European University Institute

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Disinterested or discouraged?

The gender gap in political interest.

Irene SÁNCHEZ-VÍTORES

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences
of the European University Institute

Florence, 28 June 2019

European University Institute

Department of Political and Social Sciences

Disinterested or discouraged?

The gender gap in political interest.

Irene Sánchez-Vítores

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences
of the European University Institute

Examining Board

Prof. Alexander Trechsel, University of Luzern (former EUI/ Supervisor)
Prof. Marta Fraile, Instituto de Bienes y Políticas Públicas – Consejo Superior de
Investigaciones Científicas (former EUI, Co-Supervisor)
Prof. Susan Banducci, University of Exeter
Prof. Hilde Coffé, University of Bath

Researcher declaration to accompany the submission of written work
Department of Political and Social Sciences - Doctoral Programme

I Irene Sánchez-Vítores certify that I am the author of the work *Disinterested or discouraged? The gender gap in political interest* I have presented for examination for the Ph.D. at the European University Institute. I also certify that this is solely my own original work, other than where I have clearly indicated, in this declaration and in the thesis, that it is the work of others.

I warrant that I have obtained all the permissions required for using any material from other copyrighted publications.

I certify that this work complies with the Code of Ethics in Academic Research issued by the European University Institute (IUE 332/2/10 (CA 297).

The copyright of this work rests with its author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. This work may not be reproduced without my prior written consent. This authorisation does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe the rights of any third party.

I declare that this work consists of 43617 words.

Statement of inclusion of previous work (delete if not applicable):

I confirm that chapter 3 was jointly co-authored with Prof. Marta Fraile Maldonado and I contributed 60% of the work.

Statement of language correction (delete if not applicable):

This thesis has been corrected for linguistic and stylistic errors. I certify that I have checked and approved all language corrections, and that these have not affected the content of this work.

Signature and date:

15 May 2019

Abstract

This dissertation examines gender differences in political interest. It draws from scholarship in political science, sociology and communication, amongst other disciplines, to explore the drivers of such pervading differences. The key argument of this thesis is that gender differences (or gender gaps), both regarding political orientations and political participation, are the product of gendered social norms and differences in men and women's socio-economic status. Despite advances in gender equality in Western societies in the last decades, women remain the primary care-providers while men focus on the provision of resources.

The thesis consists of three empirical chapters, each addressing a distinct puzzle regarding the object of difference, their development over the lifespan and the context in which they develop. In the first paper (chapter 2), I argue that men and women relate differently to politics, and this is reflected in their interest not as a matter of level (how interested they are) but of the object of interest (women are interested in other issues). In the second paper (chapter 3) I argue that socialization is at the heart of the existence of a substantial gender gap in political interest from an early age. These gender differences in the political realm are further amplified during the transition to adulthood. The third paper (chapter 4) turns to contextual factors, precisely that the absence of women in media as agents of the news contributes to hindering women's interest in politics as they lack figures to identify with. Despite the limited attention of the scholarship to media, it is a relevant contextual factor that vehiculates many citizens' interactions with the political realm (but also with financial affairs or other social events), so the events reported and how they are framed are crucial for the political formation of citizens.

Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis has been a bumpy road that has brought me many moments of joy, but also of upset. Sometimes I wish I had dealt with them differently, but I do not regret anything that I have learnt during these years. Many people have helped and accompanied me down this road, these first words are to thank them, even if my bad memory forgets to bring them to my mind as I write.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisors Alex Trechsel and Marta Fraile. Their unlimited support has allowed me to come this far. Alex decided that I had an idea worth pursuing on a sunny April morning, when I first came to the EUI for an interview. And he still supported me when I decided to switch thesis topics at the beginning of the second year, even if it meant choosing a topic in which he was not well-versed. As for Marta, I can never thank her enough for that morning in June when she asked me whether I was convinced about the thesis that I was pursuing. She planted a seed of doubt that has led to this thesis. This time, I am convinced about what I have done. Marta's support and directions have been crucial for this thesis to become what it is now. She has borne with me during endless meetings, discussing research and life. Not only has she read the thesis countless times, she has also encouraged me when I felt discouraged and tempted to quit. To both, I truly thank you.

I would also like mention the institutions that have provided support for these years, the European University Institute and the funding from the Spanish Ministry of Education. The EUI is a privileged environment to pursue any research. Its vibrant community and the many resources that it provides to researchers help to make the most of our research. The EUI has allowed me to learn about many unexpected aspects of political science, not only methods, discuss the work of many scholars and attend conferences to share my

work. I would like to thank the EUI library and the SPS information specialist, Peter Keneally, for their availability and help.

Visiting other institutions, Universidad Carlos III and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, has also contributed to my learning. Some of the professors I encountered during these stays already knew me from my undergraduate years, but they still make time to read my work and continue providing advice and guidance. Prof. Jose Ramón Montero, who first read my proposal for the EUI and continues to provide wise advice; Irene Martín, who has mentored me over the years and still does; Gema García-Albacete, who offered to host me in Madrid when I needed it most, asked me to join her research project and with whom I hope to discuss many more ideas. This list could continue forever, but I do not want to forget to mention Pedro Riera, Silvia Clavería, María Ramos, Marga Torre, Santiago Pérez-Nievas or Robert Liñeira, amongst many others.

I would not have finished this thesis without the discussions and coffees, lunches and aperitivi with the colleagues that I've met over the years. I would particularly like to thank Ieva, Anna and Javier for those days that we shared in the library and elsewhere and the support they have provided during these years. I would also like to thank Monica Ferrín (and Martiño) for having me in Torino, and for all her kindness. I cannot forget to mention Oscar, Gaël, Pablo, Alicia, Paz, Irene, Ion, Adrian, Ileana, Bruno, Agnieszka, Guillem or Itzea, amongst many others. It has been a pleasure and I hope to keep contact even after we all leave Florence.

I would also like to have a kind word for those friends that I had met before going to Florence and that have borne with me all this way. Cristina has understood and shared a lot of the good and bad, but also Clara, Gonzalo, Emilio, Alejandro and Yolanda. We met when we were teenagers and I hope we will continue sharing our struggles for many years. Lucrecia, whom I also knew before this adventure started is also responsible for many of

the good things in this thesis, encouraging me to think outside my comfort zone about gender and how I felt about it, but also being always available for a pizza or a cry. Paloma, Elena and Elena have shared many meals and cheered me up, even when I was not in the mood. In this list, I could not miss Marta (Paradés), with whom I have shared a lot of the joys and discontents of research, and from whom I have learnt a lot about patience and hard work. Borja and Placido have always reminded me why politics can be thrilling, even when I thought that it was impossible for anyone to care about it.

Finally, because they are the biggest support that I have had over these years I have to mention my family, the old and the new one. Because in spite of being noisy and driving me crazy, they love me very much and have inspired many of the questions in this thesis. My parents, Javier and Maria Paz, and my brother Sergio have always supported my choices, even when they did not fully understand them. My grandmothers, whom over the years I am coming to understand better and have represented an example of resilience and love for all of us. And my partner in life, Javi, who has inspired and supported me through the ups and downs of this thesis. Everyone mentioned so far has helped me to complete this thesis, but without him I would not have ever dreamed of starting it. I hope he finds our next adventure together as exciting as I do.

Table of contents

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: MOTIVATION OF THE RESEARCH AND CONTRIBUTION

"The young female is perhaps ever more distracted from politics than the male. Until marriage, she is preoccupied with the all-important task of finding a suitable husband. After marriage, she is absorbed with trying to make the marriage a success, and, after a time, with the responsibilities of motherhood."

Glenn and Grimes (1968, 573).

In this research I seek to understand why women are less interested in politics than men, and how the life course could shape these gender differences. Women's apparent lack of interest in politics constitutes a long-standing puzzle in the public opinion literature, yet, little is known about the mechanisms that drive this gap. While there is a lack of agreement in the scarce scholarship studying this question (Fraile and Gomez 2017; Coffé 2013; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012; Campbell and Winters 2008), my research provides a systematic analysis of the potential explanations of the gender gap in political interest in Europe.

The key argument of this thesis is that gender differences (or gender gaps), both regarding political orientations and political participation, are the product of gendered social norms and differences in men and women's socio-economic status. Despite advances in recent decades that increased gender equality in Western societies, such as the disappearance of

the gap in educational attainment or the incorporation of women to the labor market, women are still the primary care-providers in the household while men focus on the provision of resources. Moreover, gender stereotypes and social norms remain a pervading influence over how men and women should behave, penalizing those individuals who refuse to comply with these norms. To support this argument, I draw on different fields, from political science and sociology to media studies and social psychology to systematize and enrich existing explanations of the gender gap.

The polysemy of the concept "interest" has rendered it a debated attitude amongst scholars. For one, some have criticized political interest on the grounds that it is a non-attitude and respondents are not giving an accurate description of their relationship with politics (Converse 1970; Krosnick et al. 2012). Other approaches describe it as a civic virtue that makes for better citizens and improves accountability in political systems (Gallego 2015; Quintelier and van Deth 2014; Torcal and Montero 2006). Political interest reflects an emotional engagement with politics (Martin 2004; Zaller 1992). Citizens do not necessarily need to be engaged cognitively with politics to hold factual knowledge about it, to be willing to become aware and participate or feel part of the political realm (Liu and Eveland 2005). Political interest can be described in more plain words as citizens' curiosity or as the motivation that pushes them into taking part in the political realm even without expertise (van Deth 1990, 278).

This literature has abundantly documented that women systematically declare lower levels of interest in politics than men. Why is it so? The opening quotation of this thesis sounds old-fashioned and dismissive, but Glenn and Grimes (1968) identify trends that still linger in many societies, putting gender differences in political interest back in the spotlight (Inglehart and Norris 2003). Since their words were written, the role of women in society has deeply changed: great advances have been made in terms of gender

equality, women have matched men's levels of educational attainment and joined the labor market. In spite of these deep socioeconomic transformations, women remain the primary care providers of many households and are still somewhat estranged from politics (Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012; Fraile and Gomez 2017). This thesis aims at better understanding how women's role in society shapes their interest in politics (or lack thereof in this case).

Despite the limited scholarship on the triggers of women's motivations, the literature does provide insights on the mechanisms that could explain women's relative disregard for the political realm compared to men. For instance, scholarship has found differences between men and women's political knowledge. While men show greater levels of knowledge about partisan and electoral politics, women display equal or better understanding of questions probing familiarity with topics of direct relevance to women as a group (for instance, female politicians or officeholders, policies that concern women, local politics; see Dolan, 2011; Ferrin, Fraile, and García-Albacete 2018; Stolle and Gidengil, 2010). Similarly, women tend to be more supportive than men of social protection policies and welfare states, which is reflected in their ideological self-placement, leaning more progressive than men (Corbetta and Cavazza 2008; Inglehart and Norris 2003). These documented gender differences in policy preferences are stronger among younger generations in Western countries (Shorrocks 2018). Women's diverse preferences and larger support for equality also reflect how they express their electoral preferences, increasing their likelihood of supporting and voting for the Democrats in the US or progressive parties in the European context (Shorrocks 2018; Harsgor 2018).

The thesis consists of three empirical chapters, each addressing a distinct puzzle in the literature. Altogether, they shed light on how women are different from men in their political interest. In the first paper (chapter 2), I argue that men and women relate

differently to politics, and this is reflected in their interest not as a matter of level (how interested they are) but of the object of interest (women are interested in other issues). In the second paper (chapter 3) I argue that socialization is at the heart of the existence of a substantial gender gap in political interest from an early age. These gender differences in the political realm are further amplified during the transition to adulthood and the diverse commitments and responsibilities acquired by men and women during this period of the life cycle. In the third paper (chapter 4) I argue that the absence of women in media as agents of the news contributes to hindering women's interest in politics as they lack figures to identify with. Despite the limited attention of the scholarship to media, it is a relevant contextual factor that vehiculates many citizens' interactions with the political realm (but also with financial affairs or other social events), so the events reported and how they are framed are crucial for the political formation of citizens.

The present chapter summarizes the relevant literature discussing the reasons for the gender gap in declared political interest. It also provides a summary of the findings of each separate chapter, highlighting the key contribution of the present research.

1.1 How does the object of interest relate to the existence of the gender gap?

For any conversation to make sense, parties to it need to stand on common grounds over what they are talking about. The same argument could be made for the survey instruments that ask citizens to rate their interest in politics: is every respondent thinking about the same things when asked about politics? Politics is a fairly comprehensive term, and even if it should evoke anything that could be considered political, it seems to be strongly linked to institutional and partisan politics (Stolle and Gidengil 2010; Fitzgerald 2013).

Although the comprehensiveness of the question seemed to be an asset to its accuracy, in fact, it seems to represent a constraint.

Prior research has questioned the way politics in abstract is used in traditional survey items. For instance, regarding political knowledge, there is a lively debate about how to accurately measure such an abstract and polysomic concept. The conventional approach has been to ask survey respondents a few factual questions about the political system, such as identifying relevant political actors, electoral rules or specific political issues. Critics have showed that these traditional survey knowledge items underestimate women's knowledge due to both the content and the format (Ferrin, Fraile, and García-Albacete 2018). First, because their focus on electoral and partisan contents implies giving preference to those topics more interesting to men (Dolan 2011; Fortin-Rittberger 2016; Stolle and Gidengil 2010). Second, because women tend to be more risk-averse than men, which means that they are less likely to guess, particularly if the survey item is perceived as some form of examination. When asked to recall facts, and unsure about the correct answer, men are more prone to guessing the correct answer while women are more likely to declare they do not know (Garcia-Albacete, Fraile, and Ferrin 2017; Lizotte and Sidman 2009; Mondak and Anderson 2004). Consequently, at least part of the documented gender gap in knowledge might be a product of the traditional measures of knowledge that have been previously used in surveys.

Regarding political interest, a similar bias could be operating. Women are more likely to underestimate their skills, particularly in areas where social norms have discouraged their participation (Bian, Leslie, and Cimpian 2017). Applied to declared political interest, this would imply that women are under reporting their interest because they systematically perceive it as lower than men. In other words, women would be as interested as men, but they misrepresent the intensity when they grade it. However, experimental research using

anchoring vignettes has looked into the traits that identified what it means to be politically interested or not interested and whether men and women identified it differently (Lee, Lin, and Stevenson 2016, 2015). They argue that political interest is an underlying continuous concept but it is measured with ordinal categories and the "cut-points" defining those categories could be the source of the gap (Lee, Lin, and Stevenson 2015, 208). Their results show no apparent gender differences in what the vignettes meant to respondents. Being interested or not appears to signify the same to men and women. Thus, gender differences were not an obvious result of a flaw in the survey instrument, other dimensions had to be considered, such as the debates and practices taking place in the political arena.

Women's estrangement from politics could also be related to substantive concerns regarding the political realm such as their exclusion from the political conversation or their lack of engagement with the affairs and issues being discussed. In recent decades, efforts have been made to make politics more egalitarian and inclusive, breaking with the idea that it is an old boys' club (Stolle and Gidengil 2010), and opening the agenda to so-called "feminine" topics, such as those related to family and work conciliation, abortion or gender pay gaps (Greene and O'Brien 2016).

In spite of efforts to increase its inclusiveness, women seem to still feel unskilled to make themselves heard and participate in the political discussion. Successful participants in the public debate are asked to be assertive, competitive and charismatic, competences that women are usually discouraged to develop as they are found to conflict gender stereotypes (Swigger and Meyer 2018). In contrast, socialization encourages women to favor cooperation and care, values that are reinforced through media and other cultural products (Eagly et al. 2004, 797). Fox and Lawless (2010, 13–15) call this combination of gender role expectations and the dominance of a masculine way of doing, a "gendered psyche"

that discourages women to run as candidates in elections, amongst other materializations. They argue that this persistent masculinization of the political realm is behind the peripheral presence of women in electoral politics.

Besides feeling ill-suited to participate, the estrangement of women from politics could also be linked to the issues addressed in the political realm. To the best of my knowledge, no one has fully tested the existence of masculine and feminine topics as such. However, there are some gendered patterns of interest and preferred modes of participation. While men tend to be more interested in institutional and partisan politics, women usually prefer social affairs and policy-related issues (Stolle and Gidengil 2010; Fitzgerald 2013; Inglehart and Norris 2003, 90; Campbell and Winters 2008). This divergence of interests is also reflected in female candidates' political platforms (Bos 2015) and the areas in which women are more knowledgeable when it comes to politics (Dolan 2011; Ferrin, Fraile, and García-Albacete 2018).

This difference in interests also connects this research with an ongoing debate on the conceptualization of politics, and, by extension, the threshold for issues to be considered political or not. Both Fitzgerald's (2013) and Stolle and Gidengil's (2010) research have shown that politics by default evokes in respondents institutional and partisan politics. These political arenas are also the most visible in media and usually framed in terms of competitiveness and conflict. In other words, the arenas where women are most estranged and less likely to participate (Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010) are the ones that receive more attention from media. Therefore, when surveys ask about their interest in political affairs, it is likely that they are evoking inadvertently a feeling of dismissiveness towards the political realm. However, national politics and political parties is not all there is to politics.

Modern politics are often multi-level, juggling different institutional arenas to which citizens do not hold the same levels of familiarity. A previous study using evidence from United Kingdom shows that while women are less interested in national and international politics than men, they display the same interest as men in local politics (Coffé 2013). From an opposite point of view, but still in the same line of closeness with the political realm, other authors have shown that women are less interested in more distant political arenas such as the EU and other international institutions (Togeby 1994; Nelsen and Guth 2000). Thus, the first expectation of this thesis would be that women are not necessarily less interested in politics than men; instead they may just be interested in a different dimension of politics, focused on closeness to their daily concerns, such as local politics.

Even if the first expectation assumes that women are a social group with aligned views, in fact they are a heterogenous group whose preferences and values are shaped by other life experiences besides their gender. Each citizens' demands and orientations vary with age. One's needs in their early twenties, when they are looking for their first job or still studying at the university and voting for the first time, are different from those when one is in their mid-thirties, when they form a family, buy a house, get a mortgage or raise children. Significant life cycle events shape other political orientations and political participation, so political interest should not be an exception (García-Albacete 2014; Dinas 2013; Sharrow et al. 2018; Quaranta and Dotti Sani 2018).

Specifically, marriage has a boosting effect on men's civic engagement but it acts as a hindrance to women's (Rotolo 2000). Even amongst couples with more egalitarian views of family and partnership, marriage and children tend to bring about a more traditional distribution of roles (Batalova and Cohen 2002; Knudsen and Wærness 2008). This traditional distribution of roles would lead men to maximize their role as providers, increasing their public presence, while women focus on caring activities and the private

22

sphere (Sayer 2005). Returning to political interest, what this literature suggests—and the second expectation tested in the second chapter—is that significant life events, such as marriage and commitment to caring, modulate citizens' interests.

1.2 When in the life cycle do men and women become different regarding the political realm?

Gendered stereotypes regarding values, acceptable social roles and issues of interest are a constant of this thesis. How men and women adopt these social constructs, and more generally, how attitudes are formed, is a long-running discussion in many disciplines. This section provides some broad strokes on how attitudes form and develop over the life course, and how does gender intervene in this process. Is it a matter of socialization or do these differences emerge later on in life as a product of socio-economic status?

The first scholarship referred to education as a key resource for citizens to develop and, later expand, their curiosity for the political world (Almond and Verba 1963). Feminist critiques highlighted that this explanation disregarded relevant gender differences in access to resources (Bourque and Grossholtz 1974), but conventional wisdom at the time was that the gender gap in political engagement would fade once men and women's levels of educational attainment were similar, and women joined the labor market. However, while women have caught up with their levels of educational attainment and entry in the labor market since the 1960s and 1970s, the literature shows the pervasiveness of relevant gender differences and women's subsequent estrangement from politics.

Despite improvements made in gender equality in recent decades, research shows that women's sense of political efficacy is still hindered, thus affecting their willingness to

become interested in politics. First, because women build their political knowledge differently to men, and apparently, formal education contributes to increase their knowledge to a lower extent than men's (Dow 2009). Second, because women tend to lack confidence in their skills in those areas that are considered masculine (Bian, Leslie, and Cimpian 2017). However, experimental evidence has shown that when their self-confidence is boosted, either through encouragement or just by accurately reporting their objective performance in responding to a list of question about politics compared to other male participants, gender differences in political engagement languish (Preece 2016).

Another traditional source of political skills is the work place, where peers often discuss about politics or even have their first hands-on political experiences. At a small scale, work places face political challenges that offer many men a first encounter with politics and the basis to engage later on a larger scale, either by joining labor organizations or engaging in other forms of participation. Women, however, have not benefitted as much from this source of skills. On the one hand, they are more likely to have part-time jobs or positions that are low in the scale, reducing their prospects of joining labor organizations or engaging in the work place in ways that build their civic skills (Lorenzini and Giugni 2012). On the other, they are often burdened with double work days, working both outside the household and in it (Knudsen and Wærness 2008; Gupta 1999). This primary commitment to care would leave them with little time available to become aware of what is happening in the political realm (Jennings 1983). However, more recent research on the gender gap in political efficacy in Canada using questions about time use from the Canadian Election Study has challenged this double day effect (Thomas 2012).

The alternative explanation to the limited resources is articulated around socialization, social learning processes that occur during childhood and youth, through which events and people shape how individuals learn their political orientations (Bennett and Bennett

1989; Filler and Jennings 2015; Sears and Levy 2003, 60–62). These stimuli start during early childhood, setting the basis for complex concepts, such as justice or politics (Gidengil, Wass, and Valaste 2016; van Deth, Abendschön, and Vollmar 2011). Later, other agents like school, peers or media, as well as formative experiences will continue to shape how citizens relate to the political environment surrounding them and whether they decide to engage or not.

This scholarship not only discusses the origins of attitudes, but also individuals' susceptibility to change their orientations. While some authors argued that individuals were always open to change (Franklin 1984), more recent scholarship has reached some agreement around the relative stability of attitudes over the life course, particularly political interest (van Deth 1990; Zaller 1992; Prior 2010). Either an individual learns it, usually from his or her parents during childhood or early youth, or it is very unlikely that he or she will become interested later on (Prior 2010, 2019).

Other authors have shown that the formative period (late teens until mid-twenties) is as critical as childhood for the development of political interest. During these years of first-times, individuals get another chance to develop their interest or remain uninterested, and this choice will crystallize immediately after (van Deth 1990; Neundorf, Smets, and García-Albacete 2013). These findings fall in line with Dinas' (2014) impressionable years hypothesis for party identification. He observes that the first time individuals vote, combined with their family's nurture, serves as a shaping experience of the party with whom individuals will identify during the rest of their lives. Afterwards, attitudes crystallize and although change may occur, it becomes increasingly rare. In a similar vein, Garcia Albacete (2014) observes that significant events in the late teens and early twenties, such as going to university, moving in with a partner for the first time or voting for the first time, have a formative and lasting effect on individuals' political engagement.

Socialization scholarship has not only studied how and when values are transmitted, but also which ones are. This learning process is considered a "learn by doing" experience, where children and young people learn the values and roles they are expected to uphold and adopt when they become adults. Sex role stereotypes (which include women's role in society) are considered as core elements of the political culture (Bejarano, Manzano, and Montoya 2011) and are transmitted by different agents, from parents and teachers to media or toys. So long as the political realm, and by extension the political culture, remains masculinized, gender inequalities in politics will pervade (Bennett and Bennett 1989, 167).

Research with children has attempted to further disentangle the mechanisms of transmission of gender norms and behaviors. Young children already display structured political orientations and political knowledge (van Deth, Abendschön, and Vollmar 2011; Goetzmann 2017). However, they are also taught gendered social norms that encourage prejudices and expectations about which areas they are going to perform well in (Bian, Leslie, and Cimpian 2017). Moreover, they learn that displaying behaviors and orientations that are consistent with those gender stereotypes brings along approval from parents and significant adults, while cross-gendered conduct and activities lead to social sanctioning (Bussey and Bandura 1999; Bussey 2011). So, to be gender compliant, boys are encouraged to concentrate on developing competitiveness and assertiveness, while girls are stimulated to focus on empathy, interconnectivity, and cooperation.

This scholarship delivers another expectation for this thesis: that gender differences should emerge at every stage of the life course. Those that appear during the early youth would relate to gendered socialization processes and pervading social norms regarding masculinity and femininity. Those that emerge later, linked to the transition to adulthood and the commitments derived, would enlarge and consolidate the size of the gender gap

in political interest. Chapter 3 tests these theories and shows that the aforementioned processes are gendered and interrelated, explaining the existence of a sizeable gender gap in political interest since a very early moment in life; a gap that thrives rather than declines over the life course.

1.3 The role of context in shaping political interest.

In contrast with preceding sections, this section turns from individuals to the contextual elements that could shape the gender gap in political interest. The overarching argument shared by this scholarship is that more egalitarian environments foster more inclusive political cultures, which, in turn, correlate with a reduction of gender-based differences in political interest. Although the fourth chapter only discusses the impact of media in producing an inclusive environment, this section will discuss other dimensions insofar as they contributed to build the theoretical argument of the chapter.

The first dimension within this approach is the average economic situation in which women find themselves. Overall, more economically developed countries seem to be related with smaller gender gaps (Alexander and Welzel 2011). However, raw economic development is often insufficient to describe how women fare in their daily lives, what their socioeconomic status is or whether the state contributes to promote equality through the provision of services. Those countries with more protective welfare states, providing affordable child care facilities, health insurance and measures to reconcile family and work, tend to have a smaller gender gap in terms of political involvement and engagement (Fraile and Gomez 2017; Andreß and Heien 2001; Sainsbury et al. 1999).

Secondly, institutions can also contribute to create an inclusive environment or hinder it. Women who participate tend to prefer third sector organizations to formal institutions (Stolle and Hooghe 2011). To disrupt the impression that politics is a man's game (Lawless and Fox 2010) and that political parties are less responsive to women's preferences (Homola 2017), institutions should be more open in order to feminize the political realm. To achieve this feminization, different strategies can be put in place, such as power-sharing institutions or the existence of prominent female candidates that act as role models.

Power-sharing institutions are those institutional arrangements that aim to broaden participation in government by combining, amongst others, proportional representation, parliamentarism, or federalism, allowing for the inclusion of as many actors as possible in decision-making processes (Norris 2008). Institutions provide symbolic cues about the most cherished principles in democratic societies (Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2010, 1001). Within this signaling, power-sharing institutions can contribute to enhancing inclusiveness, making the political realm less of a men's elite club and reducing the gender gap in political participation (Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2010). Besides, they can also impact the development of a cognitive or emotional engagement, particularly for women. For those who have difficulties being heard when political decision-makers are highly homogeneous, these institutional arrangements increase diversity and ease access and availability of information, even for those with little resources (Nir and McClurg 2015; Nir 2012; Cramer Walsh 2004).

The role model literature attempts to understand the effect of women candidates on citizens' attitudes and participation, and whether they succeed at making the political realm more inclusive (Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder 2017; Carreras 2016; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2017; Barnes and Burchard 2013; Desposato and Norrander

2009; Atkeson and Carrillo 2007). Their main argument is that women candidates act as role models for women citizens, encouraging them to become involved in politics and to participate. Two main mechanisms appear to drive this potential influence: the presence of women in institutions and their novelty (Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder 2017, 374–76; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2017). However, there is a first caveat to this literature, there is no unique recipe for a successful women candidate. Once women decide to enter the race, they are expected to balance masculinity and femininity so that they are perceived as competent but compliant with gender norms (Campus 2013; Bauer and Carpinella 2018; Carreras 2016, 9). Managing through these challenges has been done in very different ways, and with diverse results: from Segolène Royal's and Cristina Fernandez's embracement of femininity to Angela Merkel's and Margaret Thatcher's more masculine-leaning styles.

The presence of female candidates running in an election and, once they are elected and appointed, in institutions may have a role model effect on women. This presence can signal that gender equality is a relevant value for society, placing in the agenda and institutional practices new points of view (Liu and Banaszak 2017, 3–4). It should also act as a revulsive against women's lack of skills and networks to make successful candidates (Lawless and Fox 2010; Bjarnegard 2013). Yet, findings are inconclusive: positive association of women legislators and women's participation have been accounted for sub-Saharan countries (Barnes and Burchard 2013), the US (Atkeson and Carrillo 2007) and Latin America (Desposato and Norrander 2009); in contrast, Liu (2018) finds no such association in Asian countries. Some researchers have argued that these contradictory results are related with the limited visibility of a single legislator. Instead, they argue, women cabinet members are better role models because they tend to concentrate more visibility and power, matching expectations regarding changes in policy

and institutional practices (Liu and Banaszak 2017, 9). While Carreras (2016) finds no relationship with participation, Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder (2017) do. In between both positions, Liu and Banaszack (2017, 24) find that the impact of women in the executive is nuanced, affecting only to low-risk conventional participation such as taking part in legal demonstrations.

Beside the presence hypothesis, the novelty of having a female candidate in office (or "first-woman" effect) produces a powerful cue for women, showing that glass ceilings are being broken and it is appropriate for women to engage in politics, thus, improving their participation rates (Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder 2017, 376). Moreover, in crisis contexts, women's different leadership style is expected to act as a revulsive (Carreras 2016). Most authors find no support for the novelty effect on participation (Gilardi 2015; Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder 2017), with the exception of Wolbrecht and Campbell (2017).

The presence and the novelty hypotheses have found more consistent results when examined during citizens' formative period in their life cycle (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2017; Dassonneville and McAllister 2018; Mariani, Marshall, and Mathews-Schultz 2015). These authors argue that female role models are effective on young people, as they leave an imprint during their socialization that will crystallize over time, encouraging their political participation. Despite all the obstacles described, the main caveat to this scholarship is that citizens' direct interactions with politics and the mentioned candidates are scarce. Leaving aside exceptional occasions like elections, the political realm enters most households through media, particularly the news (Bandura 2001). This brokering gives media two crucial options: choosing which events to report and how they framed them. As the time available is limited, the decision of what makes the news, how the information is presented and how much time is awarded

has the potential of shaping citizens' perception of the world around them (Kahn 1994, 154).

Media has been identified as one of the channels through which social learning occurs (Bandura 2009), and a potential perpetuator of existing gender stereotypes and values (Lemish 2008) transmitted both by the family and school. Women as news subjects, compared to men, usually receive a different treatment, whichever the topic. While women's coverage tends to privilege their personal traits, men's concentrates on their achievements (Quayle et al. 2017; Bystrom, Robertson, and Banwart 2001). Even if practices in media seem to be changing, particularly regarding women politicians, women are still more likely to be associated to topics such as education or social affairs, be awarded with less time in broadcasts or pay more attention to their personal characteristics (Lühiste and Banducci 2016; Kittilson and Fridkin 2008). In other words, media is a third contextual element, besides the economic situation and the institutional realm, through which gender stereotypes are being reproduced.

The implication of this gendered treatment of news subjects is two-fold. It exerts a direct effect over those being reported, hindering their chances of pushing forward their platforms (Dolan and Lynch 2015; Murphy and Rek 2018) and penalizing them more direly when they break gender norms (Barnes, Beaulieu, and Saxton 2018). It also has an indirect influence over women witnessing how other women are being treated. This "bystander effect" of media sexism have a negative influence on women's political ambition, further reinforcing traditional gender roles (Haraldsson and Wängnerud 2018, 12).

Although media exert a powerful influence on shaping gender norms and stereotypes, citizens filter these contents, changing to another channel or switching off the television

(Friesem 2016, 373–74). Similarly, women's lesser interest in politics could be the reflection of women's disconnection from the issues and actors being discussed in the political realm. In one of the preceding sections it was discussed how the literature finds that women's political knowledge is more focused on social affairs and policy (Barabas et al. 2014; Ferrin, Fraile, and García-Albacete 2018; Stolle and Gidengil 2010). Similarly, they are more interested in local politics, which is more connected with daily needs (Coffé 2013). As a result, media would contribute to women's lack of interest in politics because they represent politics as being about institutional and partisan politics rather than policy implementation and social affairs.

While prior scholarship has studied the relationship between media and political interest (Strömbäck and Shehata 2010; Clark 1983; Moeller and de Vreese 2015), the contribution of media to the gender gap in political interest is absent from the literature. Is there an equivalent to the role model effect in media? Do media contribute to create a "bystander effect" on women's political interest? How women are portrayed in the media, even in egalitarian societies, would deter them from being politically interested because the political realm is identified as a predominantly a masculine arena and the media contribute to the portrait of such a male dominant sphere.

The present thesis aspires to create a dialog with all this scholarship, contributing to the literature by identifying the often subtle but relevant obstacles that women citizens encounter in the realm of politics and that contribute to nurture and perpetuate the survival of the "gendered psyche" (Lawless & Fox, 2010); a psyche that inhibits many women around the world from getting involved and interested in the political realm from a very early moment in their lives.

1.4 Outline of the thesis: what, how and where.

Inglehart and Norris (2000) define the gender gap in political participation as a multidimensional phenomenon. This thesis is a collection of three papers that aim to cover this multidimensionality by connecting existing debates not only in the political science literature, but also in media studies, social psychology and sociology. In this section I summarize the aims, contributions and limitations of each paper.

The first paper (chapter 2) is devoted to examining the object of interest. One of the challenges of studying political interest is the polysemy of the word and how it is not always easy to start the conversation on common ground (van Deth 1990). This chapter attempts to answer two questions: to what extent are women less interested in politics than men? Are all women equally detached from every political arena? Using comparative evidence from the Citizens, Involvement and Democracy Project (Andersen et al. 2007), I contribute to the literature on the gender gap by extending the external validity of Coffé's (2013) results, and examining the impact of marriage and caring for others on political interest. Gender-based differences fade when the object of interest is local politics, even after controlling for country heterogeneity. In line with Coffé's results (2013), women seem to not be generally estranged from politics in the European democracies examined. They seem to fail to identify local politics as one of the elements that comprises politics with further adjectives. Although this is not robustly tested, what these results suggest is that the question usually asking citizens to rate their interest in politics lead to women's declared lower levels. Caring for others, understood here as looking after other people besides family members or being engaged in altruistic organizations—and therefore a manifestation of holding caring values—equally increases the interest of both men and women. In contrast, marriage seems to act both as a social

anchor and a hindrance. Married respondents, both men and women are the most interested respondents, but they are also amongst whom the differences are at their largest size. The conundrum that this article still does not solve is the characteristic of local politics that increases its appeal to women over other arenas. In line with existing scholarship, I theoretically argue that this interest is derived from their closeness, but further research would be needed to understand the mechanism, for instance using cognitive interviewing to disentangle what respondents interpret when stimulated to think about politics at the local versus national politics.

The second paper (chapter 3) identifies the extent of the gender gap in political interest over the life span. Political interest is a relatively stable political attitude over the life course (Prior 2010, 2019). However, during the formative years, as young people become adults, the literature has observed a certain instability, particularly amongst those who become interested but whose parents were not (Russo and Stattin 2016; Neundorf, Smets, and García-Albacete 2013). Chapter 3 examines whether the gender gap follows a similar trajectory over the life course. When do gender differences in political interest become evident? Are these differences constant or do they change over the life span?

Existing literature examining the sources of the gender gap in political interest has mainly used cross-sectional evidence (Bennett and Bennett 1989; Quaranta and Dotti Sani 2018). Instead, this chapter adopts a dynamic approach using the British Household Panel to track gender differences in political interest and the association between education and the gender gap. The results show that the gender gap is already present at age 15, which suggests that gender differences have their origin in early childhood. During the transition to adulthood, these differences are amplified, as they reach their largest size. After the formative years, differences remain largely stable at its largest extent. Turning to education, the data shows a stronger association between political interest and education

for men than for women. These results support the thesis that formal education does not build women's political confidence as men's, and, by extension other orientations such as political interest (Dow 2009; Ondercin and Jones-White 2011; Preece 2016). This evidence, however, is incapable to identify the precise source of socialization contributing to crop such a critical gender gap. Is it the family of origin, the school where the children go to, their friends, or the media to which they are exposed? It is very likely that all these sources of gender inequalities work in concert to stimulate and sustain young men's political interest at the expense of that of young women.

The third paper (chapter 4) discusses the role of media in shaping the gender gap in political interest. To what extent do the contents of media, and how they reflect gender roles, affect the extent of the gender gap in political interest? The literature discussing the contextual correlates of the gender gap in political interest has mainly focused on economic and social development, institutions and candidates that act as role models. However, media has never entered the picture. Chapter 4 intends to build on this discussion by examining the role of media, the means through which most citizens experiment the majority of their interactions with the political realm (Bandura 2001). Using combined comparative evidence from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) and the European Social Survey, I examine how the presence of women correlates with the size of the gender gap in the European context. More specifically, I examine the association of the presence of women in the media and the areas where they appear on the size of the gender gap. The first finding is the scarce presence of women in news reports. Even considering some of the countries with the best scores in equality, on average women represented some 30 percent of the news subjects. Second, having women in the news is not enough to bridge the gender gap in political interest. However, when women are present in those areas that are identified with "hard news", like news on

politics or economic affairs, the gender gap diminishes. My original intention in this chapter was to test whether women in media are being presented as role models, and whether they are acting as such. Moreover, I would have liked to test how the distribution of time and space between sections, balancing the topics that attract men and women's interest or not, is related to the size of the gender gap. This was not possible due to limitations of the GMMP dataset.

All in all, this thesis aims to contribute to the ongoing debate on women's apparent lack of interest in politics in comparison to that of men. Political interest, being a motivation, a form of emotional engagement, may not have consequences as visible as electoral behavior or other modes of political participation. However, without this motivation, citizens are less likely to communicate their preferences and needs to institutions (Quintelier and van Deth 2014; Gallego 2015) and the functioning of democracies suffers (Torcal and Montero 2006). Given that women represent a good half of society, understanding the particularities of their political interest and the areas where there is room for improvement can help to expand the inclusiveness of political systems and achieve political gender equality.

CHAPTER 2. DIFFERENT GOVERNMENTS, DIFFERENT INTERESTS: THE GENDER GAP IN POLITICAL INTEREST[1]

2.1 Introduction

The literature has found abundant evidence across countries of women declaring they are less interested in politics than men (Fraile and Gomez 2017; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012). However, in her study of the UK, Coffé (2013) added a 'but' to this apparent lack of interest. When asked specifically about different political arenas, the gap between men and women (also known as gender gap) disappeared. Women declared similar levels of interest in local politics to men, while a gap appeared as they were asked about arenas that might be considered more distant, namely, national and international politics. This article analyzes this field of research in two ways. First, by examining a broader number of countries to further validate these findings. Second, by connecting Coffé's research with that exploring the sources of gender-based differences in political orientations. What makes local politics more appealing to women than other political arenas?

Many academics believed that the incorporation of women into the labor force and gender equality in levels of educational attainment were going to reduce the gender gap (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001). It was argued that education and the experience of paid employment would provide women with the skills needed to understand and engage in politics, as it did for men. However - and here lies the conundrum - this did not happen.

The starting point of my argument is that women nowadays frequently work both at home and outside in what might be called double-days. And they are socialized to accept this distribution of roles. Thus, I expect their relationship with different forms of political interest to be mediated by family and care commitments.

The literature addressing the gender gap has focused on the available resources to develop such an interest. In the theoretical section below, I review the two main hypotheses, which center on either situation or socialization. I do so because the evidence does not allow me to refute either causal mechanism driving the phenomenon observed. The situational explanation focuses on a broad definition of resources; not only material but also cognitive (Thomas 2012; Verge and Tormos 2012). In contrast, the socialization hypothesis argues that women are taught roles and values that lead to an estrangement from politics (Bennett and Bennett 1989; Mayer and Schmidt 2004). I explore how gender-based differences in declared interest in national and local politics relate to these explanations.

Articles by Coffé (2013) and Stolle and Gidengil (2010) have argued that local politics are different from national politics, and that the former attracts women's attention to a greater extent. While citizens' direct participation in national politics is usually limited to significant events like general elections, local politics can seem more closely linked to day-to-day preoccupations, such as the provision of public services or the solution of conflicts within the community (Stokes 2005). Women's traditional caring roles, it is argued, may increase their awareness of these issues when they look for a school for their children, go to the doctor's office or talk to neighbors. And this awareness might also increase their willingness to look for solutions. The direct experience of national politics is usually circumscribed to elections, while local politics is more likely to include both elections and more direct forms of engagement.

To my knowledge, the relationship between resources and varying levels of political interest remains largely unexplored, probably due to the very limited amount of relevant empirical evidence. However, the study launched in the framework of the Citizenship, Involvement and Democracy (CID) Project (Andersen et al. 2007) is an exception. This project undertook a comparative study of social capital, political behavior and the motivations for political engagement. Although the fieldwork of this dataset (1999-2001) precedes that used by Coffé (2013), it has the advantage of allowing cross-country comparison. Thus, the contribution is two-fold, broadening the scope of the first study and generalizing its results across various institutional contexts. Further, I extend this research by examining how marital status and providing care for people in the community can help shape these interests. Specifically, married couples usually participate more in the community because they are frequent users of public services. On the other hand, women are often pictured as more caring than men, as I will explain in the following section. I have used an objective measurement - 'commitment to caring for others in the community' (outside of the family, and different to volunteering) - in contrast with existing studies that have focused on values (Schwartz and Rubel-Lifschitz 2009). Although both caring for others and volunteering may be rooted in similar motivations, the first can be considered more general and flexible than the latter. Particularly this dataset, an in-depth study of social capital, includes such a broad array of activities whose participants may not only hold such caring values but also be previously inserted in participation networks. In other words, someone who cares for a neighbor may not be willing to volunteer in community activities because they do not know someone to introduce them or they lack the time to commit.

In the analytical section that follows, citizen's general interest in politics, interest in local politics, and interest in national politics are examined. The former serves as a benchmark

to interpret the results of the latter two specific measurements. The variables measuring a general interest in politics and interest in national politics show a persistent gender gap that reaches its greatest expression (in terms of a score) amongst married respondents. In contrast, the gender gap reduces across every category when local politics are the object of interest, except for married respondents. Although married men and women are amongst the most interest, there is a small but significant gender gap. Tentatively, it might be suggested that interest in local politics is a result of women's traditional assumption of roles, while an interest in national politics would require an additional effort, on top of their other obligations. These results provide evidence about where differences in political interest are located and the steps that can be taken to make politics more egalitarian and, thereby, equally attractive to both men and women.

2.2 Does care lead to not caring about politics?

The literature on gender gaps in public opinion continues to debate about why local politics might be more appealing to women than national politics. Arguments have included the suggestion that men and women seem to hold different conceptions about politics (Corbetta and Cavazza 2008), or, at least that they relate differently to politics (Coffé 2013). Understanding the sources of women's lack of political interest can provide clues about what makes local politics more appealing and how other political spheres can become more inclusive.

Economic development in recent decades has deeply changed how Western societies are organized, including social views on equality. In spite of these efforts, some political inequalities persist (Inglehart and Norris 2000; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012; Fortin-Rittberger 2016; Fraile and Gomez 2017; Jerit and Barabas 2017). The main

explanations of this phenomenon can be articulated around two hypotheses, closely linked to one another: situation and socialization.

Both socially and at home, women frequently assume the role of caregivers and men, of providers. This assumption of roles often reproduces what citizens learn during socialization from their parents and peers. In other words, characterizing women as caregivers and men as providers is a description of how society works, but also of normative perceptions of society that are transmitted through socialization (Jennings 2007). Even though much has changed in recent decades, these associations persist (Batalova and Cohen 2002; Knudsen and Wærness 2008), rendering the direction of causality hard to identify.

The situational explanation has much evolved since its early propositions (Almond and Verba 1963; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997). The point of departure of this literature is the cognitive and material resources available for citizens to develop an interest in politics. This interest was considered the main motivation for citizens to engage in politics and pursue their political objectives. The only caveat that they found in their explanation were women. They were always less interested, less engaged, less knowledgeable, etc. To solve the puzzle, they argued that once they joined the usual networks of political activation, the gender gap would dilute. In other words, once they joined the labor market, and were as educated, they would come 'up to speed'. However, despite the great progress made in improving educational equality, women remained 'less interested' in national politics (Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012).

More recent research on the situational hypothesis has focused on understanding how women being as educated as men and working has not given them the skills to be as interested in politics. In terms of educational achievement, the social entitlement and

skills conferred by university degrees seems to have decreased, as they became more common (Thomas 2012). As higher education seems less valuable, it is less key to building political orientations. Similarly, Dow (2009) finds that women's political knowledge benefits less from education than men's.

Within this same line of research, Gidengil and co-authors (2008) and Verge and Tormos (2012) have looked at 'time availability' as a resource instead of education. They argue that it is not a matter of educational attainment, where there is no gap, but of having the time to be interested and informed about politics. And women lack the time because they are busy with 'double work-days' or 'double shifts' (Hochschild and Machung 1990). Sociologists have shown that women increasingly balance a full-time job and are primary caregivers in the family (Batalova and Cohen 2002; Gupta 1999; Knudsen and Wærness 2008). Engaging with politics would imply the time and energy of third work-day. In a similar vein, Rotolo (2000) finds that marriage has different effects on men and women's civic engagement. While it boosts the participation of men, who become increasingly aware of social and economic problems and how they might act to address them in the public arena; women decrease their participation and commit to the household.

The socialization hypothesis shifts the attention from how citizens live to the gendered processes through which they learn their political orientations (Bennett and Bennett 1989; Hooghe and Stolle 2004; Morales 1999). During these years, young people receive distinct messages about the roles and values they should embrace in their adulthood (Ferrin, Fraile, and Rubal 2015). However, within this theoretical framework, authors disagree on what is transmitted: values or roles.

On the one hand, there are a group of authors within the socialization approach who argue that young people learn in their childhood and youth what they should become as adults

(Jennings 2007). Young women are encouraged to adopt caring roles, while men are taught to favor providing for the family (Filler and Jennings 2015; Sapiro 1983; Welch 1977; Bennett and Bennett 1989). There is evidence to suggest that men and women are increasingly sharing both roles, as both breadwinners and nurturers. If it becomes a trade-off, then, men seem to still generally favor their work while women take the lead role in the house.

On the other hand, a second group of authors has highlighted the fact that socialization goes further than the social division of roles. Cultural feminism, evolutionary psychology, and biosocial role theory have argued for the existence of 'feminine values' of cooperation and care, opposed to 'masculine values' of confrontation and aggressiveness (Jelen, Thomas, and Wilcox 1994; Eichenberg and Read 2015; Rapoport 1985). The gendered division of social roles reflects these varying sensibilities and has a subsequent impact on career choices. The under-representation of women in sciences, mathematics and engineering is a good example of how these gendered stereotypes dissuade girls from taking this career path (Shapiro and Williams 2012).

To summarize, both streams of literature highlight the fact that the social roles that women adopt (or are taught) hinder them in developing an interest in politics. Prioritizing marriage and commitment to caring for others, either as reflections of values held, and/or because they consume a high proportion of women's available time, lead to them showing less interest in politics. Women are not excluded *per se* from politics, but it is argued that they receive subtle messages that their interests and skills are not part of politics. This allows me to derive the first two hypotheses that will guide the analyses of the empirical evidence:

> *H1: Women tend to declare lower levels of political interest than men.*

H2: Women's lower levels of political interest relate to marriage and care.

To date, the relevant literature has seemed to hold a pessimistic vision of how women relate to politics. Nonetheless, women run for office, hold seats in Parliament, engage in civic organizations, and consume political content in the media. Women running for office are frequently linked to placing women's issues – understood as reproductive rights or family related issues, amongst others – on the agenda (Atkeson and Carrillo 2007). Does this suggest that politics often does not include topics that attract women's attention? A specific recall of politics in different arenas may trigger respondents' interest in a broader concept of politics. Although there is some disagreement, the usual political interest question seems to evoke national and partisan politics (Stolle and Gidengil 2010). However, this way, respondents are stimulated to think specifically about other forms of politics.

2.3 One concept, several meanings?

Politics is frequently framed as being an 'unfriendly environment for women' insofar as they are not well-equipped with the skills and abilities required to succeed (Renshaw 2012, 197; Stevens 2012). Politics requires a set of values and experiences that women are less likely to share (Murray 2010; Karp and Banducci 2008). Interest in politics is one of the main motivations to participate. Feeling 'an unwanted outsider' does not seem to be a likely motivation to cultivate such an interest. Most men do not participate actively in politics either; however, they do declare an interest in politics. This section now turns to how individuals develop their interest in politics, to understand its appeal to men and not women.

The gender gap in political orientations is not homogeneous. In addition to Coffé's work (2013), women have been found to declare lower levels of interest in, or support for, foreign policy (Bernstein 2005; Togeby 1994; Nelsen and Guth 2000). These authors argue that these differences occur because women's interests and preoccupations are closer to day-to-day issues, while EU or foreign affairs in general are perceived as being more distant. In other words, the 'estrangement' felt from international topics make it hard for women to relate to and unwilling to become interested.

Local politics, in contrast, often seems closer to the topics that many women deal with, and it therefore appears to be more useful in addressing their problems. Compared to the distant international sphere, the local arena might be considered to be the 'closest politically', and the first that citizens encounter (Gustafsson 1980; Rodden 2004). In spite of the wide variety of modes of decentralization across countries, and the differences in the division of competences across administrations, local politics generally seems to deal with those issues that comprise citizens' everyday concerns (Stokes 2005, 204–5).

Even if this arena is not always women-friendly in its practices (Verge 2010), the likelihood of interacting directly with local politics would make it more interesting to women than the more 'distant' arenas. Local politics are part of citizens' daily lives, even though they do not make the front cover of national newspapers or news broadcasts. Studies in the US have shown that the gender gap in political knowledge is reduced when items include also local issues (Shaker 2012, 2009). In addition, women are more likely to participate in school boards and local politics (Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997; Bond et al. 2008). Knowledge and political participation imply an active relationship with politics that interest does not; however, they can offer insight of what processes could be driving political interest. In the European sphere, Coffé (2013) found for the UK that the

gender gap in political interest vanished when asking about political interest in local issues, but the argument has not been tested in other countries.

It could be argued that interviewers define 'political interest' loosely in questions, precisely to be inclusive in their definition of politics. Nonetheless, patterns of response vary across political arenas, suggesting that this broad definition is not as broad as researchers assumed it to be. Previous research has shown that the term 'politics', broadly used, predominantly evokes the idea of national and partisan politics (Hooghe and Stolle 2004). Local politics, on the other hand, has a weaker link to politics with a big P, to the big issues, because they form part of citizens' daily conversations about, for example, how the streets should be repaired or how the local budget should be apportioned. While macroeconomics are part of national news daily, these kind of topics largely pertain to local media (Shaker 2009). I expect that, insofar as local politics can be understood as a closer political arena, the gender gap should diminish. When citizens are asked about politics without further specification, only politics with a big 'P' seems to be in the minds. When citizens are stimulated to think more broadly by changing the wording of the question, and mentioning their object of interest, a broader concept of politics may emerge. Thus, the last hypothesis is:

> *H3: The gender gap in political interest should decrease when the object considered is local politics [and it should remain regarding national politics].*

In sum, women are not necessarily more apathetic, they are just inaccurately reported. Politics, without any further defining adjective, seems to recall national or partisan politics rather than other forms of politics such as local politics.

2.4 Method

Conventional, survey-oriented studies on political involvement normally employ the classic question, 'how interested are you in politics?' or an equivalent wording. It is less frequent to find questionnaires that specify the object of interest, for instance, in terms of levels of government. As mentioned above, the most recent comprehensive comparative dataset can be found in the study of political capital and citizenship in the project "Citizenship, Involvement and Democracy (CID)" (Andersen et al. 2007). This dataset is almost twenty years old, which represents the first relevant limitation. Although it seems to be happening at a different pace in each country, social views on equality and the role of women have been deeply questioned during this period. This dataset is not able to capture this, as it is unable to give a sense of whether an increased presence of women's issues in the public arena enhances women's interest in national politics. These questions open the door to future research and will require further questioning of the extent to which politics can adopt practices and discussions that are more appealing to women. Not only so, to what extent will women become interested in national politics when they address directly their concerns or whether this will increase their awareness of male dominance of politics.

The CID study includes representative samples of thirteen countries[2], namely: Denmark, Germany (Eastern and Western Germany are considered separately), Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. The fieldwork was undertaken in periods of approximately six months between 1999 and 2002. Table A1 in appendix A provides a description of the variables

---

[2] Russia was not included in the final analyses because there was some variation across country questionnaires in terms of the variables included. Some of the relevant variables were not included in the Russian questionnaire.

employed in this study. The heterogeneity of the countries considered provides the empirical evidence necessary to test the generalizability of Coffé's (2013) results beyond the British context. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the CID project might be establishing the grounds for an improvement in how political interest is assessed.

To measure political interest, I follow Coffé's strategy (2013), using three operationalizations, according to the different objects of interest: the usual question for political interest ("general interest")[3], acting as baseline; interest in local politics; and interest in national politics[4]. General political interest provides a baseline to interpret the results of the other two forms of interest. The expectation is that interest in politics in general and interest in national politics should show a more similar distribution, while local interest should be different to account for the reduced gender gap.

The three variables share metrics. Originally, they comprised a four-item variable that ranged from "very interested" to "not at all interested". Non respondents are not considered in the multivariate analyses but, given that they represent a small portion of the sample (less than 4 percent), they should not alter the results significantly. The Pearson correlations were estimated to examine the association between the variables (results are reported in table A2 in appendix A). The magnitude of this association varies between countries, but the magnitude is relatively large, pointing to a strong association between the variables. This strong association is in line with the expectation of them being different dimensions of the same political orientation.

---

[3] The wording of the question is: 'In general, how interested in politics are you? Would you say you are very interested, fairly interested, not very interested, or not at all interested?'

[4] The wording of the question is: 'People's interest sometimes varies across different areas of politics. How interested are you personally in each of the following areas? (i) Local politics, (ii) National politics.'

The explanation of the differences has focused on women putting care first, before their careers and other social engagements. Due to socialization dynamics or their socioeconomic status, compared to men, women seem to find themselves 'differently positioned' in their relationship with politics. In terms of civic engagement, Rotolo (2000) has found marriage to be a crucial moment, even amongst those who previously had more egalitarian values. I test this explanation for the case of a 'passive political orientation'. Ideally, a panel or pseudo-panel data structure would allow me to test the impact of marrying or having a child, as the usual indicators of family status (Voorpostel and Coffé 2012; Quaranta 2016). However, the cross-sectional design of the study does not allow for this kind of testing. For this reason, I have used only marital status as the operationalization for having family[5]. The original variable in the questionnaire included over five categories, rendering it difficult to handle statistically. To overcome this inconvenience, the variable has been recoded into three categories: (1) those that have never been married or in a partnership, (2) those who are currently married or in a stable partnership, and (3) those who 'have been', that is, who are divorced or widowed. This strategy focuses on the experience that marriage or an equivalent situation provides in terms of social interconnectedness, comparing them to those who have never experienced it, and those who have experienced it but are no longer in it. Figure A1 in appendix A describes the distribution of the variables by country.

Throughout the theoretical framework 'caring for others' and 'holding values that encourage caring' were frequently mentioned as a quality that clashes with those needed

---

[5] The literature on transition to adulthood has highlighted: first employment, and forming a family (understood as getting married and having the first child), as crucial events for the development of political orientations (García-Albacete 2014). These variables were included in preliminary estimations of the explanatory equation that is presented in the following section, however, they did not add substantive differences to the results. Rather, they made the analysis more complex. Thus, I have chosen to exclude them from the final estimates.

to succeed in politics, explaining to some extent the gender gap in women's political interest (Fox and Lawless 2014). Previous research has focused on self-assessment to operationalize the extent to which individuals hold caring values (Eagly and Wood 2013; Schwartz and Rubel-Lifschitz 2009) but, to the best of my knowledge, an objective indicator has not been used before. Asking respondents whether they help people around them, outside professional activities or altruistic commitments (such as volunteering), provides a way of measuring their commitment to caring as part of their daily lives. Not caring for others is a negatively sanctioned behavior, thus, this wording is a way of bypassing social acceptance and measuring accurately whether individuals uphold 'care values'. The variable has been operationalized so that zero stands for never having offered any care and one for having provided care to others. Figure A2 in appendix A describes the distribution of respondents by country in terms of having provided care or not.

To capture the impact of gender, care and marital status in relation to the respondent's political interest, a triple interactive term has been specified in the final equation. Gender is a binary variable where zero represents men and one for women. The estimations also include a set of typical control variables (age and education). Age is a continuous variable ranging from eighteen to ninety-nine. Education has been collapsed into a three-category variable that includes those who have not finished their primary education or are uneducated, those who finished their studies before pursuing a degree, and those who earned some type of degree or pursued advanced vocational training. Education has been used as an indicator for cognitive resources to deal with complex issues (Almond and Verba 1980, 1963; Fligstein 2009).

Finally, the countries included are identified with very different institutional arrangements and values. To control for this source of heterogeneity, given the limitations in the data structure, a hierarchical model is specified.

2.5 Findings

To identify under which circumstances the gender gap occurred, figures 2.1 and 2.2 show the average levels of each operationalization of political interest for men and women across the countries in the sample (these figures in full are also reported in table A3 in appendix A). These figures confirm the expectation that the question on 'general political interest' reveals that every country has a gender gap, but there is room for variance.

Figure 2.1. Average declared interest in politics in general for men and women across countries.

Source: Own elaboration based on the CID dataset.
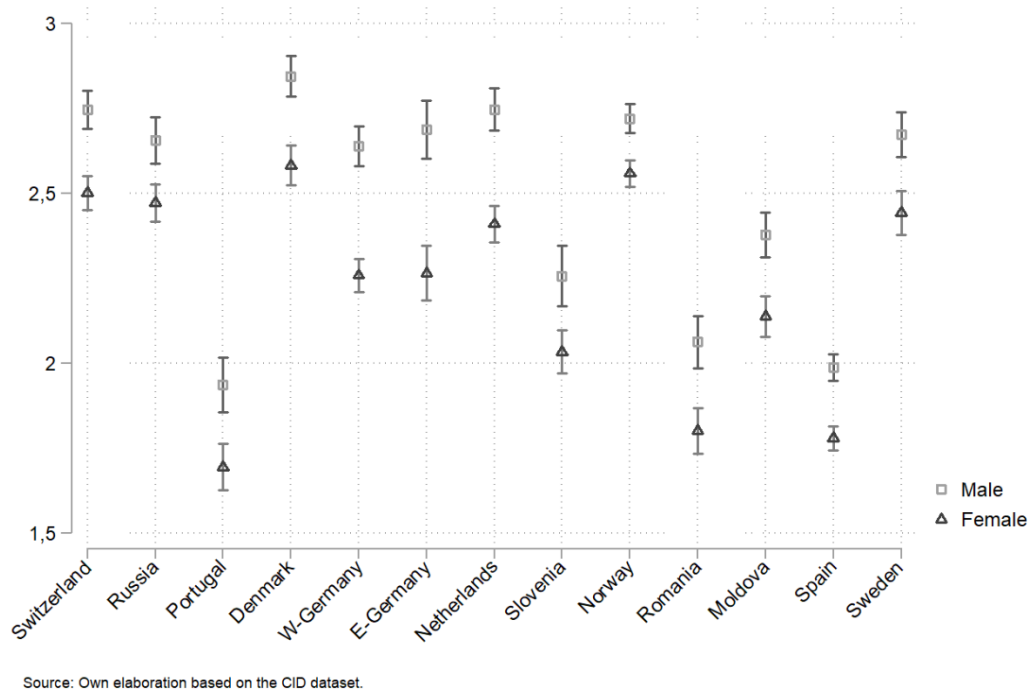
Figure 2.1 shows a consistent gender gap across countries for general political interest, with some variation in the size of the differences. First, there is a substantive cross-country variation in the general level of declared interest in politics. However, there is no clear correlation between the general level and the size of the gender gap. For instance, some countries with generally low levels of interest such as Spain, Portugal and Romania, are different in the sizes of the gap. Similarly, countries that could be identified as

"interested", like Germany or The Netherlands, show gender differences of about 0.5 (on a scale of one to four).

Figure 2.2. Average declared interest in local and national politics for men and women across countries.
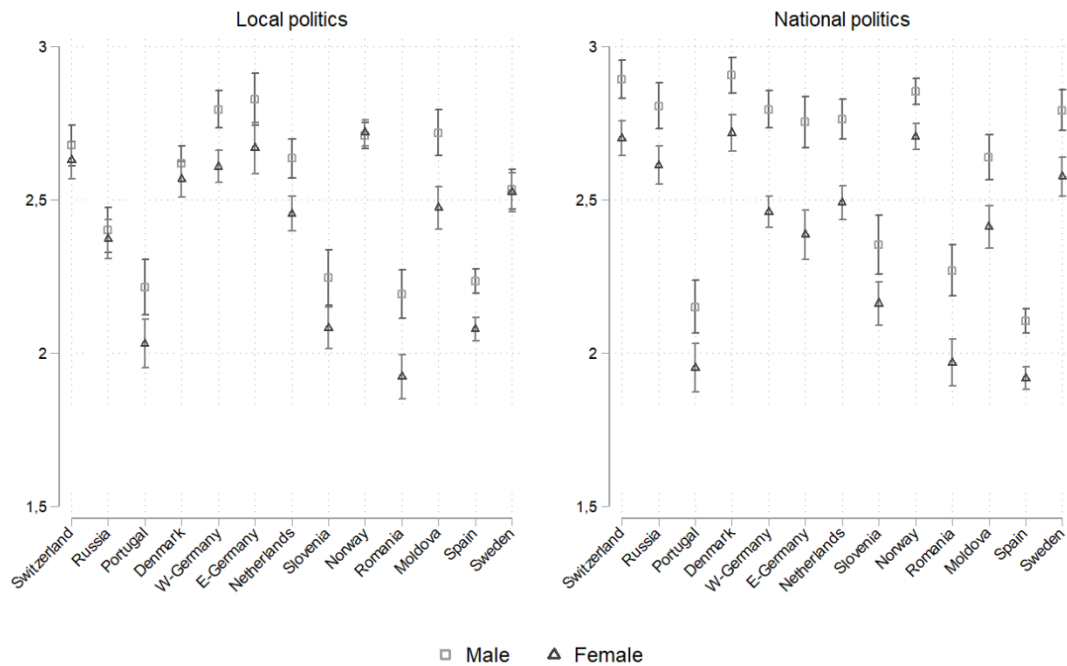
Source: Own elaboration based on the CID dataset.

Figure 2.2 shows the average interest in local and national politics by gender. The expectation is that gender-based differences should disappear regarding local politics but remain in national politics. The graph on the left shows that declared levels of interest in local politics do not differ by gender in most countries, except for Romania and Moldova, where it remains around 0.3 points. On the right, the graph shows that levels of declared interest in national politics seem to increase compared to local politics, both for men and women. However, the gender gap persists, and reproduces the trend already depicted in Figure 2.1.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 provide preliminary evidence in favor of hypotheses 1 and 3. However, to robustly test the second and third hypotheses, I estimate a multilevel ordinal

logit. The distribution of the variable in four categories that are not strongly skewed allows for this estimation. Countries such as Spain or Romania have their samples' levels of declared political interest lean towards the non-interested categories, but this does not affect the results. Given the complexity of the fully-specified equation, I will also briefly mention intermediate estimations (the full report of these models is found in tables A4-A6 in appendix A).

The main expectation of this article is that not every political arena attracts the same degree of interest from men and women. The social embeddedness provided by marriage and caring for those around oneself, makes local politics more appealing to women, reducing the gender gap. This is something that does not occur with national politics, where differences amongst married and 'caring respondents' are expected to be larger than amongst the other categories.

Before exploring the analyses more deeply, two considerations must be made. It could be argued that the gender gap in local politics is smaller for two reasons: because mainstream media do not talk about this political arena and, therefore, that it is much more difficult to become interested; or because no one, in general, is interested about what happens in townhalls.

The media has a key role in shaping citizens' relationship with politics because most political experiences are not direct, they are mediated by what makes the news (Kahn 1994, 154). National media outlets usually focus on national politics and raise topics and introduce actors from the national arena. Local politics seldom receives attention from this media, except for on very specific occasions. It is mostly local or regional media that address these issues, and they are often considered 'second-class'; dealing with less important issues. This treatment could be another manifestation of how local politics is

considered a less important form of politics. When respondents are asked specifically about it, they declare their interest. When the question is broader, it does not come to mind automatically.

The gender gap regarding local politics could be due to a general lack of interest amongst citizens. The absence of a gender gap would not be due to women being more interested, but men not being interested. A preliminary examination of the evidence does not point this way. Men's declared levels of interest in local politics seem to be slightly lower than in national issues but not notably so, as figure 2.3 will show. Overall, the average interest score for men is around 2.5 in all three items under consideration. Variation occurs regarding the size of the gap. Be it due to the proximity of the politics and/or because local media can foster interest, citizens seem to have substantively different attitudes towards the various political arenas.

The baseline model was estimated for each of the three dependent variables (interest in politics in general, interest in local politics, and interest in national politics). Marriage and caring were introduced separately at this stage to get a better grasp of their impact on the equation. Figure 3 reports the impact of gender on the probability of choosing each category of the dependent variable (the estimates are also reported in table A4 in appendix A). Across the three forms of political interest, being a woman seems to increase the chances of respondents being 'not interested at all' or 'not very interested'. In line with expectations, it also represents a decrease in the probabilities of declaring themselves to be 'quite' or 'very interested' in politics. For instance, women are eight percent more likely to declare themselves to not be interested at all in politics in general. Regarding national politics the percentage is close, at six percent. In contrast, regarding local politics, this gap falls to four percent. Turning to those who declare themselves to be 'quite interested', one of the categories with the largest number of respondents in every country,

women are seven percent less likely than men to declare themselves interested in politics in general, five percent in national politics, and three percent in local politics.

Figure 2.3. Effect of gender on the predicted probability of being in each category of interest. Multilevel ordinal logit. Baseline specification.
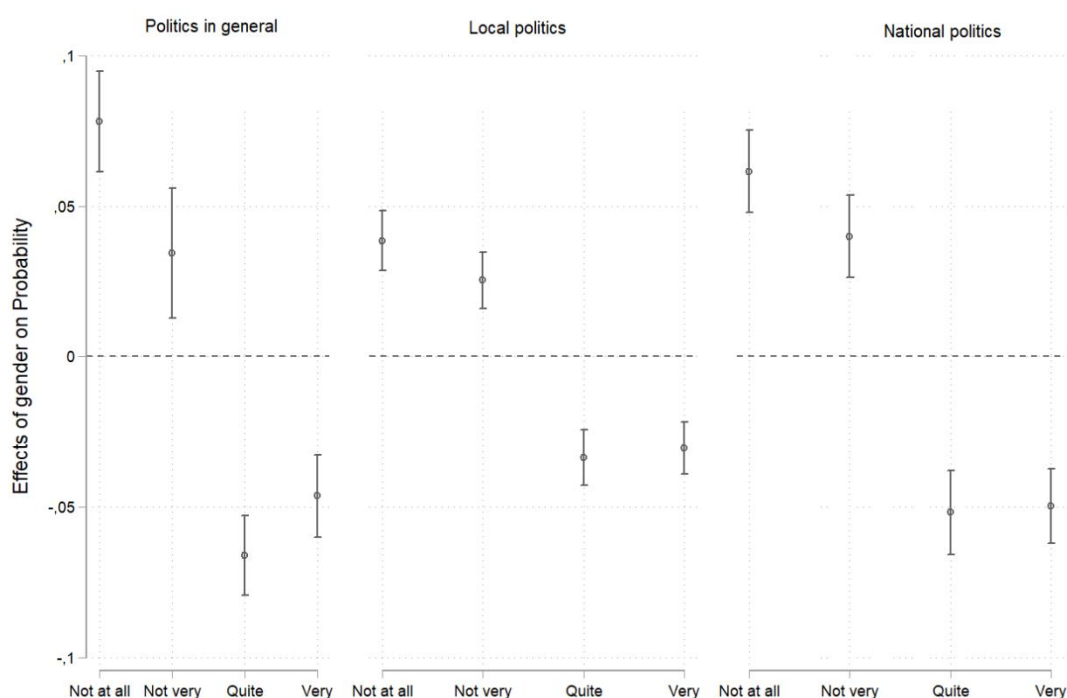
Source: Own elaboration based on the CID dataset.

Since the expectation is that marital status and 'care' produce a different impact on men and women's political interest, I have specified an interactive term following Brambor and co-authors (2006). The third hypothesis predicts differences between political arenas; thus the following estimates will also be the result of three different equations. The full model specification includes a triple interactive term combining gender, marital status, and care. Before discussing this, I will briefly cover two intermediate specifications, one with an interactive effect between gender and marital status, and another with gender and care (results are reported in figures A3 and A4 and table A5 of appendix A).

The interactive terms between gender and marital status, and gender and providing support for others introduce the role of these variables in the interaction between the three

dimensions. In the argument, they are both considered possible sources of political interest, even though their effect on men and women varies. As in the preceding figure, there seems to be a common trend between those categories that respond negatively to the question and those that respond positively. Being a woman increases the likelihood of responding 'not at all' or 'not very interested in politics' and decreases the likelihood of declaring being 'quite' or 'very interested'.

Overall, married women seem the least likely to be interested in politics. Even when the arena is local politics, the gender gap persists. Those who have never been married show the smallest gaps across categories, giving a certain amount of support to the idea that there is some association between being in a stable union or married and orientations towards politics.

In contrast, estimates considering the combined effect of gender and caring show that this variable affects the probability of being interested, but not the size of the gap. Political interest is often considered as one of the main motivations to participate and give voice to political demands. Lower scores of interest reduce the likelihood of women attempting to put their concerns in the public agenda. However, in terms of care, women do not seem to experience differences in their motivation.

Figure 2.4. Effect of gender on the predicted probability of being in each category of interest. Multilevel ordinal logit with a triple interactive term including gender, marital status, and supporting others.
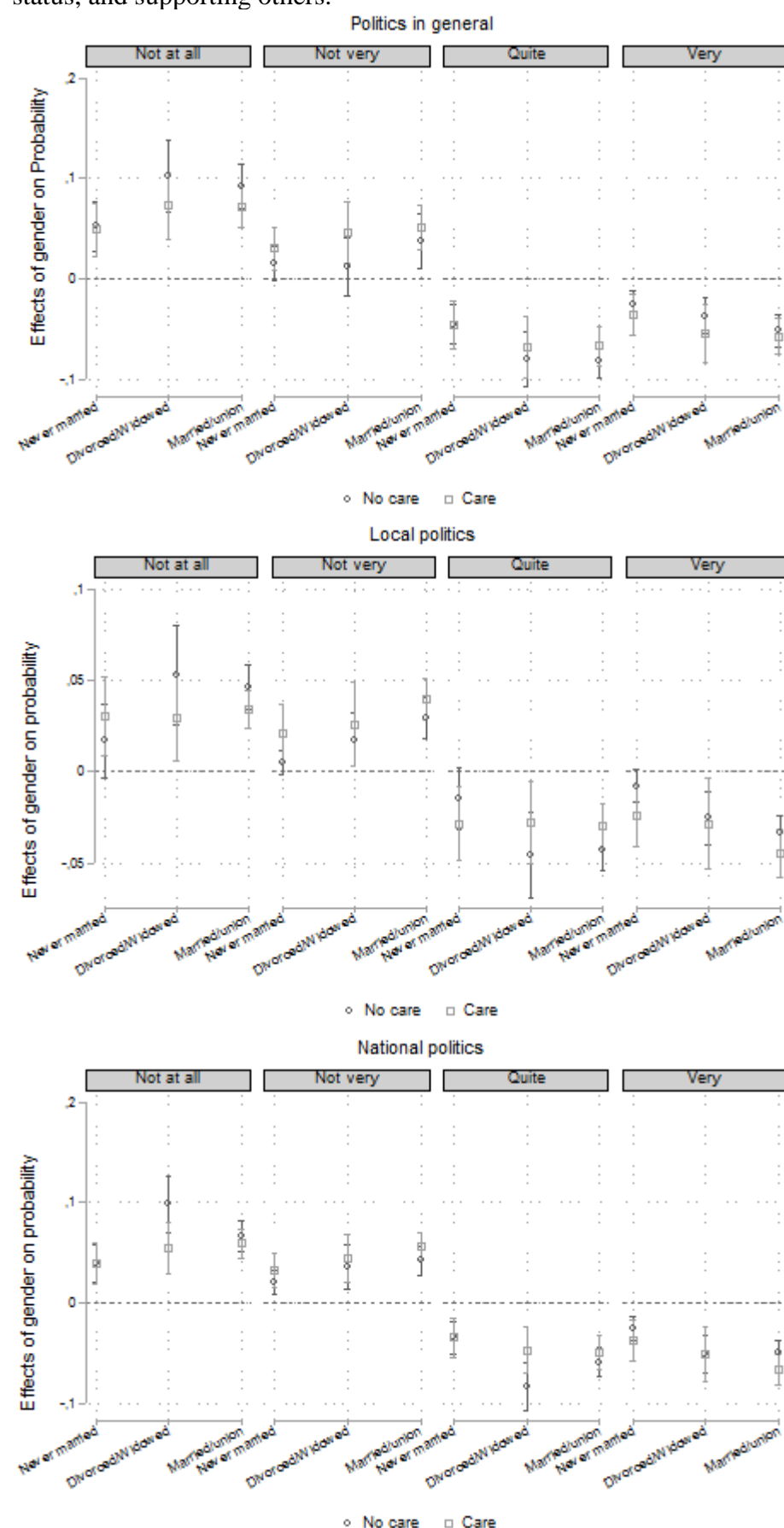
Source: Own elaboration based on the CID dataset.

Figure 2.4 reports the effect of gender on the predicted probability of being in each category of the dependent variable, conditional on an interactive term that also includes marital status and caring for others. In the theoretical framework I described how women are frequently expected to embrace a more private life (in marriage), which is focused around caring for the family and other social connections. This strategy allows me to test the extent to which this can be a combined source of hindrance to women's political interest. Results confirm that, controlling for marital status and provision of care, men tend to display higher probabilities than women of being politically interested, with some exceptions. To evaluate the robustness of the results, the equation was also estimated for each country individually. Countries fall predominantly under the same pattern with no relevant deviations[6].

The specified equation requires a high amount of statistical efficiency; thus, results are less clear-cut than in previous specifications. Results largely confirm what was observed in the simpler specifications, giving partial support to hypothesis 2 and confirming hypothesis 3.

Care does not seem to produce any difference in the size of the gap within the categories of marital status that is statistically significant. Were differences due to care significant, they would seem to produce a decrease in the likelihood of women being in the interested categories - very or quite - and an increase in the likelihood of being in the not interested categories – not at all and not quite. Even amongst those who never married, where differences are at the lowest, the gender gap amongst those who are 'not very interested

---

[6] The triple interactive term is statistically-demanding, requiring a large amount of observations to be tested. Individual countries are unable to provide sufficient observations, thus, in most countries the results are not statistically significant, but they do follow the pattern observed in the pooled estimation.

in politics' is 1.7 percentage points for those not providing care and 3.1 amongst those who do provide care.

If marital status is taken as the point of reference for the analyses, the evidence points to stable partnerships as something to explore further. Those who have never been married or in a stable union show the lowest gender gaps across all three forms of political interest.

In terms of their interest in general politics, married and divorced respondents are those least likely to be interested. For instance, the gap amongst married (or in a stable partnership) and caring respondents who provide support for others in the 'not caring at all about politics' outcome is seven percentage points. A similar score is obtained from divorced or widowed respondents.

Turning to local politics, estimates show that differences are smaller. In fact, they are so small that they overlap with the reference line drawn at zero in the Y axis. This means that differences observed are not statistically significant. In other words, single men and women are not different from one another in terms of their declared interest in politics. Widowers and divorced respondents show very small differences, which are almost non-significant, and errors show that there are probably a small number of respondents in these categories. Lastly, married respondents do display a gender gap, but the size is smaller than that seen in the preceding and following graphs. The disadvantage is around three percentage points in every outcome: increasing the likelihood for the negative responses (not at all, not very interested) and decreasing the likelihood of positive responses (quite, very interested).

The last graph in figure 2.4 reports the results of the predicted gender gap in political interest. The results, although slightly adjusted, reproduce the trends described when asking about politics in general. Indeed, single men and women show the smallest

differences across the four outcomes of the dependent variable. Estimators for divorced or widowed respondents are those with the largest error intervals but they also score the highest, suggesting that these results should be examined with caution. Specifically, amongst divorcees and widowers declaring no interest at all, the gender gap is the largest when they declare not to be caring for others. Amongst this same not-caring divorcees and widowers, the gap in the likelihood of being quite interested in politics decreases eight percentage points. Amongst those who are married and not caring, the greatest differences are found in the likelihood of respondents declaring not being interested at all (women have an increased likelihood) and very interested (women have a lower likelihood). The first interpretation of these results is that the large number of variables, and the relationship between one another make it quite hard to interpret. However, some conclusions can be made. The results show a varying but persistent gender gap across the different forms of political interest. Women are more likely to rate their political interest negatively, by declaring themselves to have no or little interest. The only exception would be local politics, and even there, small differences amongst married women persist. Thus, the civil status of an individual, broadly understood, seems to have some association with his or her political orientations. In contrast, the relationship between the proxy for caring values seem to have some influence amongst respondents but it is not clear that this influence is different for men and women.

At the beginning of this section it was mentioned that the results had been reproduced individually for each country to check their robustness and identify possible outliers. One of the unexplored avenues of the argument that I proposed is whether the institutional setting within which individuals lived has an impact on the differences in interest observed, in line with existing research on power-sharing institutions, and how they foster more egalitarian participation (Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012). Future research with

updated evidence from a larger number of countries could test whether countries that are more decentralized manage to induce a greater equality of interest amongst their citizens.

2.6 Concluding remarks

Throughout this study I have sought to describe how women's lower levels of declared political interest masked a more complex story. The gap has been identified in the literature; however, the explanatory mechanism behind it remains under-researched. Progress in education, equality, and incorporation into the labor market in recent decades has not contributed to the disappearance of this gap, as expected. This research has inquired into whether, despite changes in recent decades, politics still needs to be feminized.

The literature on the gender gap seems to find a mismatch between existing gender role stereotypes and stereotypes regarding what it takes to comprehensively understand politics (Stolle and Gidengil 2010). Even though women are joining the labor market in increasing numbers, they still put their private life first. In a similar vein, they are expected to put care and cooperation before competitiveness and aggressiveness. These gendered stereotypes are fed to men and women through two main mechanisms, as was mentioned in the theoretical framework: their socioeconomic situation and socialization processes. Women may find themselves without the skills to deal with politics; or they learn social norms that encourage them to drift away from politics. The evidence does not allow us to disentangle the effects of these two processes, which may also be operating in a loop. In any case, the outcome is that women who are married or in a stable partnership, and care for those around them, are those with the lowest likelihoods of being politically interested.

Much has been done in recent decades to make politics more appealing to women, from the introduction of quotas to public agendas that relate more closely to family life and reproductive health issues. However, these issues remain the domain of women and female politicians. Even if they are being discussed in the political arena, they do not seem to truly belong in politics. Only local politics seem to show very slight differences between men and women. The sphere where the 'closest social issues' are discussed, seems to be the arena that is most appealing to women.

The cross-sectional structure of this dataset does not allow for a meaningful interpretation of how transitions from being single to married affect individuals. Or how other events of the transition to adulthood such as having the first child shape this association. An increase in the availability of comparable panel data studies could help fill this gap in the literature. Political interest remains one of the strongest predictors of political involvement and different forms of political engagement. Better understanding of the hindrances faced by a good half of the world's population may provide strong clues about how gender equality may be improved and perhaps, one day, to allow every citizen's voice to be heard.

CHAPTER 3. TRACING THE GENDER GAP IN POLITICAL INTEREST OVER THE LIFESPAN: A PANEL ANALYSIS[7]

3.1 Introduction

Historically, politics has been a male-dominated sphere from which women have been largely excluded. This has only started to change in recent decades. Over the past forty years, the degree of gender equality in political power and resources in industrialized democracies have increased (Bericat and Sánchez Bermejo 2016; Paxton and Hughes 2014). However, women still lag behind men when it comes to political interest (Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012; Paxton, Kunovich, and Hughes 2007; Tolleson Rinehart 1992; Quaranta and Dotti Sani 2018; Karp and Banducci 2008). This represents a clear disadvantage for women in their capacity to voice their political needs, wants and views, and to influence the political decision-making process. Gender differences in political interest are a key dimension of political under-representation both historically and currently, and therefore merits the attention of scholars.

Although recent efforts have attempted to disentangle the origins of political interest (Neundorf, Smets, and García-Albacete 2013; Prior 2010; Russo and Stattin 2016), the causes of the persistent gender gap in this political attitude remain a puzzling question in the literature on public opinion. Traditional accounts of gender differences in political interest point to gendered socialization processes (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001),

---

which endorse a timid political role for women. However, gender differences in political engagement are also particularly persistent when rooted in gender roles and social norms such as those indicating who should be responsible for care and domestic chores in the household. In spite of the aforementioned changes and more egalitarian views of society, women still tend to be more committed than men to family life, leaving them with much less time available to dedicate to public matters than their male counterparts (Dotti Sani 2014; Sayer 2005). Finally, and due to the same gendered societal process, women, on average, tend to have less socioeconomic and cognitive resources. These resources are necessary to understand and become interested in politics, which, in turn, explains their lower levels of political engagement compared to men (Tolleson Rinehart 1992; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001).

Our study seeks to contribute to the literature on the gender gap in political interest by way of a major improvement, namely the use of panel data, the British Household Panel Survey (University of Essex 2018), to trace the gap between women and men. When do gender differences in declared political interest become evident? Are these differences constant or do they change over the life span? While the majority of prior studies (Fraile and Gomez 2017; Quaranta and Dotti Sani 2018; Karp and Banducci 2008; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012) have tested the aforementioned accounts of the existence of the gender gap in political interest by way of cross sectional evidence, we engage in a dynamic analysis, tracing the declared political interest of men and women over almost two decades; something that to the best of our knowledge has been absent to date in the literature. If the static forces of socialization are promoting higher levels of political engagement for men than for women, we need to identify, first, relevant gender differences at an early age, and then, to track those differences over time.

Our findings show that the gender gap in political interest is evident quite early in the life of citizens (they are already clearly present at 15 years old, when the earliest observations were collected). The gap increases during the transition to adulthood, even after controlling for citizens' level of education. Moreover, we show that the increase in political interest associated with the first years of transition to adulthood (largely illustrated by preceding studies) is of a higher magnitude for men than for women, which contributes to the amplification of existing gender differences. Finally, we show that the association between citizens' education level and their own political interest is greater for men than for women.

These findings suggest three main conclusions. First, given that differences are present at age 15, childhood may be a crucial phase and childhood needs further research to be conducted (except for Van Deth et. al, 2011 and Goetzmann, 2017). Children learn to anticipate and seek approval for their conduct, setting the grounds for what will become their political orientations (Bussey and Bandura, 1999). The second conclusion is directly derived from the first and suggests that gendered socialization processes are rooted in the past and difficult to change. This holds true even in democracies where 'gender-friendly policies' have been promoted and implemented, and prominent female political figures (such as Margaret Thatcher, Theresa May, or Nicola Sturgeon amongst others) have received and continue to receive considerable attention from the mass media. Finally, our findings also indicate that education increases women's awareness of men's dominance in politics. This recognition might boost women's impervious approach towards politics, a domain where they still feel unwelcomed. We discuss the implications of these findings for future research in the last section.

3.2 Sex Role Socialization and Political Engagement

Previous scholars have widely documented the existence of a substantive gender gap in political interest both in Europe and across the world (Fraile and Gomez 2017; Paxton and Hughes 2014; Quaranta and Dotti Sani 2018; Karp and Banducci 2008; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012). These differences in the political realm have traditionally been attributed to gendered socialization processes. During this period, women are - often through subtle or indirect mechanisms - generally discouraged from involvement in political action, particularly when it is at the expense of their private life. While gender equality in political power and resources has grown in the past 50 years, this ongoing form of political socialization still hinders gender equality in political engagement.

Gender and the social norms attached to it are learnt from early childhood through the main socialization agents: family, school, friends, and the mass media. Scholars have shown that children adopt gender roles from an early age (Martin and Ruble 2004; McIntyre and Edwards 2009; West and Zimmerman 1987). (Martin & Ruble, 2004; McIntyre & Edwards, 2009). Furthermore, they are encouraged to embrace gender stereotype consistency, receiving disapproval and social penalties when their behavior crosses socially constructed gender boundaries (Bussey, 2011). The prescriptive nature of stereotypes about men and women leads to the development of interest in different topics by girls and boys to prove their own femininity or masculinity. For example, prior studies have demonstrated that boys and girls of 13 declare themselves already interested in different topics: while girls tend to prioritize social or environmental issues, boys give more importance to foreign policy and war (Fridkin & Kenney, 2007; Lynn et al, 2001).

Girls, in contrast, are encouraged to develop a sense of empathy and interconnectivity with other people (Gilligan 1982), while boys focus on feelings of self-interest,

independence and assertiveness (Messner 2007; Ridgeway 2011). Additionally, diverse expectations develop about what should be the role of men and women in society in general, and in politics in particular (Jennings 1983). As they grow older, these values and norms are reinforced through schooling, media and cultural products (Eagly et. al, 2004). This learning also pervades expectations regarding social roles in general, and in politics in particular (Jennings, 1983). Accordingly, men tend to be identified with leadership, autonomy and public roles, whereas women are socialized towards more passive, private and compassionate activities and positions (Alwin et. al, 1991). These implicit social norms are enduring and resistant to later stimulus, as shown in the studies of the gender gap in political ambition by Fox and Lawless (2014).

Another direct consequence of the transmission of gender roles is that men and women grow up with different prejudices and expectations of the skills they are best suited for (Bian et al. 2017). Recent research has shown that men and women have diverse conceptions about what politics is and the topics they find more appealing (Campbell and Winters 2008; Fitzgerald 2013). Moreover, while women appear disinterested in politics in the abstract, they do show interest in specific political issues such as, for instance, local politics, civic rights, and welfare state policies (Coffé 2013; Norris 2000). These alternative policy areas are considered to be more directly relevant to women than men (Fitzgerald 2013; Campbell and Winters 2008; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001). In contrast to national politics - that appears to be relatively distant from citizens' lives - local politics often deals with issues that are closer to people's everyday lives (Stokes 2005). Women's specialization in the private sphere (as wives, mothers, and daughters) might also contribute to explaining their greater interest in community-oriented and local issues. In short, the issues and priorities that mobilize and interest women appear to be different to those of men.

The socialization process in gender roles is not only limited to the political dimension, but also to other realms of life such as the social division of labor between men and women. It is true to say that the gender dynamics of employment have notably progressed during the last decades. For example, between 1980 and 2008, the gender gap in participation in the labor market has decreased by 6 percent according to the World Bank (2012, 10). Households too have changed with the decline of the 'breadwinner model' (Ferguson 2013). Nevertheless, the sexual division of labor endures. In fact, in Europe over 60 percent of working women are employed in female-dominated occupations (such as teaching, nursing, or childcare), while 60 percent of working men are employed in male-dominated occupations like engineering or construction (Roseberry and Roos 2014, 16).

Research has shown that gender egalitarian values receive more support amongst individuals with higher levels of education and income, particularly amongst women (Bauer, 2015; Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004). Turning to couples, younger partnerships seem to favor more gender egalitarian role distributions. However, traditional divisions remain largely unchanged or even intensify when the first child is born. Socially, women are expected to favor engagement at home over their professional careers, while men do the opposite. In many contemporary societies, women are inherently located in the private sphere (Paxton & Hughes, 2014), since their responsibilities at home have traditionally been central to the definition of their appropriate role. Consequently, the belief that family is the 'special sphere' of women and that they are innately better equipped to provide care for elders, raise children, and should be responsible for it, is still a widespread and dominant view, even among mothers (Bianchi et. al, 2006).

Recent evidence shows that in all world regions, women remain largely responsible for care and housework. For example, data from the European Institute for Gender Equality

(EIGE) shows that up to 38 percent of women provide care while only 24 percent of men do so. The figure is even more gender unbalanced for housework activities (78.7 percent of women versus 33.7 percent of men)[8]. This pattern persists even among women with a full time job, and is often further accentuated after marriage and childbearing (Baxter et al. 2015; World Bank 2012; Sayer 2005). As a consequence, the formation of a family (and especially parenthood) reinforces traditional gender roles and behavior (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006; Baxter et al. 2015).

The varying amounts of time that men and women allocate to care and household work constitutes one factor that lowers women's interest and engagement in politics in comparison to men: women simply have less time available to be involved in and informed about politics (Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997).

A final consequence of the aforementioned gendered socialization processes relates to the resources (both material and cognitive) needed to get involved in politics. Despite a notable increase in women's level of educational attainment in recent decades, women still have fewer opportunities to take on full time jobs and, when they do, they often face a double work burden (Phillips 1991). Consequently, the struggle to balance personal and professional responsibilities particularly affects women. Thus, working women tend to prioritize their roles and identities as mothers over those as workers (Baxter et al. 2015; Katz-Wise, Priess, and Hyde 2010), at the expense of their careers. In contrast, following parenthood, men lessen their dedication to household work and increase their working hours to maximize economic rewards (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001). Scholars have shown that marriage and especially parenthood is detrimental to European women's social networking and political

---

[8] See http://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index.

69

engagement, but not that of men (García-Albacete 2014; Quaranta and Dotti Sani 2018; Quaranta 2016). As a result, women are less likely than men to benefit from the economic and cognitive resources provided by the working environment, which enhance political learning and political engagement (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001).

A last strand of literature links the gender differences in the taste for politics to the wide disparity in the representation of men and women among visible political elites. The lesser presence of prominent female politicians contributes to transmission of the implicit message that 'politics is not for them'. In short, politics has historically been and remains identified as a "*male affair*" because it is men who rule (Fox & Lawless, 2014). Empirical evidence shows that men and women's perceptions about how they fit into the political sphere are intrinsically different, with women showing lower self-perceptions of their abilities. However, a previous study using a survey experiment shows that providing participants positive feedback about their performance on a test of political knowledge substantially increases women's declared interest in the political realm so that the gender gap vanishes (Preece, 2016). The conclusion of this study is that, to close the gender gap, women need to change the way they perceive themselves in their engagement with politics.

In sum, enduring gender differences in political interest appear to be the consequence of deeply entrenched gender roles and social norms dictating what is appropriate or typical for women and men to do, and what is expected from them both in the private and in the public sphere of life. In terms of political engagement, this translates into male dominance in the political arena being transmitted and reproduced across generations.

This discussion leads to two hypotheses related both to socialization and life-cycle processes, which are best tested using panel data. The first hypothesis suggests the

existence of relevant differences in the likelihood of women and men being politically interested from a very young age, because of gendered socialization processes (H1). The second hypothesis suggests that the size of the gender gap increases over the lifespan but the rate at which this happens reduces as attitudes crystallize after the transition to adulthood (H2). In the next section we introduce the case under study and the data used to test these two hypotheses.

3.3 Method

Data and Case Study

Household panels have been largely underexploited by political scientists given the predominance of sociological information they contain; with notable exceptions, such as Prior (2010) or Voorpostel and Coffe (2012). However, there are a limited number of available panel surveys containing information about respondents' interest in politics over their life span; to the best of our knowledge: Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the UK and the US. Of all these five surveys, the BHPS (University of Essex 2018) covers one of the longest periods of time (almost two decades).

The UK can be considered an "average case" within the Western European context with respect to the topic under analysis: the evolution of the gender gap across the life span. Regarding aggregate levels of declared political interest, Prior (2010) traced the evolution of this political orientation through the life cycle with panel data from Germany, Switzerland, and the UK His findings show equivalent patterns in all countries studied.

Figure 3.1. The size of the gender gap on average levels of declared political interest 2002. EU-15 countries.
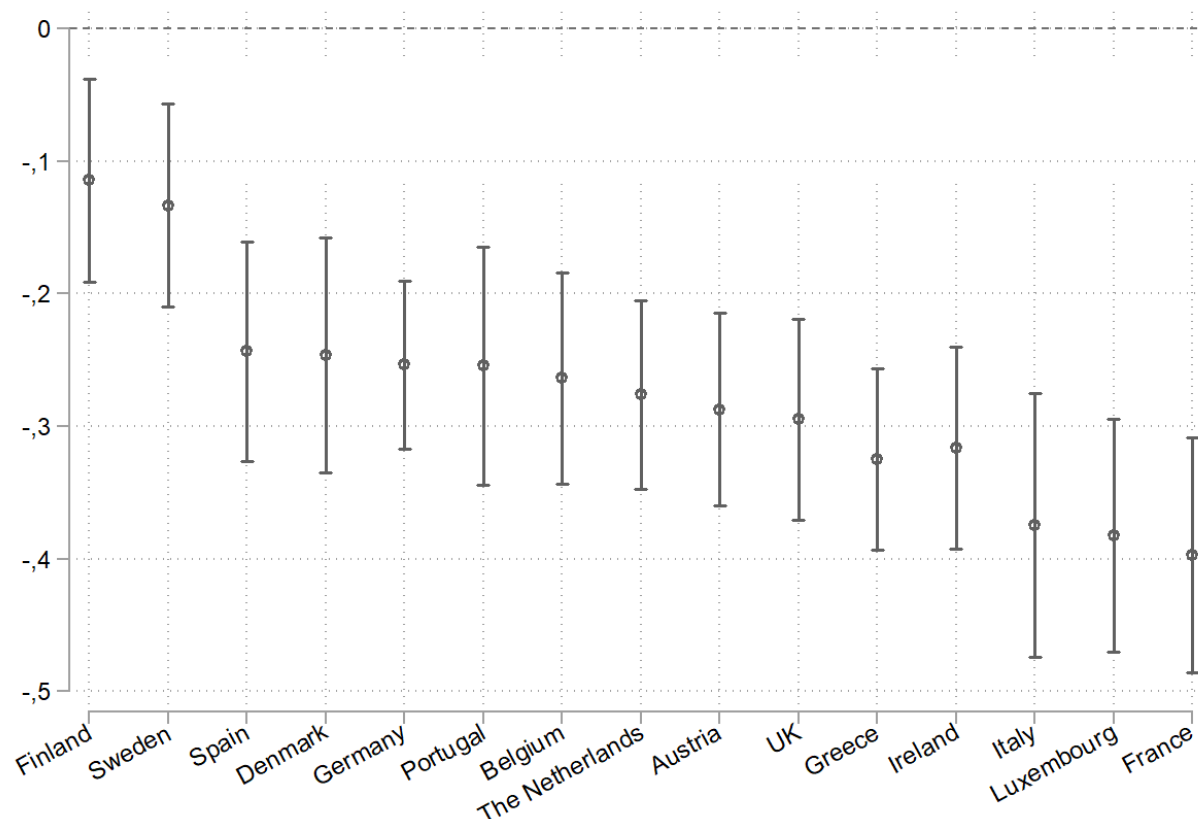
Note: The graph shows the differences between men and women on average levels of declared political interest with confidence intervals around each estimation point of 95%. Spikes overlapping the reference line at value = 0 indicate that differences are not statistically significant. The political interest variable takes values 1 ("not interested") to 4 ("very interested"). The scores for men and women can be found in table B1 in the annex.
Source: European Social Survey, wave 1 (2002).

The first wave of the European Social Survey provides evidence in favor of this characterization of the UK as an average case[9]. Figure 3.1 shows the size of the gender gap in the average levels of declared political interest in 15 Western European countries. All countries show statistically significant (different from zero) gender differences; even in Finland and Sweden, where differences are of a small size. Figure 3.1 shows that the UK presents a substantive gender gap, of around 0.3, which is similar in magnitude to

---

[9] We provide evidence from the first wave of the European Social Survey (ESS) because it was fielded between September 2002 and February 2003, exactly in the middle of the period covered by the BHPS. The last two waves of ESS-seven and eight- confirm the same finding (see also the evidence portrayed in Fraile and Gómez 2017).

other countries.[10] This implies about eight per cent of the total variation in political interest (that goes from 1 to 4).

The comparative study by Fraile and Gomez (2017) about the gender gap in political interest in Europe shows that the size of such a gap is smaller in countries that present the highest levels of gender equality. They measure gender equality using the Gender Equality Index (GEI), a comprehensive assessment of gender equality on a variety of social and political dimensions. Scores range from 1 for absolute gender inequality to 100 for full gender equality. The GEI index assessment in 2017 shows that the British score is somewhat higher than the European average: the average Euro-28 score is 66.2 against the UK's 71.5 (see: http://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index). In short, compared to other European democracies, the country under analysis is relatively well positioned regarding its support for gender equality.

Turning to the evidence used here, the BHPS offers one of the longest panel studies available, fielded between 1991 and 2009.[11] The sample includes some 5,500 households and about 10,300 respondents, who were followed over time. The Survey covers a broadly representative sample of the UK, tracked over a period of almost 20 years (Freed Taylor et al. 2010, A2-2). The first wave interviewed some 8,200 respondents, which became the core BHPS sample. However, given that this is a household survey it has added respondents over time to comprehensively track the life changes of the sample members.

---

[10] Table B1 in Appendix B shows the average declared levels of political interest for women and men across countries.

[11] In 2009, the study was stopped and substituted by the Understanding Society Study. This new study has included a fresh sample and a revision of the sampling criteria, amongst other novelties. For further details see the Understanding Society User Guide (https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/documentation/mainstage).

For instance, if one of the original respondents divorced or re-married, the new partner became a member of the sample for as long as the couple remained together.

Variables and Estimations

To trace the gender differences in political interest over time we employ the usual question included in conventional surveys: "How interested would you say you are in politics? Would you say you are [the interviewer is asked to read the response categories out loud] (1) very interested, (2) fairly interested, (3) not very interested or (4) not at all interested?" All the variables used in these analyses are described in table B2 of appendix B.

Given that the variable only includes four response categories, they have been dichotomized to maximize statistical efficiency in the panel estimations. The variable used takes the value zero for those responding 'not at all' or 'not very interested' in politics, and one for those declaring themselves to be 'fairly interested' and 'very interested' in politics. Respondents that chose not to answer or did not know how interested they were in politics are not included in the analyses given that they represent less than 1 percent of the sample and they are evenly distributed between men and women.

To confirm the robustness of our results we have estimated two additional equation specifications. First, we have replicated the same estimations with the original four-category variable using a linear model (GLS estimations, see table B3 and figures B1 for age and B2 for education, each of them available in appendix B). Second, there is a break in the dataset of four years during which the political interest question was not administered (between 1997 and 2000; both years included). The panel estimation controls for this gap. However, we replicated the estimation for the series of waves before

and after the break. This divided the observations into two subsamples: 1991-1996 and 2001-2008. Results are reported in table B4 and figures B3 for age and B4 for education in appendix B, and they are also consistent with the findings reported here.

Our argument implies that political interest during the lifespan of men and women develops differently. To test this empirically with a dynamic approach, our main variables are age and gender. The former, accounts for the respondents' age at each wave of the survey. The latter is a dichotomous variable where 1 stands for women and 0 for men.

Finally, we control for the level of education of the respondents. This is measured through an ordinal variable with four categories: (i) basic (which constitutes the reference category for the estimations), (ii) advanced secondary and basic vocational training, (iii) advanced vocational training, and (iv) university degree. Education constitutes one of the main antecedents of citizens' declared interest in politics (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Van Deth and Elff 2004; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). In addition, we want to control for the fact that during the time period under study (1991-2009), on average, older women still presented lower levels of educational attainment than men. Our sample shows that amongst those born in the 1910s, almost 7 percent of the men went to university, while less than 2 percent of women did. Amongst those born in the 1940s, the percentage increases to 11 percent for men and almost 8 percent for women. Finally, for those born in the 1970s the trend has turned, showing that more women (19 percent) than men (17 percent) went to university.

Given the dichotomous nature of our dependent variable we have performed binomial logit panel regression. This estimation technique considers that observations are dependent on one another because they come from the same individual across time, thus producing a robust estimate of the error terms. We have followed a two-step strategy in

our analysis. First, we have estimated a binomial panel logit with random effects, given the static character of our main independent variable: gender, which is constant across waves. However, to take full advantage of the dynamic character of the evidence analyzed here, we have also estimated a binomial panel logit with fixed effects for men and women separately to account for the intra-individual (within person) variation over time. This second strategy has the main inconvenience of dropping an important number of observations, therefore losing statistical efficiency in our estimations. Fixed-effect estimators only consider those observations where there is variation in the value of declared political interest. This implies that only individuals who have become interested or have lost interest at least once in the time span are included in the analysis. Those who never changed, and according to Prior (2010) these represent the majority, are dropped from the analyses. Given that fixed effects cannot account for a time-invariant variable, such as gender, the sample has been split. Accordingly, we estimate one equation for women, and another for men.

3.4 Findings

Our estimations seek to identify when the gender gap appears, and the extent to which the size of this gap changes through the life cycle. To put it in question form: is the gender gap in political interest the product of the transmission of gendered expectations about the role of men and women in society? Or does the gender gap appear later on in the lives of citizens when they have assumed the roles of adults, and women become more engaged in caring while men focus on providing? (Baxter et al. 2015; Knudsen and Wærness 2008).

The results of our first set of random-effect panel estimations are summarized in table 3.1. Equation 1 establishes the point of departure by providing a baseline model including gender, age, and education. Equation 2 adds to the baseline model an interaction term of gender and age to properly test the extent to which the size of the gender gap increases because the association of age and political interest is positive but of a lower magnitude for women than for men. Finally, Equation 3 specifies an interaction term of gender and education. Scholars have considered education to be one of the main antecedents of citizens' declared interest in politics (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Van Deth and Elff 2004; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Since the BHPS includes respondents of different generations, we need to control for the magnitude of the association between education and political interest being the same for both women and men across the lifespan.

Table 3.1 shows a sizeable gender gap in political interest in favor of men (see the negative coefficient corresponding to the variable 'being a woman', that is statistically different from zero). Additionally, it suggests that the size of the positive association of age and political interest is slightly diverse for men and women (see the coefficient corresponding to the interaction term of female and age in the second equation). Finally, equation 3 shows that the positive association of education and political interest is of a lower magnitude for women than for men.

Table 3.1. Gender gap in political interest: binomial logit panel regression (random effects).

	Equation 1	Equation 2	Equation 3
Education (ref. cat.: Basic)			
Advanced secondary & basic vocational training	0,755***	0,762***	0,765***
	(0,0521)	(0,0521)	(0,0750)
Advanced vocational training	1,373***	1,382***	1,499***
	(0,0514)	(0,0515)	(0,0734)
University	2,406***	2,416***	2,728***
	(0,0660)	(0,0661)	(0,0965)
Being a woman	-1,302***	-1,533***	-1,155***
	(0,0430)	(0,0950)	(0,0767)
Age	0,0232***	0,0204***	0,0230***
	(0,00102)	(0,00146)	(0,00102)
Woman * Age		0,00533**	
		(0,00195)	
Education * Gender			
Advanced secondary & basic vocational training # Woman			-0,0187
			(0,101)
Advanced vocational training # Woman			-0,247*
			(0,0998)
University # Woman			-0,605***
			(0,131)
Constant	-1,969***	-1,853***	-2,036***
	(0,0693)	(0,0812)	(0,0763)
lnsig2u	2,145***	2,143***	2,146***
	(0,0197)	(0,0197)	(0,0197)
sigma u	2,92	2,92	2,92
Rho	0,72	0,72	0,72
Observations	144399	144399	144399
Groups	27958	27958	27958

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Empty cells are not reported. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001
Source: Data from the BHPS.

We further summarize our findings with a graphic representation of the results. Figure 3.2 shows the predicted probability of declaring interest in politics for men and women over a life time. These estimates are calculated based on the second equation reported in Table 3.1.

Figure 3.2. Predicted probability of declaring being interested in politics for men and women by age 1991-2008.
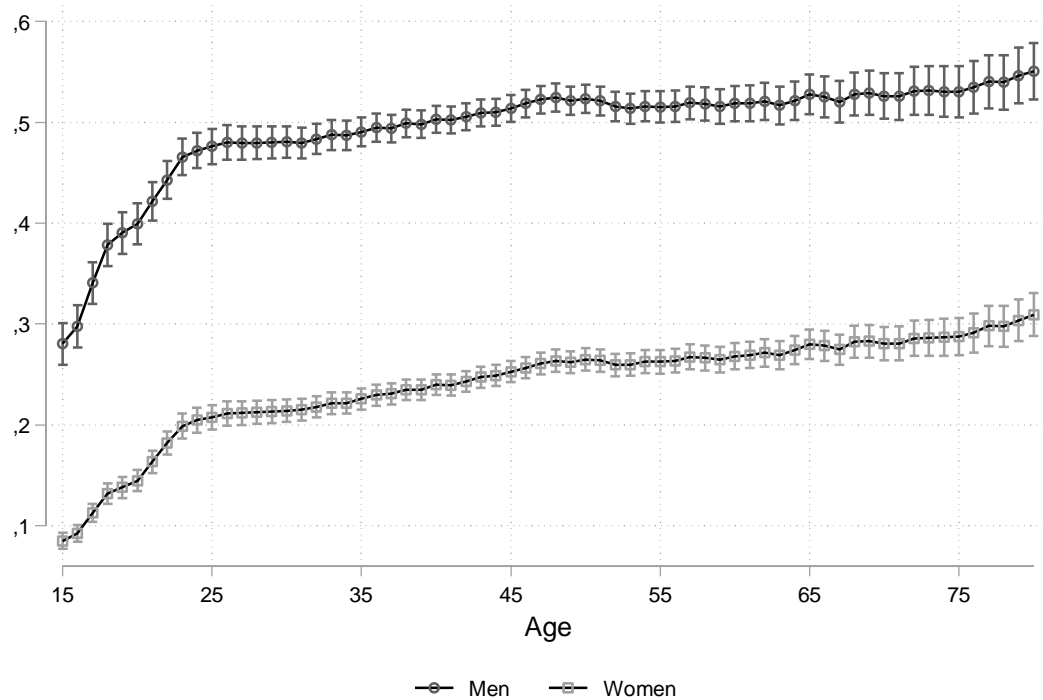
Figure 3.2 provides evidence of the existence of a substantive gender gap in political interest from age 15 (the first estimation point corresponds to those aged 15). Despite their indirect exposure to the adult world and gender stereotypes, adolescent girls appear to be already less interested in politics than their male counterparts. The difference is in the order of 20 percentage points for their probability of being politically interested. This evidence provides support for the socialization hypothesis (H1). It seems likely that if differences emerge this early, it might be due to the way in which socialization occurs. However, this evidence is insufficient to reveal the exact mechanisms through which gendered socialization processes develop different tastes in politics between girls and boys. Ideally, evidence should track the political interest of small children and the context in which they grow up. However, this kind of data is very rare. The sole exception, to the best of our knowledge, are the studies of Van Deth, Abendschön and Vollmar (2011) and

Abendschön and Tausendpfund (2017). They show that small children, at the age of entering primary school (6-7 years old), have already developed coherent and enduring political orientations. Not only this, but the gender gap in political awareness and knowledge is already present at that early age.

Earlier studies have almost exclusively focused on adolescence as the critical phase where the formation of political attitudes takes place. Our findings suggest that early childhood also merits the attention of scholars. If the gender gap in political interest is already present at the age of 15, childhood might be a crucial phase for the development of the gender gap in political attitudes and orientations.

Regarding the evolution of declared interest in politics across the life cycle, Figure 3.2 illustrates that there is a similar trend for both men and women. During the early years, the likelihood of being interested in politics tends to increase until the second half of their twenties. The literature identifies these years as a formative period in which many 'firsts' occur, forming the upcoming adulthood of individuals (García-Albacete 2014; Dinas 2014). During these years, citizens search for their first job, leave the parental home, attend university, move in with a partner and/or vote for the first time. Young people are, at this time, crystallizing the attitudes that they will hold in a more or less stable way for the rest of their lives. Specifically, figure 3.2 shows that the trend stabilizes following the late twenties and remains unchanged over the following decades, as prior studies have shown (Neundorf, Smets, and Garcia-Albacete 2013; Prior 2010).

Regarding the size of the gender gap, Figure 3.2 shows that at age 15, the gender gap in the probability of being interested in politics is about 20 percentage points. By the time the gendered roles of adulthood are acquired, the gender differences increase to up to 30 percentage points. After this period of growth, the size of the gender gap stabilizes at its

largest difference and remains so in the following decades. From that moment onwards, and compared to men, women remain at some 30 percentage points less interested in politics. While gendered socialization processes might be at the heart of the existence of a gender gap in political interest at the age of 15 (as H1 suggests), additional disadvantages appear to accumulate for women during the process of reaching early adulthood, increasing the size of the aforementioned gender differences regarding political involvement (as H2 states) by a further 10 percentage points.

Since the specification of the equations included very few variables, additional explanations that could account for the differences observed were sought. One of them was the role that education was played. Although we specified it as a control, it can be observed that the association between education and political awareness is of a smaller magnitude for women than for men. Figure 3.3 illustrates this last point.

Figure 3.3. Predicted probability of declaring being interested in politics for men and women by educational attainment. 1991-2008.
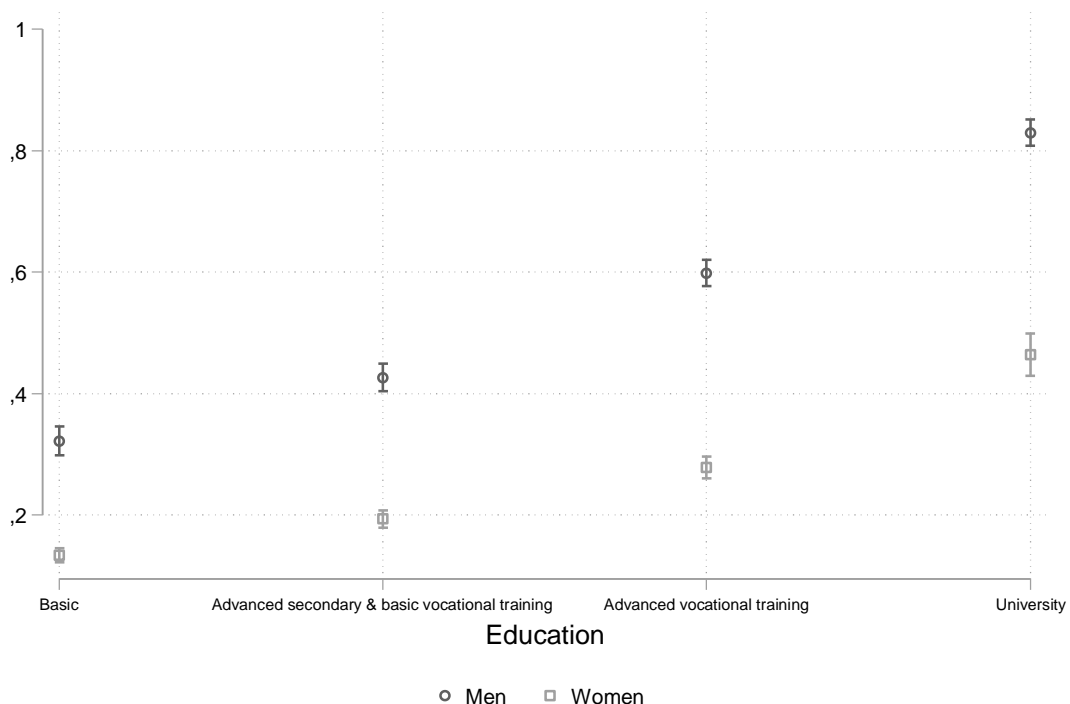
Note: Estimations based on Equation 3 in Table 3.1.
Source: Own elaboration based on the BHPS Data

Figure 3.3 shows that, on average, the chances of declaring an interest in politics increase with the level of education, confirming findings from previous studies (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Van Deth and Elff 2004; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Initially, we expected the association of education and political interest to be of a similar size for men and women. However, figure 3.3 shows that this association is of a different size for men and women. On average men with higher levels of educational attainment experience an increase in the likelihood of being politically interested that is larger than that of women with similar achievements. Men with basic education have about 32 percentage points of likelihood of being politically interested, while women in the same situation have only about 13 percentage points. Turning to those with the highest educational attainment, having attended university, men score about 83 percentage points, while women score some 46 percentage points. This implies a substantial gender gap (of around 37 percentage points), especially for those who are highly educated.

These results suggest that the potential increase in political interest that education fosters is different for men and women. In line with existing research (Ondercin and Jones-White 2011; Preece 2016), women appear to need more resources than men to feel adequately equipped to understand politics and be interested by it. There are two potential explanations for these findings. On the one hand, and in line with the results shown by Dow (2009), perhaps young men and women build their interests differently, and men benefit from the skills gained at school to a greater extent than women. Alternatively, education could help women to gain consciousness about the extent of male dominance in the political realm. This awareness might contribute to enhancing women's unreceptive attitude towards politics. a space where they still feel unwelcome.

As previously indicated, we have also estimated a binomial panel logit with fixed effects for men and women separately to account for the intra-individual (within person) variability across time in the most rigorous way. Findings from this second estimation are summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Gender gap in political interest: binomial logit panel regression (fixed effects) for men and women separately.

	Men	Women
Age	-0.0267***	-0.0399***
	(0.00275)	(0.00255)
Education (ref. cat.: Basic)		
Advanced secondary & basic vocational training	0.516***	0.362**
	(0.160)	(0.162)
Advanced vocational training	0.724***	0.578***
	(0.156)	(0.163)
University	1.340***	0.874***
	(0.192)	(0.186)
Observations	40,838	46,395
Number of pid	4,852	5,268

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Empty cells are not reported. * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$
Source: Data from the BHPS.

It is important to note that here we analyze the change in the value of political interest (from 0 to 1 or vice versa) as a function of both education and age, and for men and for women separately. Two main findings emerge from Table 3.2. First, on average, as individuals grow older, the probability of becoming interested decreases (as shown by the negative coefficient of age) and increases with their education level (as suggested by the positive coefficient corresponding to the categories of education)[12]. Again, the second finding emerging is that the size of these associations appears to be different for men and women. The negative association of age and the probability of becoming interested in politics is of a slightly higher magnitude for women than for men. Women's likelihood

---

[12] Coefficients are calculated relative to the lowest level of educational attainment, those with basic education.

of declaring interest is not only lower, but it also decreases at a higher rate than men's as respondents grow older. On the other hand, regarding education, the magnitude of the effect is greater for men than for women, as the coefficients in table 3.2 suggest.

To illustrate these results, figures 3.4 and 3.5 plot the predicted probabilities of becoming interested in politics by age and education respectively, according to the estimations reported in table 3.2. Both figures show how likely it is for respondents to become politically interested over age (figure 3.4) and across levels of education (figure 3.5), that is, of changing from 0 to 1 in the value of the dependent variable. Since fixed effects were used in the estimations, the sample was segmented by gender.

Figure 3.4. Predicted probability of becoming politically interested, by age and gender, 1991-2008.
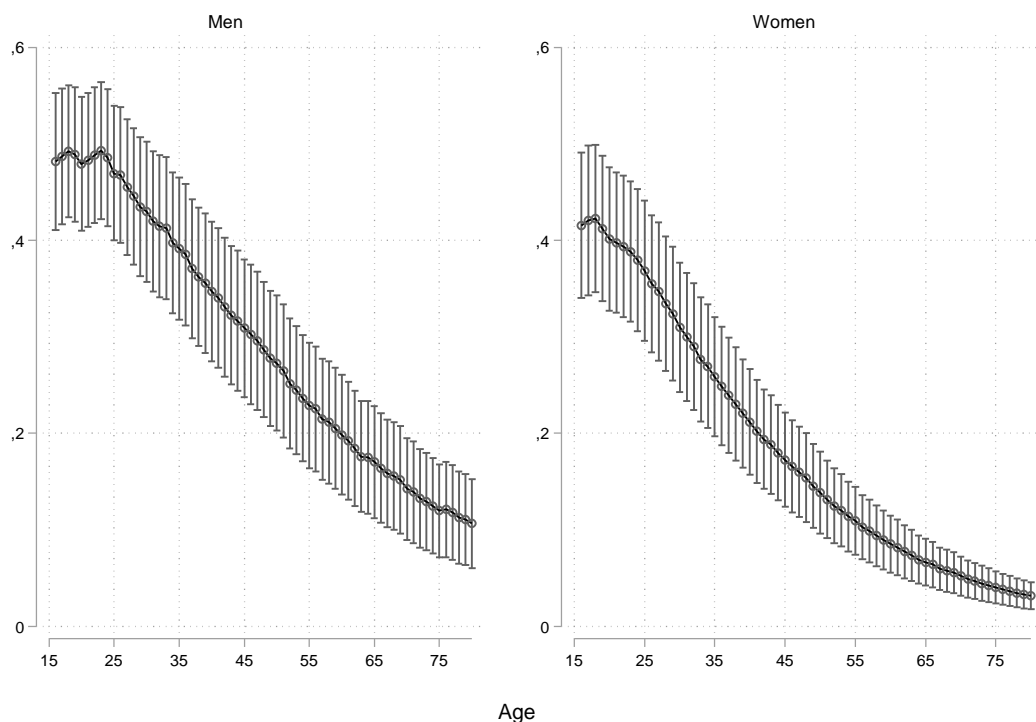
Note: Estimations based on Table 3.2 for each sex.
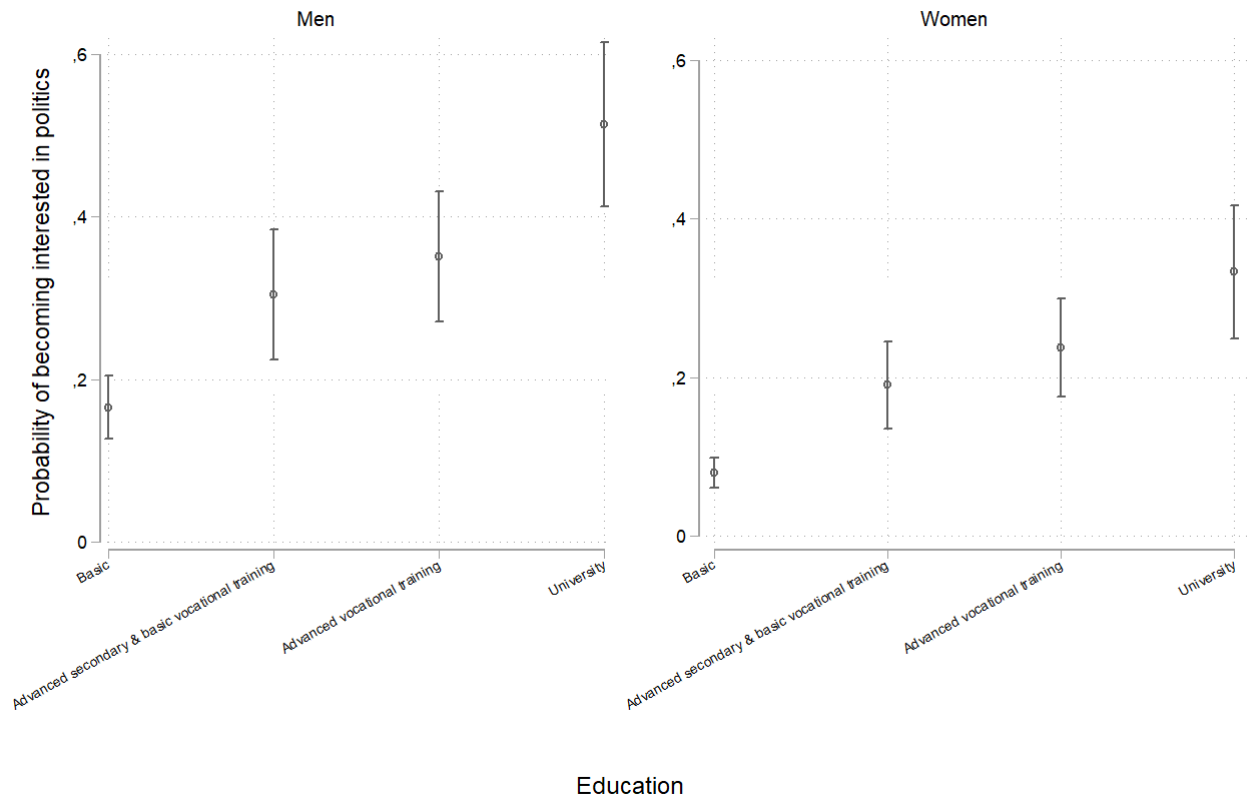*Source*: Own elaboration based on the BHPS Data.

As shown by Prior (2010), declared political interest is relatively stable over the life span. From age 16 to the late 20s, respondents seem to experience minor rises and falls, corresponding to the formative years theory mentioned above. From the late 20s onwards, those who are not already interested will very rarely change their mind and become interested. As figure 3.4 shows, the likelihood of becoming interested in politics clearly decreases as respondents advance in their life course.

In correspondence with what figure 3.2 showed using the random effects estimations, the starting point for women is lower than for men at age 16. Note that the first age point considered is one year later than in the random effect estimations because fixed effects look at changes in the dependent variable, thus, requiring an initial time point that serves as baseline for change to occur. At age 16 women are already less likely than men to become interested in politics: 42 percentage points for women versus 48 for men. This represents a total of six percentage points of difference. Moreover, the negative association between age and the likelihood of becoming interested in politics over the life cycle is slightly greater for women than for men. While the former present (on average) a very small likelihood of becoming interested in politics at the age of 55 (10 percentage points), the latter present a higher probability (of 21 percentage points). This involves a substantive gender difference: 11 percentage points. These additional findings validate those from the random effect estimation, and put early childhood in the spotlight, as a crucial phase for the development of the gender gap in political attitudes and orientations.

Figure 3.5 shows the predicted probability of becoming politically interested for men and women across their level of education. The figure shows very clearly that those attending university are the most likely to become interested, both amongst men (51 percentage points) and women (33 percentage points). Taking the opposite extreme, those with the

lowest levels of education have the lowest probability of becoming interested; 17 percentage points for men and eight for women.

Figure 3.5. Predicted probability of becoming politically interested, by education and gender. 1991-2008.

Consistent with figure 3.3, figure 3.5 shows that the size of the gender gap increases with education. Gender differences amongst the least educated are nine percentage points, while they reach 18 points for the most educated. This finding suggests that (on average) educational attainment does not appear to provide the same set of skills to motivate political involvement for men as for women.

To recapitulate, our two different estimations (random and fixed effects) reveal the same story about the evolution of the gender gap in political interest over the life span. And this gap is closely linked to the development of the attitude itself. During early socialization,

marked by the family and school, individuals start developing their political interest, but, compared to young men, young women are less likely to be interested in politics. Indeed, by that age most of the gender gap has already been established. In the following years, during the transition to adulthood, gender differences continue to grow until the latter half of the 20s. At this point, simultaneous to the crystallization of attitudes, the gender gap stabilizes at its largest magnitude for the following decades. We further discuss these findings and their implications for the study of the gender gap in political involvement in the last section.

3.5 Concluding remarks

In recent decades, considerable effort has been put into making politics less of a "men's game" and more of a game for all. The representation of women's voices has become a core element of equality for Western democracies. In spite of the efforts made, however, women still appear to be more reluctant to be informed and get involved in the political realm. In this regard, political interest is one of the key elements that trigger participation. So long as the gender gap remains, equality will be strongly hindered. This study has traced the gender gap in political interest across the lifespan of respondents.

Using dynamic evidence from the British Household Panel Survey, we contribute to the literature on the gender gap in political interest by showing that when primary socialization is still taking place, at age 15, young men are, on average, 20 percentage points more likely than young women to declare themselves politically interested. We argue that if such substantive differences between young boys and girls appear at such an early stage, the way in which they are being socialized may be driving them. However,

we recognize that this evidence is unable to point to the precise mechanism that produces a gendered socialization process during childhood, and thus, such a critical gender gap. Is it the family of origin, the school where the children go to, their friends, or the media to which they are exposed? Since our evidence draws upon data that is first collected when the respondents are 15 years old, we are unable to properly answer this last question. Previous studies suggest that gender differences in political awareness are already evident from the very early childhood - six/seven years old (van Deth, Abendschön, and Vollmar 2011; Abendschön and Tausendpfund 2017) pointing to the relevance of the family of origin in the transmission of preconceived ideas about what to expect from adult women and men both in public and family life.

Ideally, we would track the political interest of small children (from six onwards); something that has been done very rarely. Earlier studies have almost exclusively focused on adolescence as the critical phase where the formation of political attitudes takes place. Our findings suggest that early childhood might also deserve the attention of scholars. If the gender gap in political interest is already present at the age of 15, then childhood might be a crucial phase for the development of the gender gap in political attitudes and orientations.

These findings are in line with what the scarce literature has found regarding other political orientations. For instance, research focusing on cross sectional evidence of adolescents between 13 and 15 in Europe and in the US point to the existence of gender differences in political knowledge at that early age (see for instance Ferrin, Fraile, & Rubal, 2015; Wolak & McDevitt, 2011). Political ambition also provides complementary evidence to our findings. This literature concludes that women are less likely to consider running for office than their male counterparts; and more likely to perceive a competitive and discouraging electoral environment. They also find evidence of these differences at

an early stage in life (Fox and Lawless 2014). The static forces of socialization seem to create a subtle but powerful hindrance to women's engagement in the political arena. As the life cycle advances, these disadvantages consolidate, crystallizing the gap in political interest.

These conclusions suggest that further work needs to be done in order to deepen policies promoting gender equality; even in the most gender-balanced democracies. To date, policies have focused on tackling situational sources of inequality: such as providing childcare, supporting shared parental leave, fighting sexual harassment or adopting quotas, amongst others. Our evidence shows that the bulk of the gender gap originates earlier in life, during socialization. Resources need to be invested in the difficult task of influencing traditional gendered family values. Families are still remarkably dominant in the transmission to children of gender norms. Acknowledging this, institutions need to combine efforts with schools and families to reduce gender stereotypes. Furthermore, these gender stereotypes are further encouraged by the media, school and even toy marketing (Roseberry and Roos 2014). Truly tackling the gender gap in political involvement demands a revolutionary change in how families raise their children and how they are taught what their public and private responsibilities are. These changes are a challenge and will never succeed without the support of public institutions in advocating for the co-responsibility of men and women regarding family and housework obligations.

We have argued here that the case under study, the UK, can be considered to be an average European country regarding gender differences in political interest; however future research should replicate the analysis provided here to assess the external validity of these results in countries with different welfare regulations. The gathering and analysis of panel-structured data from different contexts would also provide an interesting avenue

for additional insights about which policies can further reduce the gender gap in political

engagement.

CHAPTER 4. GENDER IN THE NEWS: MORE PEBBLES IN WOMEN'S POLITICAL INTEREST?[13]

4.1 Introduction

Over the last months, social movements around the world have highlighted the consequences of gender inequalities and claimed for improvement. Examples are varied: from the "#metoo" movement against sexual harassment, to women striking in Spain on 8th March 2018 or the demonstrations in Argentina supporting a change in abortion regulations. The scholarly literature has not fallen behind either, showing an increased interest in the relationship between gender and politics. Addressing women's representation from different perspectives has become key to understand how to effectively achieve gender equality.

This chapter analyses the role that media play in shaping interest in politics. To what extent does the presence of women in media differently influence men and women's political interest? The literature on media consumption patterns and political interest has found that there is a reciprocal relationship between the two of them (Strömbäck and Shehata 2010; Clark 1983; Moeller and de Vreese 2015). In addition, there is a reinforcement effect: those interested tend to consume more information that, in turn, enhances their interest (Strömbäck and Shehata 2010). The argument of the present study, instead, focuses on the role of the presence of women in the news. Since media contents

---

[13] This chapter has been submitted for review to the *International Journal of Press/Politics*.

are an indicator of existing societal values at a given moment, a larger presence of women in media should signal the existence of a more gender egalitarian society. A more inclusive sphere should, in turn, be better suited to foster women's political interest, contributing to a reduction of the gender gap in political interest documented by previous studies (Fraile and Gomez 2017; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012). The limited presence of women in the news potentially sends other women a subtle but discouraging message: their presence and their concerns are not grave enough to be included in the public discussion. In other words, if women are absent from the news, it is more likely they will be disconnected from them and, consequently, not interested in politics. If women are systematically ignored in the news and unaware of what is happening, how can they be involved?

To empirically test this argument, I combine individual data from waves 2004, 2010 and 2014 of the European Social Survey (ESS Round 2 2004, ESS Round 5 2010, ESS Round 7 2014) and data from waves 2005, 2010 and 2015 of the Global Media Monitoring Project (Gallagher 2005, Gallagher 2010, Macharia et al 2015) on the presence of women in the news across countries. To the best of my knowledge, this dataset has seldom been used by scholars (exceptions are Ross and Carter 2011; Haraldsson and Wängnerud 2018). Given that the field is usually focused on in-depth studies, using a comparative approach (in line with Haraldsson and Wängnerud's (2018) study of political ambition), as the present study does, constitutes a first contribution to this scholarship.

Moreover, scholarship on contextual factors that influence gender gaps in participation and political orientations have focused on the relevance of economic indicators and political institutions to influence the size of the gender gap in political interest. In contrast, this study engages with Pitkin's (1967) theory of symbolic representation, and how it is not only about having women in the public sphere, but also their interests and concerns.

A society's commitment to equality and political inclusiveness is not only about grand declarations, but about the action that symbolically send subtle messages of commitment to promote these values. Empirically, this implies a scrutiny of the impact of contextual factors on the gender gap in political interest. Existing studies have mainly addressed how the extent of this gap is associated with economic indicators and political institutions. This study contributes to this debate by examining whether the presence of women in the news can convey a society's commitment to inclusiveness, thus reducing gender differences in political interest.

Findings show first that women are largely absent as news subjects: they represent roughly 30 per cent of total information spread in the news analyzed by the GMMP (average percentages of the presence of women in the news are reported in table C1 in appendix C). Second, the size of the gender gap in political interest decreases when news broadcasts and newspapers include a larger number of women as news subjects. However, this reduction is only observed for hard-news-oriented means and topics, like newspapers or traditionally male-dominated matters like the economy or socio-legal affairs. In contrast, a greater presence of women in entertainment-oriented outlets like television or soft-news-oriented topics like science and arts does not seem to contribute to any kind of reduction of the size of the gender gap in political interest. To put it succinctly, it is not about having more women in the news. It is about where women are included, and how they are portrayed. To improve gender equality, news reports need to speak both to and about men and women.

4.2 Women and the news

The interaction between citizens and politics has been widely studied in the political science literature. However, most of these interactions are indirect. Mass media outlets bring to their home what happens in Parliament, the demands of a demonstration they may or may not have attended, the reactions of politicians to a political initiative, etc. In other words, elections, demonstrations, and other forms of active political participation require resources that individuals may or may not have available. The news can bridge this gap by reporting political events to citizens and making them comprehensible. News reports are effortlessly available to citizens every day, they just need to switch on the television or the radio, buy a newspaper or surf the internet. And in plural media outlets, citizens can choose who to trust to bring them this information. Even for those who are not strongly inclined to consume 'hard' news, there are media contents to suit them, particularly in television and in social media, where political contents and entertainment are often combined (Jensen 1990; Curran et al. 2009; Liu and Eveland 2005). Thus, providing even the least willing citizens with a broad overview of what is happening in the public sphere.

Mass media play a double role in democratic societies: they are both reporters and prescribers (McCombs and Shaw 1972, 1993). According to prior scholarship different media outlets make use of three mechanisms to report and prescribe: agenda-setting, through which salience is awarded to issues; priming, through which media suggest the standards that citizens should use to form their opinions, and framing, through which media influence how an event is presented and understood (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007, 11). By choosing what topics enter the news agenda and how are these topics

presented to the audiences, media shape the way citizens perceive politics and society (Curran et al. 2009; Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder 1982).

Two main theories have explained how citizens' political knowledge and orientations are shaped by media: cultivation theory (Morgan, Shanahan, and Signorielli 2017; Graber 1988) and social cognitive theory (Bandura 2001, 2002). Cultivation theory suggests the metaphor that television broadcast culture ideas in their audiences. Those devoting more time to television viewing would then be more likely to perceive the world as it was shown to them (Graber 1988). However, changes in consumption patterns, such as on-demand platforms, television cable and an increasingly fragmented media environment have contributed to fractioning the message, decreasing its efficacy (Morgan, Shanahan, and Signorielli 2017).

In contrast to cultivation theory, social cognitive theory argues for media as a way of social prompting. On the one hand, mass media can be used to promote acceptable social conducts by positively framing individuals who comply with social norms. On the other hand, it can also act as a channel to promote change in social values and behaviors, particularly those related to gender norms. By identifying some individuals as innovators, and presenting them as social models, unconventional behaviors can be presented to citizens so as to promote new acceptable social conducts or to introduce innovative ways of thinking and behaving (Bandura 2009, 112–15). Showing those innovative behaviors as positive changes can encourage individuals to adopt them and feel efficacious about the benefits of changing their old social habits.

Within these social norms and values that are being transmitted and perpetuated, gender stereotypes are key elements. But there are two caveats to these approaches. For once, in high choice media environments, citizens enjoy many opportunities to be exposed to

95

diverse media contents, not only television but also other forms of mass media (especially digital and social media). Second, individuals' willingness to engage with contents is heterogeneous, and strongly mediated by other elements such as the trust or past ideological agreement with the source of information, amongst other heuristics (Petty, Briñol, and Priester 2009, 133).

Media outlets are key actors in the political agenda since they often represent a threshold for issues to capture the attention of legislators and governmental actors. Most of people's direct interaction with politics is vicarious, brokered by mass media (Bandura 2002, 272). Citizens rely on what media outlets deem as newsworthy to judge which social issues are pressing and how effectively politicians are at addressing them. Since the amount of time and space available in these news reports is limited, by choosing what to inform about and how, media shape reality for their viewers (Kahn 1994, 154). This choice of topics and frames can also be informative of existing gender stereotypes and values (Lemish 2008). Journalists not only award relevance and salience to events, attracting the public eye, they also produce messages about social appropriateness of behaviors, even if they do so inadvertently. For instance, describing a woman CEO as unreachably outstanding can convey two messages. First, a praising message to this person and maybe identifying her as a role model of success. However, even if it may be unintentional, they are also sending a subtle message that anyone who wants to emulate this person should reach levels of excellence that are not available to everyone, ultimately discouraging those that may hold low self-esteem to undertake such career path.

Although shifts in social values are often slower than some would want, they are not immutable. Media also hold a social prompting function, they exemplify which social conducts are acceptable and which are reprehensible (Bandura 2001, 2009). Regardless the news section, whether it is politics or sports, the communication literature finds a

shared difference in how men and women are portrayed in the mass media. Compared to men, women's coverage is more likely to stress their personal traits and banalize their platforms or achievements (Quayle et al. 2017; Bystrom, Robertson, and Banwart 2001; Kahn 1994). This differential treatments cultivate subtle messages about the social roles women should occupy, shaping the perceptions of citizens towards the world they live in (Morgan, Shanahan, and Signorielli 2017). Besides, when few women politicians are reported and framed as exceptional, they could act as a discouragement rather than a role model (Liu 2018). Given the lower level of women's sense of self-efficacy in comparison to men (Preece 2016), seeing that only exceptional women could achieve excellence may further encourage their sense of disengagement. Insofar as women's lower self-efficacy usually reflects an underestimation of their own capacities, mistakes further feed into their insecurities and their sense of inadequacy (Sakulku and Alexander 2011). In line with the previous example, if only those with exceptional qualities can get into these positions, mistakes become costlier, thus, discouraging participation.

Moreover, these gender stereotypes are not only communicated by who is portrayed and how, but also by the specific topics in which they are reported. For instance, Campbell (2004) identifies differences in the matters that men and women display interest in. Men are more likely to be interested by the economy, the political situation or international affairs, while women prefer social and environmental affairs. In a similar vein, Banducci and Semetko (2002) examined the attention paid to feminine and masculine issues. Both studies find that differences between men and women's interests are not homogeneous. Instead, women are as interested or even more interested in social or environmental issues (leading them to sometimes be referred to as feminine issues), while they tend to be significantly less interested in masculine topics, such as partisan politics or the economy.

These gender differences in content preferences are already present in children and relate to the gender stereotypes in which they are socialized. Boys learn values of competition, achievement and performance, while girls emphasize social relations and care (Knobloch-Westerwick and Alter 2007, 741). Knobloch-Westerwick and Alter (2007) show that boys tend to prefer violent content, related to performance, while girls rather peaceful content. This gendered socialization and difference of interests also reflects on girls' and boys' levels of political knowledge in Europe. A study shows that while boys perform better in questions on institutions and economics, girls appear more knowledgeable on topics related to human rights and social policies (Ferrin, Fraile, and Rubal 2015, 73).

The main argument of this study is that more inclusive media environments should be associated to a smaller gender gap in declared political interest. Citizens tend to be more attentive to the news when they are able to somewhat identify with the contents (Boukes et al. 2015; Graber 1988, 127). Citizens are more willing to engage with the news when what is being reported connects with them, either because they may find themselves in that situation or because it could have affected them or their loved ones (Höijer 2010). When women are not reported, it is harder for them to find that personal linkage to the news, increasing their likelihood of feeling disconnected from the news and what they report. More women in the news should signal a more inclusive public sphere, where women feel more accurately represented, thus, resulting in a smaller gender gap in political interest. The first hypothesis tested here is then:

H1.- *More women in the news are associated with a smaller gender gap in political interest.*

News coverage is, on average, more entertainment-oriented in television than in newspapers (Liu and Eveland 2005; Curran et al. 2009; Baum 2002). While more

interested citizens usually consider newspapers more attractive because they are oriented towards hard news, television brings information even to those who are not very interested by combining it with soft contents. Women tend to consume less hard news than men (Benesch 2012), but they are also less likely to appear in them. Finding women in a mean where they are not expected, should contribute to signal a stronger commitment to inclusion than when women are more present in a more entertainment-oriented means such as television. This leads to the second set of hypotheses (which distinguish by media outlet):

H2a.- More women in television news might not be associated with the size of the gender gap in political interest.

H2b.- More women in newspaper news should be related to a smaller size of the gender gap in political interest.

The last element that might concern gender differences is the news contents. Women and men seem to be interested and knowledgeable about different topics (Campbell 2004; Ferrin, Fraile, and García-Albacete 2018). If more women are present in masculine topics, this should contribute to symbolize a more welcoming public sphere for women. The last hypotheses (which distinguish by type of topic covered) then states:

H3a.- More presence of women in masculine issues in the news (politics, economy, etc.) should be associated with a smaller size of the gender gap in political interest.

H3b.- More presence of women in feminine issues in the news (health, arts, etc.) might not be associated with the extent of the gender gap in political interest.

4.3 Method

Data and case study

This study examines the role that the presence of women in the news can play over men and women's declared levels of political interest. As previously discussed, a larger presence of women in the news should contribute to decrease the size of the gender gap in political interest. This is because the number of women in the news constitutes a kind of societal signal of the extent of gender inclusiveness of the public sphere in a given country. This measurement is probably far from ideal because it does not allow for a specific examination of how the women were framed in each piece, and whether they are being presented as a role model or criticized for breaking social norms or gender roles. To compensate, this lack of detail allows for the comparison of several countries over time, something that has not been done to the best of my knowledge (with the sole exception of Haraldsson and Wägnerund, 2019).

The case selection in this paper was limited by the scarcity of comparable data of media contents. Finding survey data that could be matched with the data of media constrained the countries included in the sample. For this reason, the countries included in this study were those that had participated both in the Global Media Monitoring Project and in the European Social Survey (a list can be found in table C1 of the appendix C).

Coding news contents is a highly resource-consuming process because it takes a long time to code, the knowledge of different languages, and comparing is not always possible. To avoid this challenge, I have benefited from an underused dataset produced by the Global Media Monitoring Project[14] (from now on, the GMMP dataset). This project is sponsored

---

[14] This dataset has been exploited by practitioners all over the world, but it has seldom been used by academics. One exception of this would be the article by Ross and Carter (2011) in which they examine the

by a Canadian NGO[15] that intends to promote gender equality in media. They put together an international team of researchers that code the news of one randomly chosen day every five years in over a hundred countries. There is no rule of thumb of which days can serve as a thermometer of normality when studying media contents. The strategy chosen for collecting the GMMP data is to code a randomly chosen day, which avoided significant events that could have increased the presence of women or men that day, biasing the results towards an under- or overrepresentation of women. This sample includes only European countries and the last three waves available, 2005, 2010 and 2015. The teams of GMMP monitored the news broadcasts in radio, television, and newspapers of one day randomly chosen. Ownership, territorial coverage or ideological stance were amongst the criteria applied to offer a representative image of the country's tv channels, stations, and newspapers. Table C1 in appendix C reports the average percent of women present in each category used in the analyses.

Many critiques can be put forward to the use of this empirical evidence. First, salience and time or space devoted cannot be modelled into the estimations. One possible explanation for women's lack of interest could be that they did not identify with news contents because most of the time was devoted to those issues in which they show a significantly lesser interest (Campbell 2004; Banducci and Semetko 2002). If so, women would not pay much attention to a television broadcast where most of the time is dedicated to partisan politics and economic performance, while social affairs get only a couple of minutes at the end of the broadcast. One way to examine this, in line with what is implied in hypotheses 3a and b, would be to weight the presence of women in the different news

---

presence of women in British media over time. The other one is the study of how ambient sexism, reflected by the absence of women in the news hinders women's political ambition by Haraldsson and Wängnerud (2018).

[15] http://whomakesthenews.org/about-us

sections by the time or space that these sections covered. However, the GMMP dataset, as it is made available on their website, does not provide enough information to weigh which issues take more time or space in broadcasts and newspapers. Another possibility would be that women in the news could act as negative role models (Liu 2018), this is hard to test empirically without having some hints in the coding of how subjects were being framed. Yet, the present study is exploratory and aspires to build on evidence for further research avenues to open.

At the individual level, the data used are three waves of the European Social Survey (ESS). This academic-led survey is carried out every other year in Europe with samples that are comparable across waves. Those waves fielded closest to the days in which media were monitored are the ones used in the analyses, namely waves 2 (fielded in 2004), 5 (fielded in 2010), and 7 (fielded in 2014). Another consequence of the challenge of finding matching datasets is that not every country has observations for the three waves considered. Given the limitations of matching two independent datasets, I could have chosen to strengthen the robustness of observed trends over time by choosing only the countries that had observations in every wave. This strategy would have reduced the country-level sample by a good half (with the subsequent loss of statistical efficiency), so I chose to include every country available in each wave because it allowed me to have a larger country-level sample. To do so, I avoided claims about the countries over time and I took country-year as unit of analysis for the second level of the hierarchical estimation.

Variables and estimations

To examine gender differences in declared levels of political interest I employ the usual question included in most surveys: "How interested would you say you are in politics?

102

Would you say you are [the interviewer is asked to read the response categories out loud] (1) very interested, (2) fairly interested, (3) not very interested or (4) not at all interested?" In the following section I will discuss the results of a hierarchical binomial logit. The dependent variable is thus a dichotomized operationalization of political interest, where 0 stands for not interested (including the categories of not very interested and not interested at all from the original variable) and 1 (comprising the categories of fairly interested and very interested from the original variable) for interested in politics. Those who refuse to respond or did not rate their interest are not considered in the multivariate analyses, given that they represent less than 1 percent of the sample in each wave, they are not expected to alter the results obtained significantly. The distribution of the variable by gender in its original four categories is reported in table C1 in Appendix C. As a robustness check, I have replicated the estimation of the same equations using hierarchical ordinal logits, that considers the original metrics of the variable. These results are reported in tables C5 and C6 and figures C1-3 in appendix C. They are consistent with the findings of the binomial estimates discussed here (reported in tables C7 and C8 in appendix C).

The main independent variables are gender and different measurements of the presence of women in the news. Gender is measured as a dichotomous variable where 1 stands for women and 0 for men.

To understand how inclusive the media of a given country were at each point in time, I have used the percent of women as news subjects in different contexts. This choice allows me to measure those pieces where women had a leading role and leaves aside those women that were reported in secondary roles such as being family members or assistants. To test H1, positing that more women in media should lead to a reduction in the size of the gender gap, I employ the total percent of women that were news subjects. To test H2a and b, examining the role of women in television and newspapers, understood as a more

entertainment-oriented and hard-news-oriented environments, thus, I use the percent of women subjects that appeared in tv and in newspapers respectively. To test H3a and 3b, where different sections within the news are considered, I use the percent of women subjects in each topic. The expectation is that, overall, an increased presence of women should be associated with a reduction in the size of the gender gap. However, given that the literature has identified some topics as more appealing to men than women (Banducci and Semetko 2002; Knobloch-Westerwick and Alter 2007; Campbell 2004; Campbell and Winters 2008), the association should be stronger in those topics were women are less frequent. Among the masculine-leaning topics I include news on politics, the economy, and crime. Amongst feminized topics, news on health and scientific affairs, and news on celebrities, arts, and sports. News on socio-legal affairs can be found somewhat in the middle since the social part should have a larger appeal to women, but the social conflict side could be appealing to men (Knobloch-Westerwick and Alter 2007).

I include the control variables that are common in the literature when addressing political interest, understood as a motivation to engage in politics and learn about it, namely, age and the number of years of education. Their distribution by gender is reported in table C3 in appendix C.

To accurately estimate the combined effect of the two main independent variables, the equations were estimated using hierarchical equations including interactive terms of gender and the given variable at the contextual level. Since the results of the estimates reported in table C8 of appendix C) cannot be directly interpreted, I plot and discuss the marginal effect of gender on the predicted probability of falling in each of the categories of the dependent variable. One equation is estimated for each independent variable.

4.4 Findings

The estimations seek to identify whether countries providing a higher degree of coverage of women in the news tend to present a gender gap in declared political interest of a smaller size. The social prompting function of media leads them not only to act as models of conduct but also to promote new social values (Bandura 2001). If media report more news in which women are the main subject, I expect it to be part of a political system's effort to signal that gender inclusiveness is a relevant trait of their democracy (Lawless and Fox 2010, 12). Turning to individuals, this would imply that women are more likely to find a personal connection, and thus, the motivation to engage with politics when they see more women in the news (Graber 1988, 127; Boukes et al. 2015).

Figure 4.1 shows the sizeable differences in the average declared political interest for men and women by country and wave (the magnitude of such gender differences is also reported in table C4 of appendix C). So, for example, in the first wave of the ESS used (that is, wave 2) Austrian men's mean political interest was 9 percent larger than women's mean. All the gender differences plotted are statistically significant except for Finland in 2004 (wave 2).

This figure also suggests that there is no clear trend regarding the size of the gender gap in political interest over time shared by every country. Even excluding those countries for which there are only one or two observations, gender differences are substantial and statistically different from zero. Belgium shows a slight decrease in the size of gender gap across all three waves. In contrast, Finland shows a slight increase across both periods, although it remains among the most gender equal countries. However, most of the countries increase the size of the gap in one of the periods and decrease it in the other without showing a clear pattern. The Netherlands exemplifies this trend: the size of the

gender gap decreased between the first two waves and increased between the second and

third waves.

Figure 4.1. Difference between men and women's average declared levels of political interest by country.
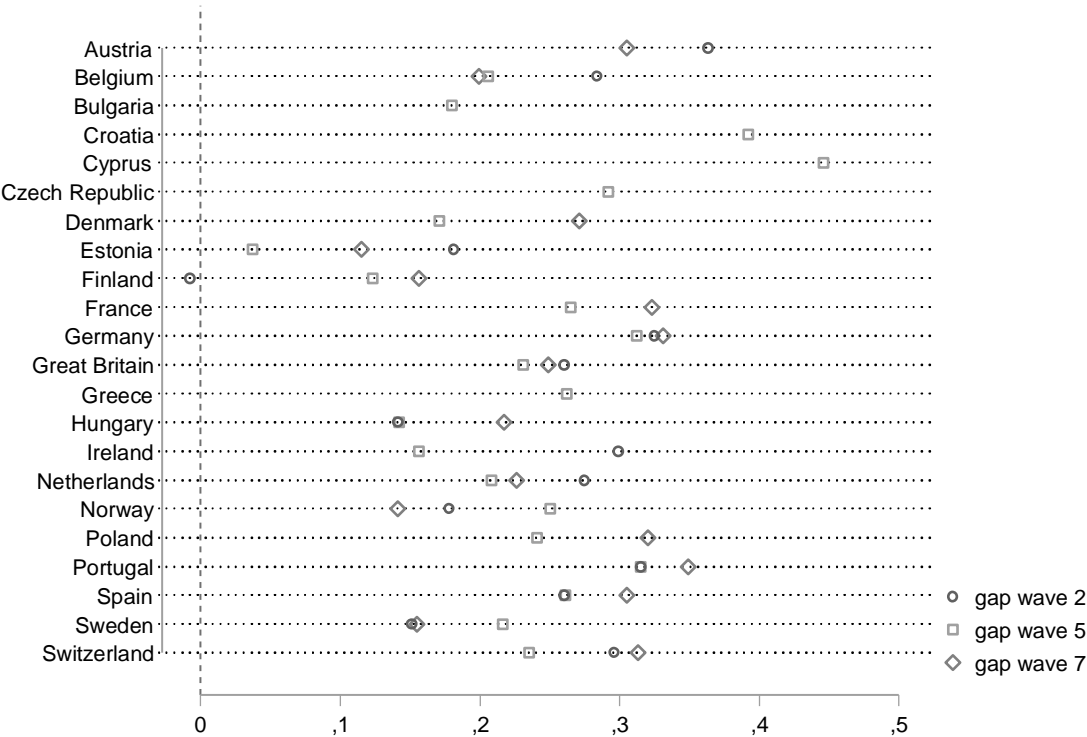
Note: The differences plotted in this figure were calculated performing t-test on the sample. All the differences here reported are statistically significant except for Finland in 2005.
Source: Own elaboration based on ESS Data (waves 2004, 2010 and 2014).

Figure 4.2. Percentage of women reported as news subjects over country and year.
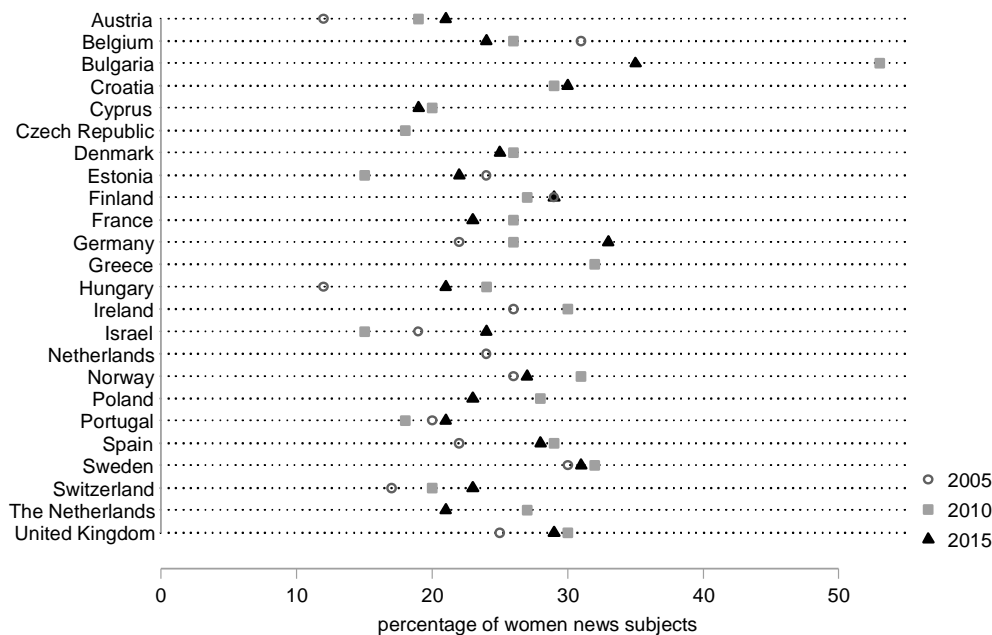
Source: Own elaboration based on the GMMP Dataset (waves 2005, 2010 and 2015).

Where there seems to be a trend throughout the waves is in terms of the size of the gender gap in declared political interest across countries. Austria, Germany, Portugal and Poland consistently score amongst the countries with the largest size in the gender gap in declared political interest. On the other hand, amongst the lowest scoring, are some of the usual suspects when discussing gender equality: Finland, Norway and Sweden are consistently scoring differences around 0.1. However, they are accompanied by two Eastern countries, Hungary and Estonia, also showing small-sized gender gaps.

Figure 4.2 shows the percentage of news subjects that were women in each country and year in the sample. The first consideration that stands out is the fact that few women are news subjects. Bulgaria in 2010 seems an outlier insofar as it is the only country that has more than 50 percent of women as news subjects[16]. The rest of the countries fall between

---

[16] Estimates were calculated including and excluding the observations for Bulgaria in 2010 to test whether the outlier could be shifting the results or not. Findings showed no significant shift in trends with and without Bulgaria 2010.

10 and slightly over 40 percent, even those with better scores in terms of gender equality. These results represent a concern to the empirical analyses due to the low degree of empirical variation present in the country sample. Furthermore, it sets a substantive concern. Women are scarcely present in the news, on average, they make around 25 percent of the news subjects. Finding a personal connection with the news that triggers interest seems trickier when women do not find themselves portrayed.

The following step to answer the research question is to examine the multivariate estimations. The first set of equations, 1-10 (reported in table C7 in appendix C), report the empty and the baseline models for each of the media measurements used. Equations 11-19 (reported in table C8 in appendix C) include an interactive term between gender and the media measurements testing whether the size of the gender gap in political interest depends on the extent of the presence of women in the news. In the following paragraphs, I present a plot showing the size of the gender gap over the presence of women on the probability of declaring some level of political interest (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006). The ordinate axis in each graph is defined according to the real values within which are the variables measuring the presence of women in the media range.

As can be appreciated in figure 4.3, gender differences in declared political interest are statistically different from zero for all values of the presence of women in the news. At minimum, that is when only 10 percent of the news subjects were women, women are 13.4 percent points less likely to be politically interested than men. When women are 50 percent of the news subjects, the gender gap reduces about three percent points (10 percent). Yet, figure 4.3 also shows that although differences are all statistically significant, the confidence intervals around each of them overlap. This implies that the evidence reported does not suggest that an increase in the number of women in the news produces a significant reduction of the gender gap in political interest.

Figure 4.3. Predicted size of the gender gap over percent of women reported as subjects in the news. Hierarchical binomial logit.
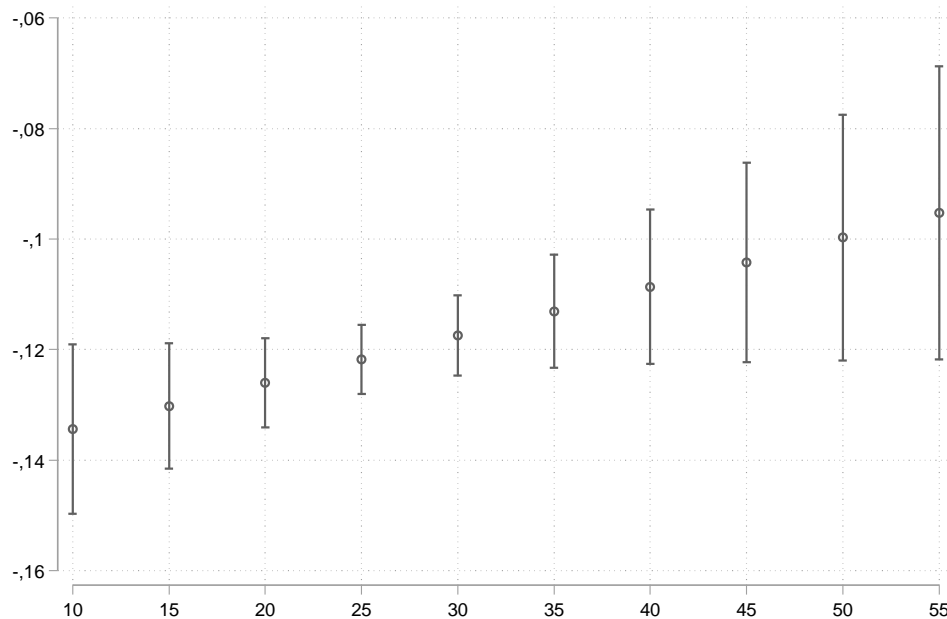
That figure 4.3 does not show a clear trend may be related with how the sample at the country level is distributed. The confidence intervals from 35 percent of women news subjects onwards become much larger, pointing to a significant loss of statistical efficiency. This usually occurs when the sample is unevenly distributed, as in this case, where it is skewed towards the lower values of the interval. Descriptive results in figure 4.2 confirm that most of the countries have between 20 and 30 percent of women as news subjects. In other words, the presence of women in the news is so limited in most cases that it becomes impossible to test whether countries presenting higher levels of women's presence in the news causes a smaller size in the gender gap in political interest because there are no such countries. Further evidence of how women are framed in the news could tell whether the presence of women in the news works as a role model or a deterrent for women's declared political interest.

The evidence does not provide information about the frames in which these women were presented to the public. However, the literature does suggest that the type of media outlet is relevant to how it is perceived. Hypotheses 2a and 2b consider the association between political interest and more entertainment-oriented (television) or hard-information-oriented (newspaper) outlets. The expectation was that the presence of women in newspaper outlets should be somehow related to the gender gap, while not so much television ones. The first is focused on hard news, so less space is devoted to soft contents where women are more likely to appear. In contrast, the latter is more likely to mix both hard and soft news to make their spaces more entertaining and attract a wider audience.

The first graph in figure 4.4, on the left, shows the size of gender differences as the number of women as news subjects in television's news broadcasts increase. The expectation in hypothesis 2a was that the degree of occurrence of women in televisions' news broadcast is unrelated to the size of the gender. As it was the case in figure 3, the first graph in figure 4.4 shows statistically significant gender differences but such differences are not substantially different across levels of women presence in the news. When there are about 5 percent of women as news subjects in television, women are 11 percent less likely of being interested in politics than men. When their presence in television increases to 40 percent, the size of the gender gap is still 12 points, suggesting no association at all between having more women in the news and the size of the gender gap.

Figure 4.4. Predicted size of the gender gap over percent of women reported as subjects in the news. Hierarchical binomial logit.

Note: These results show the marginal difference between men and women of declaring being politically interested. They are calculated based on equations 12 and 13 reported in table C5 in appendix C.
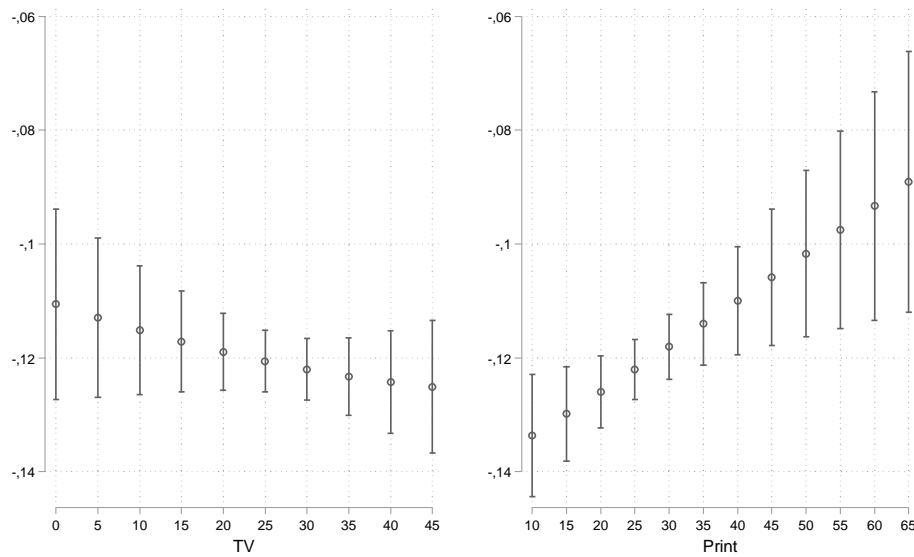*Source*: Own elaboration based on the combination of the GMMP Data (waves 2005, 2010 and 2015) and the European Social Survey (waves 2004, 2010 and 2014).

The fact that no substantial differences were observed might be again related with the limited range of variation of the media variable. Between 2005 and 2015, no country showed more than 45 percent of women as news subjects in television. This overall low presence of women and the tendency for them to usually be presented more in terms of their personal traits, rather than achievements or platforms (Bystrom, Robertson, and Banwart 2001) could contribute to the lack of association observed[17].

The second graph in figure 4.4 shows the size of the gender gap over the presence of women as news subjects in printed outlets. These findings confirm hypothesis 2b. The size of gender differences declines on average with a higher presence of women as news

---

[17] Figure C2 in appendix C shows that this lack of a relationship may reveal that while there is no association between the size of the gap and change in the number of women in the news for those that are not interested at all and those very interested, it does show an association amongst those that are hardly and quite interested. Further research could disentangle the implications of this finding, but it could be the case that the generally low number of women in the news and how they are presented could discourage them from getting involved in politics.

subjects in printed outlets. When women are 15 percent of the news subjects in printed outlets, the size of the gender gap is around 13 percent. Between the minimal presence of women and the maximum there is a decrease in the size of the gender gap of about 3 percentage points. This decrease in the size of the gender gap appears to be statistically different from zero, since the confidence intervals do not overlap. In line with H2b, having more women reported in the printed press, where hard news dominate, might be an indication of a higher level of inclusion of the public sphere and, consequently, it is perceived as more attractive and closer to women's interests.

Figure 4.5 examines the role played by the presence of women in different topics covered by the news. As discussed in the theoretical section, socialization and gender stereotypes play a role in shaping men and women's interests, both in politics (Coffé 2013; Campbell and Winters 2008) and in media contents (Knobloch-Westerwick and Alter 2007; Campbell 2004). The expectation of hypothesis 3a is that a larger presence of women in those topics that are usually attractive to men should produce an image of inclusiveness, thus relating to a smaller gender gap in political interest. In contrast, hypothesis 3b proposes that the presence of women in those topics that usually attract women's interest to a larger extent should not be associated with the size of the gender gap in political interest. To test these hypotheses the six graphs in figure 4.5 show the association between the size of the gender gap and the presence of women as news subjects in each of the topics that was monitored, namely, politics, economics, socio-legal affairs, crime and violence, science and health, and celebrities, arts and sports.

Figure 4.5. Predicted size of the gender gap over percent of women reported as subjects in the news by topic. Hierarchical binomial logit.
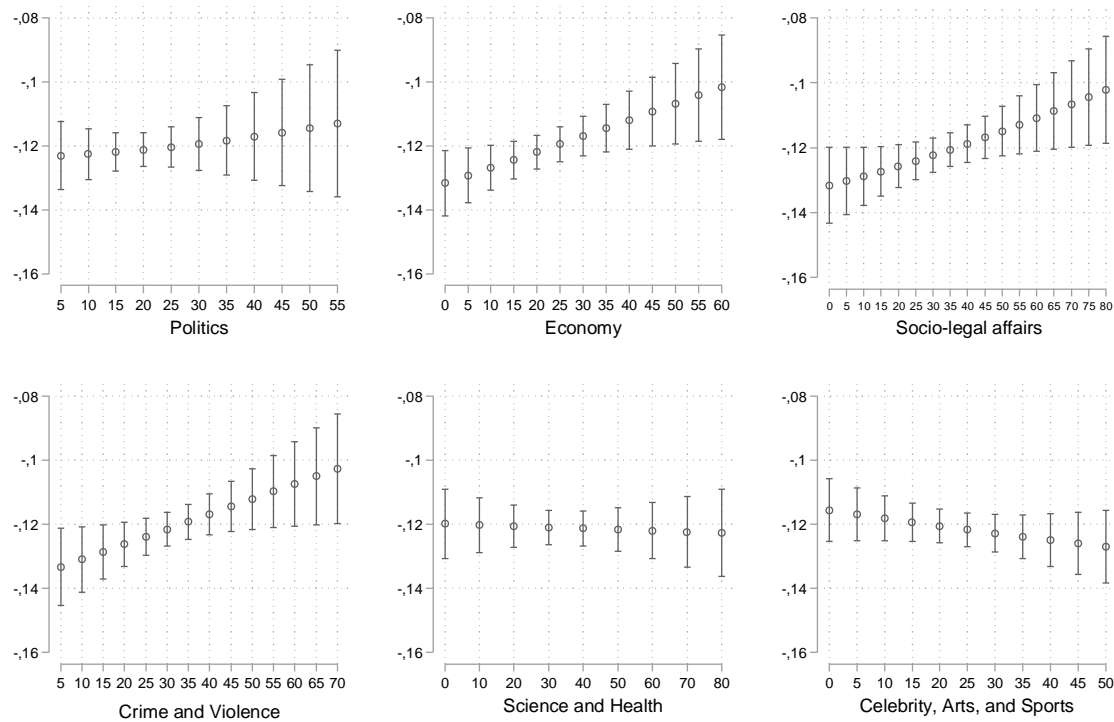
Note: These results show the marginal difference between men and women of declaring being politically interested. They are calculated based on equations 14-19 reported in table C5 in appendix C.
Source: GMMP Dataset (waves 2005, 2010 and 2015) and European Social Survey (waves 2004, 2010 and 2014).

The first graph on the top left corner of figure 4.5 plots the size of the gender differences over the percentage of women as news subjects in the news about politics. Given that the sample of television and radio only includes news broadcasts, this measurement reflects how many women made it to the news about political parties, parliamentary life, governmental action, etc. This graph shows that women's likelihood of reporting being interested in politics is significantly lower than men's despite the number of women in the news regarding politics observed. However, the number of women does not seem to make a difference, since the size of the gender gap is relatively stable around 12 percent.

Regarding women reported as news subjects in economic affairs news, the following graph to the right in figure 4.5, shows a slightly different story. Seeing women in the economic news appears to contribute to a reduction of the size of the gender gap. When

women constitute 5 percent of the news subjects, women respondents are about 13 percent less likely than men to declare being interested in politics. However, when women are 50 percent of the news subjects, this difference is of 11 percentage points, thereby decreasing the size of the gap by around two percentage points. In contrast with what was shown in the previous graph, the confidence intervals at the lower rates do not overlap with those at the higher rates, in line with H3a.

As discussed previously, news on socio-legal affairs refer to conflict but also to social issues. In this regard, it was hard to classify it either as a masculine or a feminine topic because it falls somewhere in between. The third graph on the first row in figure 5 depicts, as in the preceding ones, the relation between the number of women subjects in news on socio-legal affairs and the size of gender differences in political interest. The gap is larger when few women are present, for instance, women are roughly 13 percent less likely to declare being interested in politics when women are less than 10 percent of those news subjects. As the amount increases, the gender gap seems to decline. When women represented more than 50 percent of the news subjects in this topic, the magnitude of the gender gap was roughly 10.5 percentage points. Not only are differences statistically significant but the confidence intervals at the ends do not overlap.

The last of the so-called masculine topics would be news on crime and violence, it is the first graph starting from the left on the second row of graphs in figure 4.5. As it occurred with news on socio-legal affairs, the trend shows that there is a negative association between the presence of women in this section and the magnitude of gender differences. When few women are present (5-10 percent), women are roughly 13 percent less likely to report that they are interested in politics than men. However, these differences are smaller, around 10.5 percent, when more women are the news subjects (60-65 percent). The fact that these kinds of news are negatively associated with the magnitude of the gap

opens interesting questions for further research. For instance, because what this evidence does not tell us is what role these news subjects played in the crime reported, whether they were the victims or the perpetrators. Although this implication is only speculative, further research is needed to understand the relationship between violence and political engagement. It could be the case that putting violence against women on the front page does not act as a deterrent to women's political interest insofar as it highlights the dangers of being in the streets, or acts as a stimulus and trigger of political participation, as issues they care about gain salience.

Last but not least, the second row in figure 4.5 includes two graphs plotting the size of the gender gap on the presence of women subjects on news on science and health, and on news on celebrities, arts, and sports respectively. Both sets of topics are typically considered by the literature as "soft news", that is, the human relevance information that intends to play up emotions. Hypothesis 3b expected that the presence of women in these news topics is unrelated to the size of the gender gap in political interest because they do not really report on the openness of the public sphere. A different thing would be that the data made available allowed the estimations to control for the weight that these sections have in each of the broadcast considered, in other words, how news broadcasts and newspapers balance the space awarded to each section. Unfortunately, this information is not available in the data used. Both graphs show almost flat lines (with a magnitude of gender differences of around 12 percent) suggesting that the increase in the presence of female subjects in news on science and health, and in news on celebrities, arts, and sports is not related to the size of the gender gap in political interest.

Altogether, figure 5 finds support for both hypotheses 3a and 3b. Except for news on politics, in every other topic that was expected to be male-dominated, a larger presence of women seems to be associated with a reduction of the magnitude of the gender gap. In

contrast, the social interest topics showed no association with the size of gender differences. Interestingly, women in political news did not act as role models as it had been expected. As mentioned above, this may be the case due to the frame that women received, either because they were portrayed as being so exceptional that women could not identify and think that they could follow their path or because the exposure was so focused on trivial aspects that women did not feel that their aspirations would be fulfilled. Whatever the mechanism may be, all these estimations faced a common limitation, the average percent of women as news subjects in the all dimensions considered was between 20 and 30 percent. Put briefly, women are hardly present in the news, even in the most egalitarian countries.

4.5 Concluding remarks

This article analyses the role of the presence of women as news subjects in the gender gap in political interest. Although the original idea was to examine to what extent women in the news could act as role models that encouraged women's political interest, limitations to the data available forced a more exploratory approach focused on the presence dimension of this literature and how it signaled a political system's inclusiveness (Schwindt-Bayer and Reyes-Housholder 2017; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2017). The hypotheses expected that the presence of women would be relevant in those areas that are considered "hard news", such as the newspapers or the politics section of the news. The results show that, precisely with the exception of the politics section of the news, having women in hard news seems to be associated with a reduction in the magnitude of gender differences in the probability of reporting an interest in politics.

This study intends to contribute to the debate about how to address gender differences in political orientations and participation, and how media can be shaping such differences. I use a seldom used dataset with information about the presence of women in the news and combine it with a well-established survey, the European Social Survey, to compare gender differences in political interest in different contexts. Substantively, women seem to declare that they have systematically lower levels of interest in politics (Fraile and Gomez 2017; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012). Yet, a further exploration of this phenomenon shows that women have different interests than men, which may lead to a certain underreporting. It is not that they are not interested in politics, it is that when women are not present, politics is not speaking to them, as the results in this paper suggest.

Returning to Pitkin's words (1967), women's substantive representation is not only about having women present, but also about how women are portrayed and whether they manage to voice women's interests, in this case, in the media. The results in this study point in two different directions. On the one hand, that further research is needed regarding gender differences in the conceptualization of politics, and the extent to which women believe that their interests are addressed by the political realm. The public opinion scholarship has often underestimated gender as a source of differences in belief systems. This reassessment should be extended to the tools used in surveys to study political opinions and orientations. On the other hand, these results also hint that inclusiveness is not a mechanical outcome of women joining the labor market or improving their levels of educational attainment. For political systems to show a true commitment to inclusiveness they need to normalize the presence of women in those areas that have traditionally been men's clubs, not only political institutions but also the management boards of companies.

Although I do not test whether women's interests are given sufficient time or space in the mass media, there is a general fact that speaks for itself. The average presence of women, whatever the dimension considered here, was around 25 percent. One in four news subjects were women. The news does not speak about women and, when it does, they tend to trivialize them. Women's lack of interest and lesser consumption of news may not be because they do not have time or resources as some literature as proposed (Benesch 2012), it might simply be because they cannot relate to a discussion that does not portray them. In this regard, survey instruments measuring political interest and political knowledge need to be reviewed to look for strategies that speak to women's interest and knowledge.

Political interest could be thought of as a political orientation with little impact in policy-making. Nevertheless, it is key to political systems because it is considered as the motivation to participate politically and voice demands in the public discussion. If a good half of the population feels that the political system is not speaking to them, there are relevant issues being left out. Moreover, what these results show is that how women are presented matters. Research on perceptions of self-efficacy, particularly regarding politics (Preece 2016), have shown that women need their confidence to be boosted even when they have the skills. Media are a key part in developing this boost and, for societies to improve their gender equality, they should be part of the reflection on how to change gender stereotypes and cultural values regarding family and care.

Furthermore, this reflection about gender norms should consider what characteristics make a good leader or a good entrepreneur. Women may make it to the news, but how they are presented may still be sending a subtle message of their being ill-suited for the public realm. It can be as discouraging to trivialize their personas and dismiss their platforms as to portray them as outstanding exceptions. Women are socialized into having

a low sense of self-efficacy; if women politicians, CEOs or members of the military are systematically presented as excellent or unique, the discouragement pervades. In a context of low self-confidence, the threshold can be perceived as unreachable not only due to a lack of resources but also due to a fear of failure. If only outstanding women can make it, those who perceive themselves as being average are more likely to exclude themselves.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND FUTURE AVENUES OF RESEARCH

This research aims to understand the different dimensions of the gender gap in political interest. The public opinion literature expected this situation to be a temporary byproduct of gender inequality (Almond and Verba 1963). Contrary to this expectation and despite the improvement in levels of gender equality, the gender gap has remained. This persistence of gender differences in the motivation to engage with politics underlines that women face complex challenges, linked to gendered social values. This final chapter is devoted to summarizing the findings and implications of this thesis and presenting some avenues of future research that tackle some of the limits found while pursuing this thesis.

Although each chapter had its own research question, there is an overarching query guiding this research. To what extent are women different in their political interest to men? Women's lower levels of declared interest in politics are a recurrent finding (Fraile and Gomez 2017; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012; Coffé 2013) but, to the best of my knowledge, no one had exhaustively systematized the literature and tested the different available hypotheses. The first contribution of this thesis is such systematization. Moreover, the discussion has been enriched and fertilized by dialoguing with close disciplines like social psychology, sociology and media studies.

5.1 An overview of the thesis and some implications

To fully examine the multidimensionality of the object of this research, it was broken down into three smaller questions that intend to understand what women are interested in (if they are interested at all), when differences become evident over the life cycle and how contextual elements (precisely media contents as a reflection of existing gender stereotypes) can shape the gender gap in political interest.

The second chapter engages with what citizens understand as politics by default. Politics, with a capital P, is often identified by citizens with political parties and national politics (Stolle and Gidengil 2010; Fitzgerald 2013). This identification, added to the strong masculinization of this environment, represents a hindrance to women's political interest (Lawless and Fox 2010), insofar as it clashes with the values and practices that women are encouraged to develop since their early socialization (Eagly et al. 2004; Swigger and Meyer 2018). Moreover, this apparent mismatch between the skills to succeed and the values and competences that women identify with is also reflected in men and women's different patterns of political engagement (Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010). I contribute to this debate by showing that women across countries are not generally disengaged from politics, in line with Coffé (2013), but rather that they are more interested in local politics, an arena closer to their daily lives. The findings show there is no gender gap in declared interest in local politics across all democracies analyzed, whereas such a gap remains regarding national politics, and this gap is of a similar size as the one present in the general political interest question.

One of the main caveats of these results is that they are based in empirical evidence that is almost twenty years old. During this period, social values on gender roles have deeply changed, particularly in terms of awareness regarding gender equality. Not only so, in

recent decades, women have turned from being and voting more rightist than men to being more leftist and more likely to vote for progressive or socialist parties (Shorrocks 2018, Corbetta and Cavazza 2008). If politics are now more likely to decide on issues that directly affect women's lives, it should lead to an increase in women's interest in national politics. At least in those countries where feminist groups have been able to gain salience for their demands. However, these differences between arenas may have persisted because, even if awareness seems to have increased. Women's issues are still perceived as something that concerns women first, while men's issues are more likely to be perceived as universal. So long as this occurs, it shall be expected for women to focus on those arenas closer to them. Furthermore, social practices are still strongly reliant on women's commitment to bearing the main responsibilities in the household. Even if they do not address the same dependent variable, recent scholarship has shown that life cycle events are still affecting negatively women's engagement, political knowledge and political involvement (Banducci et al. 2016; Ferrín, Fraile, and García-Albacete 2019; Quaranta and Dotti Sani 2018; Voorpostel and Coffé 2012).

As citizens grow older and become adults, their demands and their engagement with society adapts to their needs as they assume the roles of adulthood (Dinas 2013, 2014; García-Albacete 2014). Married respondents are more socially engrained and, therefore, more likely to engage with their communities (demanding schools, doctors and other social services). Findings show that married men and women are both the most interested respondents, and also amongst whom the largest differences are observed. In other words, marriage hinders women's political interest, even regarding local politics.

 Another contribution of this article is the examination of the role of holding caring values (Eagly et al. 2004) to explain gender differences. For caring citizens, politics can evoke negative feelings, as it is a competitive and masculinized environment (Lawless and Fox

2010, 12), but it can also be attractive insofar as it is the space where society can be improved and issues tackled. The results confirm that caring citizens are more interested in politics. The positive association is of the same size for both men and women, so the mechanism driving gender differences in declared political interest should be searched for in another place. Although further research is needed using interviews or other adequate techniques that shed light on the driving mechanism (for instance focus groups), women's unease with national politics seems related with their socialization in cooperative values.

One of the caveats of the second chapter is that it did not identify the underlying trigger of the results obtained. The main explanations point to socialization processes and socio-economic status, but cross-sectional evidence did not allow the effects to be fully disentangled. The third chapter takes a first step at this issue by tracing the evolution of the gender gap in political interest over the life cycle using evidence from the British Household Panel (BHPS). This dynamic approach shows that gender differences are already evident at age 15. As citizens grow older, attitudes crystallize, and they learn the roles of adulthood, that is, between their late teens and early twenties, the size of observed differences grows steadily. After this period, British women will remain consistently 30 percent less likely than British men to declare that they are interested in politics over the life course.

These findings were contrary to the initial expectation: that some minor differences would be present at early ages, but the bulk would be acquired during the transition to adulthood, as they tried to balance the many adult roles they are expected to acquire. So far, most scholarship focused on young people because they have the maturity to fully grasp the complexities of the political realm (Shehata and Amnå 2017; Neundorf, Smets, and García-Albacete 2013; García-Albacete 2014). Early childhood remains a largely under-

researched period (van Deth, Abendschön, and Vollmar 2011; Goetzmann 2017),where there is much to be learnt about the drivers of social learning. Children are often described as sponges, absorbing everything around them even if they do not fully grasp its implications. Toys and games where girls are encouraged to act as care providers, such as being a doll's mom or dressing up as a nurse, leave an imprint on children's broad conceptions of gender appropriateness and women's role in society. Further research is needed to better understand how families and schools are transmitting this subtle inequality, despite existing efforts to improve gender equality.

A better picture of what is making a deeper impression and shaping the values and orientations that will crystallize later on citizens' lives, and how, could contribute to a substantive improvement of existing knowledge of early socialization. The contribution of this research could be both academic and policy-oriented. It could illuminate why gender stereotypes are so pervasive and how they can be further deconstructed. It could also help improve policies oriented to the promotion gender equality. So far, existing policies have focused on the socio-economic dimension of inequality, providing child care, addressing family and work conciliation, etc. This research could inform families and schools how to work together in the difficult task of influencing traditional gender values.

The BHPS also allowed for an examination of gender differences in the association between education and political interest. The scholarship has found that more educated citizens are more likely to be interested in politics because they have developed the skills that allow them to fully apprehend the complexities of political issues (Almond and Verba 1963, 1980). However, the persistence of the gender gap in political interest and political knowledge, even after gender differences in levels of educational attainment faded, questioned whether women were obtaining the same benefit as men from education

(Thomas 2012). Results confirm that education does not build women's political interest to the same extent as men's (Dow 2009). Experiments have shown that women need higher levels of education or some boost of their confidence to feel as equipped to engage with politics as men (Preece 2016). For many children, their first civic experiences occur during the school years, discussing in the classroom or being class representatives. Families are the key agent in the transmission of gender stereotypes; nonetheless, understanding the way in which these experiences are formative, and where they can be improved, could also contribute to bringing significant changes into dismantling gender stereotypes.

The preceding chapters and the literature on which they build repeatedly mention the importance of the context in which citizens develop and how they convey and perpetuate gender stereotypes. Modern Western societies declare their commitment to gender equality, but they vary in how they promote it and the importance they award to it compared to the promotion of other social values. Levels of economic development and equality can improve women's situation in society, lifting some of the burdens that hinder them from being politically interested (Fraile and Gomez 2017). Nonetheless, culture and values that societies hold, enforce and transmit are at the heart of this pervasive gender differences. If economic progress is not accompanied by institutions and political actors, the efforts to signal inclusiveness seem hollow (Lawless and Fox 2010). How women's political ambition is perceived, and the extent to which those ambitions are met provides cues, both for the women involved and for bystanders, that can act as a potent discouragement of their political involvement (Bradley-Geist, Rivera, and Geringer 2015).

These clear-cut explanations have a caveat, most interactions between citizens and the political realm are vicarious: political actors enter the houses of citizens through news

broadcasts. Media shapes how citizens perceive reality because they decide what makes the news and how much time is devoted to reporting it, which in turn gives citizens hints about which social issues are pressing and which are not (Friesem 2016). However, this relationship is not solely unidirectional. Indeed, if citizens are not able to relate to the contents they receive, they are more likely to disconnect (Boukes et al. 2015; Graber 1988). The expectation was that this mechanism should affect the relationship between how women are presented in media and the extent of the gender gap in political interest.

Combining evidence from the Global Media Monitoring Programme (GMMP) on the presence of women in the news and from the European Social Survey (ESS) to explore public opinion, I examined how the number of women in the news related to the size of the gender gap in political interest. The strength of this dataset is that it allowed for cross-country comparison, something that is rare in media studies because of costly data collection. The trade-off is that many details about how women were framed and how much time/space was devoted to each section could not be coded and therefore modelled in the analysis. Given that very few studies have addressed this issue (Haraldsson and Wängnerud 2018; Lobo and Cabecinhas 2010), an exhaustive description can still offer relevant insight. The results show that the mere presence of women in media is not enough to bridge the gender gap in political interest. None of the news broadcasts coded included more than 45 percent of women as news subjects, but not even in these contexts did a reduction of gender differences happen.

A further contribution of chapter 4 regards the content of the news reported in the aforementioned data. A conventional distinction in the media literature is between hard and soft news, where hard news is those regarding politics, economics, etc., and soft news usually reports environmental, social and cultural affairs. The first are considered more interesting for men, but also more dominated by male subjects. An increased presence of

women in these news pieces should be a strong signal of inclusiveness. The results confirm this expectation, women are more interested in politics when the news report more women in the politics and economics sections. More women as news subjects in newspapers, which are also considered as hard news, also contributed to a reduction of the gender gap in political interest.

5.2 Limits & future research agenda

Although the preceding section has tried to bring out the strengths of this research, it is not exempt from problems and caveats, related to data availability, time constraints, gaps in the literature that became evident as the research advanced. This section is devoted to discussing them and identifying future avenues of research.

The first and clearest one has to do with the evidence used. Given that I did not produce my own data, my research questions had to be adapted and limited to consider what was available. This became particularly clear in the second and fourth chapters. In the case of the different objects of interest, I initially intended to examine the impact of the different dimensions regarding having a family, namely marital status, having children and housing situation. However, when I dug into the dataset, I found that not all this information was available and that the countries had fielded different questionnaires.

Similarly, the initial ambition of the paper on media and the gender gap was to test the extent to which the role model hypotheses could be applied to other environments where citizens were presented with cues on social norms, particularly media. The GMMP dataset did not allow me to deliver on those expectations. Future research could be devoted to examining how gendered frames can affect women, not only looking at the impact of

dismissive or trivial portrayals but also whether highlighting the exceptionality of women candidates and professionals could act as a deterrent for other women. In line with Liu's (2018) hypothesis, women's usually lower sense of self-efficacy could be stimulated by media contents that set the threshold at the achievements of these exceptional women. Data constrains did not allow either for a description of how women were being described in the news. They did not allow for a robust examination of how the time and space is distributed and how this could shape the gender gap. The results suggested a smaller gender gap across countries, when women are more present in hard news. But it remains unclear whether they received as much time as men or how this gap is affected when the news contents show a larger presence of the topics that interest women.

Appendix A

Table A1. Summary of the variables included.

	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Interest in politics in general			
Not at all interested	17,21	23,42	20,53
Not very interested	32,79	38,72	35,95
Quite interested	36,05	30,5	33,09
Very interested	13,95	7,36	10,43
Total	100	100	100
Interest in national politics			
Not at all interested	15,67	20,73	18,36
Not very interested	27,53	32,29	30,06
Quite interested	39	36,51	37,68
Very interested	17,8	10,47	13,9
Total	100	100	100
Interest in local politics			
Not at all interested	15,88	19,56	17,84
Not very interested	31,9	33,69	32,85
Quite interested	37,66	35,49	36,51
Very interested	14,56	11,25	12,8
Total	100	100	100
Marital status			
Never married	24,91	17,07	20,72
Divorced/Widowed	9,29	20,9	15,49
Married	65,8	62,03	63,79
Total	100	100	100
Provide care for others			
No	61,35	53,4	57,13
Yes	38,65	46,6	42,87
Total	100	100	100
Age			
Mean	45,67	46,98	
Standard deviation	16,91	17,4	
Education			
No qualifications	22,53	27,91	25,4
Subgraduate	69,55	65,91	67,6
Graduate	7,92	6,18	6,99
Total	100	100	100
Country			
Switzerland	9,78	10,89	10,37
Portugal	4,86	4,9	4,88
Denmark	8,47	7,44	7,93
W-Germany	9,01	10,17	9,62

(table A1 continues here)			
E-Germany	4,9	4,89	4,9
Netherlands	7,91	7,98	7,95
Slovenia	3,95	5,51	4,78
Norway	11,68	10,59	11,1
Romania	6,02	5,76	5,88
Moldova	5,84	5,94	5,89
Spain	21,16	20,02	20,55
Sweden	6,42	5,9	6,14
Total	100	100	100

Note: Percentages reported for every variable except for age where mean and standard deviation are reported in years. The original dataset made available by MZES does not allow to report the respondents that replied to the political interest questions (politics in general, local politics and national politics) saying they did not know how interested they were, or they did not want to answer. However, looking at the overall sample size it can be estimated that less than 3 percent of the respondents are marked as missing values in these three items. Given the small percentage of the sample they represent, these respondents will not be taken into consideration in multivariate analyses.
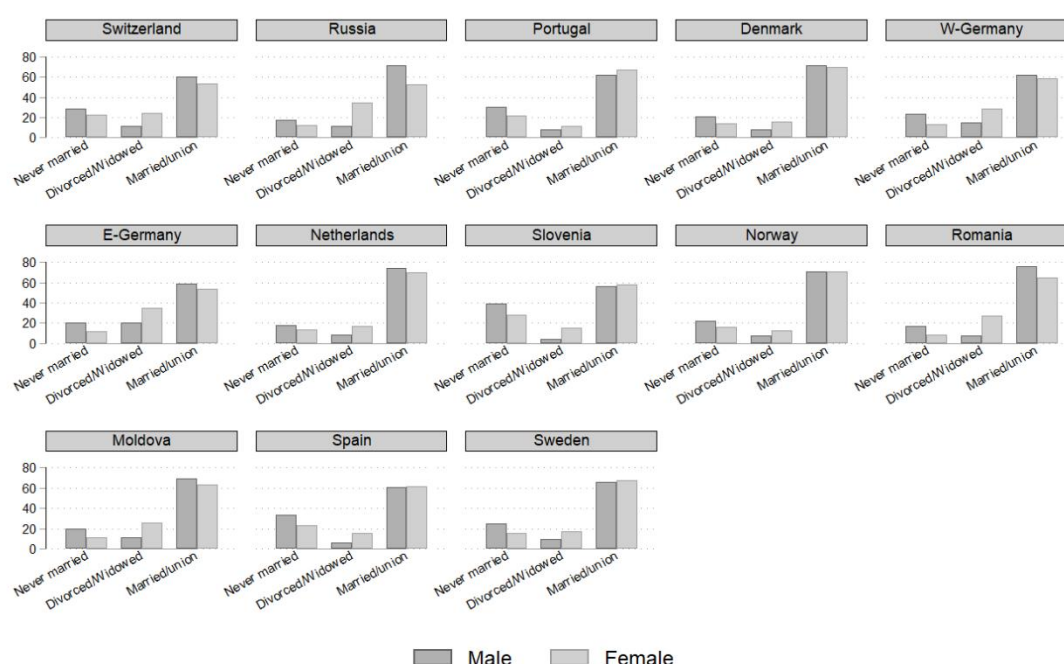*Source*: Own elaboration based on the CID dataset.

Table A2. Pairwise Pearson correlation of the dependent variables.

	General / Local politics		General / National politics		Local / National politics	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Switzerland	0,377	0,468	0,556	0,601	0,45	0,551
Russia	0,592	0,646	0,804	0,809	0,608	0,675
Portugal	0,674	0,688	0,775	0,776	0,815	0,844
Denmark	0,546	0,498	0,783	0,753	0,548	0,491
W-Germany	0,642	0,602	0,789	0,777	0,614	0,587
E-Germany	0,694	0,64	0,866	0,853	0,703	0,688
Netherlands	0,562	0,582	0,819	0,798	0,587	0,586
Slovenia	0,602	0,643	0,769	0,756	0,64	0,704
Norway	0,448	0,473	0,754	0,752	0,428	0,487
Romania	0,693	0,684	0,778	0,79	0,761	0,76
Moldova	0,655	0,638	0,748	0,707	0,728	0,743
Spain	0,674	0,705	0,744	0,762	0,687	0,781
Sweden	0,455	0,53	0,811	0,781	0,507	0,553

Note: Given that the dependent variable is an ordinal four-category variable, a non-parametric correlation is calculated. Parametric correlations were also estimated showing results in the same line, although of a slightly higher magnitude.
Source: Own elaboration based on the CID dataset.

Figure A1. Distribution of marital status by gender. Percentages

Source: Own elaboration based on the CID Dataset.

Figure A2. Distribution of providing care for others by gender. Percentages.

Source: Own elaboration based on the CID Dataset.

Table A3. Reported means for the dependent variables by gender and country.

	General politics			Local politics			National politics		
	Men	Women	Diff.	Men	Women	Diff.	Men	Women	Diff.
Switzerland	2,74	2,5	0,25*	2,68	2,63	0,05	2,89	2,7	0,19*
Russia	2,65	2,47	0,19*	2,4	2,37	0,03	2,81	2,61	0,19*
Portugal	1,94	1,69	0,24*	2,21	2,03	0,19*	2,15	1,95	0,20*
Denmark	2,84	2,58	0,26*	2,62	2,57	0,05	2,91	2,72	0,19*
Western Germany	2,64	2,26	0,38*	2,79	2,61	0,19*	2,79	2,46	0,33*
Eastern Germany	2,69	2,26	0,42*	2,83	2,67	0,16	2,75	2,39	0,37*
Netherlands	2,75	2,41	,034*	2,63	2,45	0,18*	2,76	2,49	0,27*
Slovenia	2,26	2,03	0,22*	2,25	2,08	0,16*	2,35	3,1	0,19*
Norway	2,72	2,56	0,16*	2,71	2,72	-0,01	2,85	2,7	0,15*
Romania	2,06	1,8	0,26*	2,19	1,92	0,27*	2,27	1,97	0,30*
Moldova	2,38	2,14	0,24*	2,72	2,47	0,025*	2,64	2,41	0,23*
Spain	1,99	1,78	0,21*	2,24	2,08	0,16*	2,1	1,92	0,19*
Sweden	2,67	2,44	0,23*	2,53	2,52	0,01	2,79	2,58	0,22*

Note: Differences = mean(Men) – mean(Women). Differences marked with a * can be considered statistically significant for a confidence interval at the 95%.

Source: Own elaboration based on the CID dataset.

Table A4. Multilevel ordinal logistic regression. Baseline specification.

	Politics in general	Local Politics	National politics
Age	0,01***	0,02***	0,01***
	0	0,001	0,001
Education (ref.cat.: no qualifications or basic education)			
Secondary (finished before pursuing a degree)	0,96***	0,69***	0,88***
	0,04	0,04	-0,04
Degree	1,92***	1,33***	1,79***
	0,07	0,07	-0,07
Being a woman	-0,55***	-0,29***	-0,47***
	0,03	0,03	-0,03
Marital status (ref. cat.: never married)			
Divorced/Widowed	-0,13*	0,11*	-0,11
	0,05	0,05	-0,05
Married/union	0,12**	0,40***	0,14***
	0,04	0,04	-0,04
Support others	0,36***	0,48***	0,35***
	0,03	0,03	-0,03
cut1	-0,22	-0,05	-0,39*
	0,21	0,18	0,19
cut2	1,75***	1,75***	1,35***
	0,21	0,18	0,19
cut3	3,85***	3,80***	3,47***
	0,21	0,18	0,19
Constant by country	0,50*	0,32*	0,37*
	0,2	0,13	0,15
N(observations)	20120	19560	19528
N(countries)	12	12	12
BIC	47516,63	47516,63	47516,63

Note: Empty cells are not reported.
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, p<0.001
Source: Own elaboration based on the CID Dataset.

Table A5. Multilevel ordinal logistic regression. Intermediate specification with additive terms.

	Gender * Marital Status			Gender * Support others		
	General	Local	National	General	Local	National
Age	0,01***	0,02***	0,01***	0,01***	0,02***	0,01***
	0,001	0,001	0,001	0,001	0,001	0,001
Education (ref. cat.: no qualification or basic education)						
Secondary (finished before pursuing a degree)	0,95***	0,69***	0,87***	0,96***	0,69***	0,88***
	-0,04	-0,04	-0,04	-0,04	-0,04	-0,04
Degree	1,91***	1,32***	1,78***	1,92***	1,33***	1,79***
	-0,07	-0,07	-0,07	-0,07	-0,07	-0,07
Being a woman	-0,35***	-0,15**	-0,29***	-0,56***	-0,28***	-0,46***
	0,06	0,06	0,06	0,04	0,04	0,04
Marital status (ref. cat.: never married)						
Divorced or Widowed	-0,03	0,17*	0,02	-0,13*	0,11*	-0,11
	0,08	0,08	0,08	0,05	0,05	0,05
Married or in a union	0,24***	0,49***	0,24***	0,12**	0,40***	0,14***
	0,05	0,05	0,05	0,04	0,04	0,04
Female * Marital status						
Female * divorced or widowed	-0,21*	-0,13	-0,24*	-	-	-
	0,1	0,1	0,1	-	-	-
Female * married or in a union	-0,25***	-0,18**	-0,22**	-	-	-
	0,07	0,07	0,07	-	-	-
Supporting others	0,36***	0,48***	0,35***	0,33***	0,48***	0,36***
	0,03	0,03	0,03	0,04	0,04	0,04
Female * Supporting others	-	-	-	0,05	-0,01	-0,01
	-	-	-	0,05	0,05	0,05
cut1	-0,15	0	-0,32	-0,23	-0,05	-0,38*
	0,21	0,18	0,19	0,21	0,18	0,19
cut2	1,83***	1,80***	1,41***	1,75***	1,75***	1,35***
	0,21	0,18	0,19	0,21	0,18	0,19
cut3	3,92***	3,86***	3,54***	3,84***	3,81***	3,47***
	0,22	0,18	0,19	0,21	0,18	0,19
Constant by country	0,50*	0,33*	0,37*	0,50*	0,32*	0,37*
	0,2	0,13	0,15	0,2	0,13	0,15
N(observations)	20120	19560	19528	20120	19560	19528
N(countries)	12	12	12	12	12	12
BIC	47516,63	47516,63	47516,63	47516,63	47516,63	47516,63

Note: Empty cells are not reported.
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, p<0.001
Source: Own elaboration based on the CID Dataset.

Figure A3. Predicted impact of gender on the probability of each declared level of interest. Multilevel ordinal logistic regressions with an additive term combining gender and marital status.
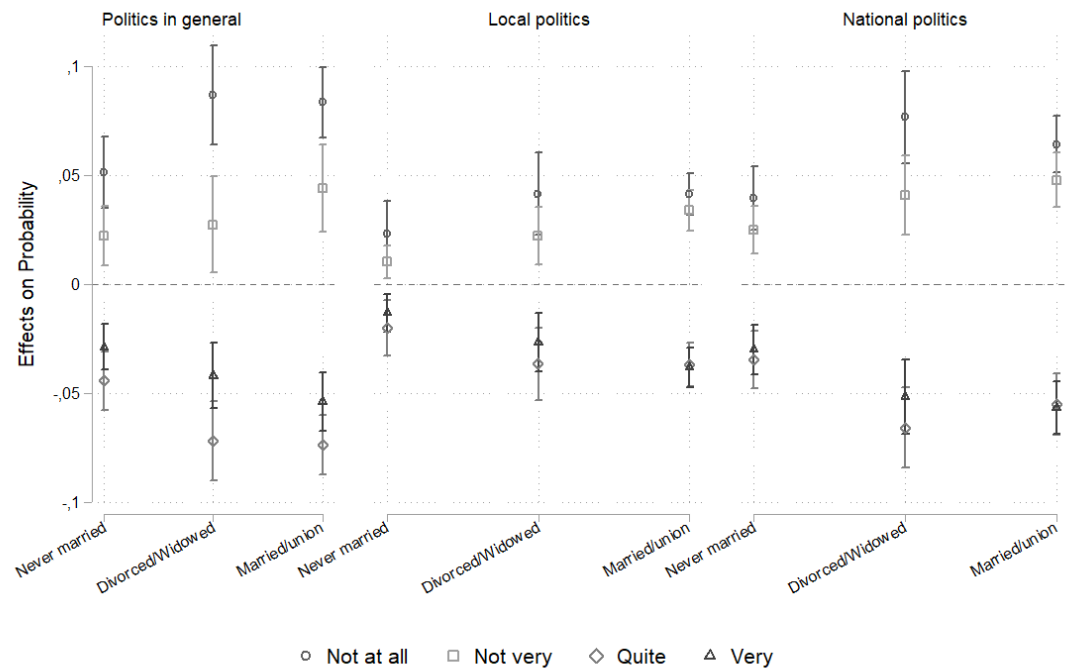
Source: Own elaboration based on the CID dataset

Figure A4. Predicted impact of gender on the probability of each declared level of interest. Multilevel ordinal logistic regressions with an additive term combining gender and providing care to others.
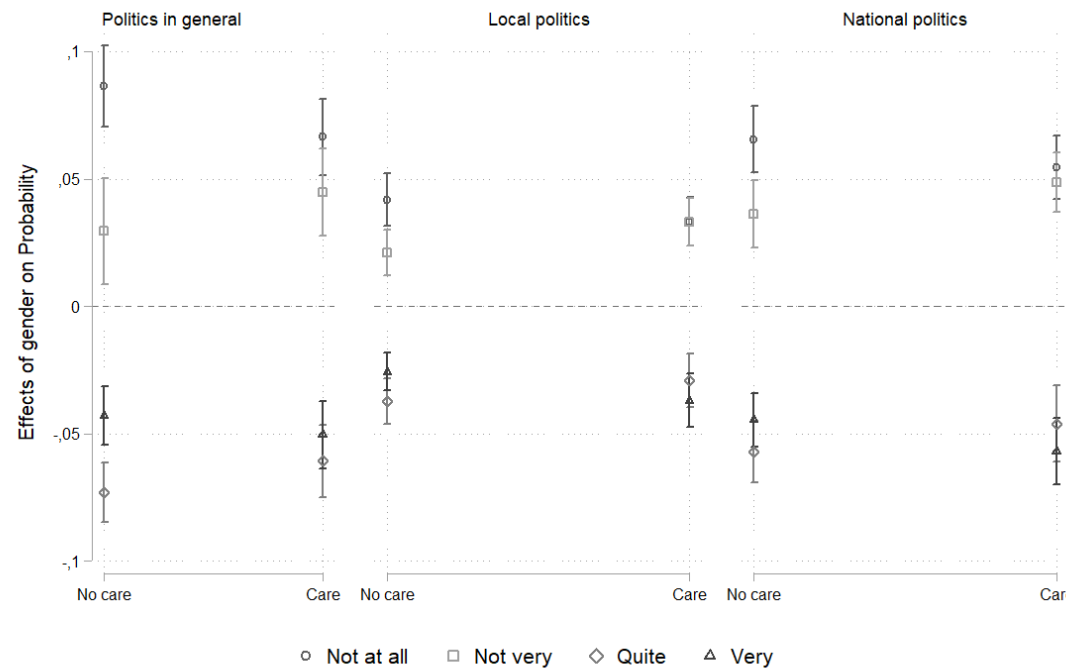
Source: Own elaboration based on CID Dataset.

Table A6. Multilevel ordinal logistic regression. Full specification.

	Politics in general	Local politics	National politics
Age	0,01***	0,02***	0,01***
	0,001	0,001	0,001
Education (ref. cat.: no qualification or basic education)			
Secondary (finished before degree)	0,95***	0,69***	0,87***
	0,04	0,04	0,04
Degree	1,91***	1,32***	1,78***
	0,07	0,07	0,07
Being a woman	-0,34***	-0,1	-0,27***
	0,07	0,07	0,07
Marital status (ref. cat.: never married)			
Divorced or Widowed	-0,11	0,16	0
	0,1	0,1	0,1
Married or in a union	0,27***	0,50***	0,24***
	0,06	0,06	0,06
Female * marital status			
Female * divorced or widowed	-0,26*	-0,22	-0,35**
	0,12	0,12	0,13
Female * married or in a union	-0,29***	-0,23**	-0,22*
	0,09	0,09	0,09
Supporting others	0,36***	0,50***	0,34***
	0,08	0,08	0,08
Female * supporting others	-0,04	-0,13	-0,05
	0,12	0,12	0,12
Marital status * supporting others			
Divorced or widowed * supporting others	0,22	0,01	0,06
	0,16	0,16	0,16
Married or in a union * supporting others	-0,09	-0,03	0
	0,09	0,1	0,1
Female * marital status * supporting others			
Female * Divorced or widowed * supporting others	0,07	0,2	0,23
	0,2	0,2	0,2
Female * married or in a union * supporting others	0,09	0,13	0,02
	0,14	0,14	0,14
cut1	-0,15	0,01	-0,32
	0,22	0,18	0,19
cut2	1,83***	1,80***	1,41***
	0,22	0,18	0,19
cut3	3,93***	3,86***	3,54***
	0,22	0,18	0,19
Constant by country	0,50*	0,33*	0,37*
	0,2	0,13	0,15
N(observations)	20120	19560	19528
N(groups)	12	12	12
BIC	47516,63	47516,63	47516,63

Note: Empty cells are not reported. * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, p<0.001
Source: Own elaboration based on the CID Dataset.

Appendix B

Table B1. Average declared levels of political interest in Euro-15 countries. 2002.

	Men	Women	Gender gap (=women-men)
Finland	2,48	2,37	-0,11*
Sweden	2,67	2,54	-0,13*
Spain	2	1,76	-0,24*
Denmark	2,84	2,6	-0,25*
Germany	2,91	2,65	-0,25*
Portugal	2,28	2,03	-0,25*
Belgium	2,44	2,18	-0,26*
The Netherlands	2,87	2,6	-0,28*
Austria	2,81	2,52	-0,29*
UK	2,61	2,32	-0,29*
Greece	2,25	1,93	-0,32*
Ireland	2,5	2,18	-0,32*
Italy	2,33	1,95	-0,38*
Luxembourg	2,53	2,15	-0,38*
France	2,51	2,11	-0,40*

Note: The table shows the average level of declared political interest for men and women, and the size of differences between them. The asterisks show that the differences are statistically significant. The political interest variable takes values 1 ("not interested") to 4 ("very interested").

Source: European Social Survey, wave 1 (2002).

Table B2. Summary of the variables included in the analyses.

	Men	Women	Total
Interest in politics			
missing or wild	0,05	0,05	0,05
Inapplicable	0,52	0,7	0,62
Proxy and or phone	5,39	2,94	4,07
Refused	0,02	0,01	0,01
Don't know	0,01	0,01	0,01
Very interested	10,13	5,04	7,39
Fairly interested	37,67	29,59	33,33
Not very interested	28,07	35,16	31,88
Not at all interested	18,14	26,5	22,64
Total	100	100	100
Education			
Primary	25,49	30,09	28
Secondary & basic vocational training	29,77	30,84	30,35
Advanced vocational training	31,64	27,98	29,65
University	13,1	11,09	12
Total	100	100	100
Age at time of interview (mean)	44,7	45,9	45,3
Age at time of interview (standard deviation)	18,3	18,9	18,6

Note: Percentages reported except for age, where means and standard deviation are reported in years. Given the small percentage of the sample that respondents who did not know or refused to respond represent, these respondents will not be taken into consideration in multivariate analyses.
Source: Data from the BHPS.

Table B3. Gender gap in political interest: Generalized least squares panel regression with random effects.

	Baseline	Age*gender	Education*gender
Education (ref. cat.: Basic)			
Advanced secondary & basic vocational training	0,149***	0,149***	0,161***
	(0,0103)	(0,0103)	(0,0150)
Advanced vocational training	0,288***	0,288***	0,325***
	(0,0101)	(0,0101)	(0,0147)
University	0,508***	0,508***	0,602***
	(0,0129)	(0,0129)	(0,0189)
Being a woman	-0,275***	-0,278***	-0,228***
	(0,00892)	(0,0189)	(0,0155)
Age	0,00517***	0,00514***	0,00512***
	(0,000200)	(0,000293)	(0,000200)
Woman * Age		0,0000740	
		(0,000391)	
Woman * Education			
Advanced secondary & basic vocational training * Woman			-0,0221
			(0,0201)
Advanced vocational training * Woman			-0,0693***
			(0,0199)
University * Woman			-0,175***
			(0,0257)
Constant	1,974***	1,975***	1,950***
	(0,0136)	(0,0161)	(0,0151)
sigma u	0,668	0,668	0,665
sigma e	0,533	0,533	0,534
Rho	0,611	0,611	0,608
Overall R-squared	0,11	0,11	0,11
Observations	172.238	172.238	144.399
Number of pid	28.346	28.346	27.958

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Empty cells are not reported

* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Source: Data from the BHPS.

Figure B1. Predicted probability of declaring being interested in politics for men and women by age, 1991-2008.
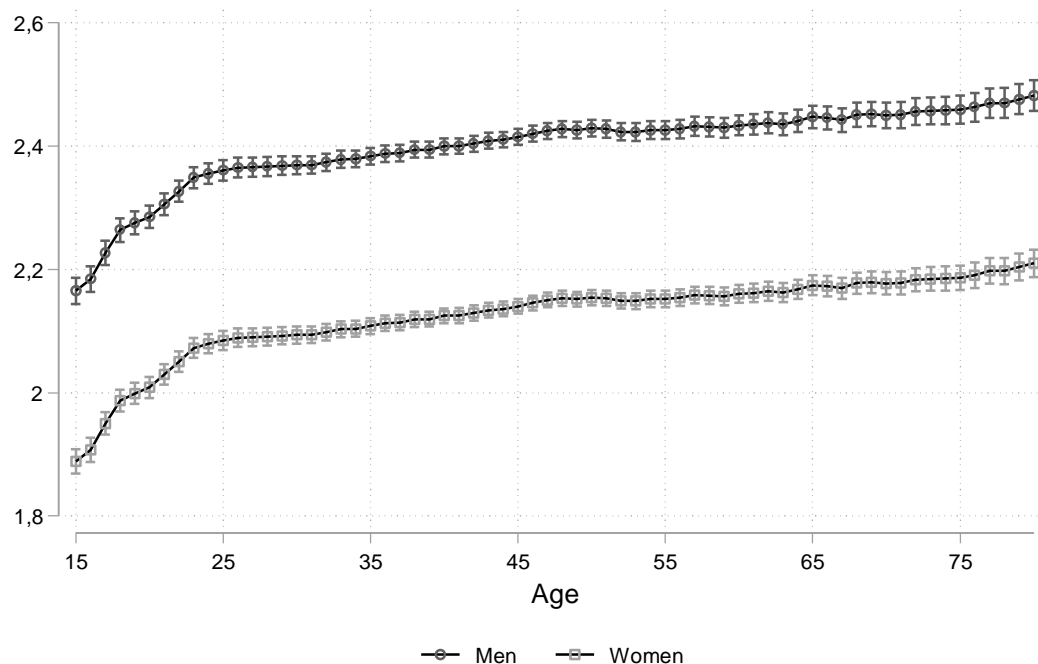
Note: Estimations based on Equation with interaction term between age and gender in Table A1.
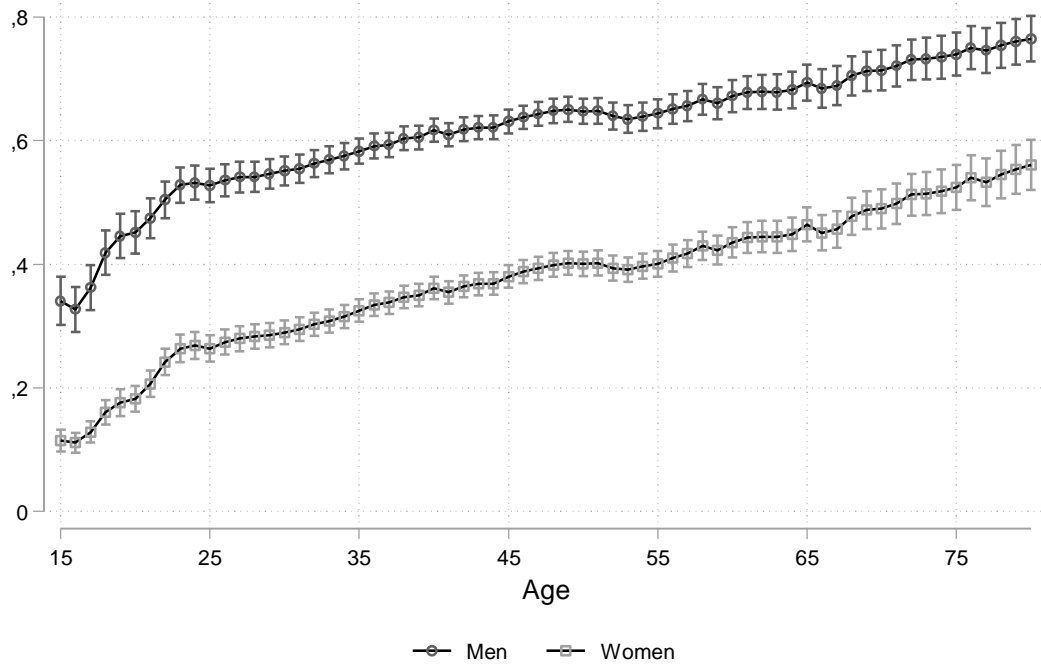*Source*: Own elaboration based on the BHPS Data.

Figure B2. Predicted probability of declaring being interested in politics for men and women by educational attainment, 1991-2008.
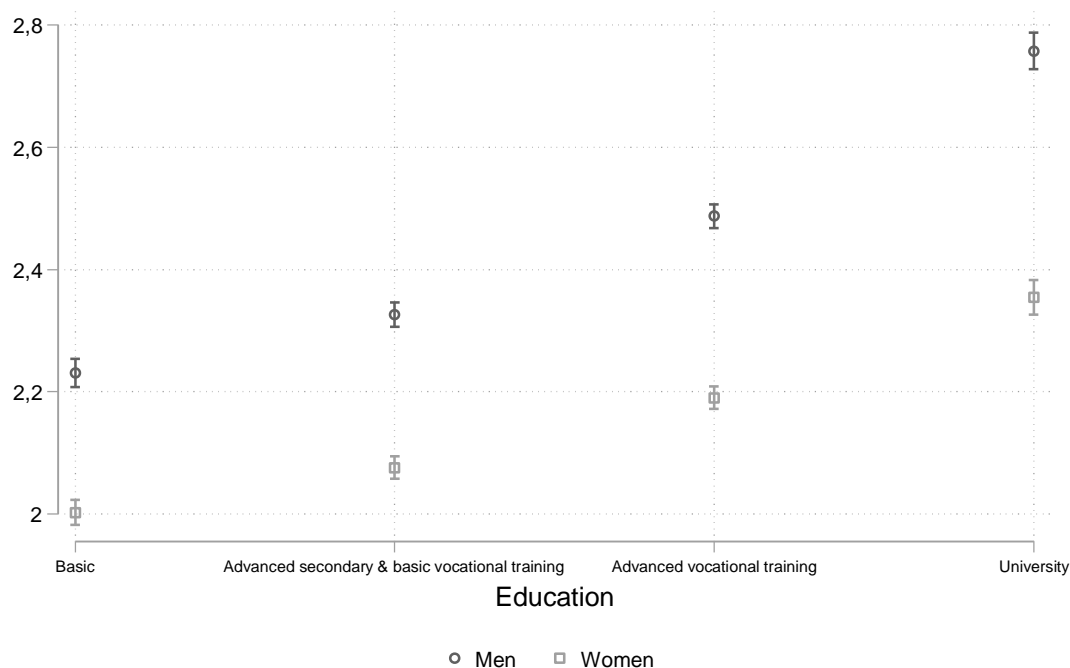
Note: Estimations based on Equation with interaction term between age and gender in Table A1. *Source*:
Own elaboration based on the BHPS Data.

Table B4. Gender gap in political interest: logit panel regression with random effects. Sub-samples for 1991-1996 and 2001-2008.

|	1991-1996			2001-2008		
	Baseline	Age*gender	Education*gender	Baseline	Age*gender	Education*gender
Education (ref. cat.: Basic)						
Advanced secondary & basic vocational training	1,222***	1,230***	1,050***	1,143***	1,158***	1,145***
	(0,0821)	(0,0822)	(0,118)	(0,0698)	(0,0699)	(0,100)
Advanced vocational training	1,694***	1,703***	1,686***	2,154***	2,175***	2,264***
	(0,0810)	(0,0812)	(0,114)	(0,0708)	(0,0709)	(0,100)
University	3,255***	3,264***	3,094***	3,596***	3,622***	3,821***
	(0,121)	(0,121)	(0,165)	(0,0887)	(0,0889)	(0,127)
Being a woman	-1,241***	-1,490***	-1,366***	-1,463***	-2,046***	-1,342***
	(0,0671)	(0,163)	(0,114)	(0,0525)	(0,129)	(0,101)
Age	0,0426***	0,0394***	0,0427***	0,0505***	0,0436***	0,0502***
	(0,00184)	(0,00263)	(0,00185)	(0,00142)	(0,00198)	(0,00142)
Woman * Age		0,00583			0,0130***	
		(0,00347)			(0,00262)	
Education * Gender						
Advanced secondary & basic vocational training * Woman			0,317*			-0,00348
			(0,157)			(0,133)
Advanced vocational training * Woman			0,00579			-0,214
			(0,155)			(0,133)
University * Woman			0,324			-0,421*
			(0,235)			(0,169)
Constant	-2,474***	-2,348***	-2,412***	-3,988***	-3,697***	-4,041***
	(0,116)	(0,138)	(0,124)	(0,0995)	(0,115)	(0,109)
lnsig2u	2,292***	2,290***	2,291***	2,298***	2,294***	2,298***
	(0,0296)	(0,0296)	(0,0296)	(0,0235)	(0,0235)	(0,0235)
sigma u	3,145	3,143	3,143	3,191	3,186	3,155
Rho	0,750	0,750	0,75	0,756	0,755	0,75
Observations	54819	54819	54819	89580	89580	89580
Number of groups	12963	12963	12963	22,692	22,692	22303

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Empty cells are not reported. * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Source: Data from the BHPS.

143

Figure B3. Predicted probability of declaring being interested in politics for men and women by age 1991-1996.
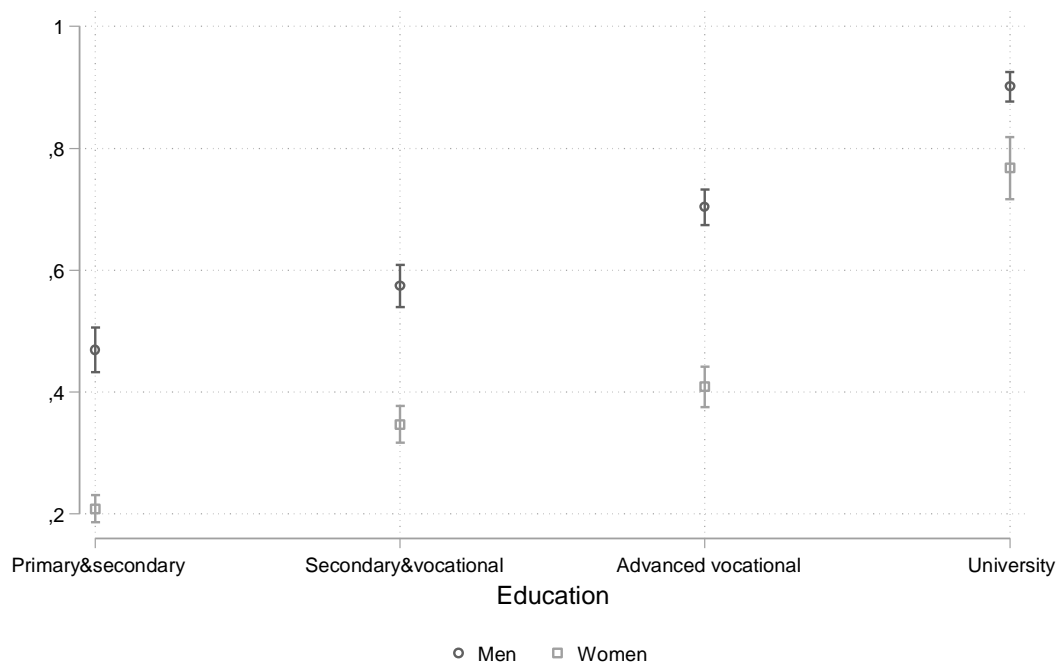

2001-2008
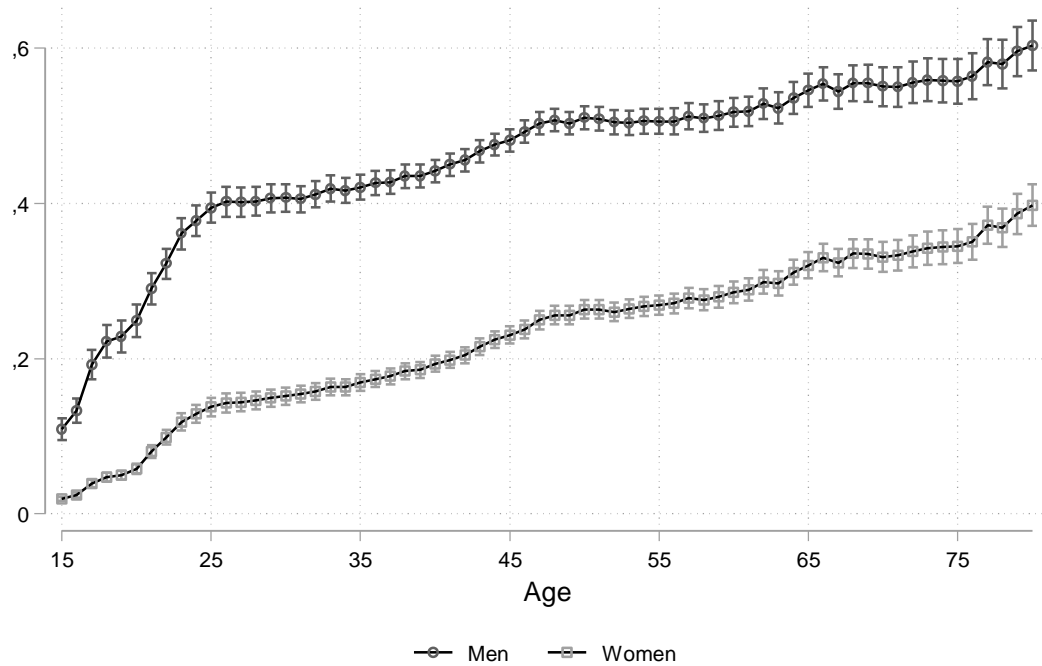
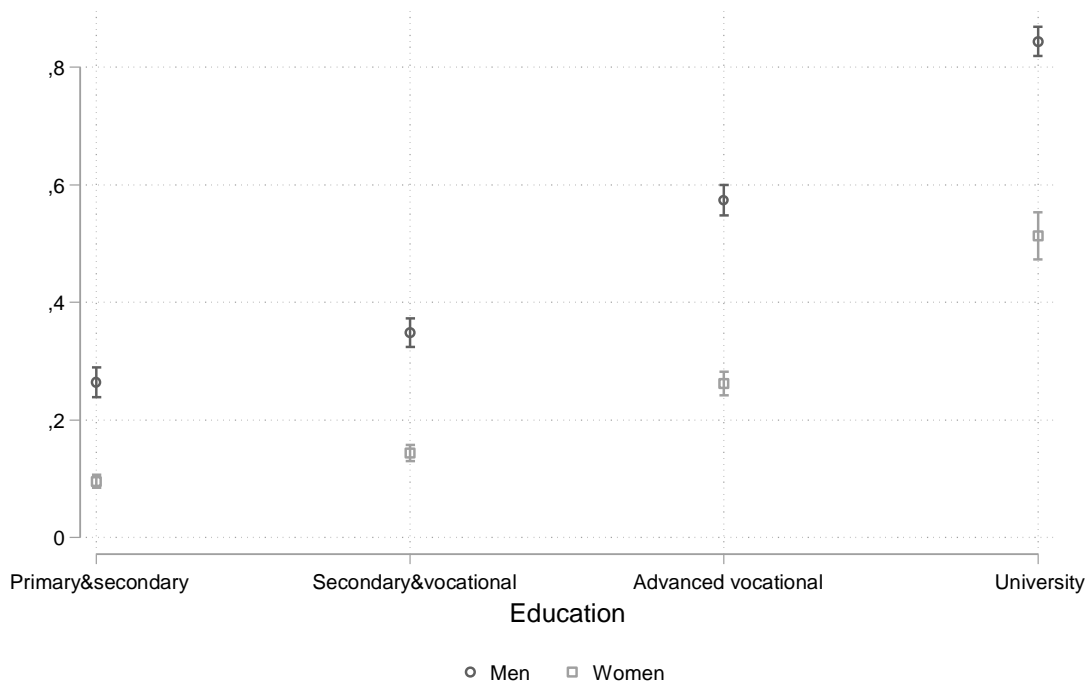*Note:* Estimations based on Equation with interaction term between age and gender in Table A2.
Source: Own elaboration based on the BHPS Data.

Figure B4. Predicted probability of declaring being interested in politics for men and women by educational attainment.
1991-1996

○ Men   □ Women

2001-2008

○ Men   □ Women

Note: Estimations based on Equation with interaction term between age and gender in Table A2.
Source: Own elaboration based on the BHPS Data

Appendix C

Table C1. Average percentage of women in the news.

	Overall	2005	2010	2015
Women as news subjects	25,3 (6,7)	22,82 (5,6)	26,9 (8,3)	25,4 (3,9)
Women by means				
Television	27,2 (8,7)	26,3 (6,1)	27,4 (11,1)	27,8 (7,1)
Print	25,8 (8,3)	22,3 (6)	28,4 (10,9)	25,3 (3,8)
Women by topic in the news				
Politics	18,8 (8,2)	16,1 (6,3)	19,5 (6,6)	20,2 (10,7)
Economy	21,6 (12,3)	20,4 (10,6)	20,6 (15,6)	23,9 (7,6)
Socio-legal	33,4 (18,1)	25,1 (7,5)	34,2 (20,9)	39,4 (17,8)
Crime & violence	32,4 (15)	30,5 (9,8)	37,3 (20,3)	27,6 (5,8)
Science & health	30,9 (11,7)	29,2 (8,5)	31,2 (14,2)	32,2 (9,3)
Celebrities, sports, arts	23,9 (14,2)	23,1 (13,1)	27,9 (12,3)	19,3 (15,7)

Note: Standard deviation reported between parentheses.
Source: Own elaboration based on the GMMP Data

Table C2. Distribution of the dependent variable by gender. Percentages reported.

	Man	Woman	Total
2002 (wave 2)			
Not interested	13,54	20,34	17,22
Hardly interested	32,9	37,98	35,65
Quite interested	39,88	34,37	36,9
Very interested	13,68	7,31	10,23
Total	100	100	100
2010 (wave 5)			
Not interested	18,51	25,38	22,18
Hardly interested	31,14	35,93	33,7
Quite interested	36,37	31,29	33,66
Very interested	13,98	7,4	10,47
Total	100	100	100
2014 (wave 7)			
Not interested	14,62	20,4	17,65
Hardly interested	28,11	35,2	31,83
Quite interested	40,5	35,29	37,77
Very interested	16,77	9,11	12,75
Total	100	100	100

Note: The original dataset does not report those who do not know or do not answer how interested they are in politics. However, it can be estimated that it was less than 1 percent of the amount of respondents in each wave. Given how few they are, these respondents will not be included in multivariate analyses.
Source: Own elaboration based on the ESS Data (waves 2, 5 and 7).

Table C3. Distribution of mean age and years of education by gender. Standard errors between parentheses.

	Overall		2002		2010		2014	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Age	47,6 (18,6)	48,9 (18,8)	46 (18,2)	47,8 (18,6)	47,7 (18,7)	49 (18,9)	48,6 (18,7)	49,8 (18,8)
Years of education	12,5 (4)	12,3 (4,2)	12,0 (3,9)	11,6 (4)	12,4 (4)	12,2 (4,3)	13 (3,9)	12,9 (4)

Source: Own elaboration based on the ESS Data (waves 2, 5 and 7).

Table C4. Size of gender differences by country and ESS wave.

Country	Wave 2004	Wave 2010	Wave 2014
Austria	0,363	·	0,305
Belgium	0,284	0,206	0,199
Bulgaria	·	0,18	·
Switzerland	0,296	0,235	0,313
Cyprus	·	0,446	·
Czech Republic	·	0,292	·
Germany	0,325	0,312	0,331
Denmark	·	0,171	0,271
Estonia	0,181	0,037	0,115
Spain	0,26	0,261	0,305
Finland	-0,008*	0,123	0,156
France	·	0,265	0,323
Great Britain	0,26	0,231	0,249
Greece	·	0,262	·
Croatia	·	0,392	·
Hungary	0,141	0,142	0,217
Ireland	0,299	0,156	·
Netherlands	0,275	0,208	0,226
Norway	0,178	0,25	0,141
Poland	·	0,241	0,32
Portugal	0,315	0,315	0,349
Sweden	0,151	0,216	0,155

Note: Countries with a "·" do not have observations for that wave.
Differences were calculated using t-test in and a sample segmented by gender. Finland in 2005, marked with "*" is the only one where differences were not statistically significant.
*Source*: Own elaboration based on the combination of the GMMP Data (waves 2005, 2010 and 2015) and the European Social Survey (waves 2004, 2010 and 2014).

Table C5. Hierarchical ordinal logit. Empty and baseline specifications.

Equation no.	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
Aggregate variable	Baseline	Women as news subjects	Television	Print	Politics	Economy	Socio-legal	Crime & violence	Science & health	Celebrities
Age	0,0228***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***
	(0,000479)	(0,000479)	(0,000480)	(0,000479)	(0,000479)	(0,000479)	(0,000479)	(0,000479)	(0,000486)	(0,000479)
Years of full-time education	0,160***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***
	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00246)	(0,00242)
Gender	-0,529***	-0,516***	-0,518***	-0,516***	-0,516***	-0,517***	-0,516***	-0,516***	-0,518***	-0,519***
	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)
cut1	2,827***	2,791	2,539	2,791	2,791	2,965***	2,791	2,791	3,064	2,713***
	(0,0877)	(3,827)	(.)	(3,880)	(2,356)	(0,0663)	(3,348)	(3,323)	(.)	(0,146)
var(cons)	0,206***	0,241	0,111	0,248	0,133	7,94e-09	0,155	0,174	0,0721	0,124
	(0,0493)	(.)	(0,162)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(0,152)	(0,0899)
var(e)		0,999	0,0134	0,999	0,991	0,190	0,994	0,995	0,0191	0,00610
		(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Observations	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322
BIC	84308,84	84549,33	84394,7	84550,27	84527,97	84467,79	84560,59	84556,72	84425,58	84359,18

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$

Source: Own elaboration based on the combination of the GMMP Data (waves 2005, 2010 and 2015) and the European Social Survey (waves 2004, 2010 and 2014).

Table C6. Hierarchical ordinal logit with interactive term.

Equation no. Aggregate variable	xi Women news subj.	xii Television	xiii Print	xiv Politics	xv Economy	xvi Socio-legal	xvii Crime & violence	xviii Science & health	xix Celebrities
Age	0,0216*** (0,000334)	0,0216*** (0,000334)	0,0216*** (0,000334)	0,0216*** (0,000334)	0,0216*** (0,000334)	0,0216*** (0,000334)	0,0216*** (0,000334)	0,0216*** (0,000334)	0,0216*** (0,000334)
Years of full-time education	0,151*** (0,00166)	0,152*** (0,00166)	0,151*** (0,00166)	0,151*** (0,00166)	0,151*** (0,00166)	0,151*** (0,00165)	0,152*** (0,00166)	0,152*** (0,00166)	0,152*** (0,00166)
Being a woman	-0,662*** (0,0462)	-0,498*** (0,0381)	-0,671*** (0,0382)	-0,595*** (0,0291)	-0,584*** (0,0238)	-0,591*** (0,0278)	-0,616*** (0,0332)	-0,551*** (0,0247)	-0,514*** (0,0230)
Women News Subject	-0,000268 (0,0103)								
Woman * Women News Subject	0,00444* (0,00176)								
Women News Subject in TV		-0,0111 (0,00730)							
Woman * Women News Subject in TV		-0,00189 (0,00133)							
Women News Subject in Print			0,000861 (0,00827)						
Woman * Women News Subject in Print			0,00468*** (0,00141)						
News subject in Politics				0,00790 (0,00754)					
Woman * News subject in Politics				0,00239 (0,00140)					
News subject in Economy					0,00307 (0,00528)				
Woman * News subject in Economy					0,00160 (0,000957)				
News Subject in Socio-legal						-0,00883* (0,00422)			

150

(table C3 continues here)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Woman * News Subject in Socio-legal						0,00128			
						(0,000777)			
News Subject in Crime and Violence							-0,00161		
							(0,00556)		
Woman * News Subject in Crime and Violence							0,00213*		
							(0,00100)		
News subject in Science and Health								-0,000833	
								(0,00371)	
Woman * News subject in Science and Health								0,0000290	
								(0,000648)	
News Subject in Celebrity, Arts, and Sports									-0,00213
									(0,00466)
Woman * News Subject in Celebrity, Arts, and Sports									-0,00150
									(0,000831)
cut1	0,923***	0,635**	0,951***	1,080***	0,995***	0,646***	0,881***	0,903***	0,881***
	(0,267)	(0,206)	(0,223)	(0,159)	(0,133)	(0,153)	(0,182)	(0,142)	(0,132)
cut2	2,718***	2,430***	2,747***	2,875***	2,791***	2,441***	2,677***	2,699***	2,676***
	(0,267)	(0,207)	(0,223)	(0,159)	(0,133)	(0,153)	(0,182)	(0,142)	(0,132)
cut3	4,952***	4,664***	4,981***	5,109***	5,024***	4,675***	4,910***	4,932***	4,910***
	(0,268)	(0,207)	(0,224)	(0,160)	(0,134)	(0,154)	(0,183)	(0,143)	(0,132)
var(cons)	0,222***	0,211***	0,222***	0,216***	0,220***	0,207***	0,222***	0,222***	0,220***
	(0,0435)	(0,0414)	(0,0434)	(0,0424)	(0,0431)	(0,0407)	(0,0435)	(0,0435)	(0,0432)
Observations	101757	101757	101757	101757	101757	101757	101757	101757	101757
BIC	243373,2	243374,9	243368,4	243375,3	243376,3	243373,3	243375,1	243379,6	243376

Standard errors in parentheses

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: Own elaboration based on the combination of the GMMP Data (waves 2005, 2010 and 2015) and the European Social Survey (waves 2004, 2010 and 2014).

151

Figure C1. Size of the gender gap in each category of political interest over percent of women reported as subjects in the news. Hierarchical ordinal logit.
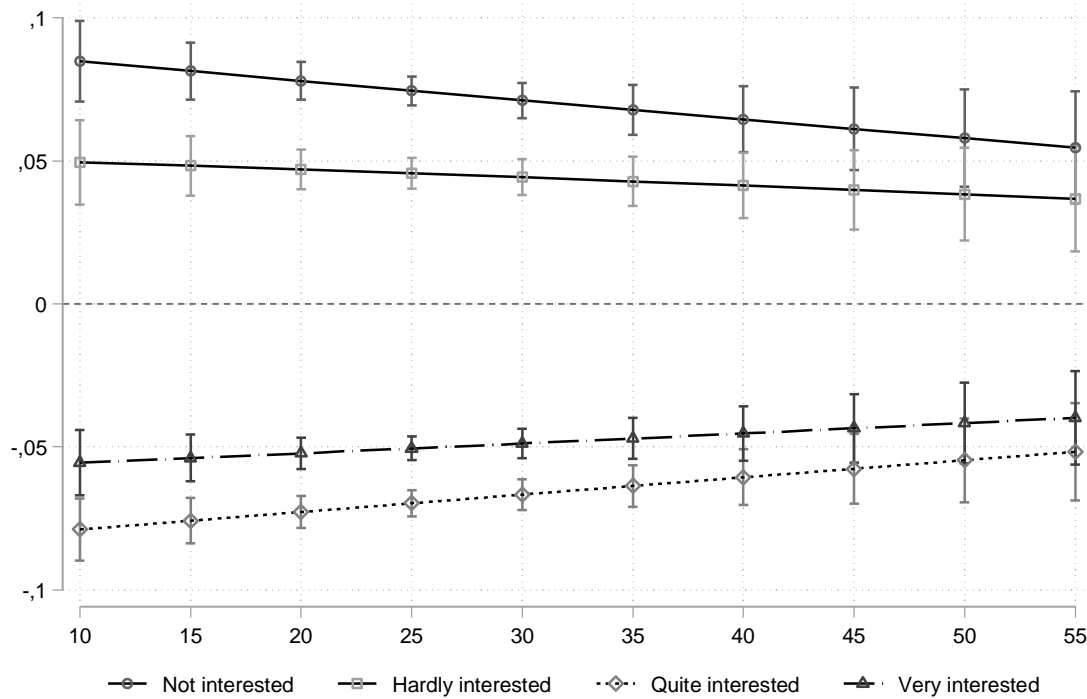
Note: These results are based on equation xi in table A3.
Source: GMMP Dataset (waves 2005, 2010 and 2015) and European Social Survey (waves 2004, 2010 and 2014).

Figure C2. Size of the gender gap in each category of political interest over news subjects in television and print. Hierarchical ordinal logit.
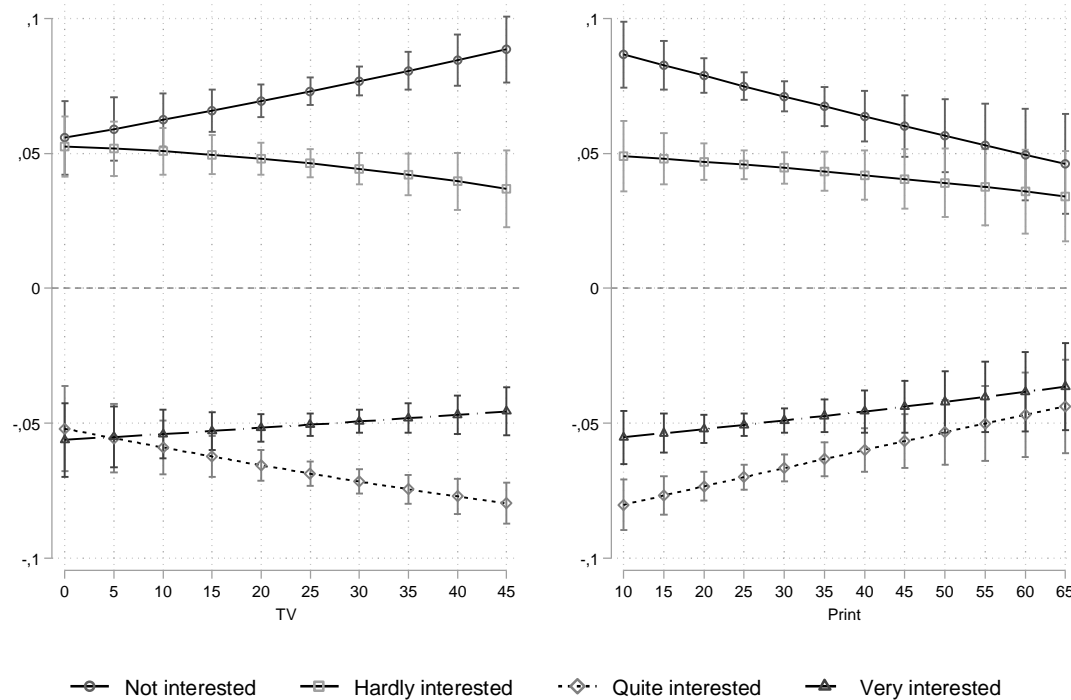
Note: These results are based on equations xii and xiii in table A3.
Source: GMMP Dataset (waves 2005, 2010 and 2015) and European Social Survey (waves 2004, 2010 and 2014).

Figure C3. Size of the gender gap in each category of political interest and percent of women reported as news subjects by news topic. Hierarchical ordinal logit.
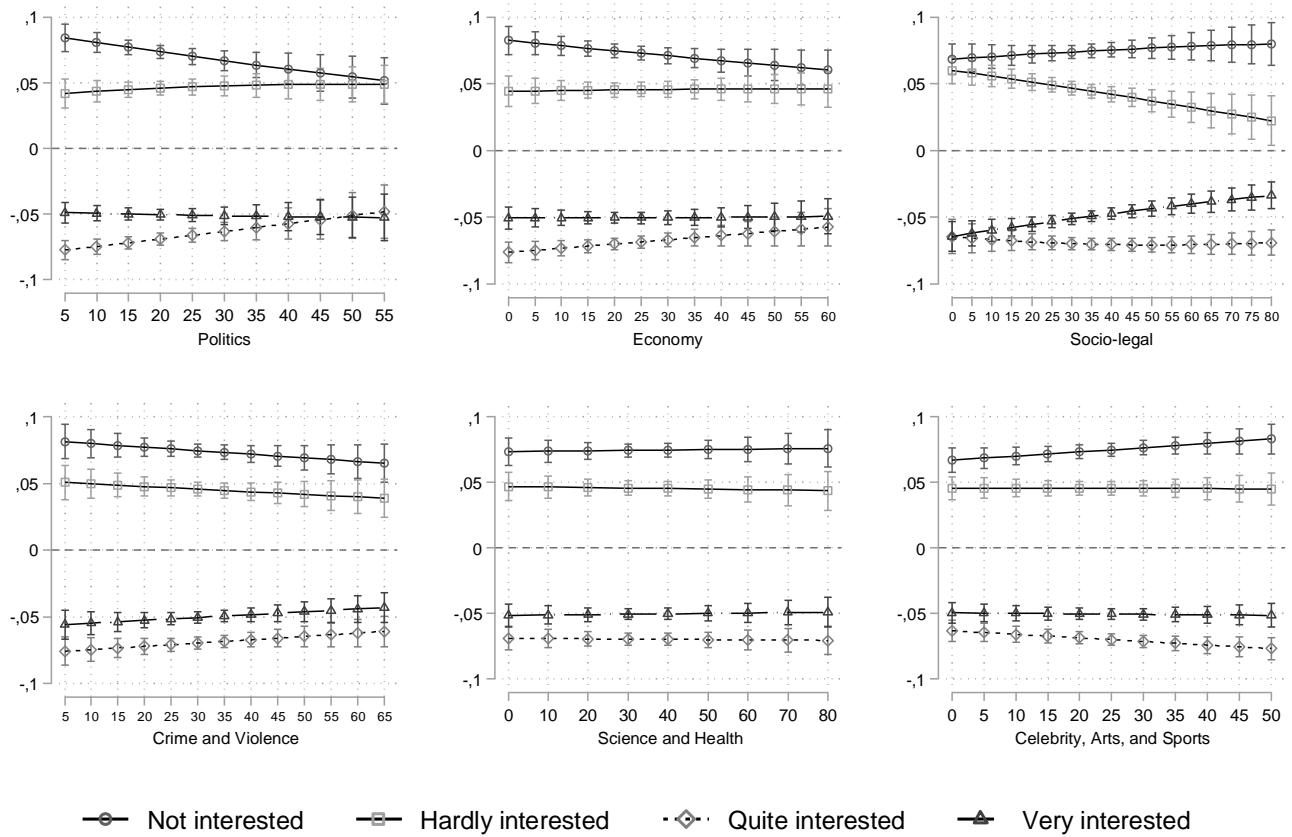
Note: These results are based on equations xiv-xix in table A3.
Source: GMMP Dataset (waves 2005, 2010 and 2015) and the European Social Survey (waves 2004, 2010 and 2014).

Table C7. Hierarchical binomial logit. Empty model and baseline specifications.

Equation no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Aggregate variable	Empty	Women as news subjects	Television	Print	Politics	Economy	Socio-legal	Crime & violence	Science & health	Celebrities
Age	0,00859***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***	0,0229***
	(0,000172)	(0,000479)	(0,000480)	(0,000479)	(0,000479)	(0,000479)	(0,000479)	(0,000479)	(0,000486)	(0,000479)
Years of full-time education	0,0671***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***	0,158***
	(0,000811)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00242)	(0,00246)	(0,00242)
Being a woman	-0,226***	-0,516***	-0,518***	-0,516***	-0,516***	-0,517***	-0,516***	-0,516***	-0,518***	-0,519***
	(0,00622)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)	(0,0167)
Constant	1,310***	-2,791	-2,539	-2,791	-2,791	-2,965***	-2,791	-2,791	-3,064	-2,713***
	(0,0355)	(3,827)	(.)	(3,880)	(2,356)	(0,0663)	(3,348)	(3,323)	(.)	(0,146)
var (residual)	-1,648***									
	(0,119)									
var (cons)	-0,213***	0,241	0,111	0,248	0,133	1,02e-09	0,155	0,174	0,0721	0,124
	(0,00271)	(.)	(0,162)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(0,152)	(0,0899)
var(e)		0,999	0,0134	0,999	0,991	0,190	0,994	0,995	0,0191	0,00610
		(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Observations	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322	68322
BIC	165084,2	84549,33	84549,33	84550,27	84527,97	84467,79	84560,59	84556,72	84425,58	84359,18

Standard errors in parentheses
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001
Source: Own elaboration based on the combination of the GMMP Data (waves 2005, 2010 and 2015) and the European Social Survey (waves 2004, 2010 and 2014).

154

Table C8. Hierarchical ordinal logit with interactive term.

Equation no. Aggregate variable	11 Women as news subjects	12 Television	13 Print	14 Politics	15 Economy	16 Socio-legal	17 Crime & violence	18 Science & health	19 Celebrities
Age	0,0241***	0,0241***	0,0241***	0,0241***	0,0241***	0,0241***	0,0241***	0,0241***	0,0241***
	(0,000407)	(0,000407)	(0,000407)	(0,000407)	(0,000407)	(0,000407)	(0,000407)	(0,000407)	(0,000407)
Years of full-time education	0,155***	0,155***	0,155***	0,155***	0,155***	0,155***	0,155***	0,155***	0,155***
	(0,00205)	(0,00205)	(0,00205)	(0,00205)	(0,00205)	(0,00205)	(0,00205)	(0,00205)	(0,00205)
Being a woman	-0,669***	-0,517***	-0,662***	-0,581***	-0,614***	-0,612***	-0,631***	-0,557***	-0,535***
	(0,0556)	(0,0467)	(0,0445)	(0,0370)	(0,0285)	(0,0327)	(0,0392)	(0,0305)	(0,0275)
Women News Subject	0,00399								
	(0,0113)								
Woman * Women News Subject	0,00415*								
	(0,00209)								
Women News Subject in TV		-0,0130							
		(0,00795)							
Woman * Women News Subject in TV		-0,00164							
		(0,00162)							
Women News Subject in Print			0,00432						
			(0,00887)						
Woman * Women News Subject in Print			0,00383*						
			(0,00162)						
News subject in Politics				0,0101					
				(0,00843)					
Woman * News subject in Politics				0,000936					
				(0,00175)					
News subject in Economy					0,00281				
					(0,00579)				

(table C5 continues here)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Woman * News subject in Economy					0,00240* (0,00114)				
News Subject in Socio-legal						-0,00884 (0,00456)			
Woman * News Subject in Socio-legal						0,00150 (0,000901)			
News Subject in Crime and Violence							-0,000208 (0,00605)		
Woman * News Subject in Crime and Violence							0,00223 (0,00118)		
News subject in Science and Health								0,000489 (0,00405)	
Woman * News subject in Science and Health								-0,000160 (0,000783)	
News Subject in Celebrity, Arts, and Sports									-0,00441 (0,00515)
Woman * News Subject in Celebrity, Arts, and Sports									-0,00118 (0,00103)
Constant	-2,984*** (0,296)	-2,539*** (0,227)	-2,994*** (0,242)	-3,081*** (0,182)	-2,943*** (0,146)	-2,597*** (0,167)	-2,878*** (0,199)	-2,902*** (0,158)	-2,783*** (0,143)
var(_cons[countryid])	0,253*** (0,0507)	0,240*** (0,0481)	0,252*** (0,0505)	0,247*** (0,0495)	0,252*** (0,0505)	0,240*** (0,0481)	0,254*** (0,0510)	0,255*** (0,0510)	0,250*** (0,0501)
Observations	97086	97086	97086	97086	97086	97086	97086	97086	97086
BIC	119012,6	119012,8	119012,6	119014,9	119011,9	119011	119013,2	119016,7	119014,5

Standard errors in parentheses

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Source: Own elaboration based on the combination of the GMMP Data (waves 2005, 2010 and 2015) and the European Social Survey (waves 2004, 2010 and 2014).

[156]

REFERENCE LIST

Abendschön, Simone, and Markus Tausendpfund. 2017. "Political Knowledge of Children and the Role of Socio-Structural Factors." *American Behavioral Scientist* 61 (2): 204–21.

Alexander, Amy C., and Christian Welzel. 2011. "Empowering Women: The Role of Emancipative Beliefs." *European Sociological Review* 27 (3): 364–84.

Almond, Gabriel A, and Sidney Verba. 1963. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Boston: Princeton University Press.

———. 1980. *The Civic Culture Revisited*. Boston: Princeton University Press.

Alwin, Duane, Ronald L Cohen, and Theodore M Newscomb. 1991. *Political Attitudes over the Life Span: The Bennington Women after 50 Years*. Madison (Wisconsin): Wisconsin University Press.

Andersen, Jørgen Goul, Jan W van Deth, Peter Geurts, José Manuel Leite Viegas, Gabriel Badescu, Per Selle, Jan Teorell, et al. 2007. "Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy." GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. https://doi.org/10.4232/1.4492.

Andreß, Hans Jürgen, and Thorsten Heien. 2001. "Four Worlds of Welfare State Attitudes? A Comparison of Germany, Norway, and the United States." *European Sociological Review* 17 (4): 337–56.

Atkeson, Lonna Rae, and Nancy Carrillo. 2007. "More Is Better: The Influence of

Collective Female Descriptive Representation on External Efficacy." *Politics & Gender* 3 (1): 79–101.

Banducci, Susan A, and Holli A Semetko. 2002. "Gender and Context: Influences on Political Interest in Europe." Paper presented at the 2002 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association in Chicago (IL).

Bandura, Albert. 2001. "Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication." *Media Psychology* 3 (3): 265–99.

———. 2002. "Social Cognitive Theory in Cultural Context." *Applied Psychology* 51 (2): 269–90.

———. 2009. "Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication." In *Media Effects. Advances in Theory and Research*, edited by Jennings Bryant and Mary Beth Oliver, 3rd ed., 94–124. New York and London: Routledge.

Barabas, Jason, Jennifer Jerit, William Pollock, and Carlisle Rainey. 2014. "The Question(s) of Political Knowledge." *American Political Science Review* 108 (4): 840–55.

Barnes, Tiffany D, Emily Beaulieu, and Gregory W Saxton. 2018. "Sex and Corruption: How Sexism Shapes Voters' Responses to Scandal." *Politics, Groups, and Identities*: 1–19.

Barnes, Tiffany D, and Stephanie M Burchard. 2013. "'Engendering' Politics: The Impact of Descriptive Representation on Women's Political Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 46 (7): 767–90.

Batalova, Jeanne A., and Philip N. Cohen. 2002. "Premarital Cohabitation and

Housework: Couples in Cross-National Perspective." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64 (3): 743–55.

Bauer, Nichole M, and Colleen Carpinella. 2018. "Visual Information and Candidate Evaluations: The Influence of Feminine and Masculine Images on Support for Female Candidates." *Political Research Quarterly* 71 (2): 395–407.

Baum, Matthew A. 2002. "Sex, Lies, and War: How Soft News Brings Foreign Policy to the Inattentive Public." *American Political Science Review* 96 (1): 91–109.

Baxter, Janeen, Sandra Buchler, Francisco Perales, and Mark Western. 2015. "A Life-Changing Event: First Births and Men's and Women's Attitudes to Mothering and Gender Divisions of Labor." *Social Forces* 93 (3): 989–1014.

Bejarano, Christina E, Sylvia Manzano, and Celeste Montoya. 2011. "Tracking the Latino Gender Gap: Gender Attitudes across Sex, Borders, and Generations." *Politics and Gender* 7 (4): 521–49.

Benesch, Christine. 2012. "An Empirical Analysis of the Gender Gap in News Consumption." *Journal of Media Economics* 25 (3): 147–67.

Bennett, Linda L M, and Stephen Earl Bennett. 1989. "Enduring Gender Differences in Political Interest. The Impact of Socialization and Political Dispositions." *American Politics Quarterly* 17 (1): 105–22.

Bericat, Eduardo, and Eva Sánchez Bermejo. 2016. "Structural Gender Equality in Europe and Its Evolution over the First Decade of the Twentyfirst Century." *Social Indicators Research* 127 (1): 55–81.

Bernstein, Arla G. 2005. "Gendered Characteristics of Political Engagement in College

Students." *Sex Roles* 5–6 (52): 299–310.

Bian, Lin, Sarah Jane Leslie, and Andrei Cimpian. 2017. "Gender Stereotypes about Intellectual Ability Emerge Early and Influence Children's Interests." *Science* 355: 389–91.

Bianchi, Suzanne M, John P Robinson, and Melissa A Milkie. 2006. *Changing Rythms of American Family Life*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Bjarnegard, Elin. 2013. *Gender, Informal Institutions and Political Recruitment. Explaining Male Dominance in Parliamentary Representation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bond, Lynne A, Tabitha R Holmes, Ciara Byrne, Lynne Babchuck, and Sheila Kirton-robbins. 2008. "Movers and Shakers: How and Why Women Become and Remain Engaged in Community Leadership." *Psychology Of Women Quarterly* 32 (1): 48–64.

Bos, Angela L. 2015. "The Unintended Effects of Political Party Affirmative Action Policies on Female Candidates' Nomination Chances." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 3 (1): 73–93.

Boukes, Mark, Hajo G Boomgaarden, Marjolein Moorman, and Claes H De Vreese. 2015. "Political News with a Personal Touch: How Human Interest Framing Indirectly Affects Policy Attitudes." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 92 (1): 121–41.

Bourque, S. C., and J. Grossholtz. 1974. "Politics an Unnatural Practice: Political Science Looks at Female Participation." *Politics & Society* 4 (2): 225–66.

Bradley-Geist, Jill C., Ivy Rivera, and Susan D Geringer. 2015. "The Collateral Damage of Ambient Sexism: Observing Sexism Impacts Bystander Self-Esteem and Career Aspirations." *Sex Roles* 73 (1–2): 29–42.

Brambor, Thomas, William Roberts Clark, and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses." *Political Analysis* 14 (1): 63–82.

Burns, Nancy E, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba. 2001. *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation*. Cambridge (Massachusetts): Harvard University Press.

Bussey, Kay. 2011. "Gender Identity Development." In *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, edited by Seth J Schwartz, Koen Luyckx, and Vivian L Vignoles, 603–28. New York: Springer.

Bussey, Kay, and Albert Bandura. 1999. "Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation." *Psychological Review* 106 (4): 676–713.

Bystrom, Dianne G, Terry A. Robertson, and Mary Christine Banwart. 2001. "Framing the Fight. An Analysis of Media Coverage of Female and Male Candidates in Primary Races for Governor and U.S. S Enate in 2000." *American Behavioral Scientist* 44 (12): 1999–2013.

Campbell, David E, and Christina Wolbrecht. 2006. "See Jane Run: Women Politicians as Role Models for Adolescents." *Journal of Politics* 68 (2): 233–47.

Campbell, Rosie. 2004. "Gender, Ideology and Issue Preference: Is There Such a Thing as a Political Women's Interest in Britain?" *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 6: 20–44.

Campbell, Rosie, and Kristi Winters. 2008. "Understanding Men's and Women's Political Interests: Evidence from a Study of Gendered Political Attitudes." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 18 (1): 53–74.

Campus, Donatella. 2013. *Women Political Leaders and the Media*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Carreras, Miguel. 2016. "High-Profile Female Executive Candidates and the Political Engagement of Women: A Multilevel Analysis." *Political Research Quarterly* 70 (1): 172–83.

Clark, Richard E. 1983. "Reconsidering Research on Learning from Media." *Review of Educational Research* 53 (4): 445–59.

Coffé, Hilde. 2013. "Women Stay Local, Men Go National and Global? Gender Differences in Political Interest." *Sex Roles* 69 (5–6): 323–38.

Coffé, Hilde, and Catherine Bolzendahl. 2010. "Same Game, Different Rules? Gender Differences in Political Participation." *Sex Roles* 62 (5–6): 318–33.

Converse, Philip E. 1970. "Attitudes and Non Attitudes: Continuation of a Dialogue." In *The Quantitative Analysis of Social Problems*, edited by Edward R Tufte. Reading, (MA): Addison-Wesley.

Corbetta, Piergiorgio, and Nicoletta Cavazza. 2008. "From the Parish to the Polling Booth: Evolution and Interpretation of the Political Gender Gap in Italy, 1968-2006." *Electoral Studies* 27 (2): 272–84.

Cramer Walsh, Katherine. 2004. *Talking about Politics. Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Curran, James, Shanto Iyengar, Anker Brink Lund, and Inka Salovaara-Moring. 2009. "Media System, Public Knowledge and Democracy: A Comparative Study." *European Journal Of Communication* 24 (1): 5–26.

Dassonneville, Ruth, and Ian McAllister. 2018. "Gender, Political Knowledge, and Descriptive Representation: The Impact of Long-Term Socialization." *American Journal of Political Science* 62 (2): 249–65.

Desposato, Scott, and Barbara Norrander. 2009. "The Gender Gap in Latin America: Contextual and Individual Influences on Gender and Political Participation." *British Journal of Political Science* 39 (1): 141–62.

Deth, Jan W van. 1990. "Interest in Politics." In *Continuities in Political Action*, edited by M Kent Jennings, Jan W van Deth, Samuel H Barnes, Dieter Fuchs, Felix J Heunks, Ronald Inglehart, Max Kaase, Hans-Dieter Klingemann, and Jacques J A Thomassen, 275–312. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Deth, Jan W van, Simone Abendschön, and Meike Vollmar. 2011. "Children and Politics: An Empirical Reassessment of Early Political Socialization." *Political Psychology* 32 (1): 147–74.

Deth, Jan W Van, and Martin Elff. 2004. "Politicisation, Economic Development and Political Interest in Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 43 (3): 477–508.

Dinas, Elias. 2013. "Opening 'Openness to Change': Political Events and the Increased Sensitivity of Young Adults." *Political Research Quarterly* 66 (4): 868–82.

———. 2014. "Why Does the Apple Fall Far from the Tree? How Early Political Socialization Prompts Parent-Child Dissimilarity." *British Journal of Political*

Science 44 (4): 827-52.

Dolan, Kathleen. 2011. "Do Women and Men Know Different Things? Measuring Gender Differences in Political Knowledge." *The Journal of Politics* 73 (01): 97–107.

Dolan, Kathleen, and Timothy Lynch. 2015. "Making the Connection? Attitudes about Women in Politics and Voting for Women Candidates." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 3 (1): 111–32.

Dotti Sani, Giulia M. 2014. "Men's Employment Hours and Time on Domestic Chores in European Countries." *Journal of Family Issues* 35 (8): 1023–47.

Dow, Jay K. 2009. "Gender Differences in Political Knowledge: Distinguishing Characteristics-Based and Returns-Based Differences." *Political Behavior* 31 (1): 117–36.

Eagly, Alice H., Mary C. Johannesen-Schmidt, Amanda B. Diekman, and Anne M. Koenig. 2004. "Gender Gaps in Sociopolitical Attitudes: A Social Psychological Analysis." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 87 (6): 796–816.

Eagly, Alice H, and Wendy Wood. 2013. "Feminism and Evolutionary Psychology: Moving Forward." *Sex Roles* 69 (9–10): 549–56.

Eichenberg, Richard C, and Blair M Read. 2015. "Gender Difference in Attitudes towards Global Issues." In *Handbook of Gender in World Politics*, edited by Jill Steans and Daniela Tepe-Belfrage. 234-44. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

ESS Round 2. 2004. "European Social Survey Round 2 Data". Data file edition 3.6. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC. doi:10.21338/NSD-ESS2-2004.

ESS Round 5. 2010. "European Social Survey Round 5 Data". Data file edition 3.4. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC. doi:10.21338/NSD-ESS5-2010.

ESS Round 7. 2014. "European Social Survey Round 7 Data". Data file edition 2.2. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC. doi:10.21338/NSD-ESS7-2014.

Ferguson, Lucy. 2013. "Gender, Work, and the Sexual Division of Labor." In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, edited by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johana Kantola, and S Laurel Welson, 337–62. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ferrin, Monica, Marta Fraile, and Gema García-Albacete. 2018. "Is It Simply Gender? Content, Format, and Time in Political Knowledge Measures." *Politics and Gender* 14 (2): 162–85.

Ferrin, Monica, Marta Fraile, and Martiño Rubal. 2015. "Young and Gapped? Political Knowledge of Girls and Boys in Europe." *Political Research Quarterly* 68 (1): 63–76.

Filler, Nicole, and M Kent Jennings. 2015. "Familial Origins of Gender Role Attitudes." *Politics & Gender* 11 (1): 27–54.

Fitzgerald, Jennifer. 2013. "What Does 'Political' Mean to You?" *Political Behavior* 35 (3): 453–79.

Fligstein, N. 2009. "Who Are the Europeans and How Does This Matter for Politics?" In *European Identity*, edited by J T Checkel and P J Katzenstein, 132–66. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fortin-Rittberger, J. 2016. "Cross-National Gender Gaps in Political Knowledge: How Much Is Due to Context?" *Political Research Quarterly* 69 (3): 391–402.

Fox, Richard L, and Jennifer L Lawless. 2014. "Uncovering the Origins of the Gender Gap in Political Ambition." *American Political Science Review* 108 (3): 499–519.

Fraile, Marta, and Raul Gomez. 2017. "Bridging the Enduring Gender Gap in Political Interest in Europe: The Relevance of Promoting Gender Equality." *European Journal of Political Research* 56 (3): 601–18.

Franklin, C. H. 1984. "Issue Preferences, Socialization, and the Evolution of Party Identification." *American Journal of Political Science1* 28 (3): 459–78.

Freed Taylor, Marcia, John Brice, Nick Buck, and Elaine Prentice-Lane, eds. 2010. *British Household Panel Survey. User Manual. Volume A. Introduction, Technical Report and Appendices*. Colchester: University of Essex.

Friesem, Elizaveta. 2016. "Drawing on Media Studies, Gender Studies, and Media Literacy Education to Develop an Interdisciplinary Approach to Media and Gender Classes." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 40 (4): 370–90.

Gallagher, Margaret (ed), World Association for Christian Communication. 2005. Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Programme 2005. [data collection]

Gallagher, Margaret (ed), World Association for Christian Communication. 2010. Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Programme 2010. [data collection]

Gallego, Aina. 2015. *Unequal Political Participation Worldwide*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

García-Albacete, Gema. 2014. *Young People's Political Participation in Western Europe. Continuity or Generational Change?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Garcia-Albacete, Gema, Marta Fraile, and Monica Ferrin. 2017. "The Gender Gap in Political Knowledge: Is It All about Guessing? An Experimental Approach." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 9 (1): 111–32.

Gidengil, Elisabeth, Janine Giles, and Melanee Thomas. 2008. "The Gender Gap in Self-Perceived Understanding of Politics in Canada and the United States." *Politics & Gender* 4 (04): 535.

Gidengil, Elisabeth, Hanna Wass, and Maria Valaste. 2016. "Political Socialization and Voting: The Parent-Child Link in Turnout." *Political Research Quarterly* 69 (2): 373–83.

Gilardi, Fabrizio. 2015. "The Temporary Importance of Role Models for Women's Political Representation." *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (4): 957–70.

Gilligan, Carol. 1982. "In a Different Voice. Psychological Theory and Women's Development". Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Glenn, Norval D, and Michael Grimes. 1968. "Aging, Voting, and Political Interest." *American Sociological Review* 33 (4): 563–75.

Goetzmann, Anke. 2017. "Elementary School Children's Political Knowledge." *American Behavioral Scientist* 61 (2): 238–53.

Graber, D. 1988. *Processing the News: How People Tame the Information Tide*. 2nd ed.

New York: Longman.

Greene, Zachary, and Diana Z O'Brien. 2016. "Diverse Parties, Diverse Agendas? Female Politicians and the Parliamentary Party's Role in Platform Formation." *European Journal of Political Research* 55 (3): 435–53.

Gupta, Sanjiv. 1999. "The Effects of Transitions in Marital Status on Men's Performance of Housework." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 61 (3): 700–711.

Gustafsson, Gunnel. 1980. "Modes and Effects of Local Government Mergers in Scandinavia." *West European Politics* 3 (3): 339–57.

Haraldsson, Amanda, and Lena Wängnerud. 2018. "The Effect of Media Sexism on Women's Political Ambition: Evidence from a Worldwide Study." *Feminist Media Studies*, 1–17.

Harsgor, Liran. 2018. "The Partisan Gender Gap in the United States. A Generational Replacement?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82 (2): 231–51.

Hochschild, Arlie, and Anne Machung. 1990. *The Second Shift*. New York: Avon Books.

Höijer, Birgitta. 2010. "Emotional Anchoring and Objectification in the Media Reporting on Climate Change." *Public Understanding of Science* 19 (6): 717–31.

Homola, Jonathan. 2017. "Are Parties Equally Responsive to Women and Men?," *British Journal of Political* Sceince, 1–19.

Hooghe, Marc, and Dietlind Stolle. 2004. "Good Girls Go to the Polling Booth, Bad Boys Go Everywhere." *Women and Politics* 26 (4): 1–23.

Inglehart, Ronald F, and Pippa Norris. 2000. "The Developmental Theory of the Gender Gap: Women's and Men's Voting Behavior in Global Perspective." *International*

Political Science Review 21 (4): 441–63.

———. 2003. *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D Peters, and Donald R Kinder. 1982. "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs." *The American Political Science Review* 76 (4): 848–58.

Jelen, Ted G., Sue Thomas, and Clyde Wilcox. 1994. "The Gender Gap in Comparative Perspective. Gender Differences in Abstract Ideology and Concrete Issues in Western Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 25: 171–186.

Jennings, M Kent. 1983. "Gender Roles and Inequalities in Political Participation: Results from an Eight-Nation Study." *The Western Political Quarterly* 36 (3): 364–85.

———. 2007. "Political Socialization." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour*, edited by Hans Dieter Klingemann and Russell J Dalton. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jensen, Klaus B. 1990. "The Politics of Polysemy: Television News, Everyday Consciousness and Political Action." *Media, Culture & Society* 12 (1990): 57–77.

Jerit, Jennifer, and Jason Barabas. 2017. "Revisiting the Gender Gap in Political Knowledge." *Political Behavior* 39 (4): 817–38.

Kahn, Kim Fridkin. 1994. "The Distorted Mirror: Press Coverage of Women Candidates for Statewide Office." *Journal of Politics* 56 (1): 154–73.

Karp, Jeffrey A, and Susan A Banducci. 2008. "When Politics Is Not Just a Man's Game: Women's Representation and Political Engagement." *Electoral Studies* 27 (1): 105–

15.

Katz-Wise, Sabra L., Heather A. Priess, and Janet S. Hyde. 2010. "Gender-Role Attitudes and Behavior across the Transition to Parenthood." *Developmental Psychology* 46 (1): 18–28.

Kittilson, Miki Caul, and Kim Fridkin. 2008. "Gender, Candidate Portrayals and Election Campaigns: A Comparative Perspective." *Politics & Gender* 4 (03): 371–92.

Kittilson, Miki Caul, and Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer. 2012. *The Gendered Effects of Electoral Institutions: Political Engagement and Participation*. Oxford: ECPR - Oxford University Press.

Kittilson, Miki Caul, and Leslie A Schwindt-Bayer. 2010. "Engaging Citizens: The Role of Power-Sharing Institutions." *The Journal of Politics* 72 (4): 990–1002.

Knobloch-Westerwick, Silvia, and Scott Alter. 2007. "The Gender News Use Divide: Americans' Sex-Typed Selective Exposure to Online News Topics." *Journal of Communication* 57 (4): 739–58.

Knudsen, Knud, and Kari Wærness. 2008. "National Context and Spouses' Housework in 34 Countries." *European Sociological Review* 24 (1): 97–113.

Krosnick, Jon a., Allyson L Holbrook, Matthew K Berent, Richard T Carson, W Michael Hanemann, Raymond J Kopp, Robert Cameron Mitchell, et al. 2012. "The Impact of 'No Opinion' Response Options on Data Quality: Non-Attitude Reduction or an Invitation to Satisfice?" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 66 (3): 371–403.

Lawless, Jennifer L, and Richard L Fox. 2010. *It Still Takes a Candidate. Why Women Don't Run for Office*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, Seonghui, Nick C N Lin, and Randolph T Stevenson. 2015. "Evaluating the Cross-National Comparability of Survey Measures of Political Interest Using Anchoring Vignettes." *Electoral Studies* 39: 205–18.

Lee, Seonghui, Nick Lin, and Randolph T Stevenson. 2016. "An Expanded Empirical Evaluation of the Cross-National Comparability of Survey Measures of Political Interest Using Anchoring Vignettes: A Research Note." *Electoral Studies*.

Lemish, D. 2008. "Gender: Representation in the Media." In *International Encyclopedia of Communication*, edited by W Donsbach, 5:1945–51. Malden (MA): Blackwell.

Liu, Shan Jan Sarah. 2018. "Are Female Political Leaders Role Models? Lessons from Asia." *Political Research Quarterly* 71 (2): 255–69.

Liu, Shan Jan Sarah, and Lee Ann Banaszak. 2017. "Do Government Positions Held by Women Matter? A Cross-National Examination of Female Ministers' Impacts on Women's Political Participation." *Politics and Gender* 13 (1): 132–62.

Liu, Yung-I, and William P Eveland. 2005. "Education, Need for Cognition and Campaign Interest as Moderators of News Effects on Political Knowledge: An Analysis of the Knowledge Gap." *Journalism & Mass Comunication Quarterly* 82 (4): 910–29.

Lizotte, Mary-Kate, and Andrew H. Sidman. 2009. "Explaining the Gender Gap in Political Knowledge." *Politics & Gender* 5 (02): 127.

Lobo, Paula, and Rosa Cabecinhas. 2010. "The Negotiation of Meanings in the Evening News. Towards an Understanding of Gender Disadvantages in the Access to the Public Debate." *International Communication Gazette* 72 (4–5): 339–58.

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.

Lühiste, Maarja, and Susan Banducci. 2016. "Invisible Women? Comparing Candidates' News Coverage in Europe." *Politics and Gender* 12 (2): 223–53.

Macharia, Sarah (ed.), with Dafne Plou, Mindy Ran, Monia Azzalini, Claudia Padovani and Karen Ross. 2015. World Association for Christian Communication. 2015. Who makes the news? Global Media Monitoring Programme 2015. [data collection]

Mariani, Mack, Bryan W Marshall, and A. L. Mathews-Schultz. 2015. "See Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, and Sarah Palin Run? Party, Ideology, and the Influence of Female Role Models on Young Women." *Political Research Quarterly* 68 (4): 716–31.

Martin, Carol Leone, and Diane Ruble. 2004. "Children's Search for Gender Cues: Cognitive Perspectives on Gender Development." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 13 (2): 67–70.

Martin, Irene. 2004. "Significados y Orígenes Del Interés Por La Política En Dos Nuevas Democracias: España y Grecia." *Centro de Estudios Avanzados En Ciencias Sociales Del Instituto Juan March*. Universidad Autonoma de Madrid.

Mayer, Jeremy D, and Heather M Schmidt. 2004. "Gendered Political Socialization in Four Contexts: Political Interest and Values among Junior High School Students in China, Japan, Mexico, and the United States." *The Social Science Journal* 41 (3): 393–407.

McCombs, Maxwell E, and Donald L Shaw. 1972. "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36 (2): 176.

———. 1993. "The Evolution of Agenda-Setting Research: 25 Years in the Marketplace of Ideas." *Journal of Communication* 43 (2): 58–67.

McIntyre, Matthew H., and Carolyn Pope Edwards. 2009. "The Early Development of Gender Differences." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 38 (1): 83–97.

Messner, Michael A. 2007. "The Masculinity of the Governator Muscle and Compassion in American Politics." *Gender & Society* 21 (4): 461–80.

Moeller, J., and C. de Vreese. 2015. "Spiral of Political Learning: The Reciprocal Relationship of News Media Use and Political Knowledge Among Adolescents." *Communication Research*, 1–17.

Mondak, Jeffery J., and Mary R. Anderson. 2004. "The Knowledge Gap: A Reexamination of Gender-Based Differences in Political Knowledge." *The Journal of Politics* 66 (2): 492–512.

Morales, Laura. 1999. "Political Participation: Exploring the Gender Gap in Spain." *South European Society and Politics* 4 (2): 223–47.

Morgan, Michael, James Shanahan, and Nancy Signorielli. 2017. "Cultivation Theory: Idea, Topical Fields, and Methodology." *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, 1–14.

Murphy, Justin, and Beata Rek. 2018. "Candidate Gender and the Media Attention in the 2015 UK General Election." *Parliamentary Affairs*, no. May: 1–22.

Murray, Rainbow. 2010. "Linear Trajectories or Vicious Circles? The Causes and

Consequences of Gendered Career Paths in the National Assembly." *Modern & Contemporary France* 18 (4): 445–59.

Nelsen, Brent F, and James L Guth. 2000. "Exploring the Gender Gap: Women, Men and Public Attitudes toward European Integration." *European Union Politics* 1 (3): 267–91.

Neundorf, Anja, Kaat Smets, and Gema García-Albacete. 2013. "Homemade Citizens: The Development of Political Interest during Adolescence and Young Adulthood." *Acta Politica* 48 (1): 92–116.

Nir, Lilach. 2012. "Cross-National Differences in Political Discussion: Can Political Systems Narrow Deliberation Gaps?" *Journal of Communication* 62 (3): 553–70.

Nir, Lilach, and Scott D. McClurg. 2015. "How Institutions Affect Gender Gaps in Public Opinion Expression." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 79 (2): 544–67.

Norris, Pippa. 2000. *A Virtous Cicle: Politicial Communications in Postindustrial Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2008. *Driving Democracy. Do Power-Sharing Institutions Work?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ondercin, Heather L., and Daniel Jones-White. 2011. "Gender Jeopardy: What Is the Impact of Gender Differences in Political Knowledge on Political Participation?" *Social Science Quarterly* 92 (3): 675–94.

Paxton, Pamela, and Melanie Hughes. 2014. *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective*. Thousand Oaks (California): Sage Publications Inc.

Paxton, Pamela, Sheri Kunovich, and Melanie M. Hughes. 2007. "Gender in Politics."

Annual Review of Sociology 33 (1): 263–84.

Petty, Richard E., Pablo Briñol, and Joseph E. Priester. 2009. "Mass Media Attitude Change. Implications of the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion." In *Media Effects. Advances in Theory and Research*, edited by Jennings Bryant and Mary Beth Oliver, 3rd ed., 125–64. New York and London: Routledge.

Phillips, Anne. 1991. *Engendering Democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Pitkin, Hanna F. 1967. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Preece, Jessica Robinson. 2016. "Mind the Gender Gap: An Experiment on the Influence of Self-Efficacy on Political Interest." *Politics and Gender* 12 (1): 198–217.

Prior, Markus. 2010. "You've Either Got It or You Don't? The Stability of Political Interest over the Life Cycle." *The Journal of Politics* 72 (03): 747–66.

———. 2019. *Hooked: How Politics Captures People's Interest*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Quaranta, Mario. 2016. "Leaving Home, Finding a Partner and Having Kids: Gender Differences in Political Participation across the Life Course in Italy." *Acta Politica* 51 (3): 372–97.

Quaranta, Mario, and Giulia M Dotti Sani. 2018. "Left behind? Gender Gaps in Political Engagement over the Life Course in Twenty-Seven European Countries." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 1–33.

Quayle, Michael, Alanna Wurm, Harley Barnes, Thomas Barr, Erin Beal, Mairead Fallon, Rachel Flynn, et al. 2017. "Stereotyping by Omission and Commission: Creating

Distinctive Gendered Spectacles in the Televised Coverage of the 2015 Australian Open Men's and Women's Tennis Singles Semi-Finals and Finals." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 54(1): 3-21.

Quintelier, Ellen, and Jan W van Deth. 2014. "Supporting Democracy: Political Participation and Political Attitudes. Exploring Causality Using Panel Data." *Political Studies* 62 (1): 153-71.

Rapoport, Ronald B. 1985. "Like Mother, Like Daughter: Intergenerational Transmission of DK Response Rates." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 49 (2): 198-208.

Renshaw, Stanley A. 2012. "The Contribution of Political Psychology to Comparative Political Analysis." In *Comparative Political Leadership*, edited by Ludger Helms, 186–206. Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. 2011. *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rodden, Jonathan. 2004. "Comparative Federalism and Decetralization: On Meaning and Measurement." *Comparative Politics* 36 (4): 481–500.

Roseberry, Lynn, and Johan Roos. 2014. *Bridging the Gender Gap: Seven Principles for Achieving Gender Balance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ross, Karen, and Cynthia Carter. 2011. "Women and News: A Long and Winding Road." *Media, Culture & Society* 33 (8): 1148–65.

Rotolo, T. 2000. "A Time to Join, a Time to Quit: The Influence of Life Cycle Transitions on Voluntary Association Membership." *Social Forces* 78 (3): 1133–61.

Russo, Silvia, and Håkan Stattin. 2016. "Stability and Change in Youths' Political

Interest." *Social Indicators Research* 132 (2): 643–58.

Sainsbury, Diane, Jet Bussemaker, Kees van Kersbergen, Marcia K Meyers, Janet C. Gornick, Katherin E. Ross, Majella Kilkey, and Jonathan Bradshaw. 1999. *Gender and Welfare State Regimes*. Edited by Diane Sainsbury. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sakulku, Jaruwan, and James Alexander. 2011. "The Impostor Phenomenon." *International Journal of Behavioral Science* 6 (1): 75–97.

Sapiro, Victoria. 1983. *The Political Integration of Women: Roles, Socialization, and Politics*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Sayer, Liana C. 2005. "Gender, Time and Inequality: Trends in Qomen's and Men's Paid Work, Unpaid Work and Free Time." *Social Forces* 84 (1): 285–303.

Scheufele, Dietram A, and David Tewksbury. 2007. "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models." *Journal of Communication* 57: 9–20.

Schwartz, Shalom H, and Tammy Rubel-Lifschitz. 2009. "Cross-National Variation in the Size of Sex Differences in Values: Effects of Gender Equality." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97 (1): 171–85.

Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie A., and Catherine Reyes-Housholder. 2017. "Citizen Responses to Female Executives: Is It Sex, Novelty or Both?" *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5 (3): 373–98.

Sears, David O, and Sheri Levy. 2003. "Childhood and Adult Political Development." In *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, edited by Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears

and Jack S. Leavy, 59–95. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shaker, Lee. 2009. "Local Political Knowledge and the Role of Media." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 86 (4): 809–26.

———. 2012. "Local Political Knowledge and Assessments of Citizen Competence." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76 (3): 525–37.

Shapiro, Jenessa R., and Amy M. Williams. 2012. "The Role of Stereotype Threats in Undermining Girls' and Women's Performance and Interest in STEM Fields." *Sex Roles* 66 (3–4): 175–83.

Sharrow, Elizabeth A, Jesse H Rhodes, Tatishe M Nteta, and Jill S Greenlee. 2018. "The First-Daughter Effect: The Impact of Fathering Daughters on Men's Preferences for Gender-Equality Policies." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82 (3): 493–523.

Shehata, Adam, and Erik Amnå. 2017. "The Development of Political Interest Among Adolescents: A Communication Mediation Approach Using Five Waves of Panel Data." *Communication Research:* 1-23.

Shorrocks, Rosalind. 2018. "Cohort Change in Political Gender Gaps in Europe and Canada: The Role of Modernization." *Politics and Society* 46 (2): 135–75.

Stevens, Anne. 2012. "Comparing and Assessing Gender Effects in Political Leadership." In *Comparative Political Leadership*, edited by Ludger Helms, 207–26. Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stokes, Wendy. 2005. *Women in Contemporary Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Stolle, Dietlind, and Elisabeth Gidengil. 2010. "What Do Women Really Know? A Gendered Analysis of Varieties of Political Knowledge." *Perspectives on Politics* 8

(1): 93.

Stolle, Dietlind, and Marc Hooghe. 2011. "Shifting Inequalities: Patterns of Exclusion and Inclusion in Emerging Forms of Political Participation." *European Societies* 13 (1): 119–42.

Strömbäck, Jesper, and Adam Shehata. 2010. "Media Malaise or a Virtuous Circle? Exploring the Causal Relationships between News Media Exposure, Political News Attention and Political Interest." *European Journal of Political Research* 49 (5): 575–97.

Swigger, Nathaniel, and Meredith Meyer. 2018. "Gender Essentialism and Responses to Candidates' Messages." *Political Psychology*: 1–20.

Thomas, Melanee. 2012. "The Complexity Conundrum: Why Hasn't the Gender Gap in Subjective Political Competence Closed?" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 45 (2): 337–58.

Togeby, Lisa. 1994. "The Gender Gap in Foreign Policy Attitudes." *Journal of Peace Research* 31 (4): 375–92.

Tolleson Rinehart, Sue. 1992. *Gender Consciousness and Politics*. London: Routledge.

Torcal, Mariano, and José Ramón Montero (eds). 2006. *Political Disaffection in Contemporary Democracies: Social Capital, Institutions, and Politics. Democratization*. London and New York: Routledge.

University of Essex. Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2018). "British Household Panel Survey: Waves 1-18, 1991-2009". [data collection]. 8th Edition. UK Data Service. SN:5151, http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-5151-2

Verba, Sidney, Nancy E Burns, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1997. "Knowing and Caring about Politics: Gender and Political Engagement." *The Journal of Politics* 59 (4): 1051–72.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Verge, Tània. 2010. "Gendering Representation in Spain: Opportunities and Limits of Gender Quotas." *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 31 (2): 166–90.

Verge, Tània, and Raül Tormos. 2012. "La Persistencia de Las Diferencias de Género En El Interés Por La Política." *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* 138 (April-June): 89–108.

Voorpostel, Marieke, and Hilde Coffé. 2012. "Transitions in Partnership and Parental Status, Gender, and Political and Civic Participation." *European Sociological Review* 28 (1): 28–42.

Welch, Susan. 1977. "Women as Political Animals? A Test of Some Explanations for Male-Female Political Participation Differences." *American Journal of Political Science* 21 (4): 711–30.

West, Candace, and Don H Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender & Society* 1 (2): 125–51.

Wolak, Jennifer, and Michael McDevitt. 2011. "The Roots of the Gender Gap in Political Knowledge in Adolescence." *Political Behavior* 33 (3): 505–33.

Wolbrecht, Christina, and David E Campbell. 2017. "Role Models Revisited: Youth, Novelty, and the Impact of Female Candidates." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5 (3): 418–34.

World Bank, The. 2012. "World Development Report: Gender Equality and Development." Washington D.C. https://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1315936222006/Complete-Report.pdf.

Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

List of figures

List of tables