

# **The Origin of Social Policy for Women Workers: the Emergence of Paid Maternity Leave in Western Countries**

Keonhi Son  
University of Bremen



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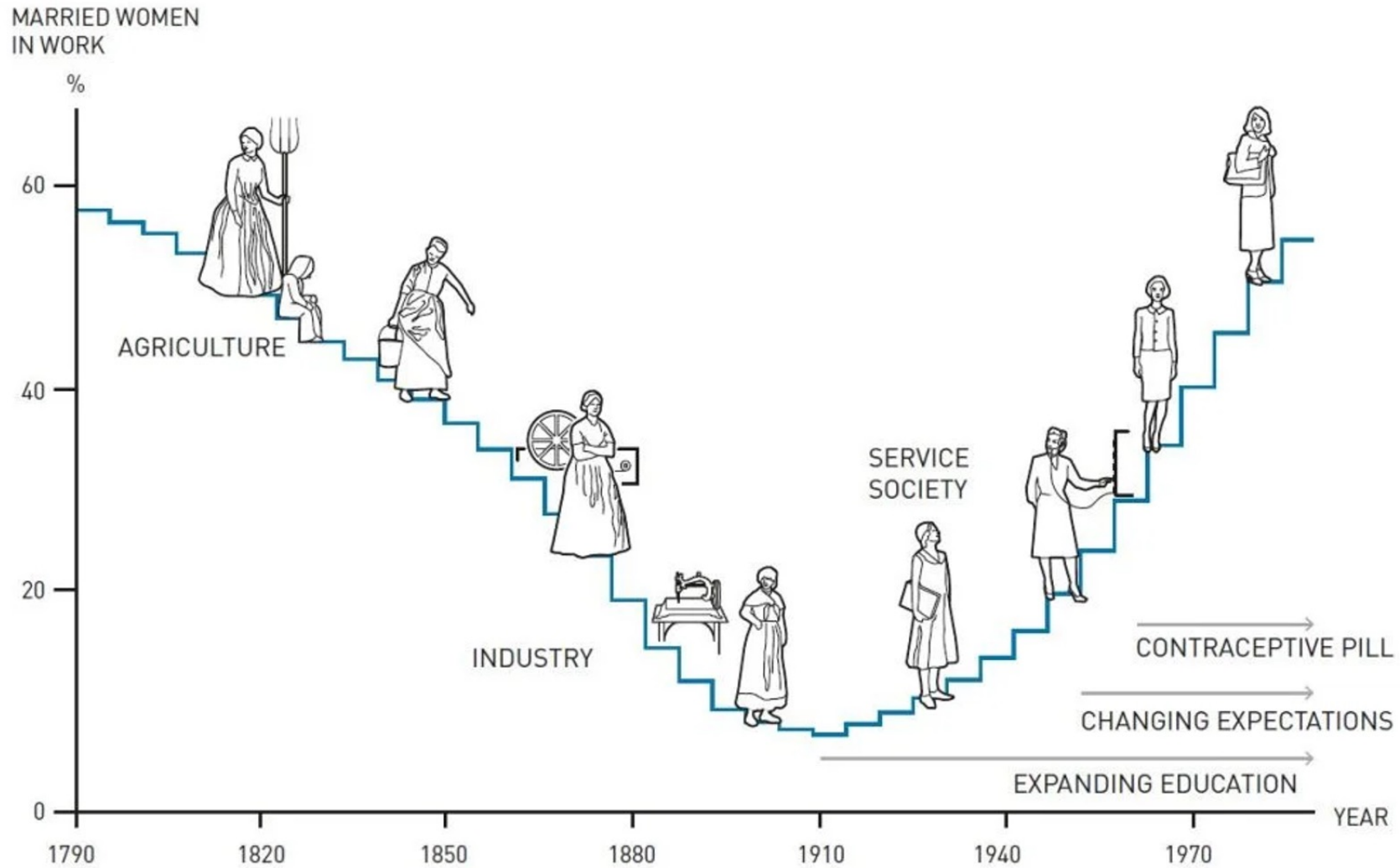
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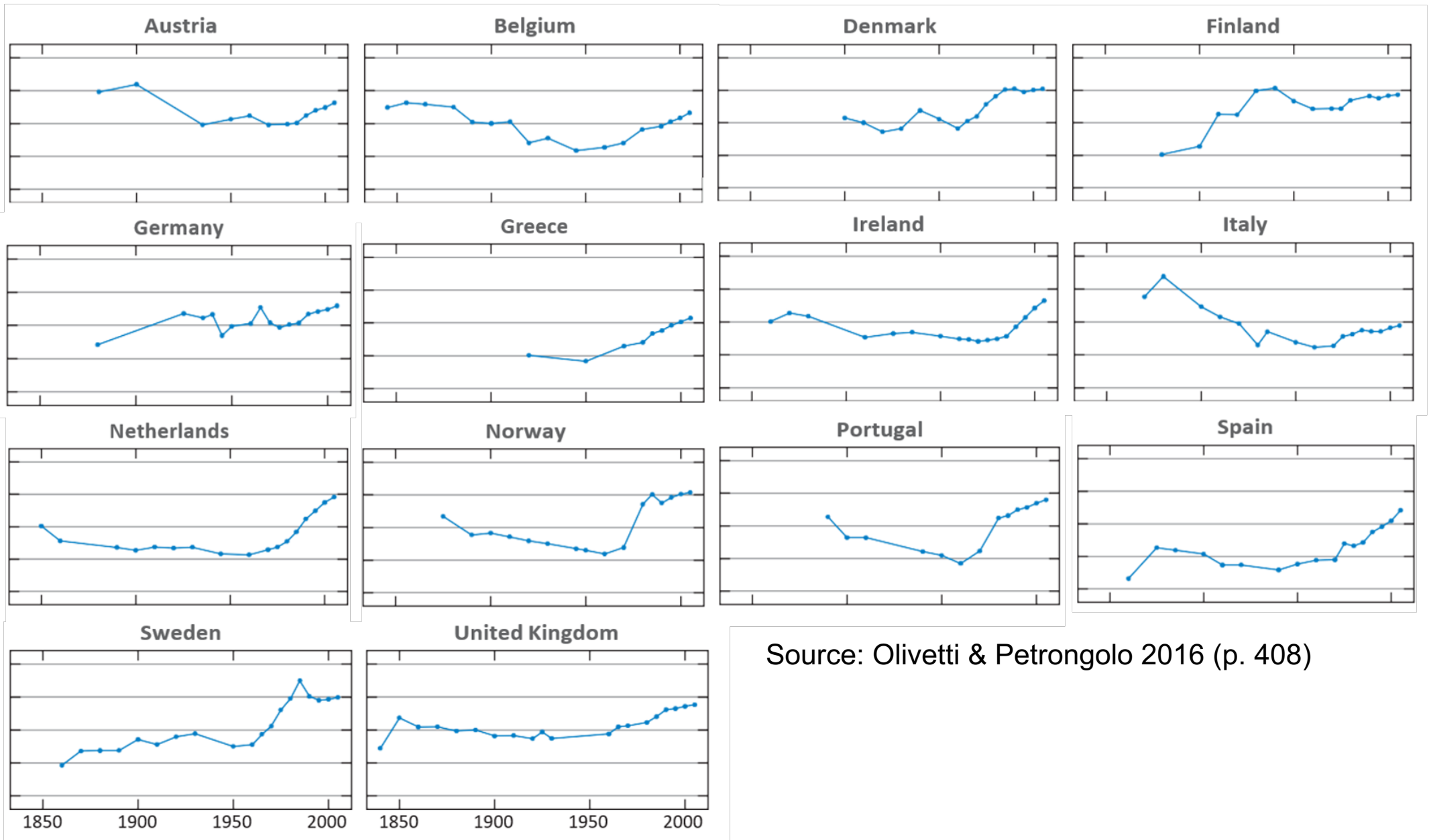
Claudia Goldin  
Harvard University, USA

*“for having advanced our understanding of  
women’s labour market outcomes”*

Picture: The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences



Picture: © Johan Jarnestad/The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences



Source: Olivetti & Petrongolo 2016 (p. 408)

# Research Questions

- 1. How did states historically govern women's labor before the 1970s in advanced capitalism?***
- 2. Did women as political actors matter for the formation of social policies for women workers?***

# State of the Art

## → NO:

- Limited women's political empowerment in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- The strength of women's movement ↔ the development of social policies for women (Koven & Michel 1993)

## → YES:

- Women's contribution to the formation of family policies (e.g., Alva Myrdal in Sweden, Katti Anker Møller in Norway) (e.g., Bock & Thane 1991).

→ **The effectiveness of women's political demands depends on *institutional constraints* (Htun & Weldon, 2010).**

# Theoretical frameworks

## (2) The introduction of paid maternity leave

- **Motivation:** (de)population concerns → increasing demands of maternity protection
- **Path dependency:** pioneer welfare states vs. liberal welfare states (e.g., the United States)
- **H1:** The establishment of social policies against various types of risks would increase the probability of states introducing paid maternity leave.
- **H2:** Countries with strong women's political participation are no more likely than countries with weak women's political participation

# Theoretical frameworks

## (2) The extension of paid maternity leave

→ **Feedback effect:**

- Women's opportunities to participate in policymaking process
- The creation of “spoils”

→ **H3:** Countries where women's political participation increases are more likely to extend paid maternity leave once paid maternity leave has been adopted.



# Data and Methods

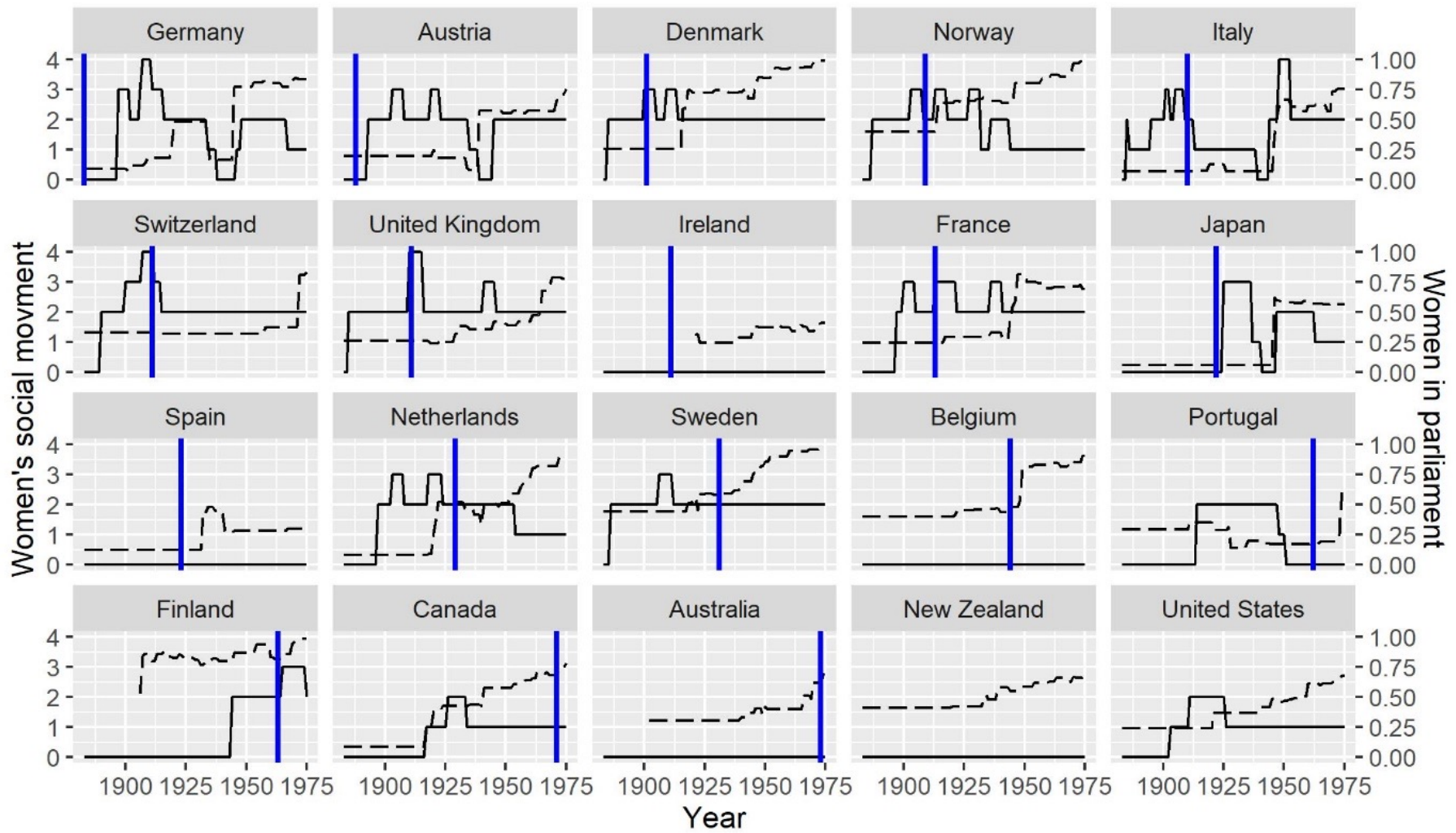
## → DV

- **Paid maternity leave:** *a novel historical database* that measures the *adoption and generosity* of paid maternity leave from 1883 until 1975 in 20 western countries

## → IVs

- **Women's movements:** *an original index* that captures the existence and activities of women's movements
- **Female representation in parliament**

→ **Methods:** **Introduction** (event history analysis) + **Extension** (panel regression analysis)



Variables — Women's social movement -- Women in parliament

	Introduction of paid maternity leave			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Women in parliament t-1				-1.347 (2.708)
Women's social movement t-1	0.561*** (0.212)	0.130 (0.301)	0.421 (0.263)	
Number of welfare programs			1.026*** (0.244)	1.155*** (0.286)
Introduction of sickness insurance		4.722** (1.859)		
Ln GDP per capita	2.294*** (0.858)	3.748*** (1.277)	2.801*** (1.069)	2.757** (1.403)
Total fertility rate	-0.644 (0.607)	1.006 (0.697)	0.109 (0.693)	0.0979 (0.903)
Left government	0.0884 (1.022)	0.158 (1.175)	-0.0922 (1.103)	-0.166 (1.125)
Center government	1.131** (0.441)	3.032*** (1.102)	1.269** (0.628)	1.473** (0.672)
Democracy t-1	-2.877*** (1.060)	-2.533** (1.146)	-2.981** (1.420)	-3.085* (1.704)
Proportional representation t-1	0.137 (0.683)	-1.279 (0.969)	-0.254 (0.709)	0.320 (1.390)
Suffrage	-0.00342 (0.0179)	-0.0606* (0.0329)	-0.0366** (0.0155)	-0.0294 (0.0264)
Protective legislations	1.455*** (0.361)	1.134*** (0.338)	0.875** (0.378)	0.723* (0.389)
ILO membership	0.453 (0.980)	1.482 (0.972)	-0.161 (0.969)	-1.101 (1.110)
Great Depression	0.885 (0.814)	1.604 (1.138)	1.611 (1.143)	1.540 (1.143)
Observations	861	861	861	861
Number of countries	19	19	19	19

	Full-time equivalent entitlement of paid maternity leave			
	(1) Fixed effects	(2) Fixed effects	(3) OLS	(4) OLS
Women in parliament t-1	7.395*** (2.106)		1.739*** (0.595)	
Women's social movement t-1		0.403 (0.357)		-0.0438 (0.116)
Number of welfare programs	0.703 (0.534)	0.897 (0.663)	0.267 (0.188)	0.241 (0.191)
Ln GDP per capita	1.905 (1.117)	3.239** (1.192)	1.973*** (0.309)	1.710*** (0.330)
Total fertility rate	-0.931 (0.556)	-1.061 (0.772)	-0.776*** (0.276)	-0.759** (0.308)
Left party t-1	-0.745 (0.627)	-0.556 (0.717)	-0.110 (0.150)	-0.0928 (0.148)
Center party t-1	-0.233 (0.555)	-0.187 (0.571)	0.0540 (0.119)	0.0582 (0.117)
Democracy t-1	0.102 (0.763)	0.966 (0.898)	-0.0715 (0.245)	-0.0464 (0.243)
Proportional representation t-1	-2.250*** (0.425)	-1.567** (0.575)	-0.270* (0.164)	-0.133 (0.149)
ILO membership	0.716* (0.391)	0.627 (0.423)	0.0791 (0.205)	0.0874 (0.206)
Great Depression	0.688* (0.338)	0.296 (0.343)	0.174 (0.197)	0.170 (0.198)
Country dummies	YES	YES	YES	YES
Constant	-13.98 (8.616)	-24.33** (9.196)	-14.15*** (3.197)	-10.89*** (3.783)
Observations	758	758	758	758
Number of countries	16	16	16	16

# Conclusion

- **Paid maternity leave** was invented by male policymakers for depopulation concerns.
- ***Whether women as political matters*** is contingent upon **institutional context**.
- ***What women want*** also depends on **institutional context**.

