

The background features a cluster of approximately eight yellow cubes, each with a simple, angry face drawn on its side. The faces have slanted, downward-pointing eyes and a small, downturned mouth. The cubes are arranged in a loose, circular pattern. In the lower-left foreground, there is a single red sphere, also with an angry face, similar in style to the cubes. The entire scene is set against a dark blue, slightly reflective surface.

ICTs and Youth at Risk: Linking practices with policies

Ellen Helsper

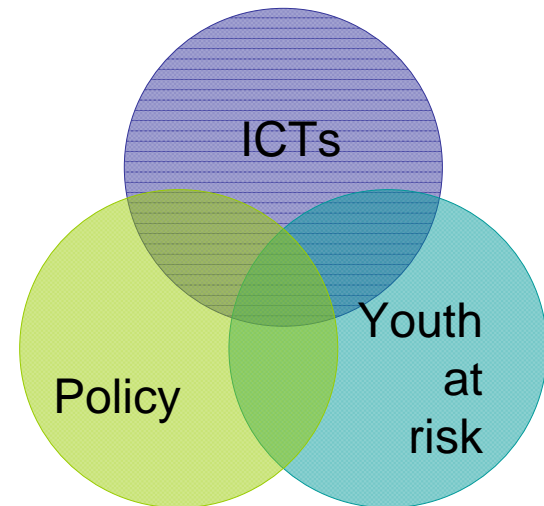
London School of Economics and Political Science

A moving target

The **internet and ICTs** change fast we need to understand better how to deal with a changing field of observation

Young people at risk are mobile and hard to reach but many of them are in some other way institutionalised. Traditional research strategies might not work.

Policy deadlines and timing have a rational of their own which do not correspond to practice or research.

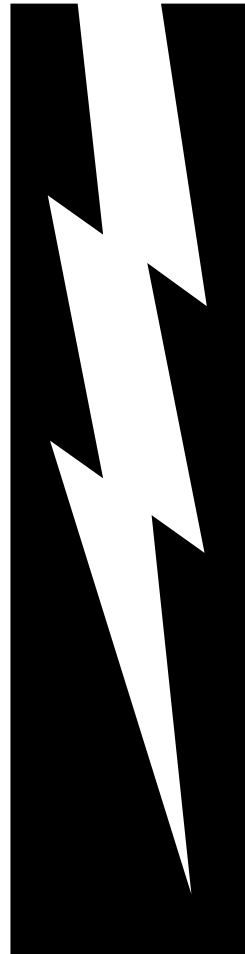


What is evidence?

The **personalised** field of
practice and intervention

Anecdotes and
experiences

Reality



Broad field of **evidence
based policy** making

Generalisability and
statistics

Rationality

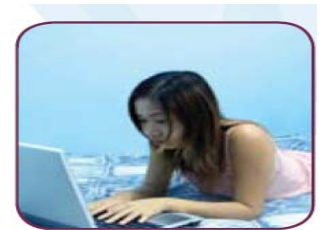
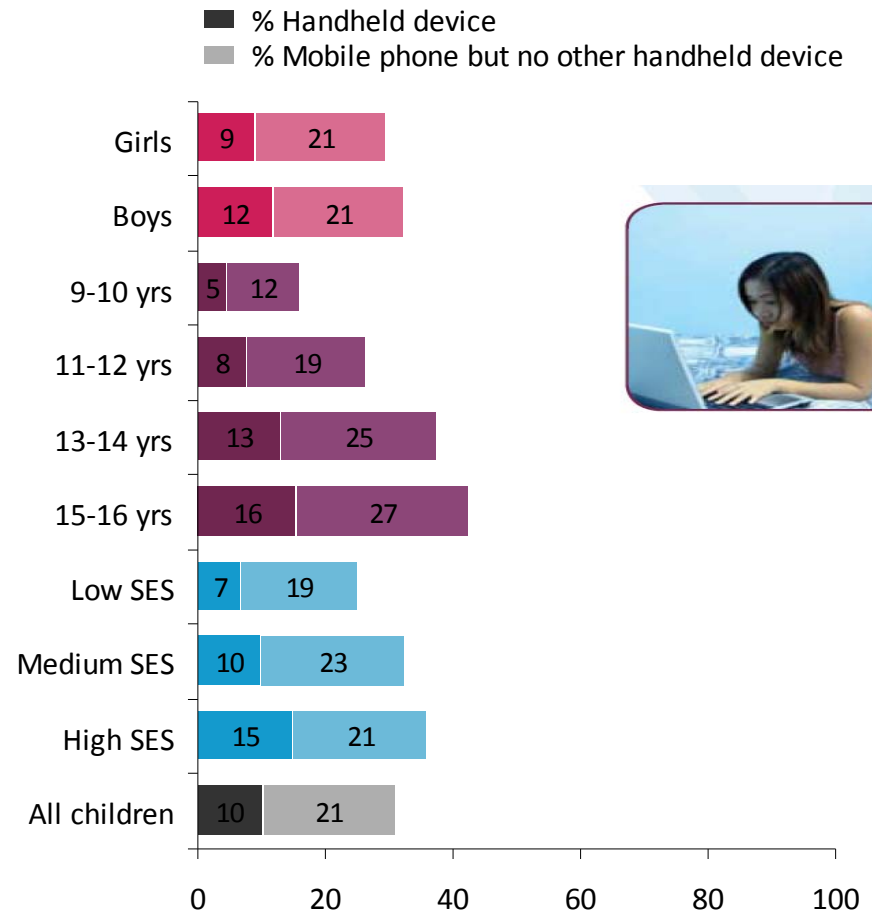
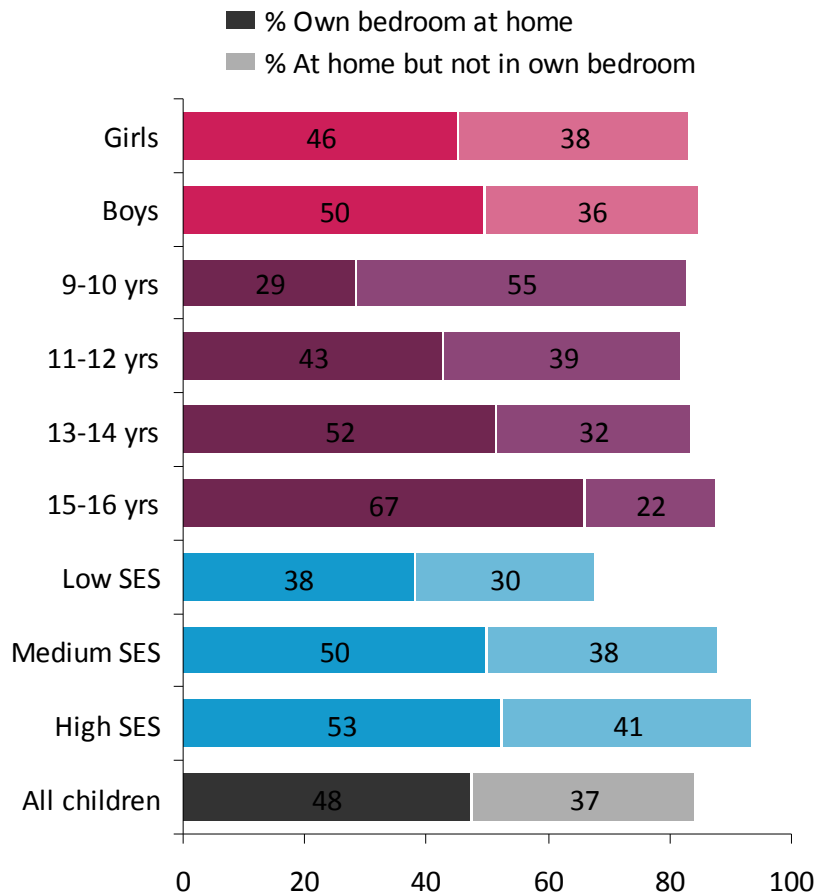


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Inequalities

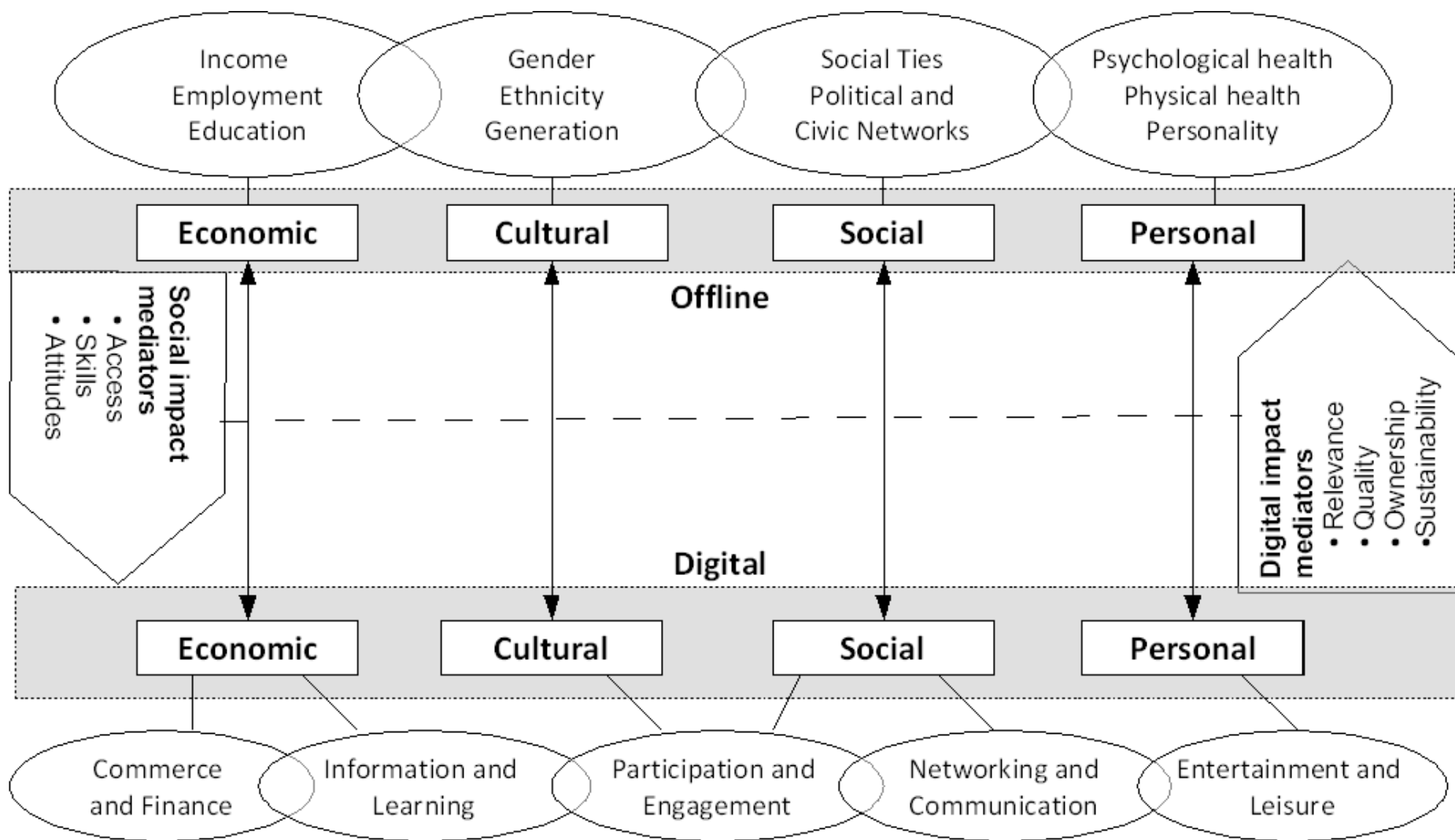


Models instead of points of observation

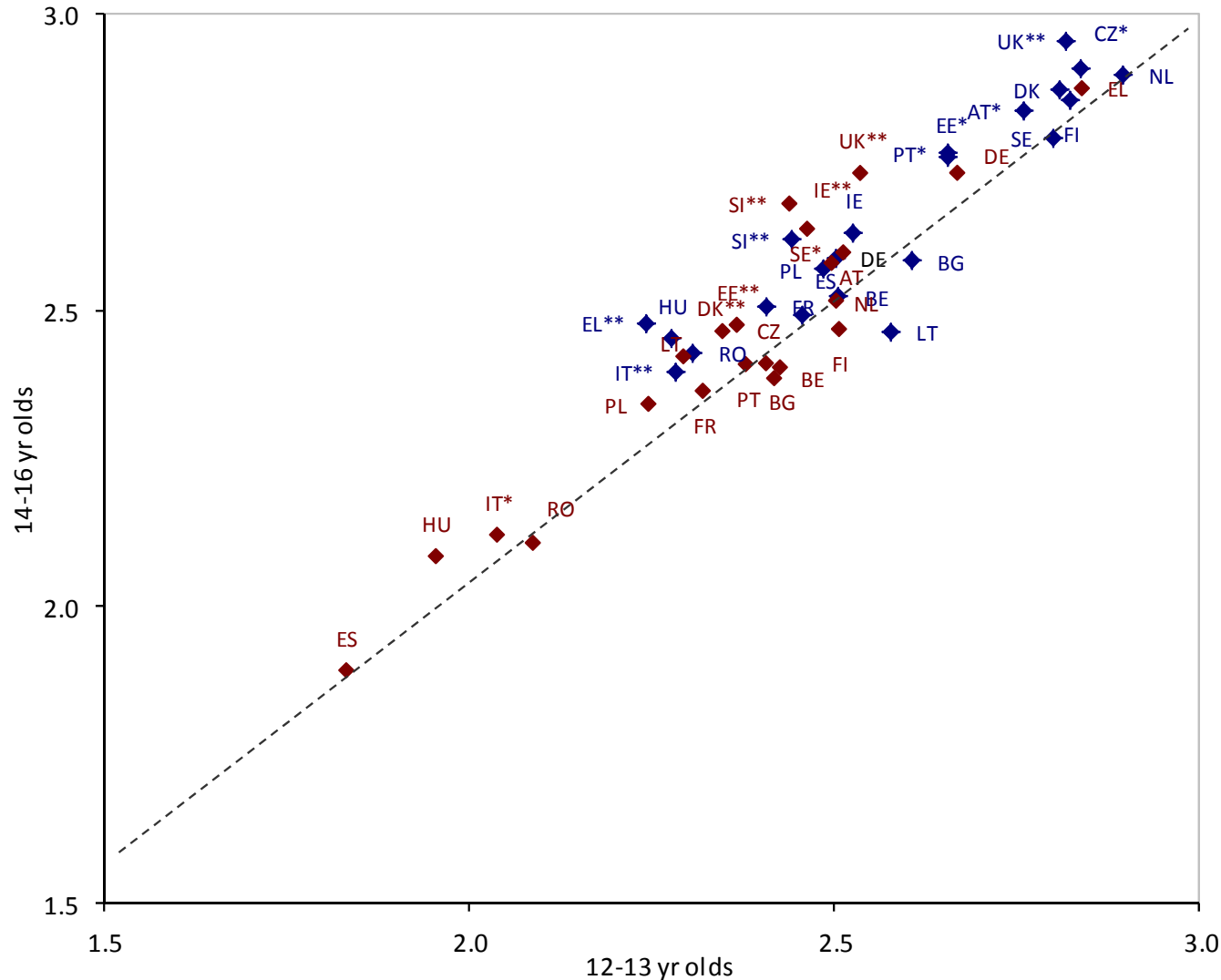
Especially with vulnerable young groups it is important to take **every day life experiences** and their practical engagement with 'authorities' as a starting point to design policy related to involvement with ICTs.

Instead of research starting from engagement with ICTs it should ask: Which **fields of engagement** are we interested in, how can we find corresponding fields in policy, research and intervention?

A **thematic, process approach** based in practice can inform the collection of evidence needed to guide policy.



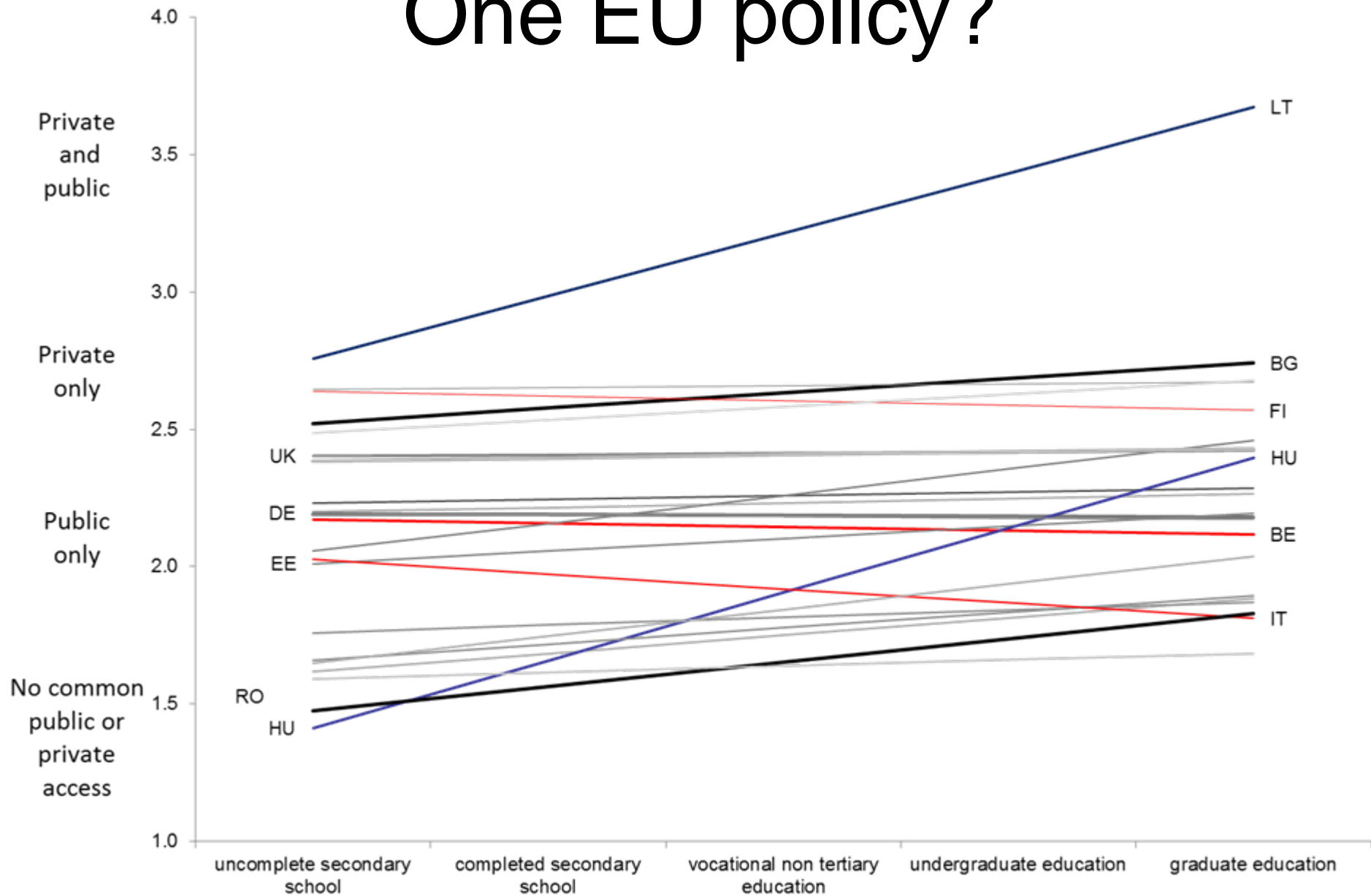
Young and different in Europe



* Differences significant at $p < .05$
** Differences significant at $p < .01$



One EU policy?



Policy realities and digital exclusion

- **Socio-demographic background** of the individual child makes a difference for the extent of engagement with the Internet across Europe.
- The relationship between socio-demographic background and engagement differs by country.
 - inequalities in **access** are larger in countries where corresponding inequalities in **gender** and **education** at a national level are larger and age distribution are less skewed towards younger people and **diffusion is lower**
 - inequalities in **frequency of use** are larger in countries where national level **gender** and **education** inequalities are larger but the judge is still out on how national level diffusion is related to individual level inequalities

Conclusions:

The problems with targeted practice

- If we base policies on the findings of these general studies we **risk ignoring the most vulnerable** since these are often excluded from research practice.
- Any successful intervention needs to take into account the **life worlds** or **everyday reality** of the people they are working with but too much **individualisation is impractical** for policy – Start with practice based on **fields of engagement** or we risk getting stuck with access.
- **Targeted research practices** using **generalisable samples** and instruments for specific populations, analysing processes starting from **specific social inclusion processes** is the best way forward to link policy and research practice in this field.