

# The Political Legacy of Feminist Movements on Childcare Policies\*

Analyzing the Long-term Effects of Social Movements in South Korea

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## Abstract

This study estimates the impact of past feminist movements on welfare policies in South Korea. It is well-established that major events such as disasters or military repression in history have lasting social, economic, and political impacts, which often endure as political legacies. While large-scale events like these have been widely studied, less attention has been paid to smaller, yet influential, political events such as peaceful protests. Although there is some debate about the long-term impact of protests on local populations, policies, and sociocultural practices in social movement studies, there is a lack of empirical evidence on whether specific significant events have brought about political and social change. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by focusing on feminist movements in South Korea that advocated for the construction of childcare facilities, examining their regional variations. It investigates whether the existence of these movements influenced welfare budgets. To test this, I construct a dataset that includes long-term information on local welfare budgets, childcare policies, and past feminist movements in South Korea, and estimate their effects using a causal identification strategy. The analysis reveals notable differences in welfare budget trends in regions where these movements achieved substantial results.

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## Introduction

Have we truly inherited the achievements of those who raised their voices in the past? The experiences of protest participation and the resulting rights and gains extend beyond the immediate beneficiaries to shape subsequent political, social, and individual values. Sidney Tarrow conceptualized the *protest cycle* as the process by which a social movement emerges, develops, sustains, and concludes, paving the way for the emergence of subsequent movements (Tarrow 1994). However, the impacts of social movements are not confined to triggering future protests; they also have lasting effects on attitudes, political behavior, and institutions (Amenta et al. 2010a, 2010b; Amenta 2014; McAdam and Su 2002).

Feminists, in particular, have cherished the legacy of their movements by taking over past movements, praising and sometimes reflecting on the achievements of past movements (Annesley and Gains 2013; Annesley 2010; McCammon et al. 2001). Thus, they have emphasized the long-term impact of past results achieved by social movements (e.g. Delap 2020; Kern 2019; Schuller 2021). Despite this theoretical and historical emphasis, there is limited empirical evidence on whether and how the consequences of social movements generate lasting effects on politics and society. On the other hand, political science has explored how major events, such as political violence or revolutions, influence voter behavior, political systems, and institutions over time (Henn and Huff 2024; Rozenas, Schutte, and Zhukov 2017; Wang 2021). Additionally, research has examined the short-term impacts of social movements on policymaking and legislative behavior (Gamson 1975, 1990; Gillion 2012; McCammon 2012). However, there remains a notable gap in understanding the long-term effects of relatively peaceful protests.

This paper addresses this gap by estimating the long-term impact of feminist movements on subsequent government policies. Specifically, it investigates whether feminist movements advocating for the establishment of daycare centers in the past have influenced later childcare policies. It seeks to answer the following questions: Did past feminist movements contribute to subsequent childcare policy development? If so, what aspects of these movements influenced future policies, and through what mechanisms?

To address these questions, this paper analyzes a longitudinal dataset on basic local governments and feminist movements in South Korea. South Korea's local government system represents a least likely case for such analysis, as it has been highly centralized. Until the early 2000s, policy authority was concentrated in the central government, leaving local governments with limited autonomy. This centralization implies that the influence of social movements on local policies would be minimal. Thus, if evidence of a social movement's legacy influencing policy variation emerges in this context, the findings are likely to have broader applicability. Additionally, the lack of substantial local policy authority before the 2000s allows for a clearer analysis of the movements' impacts, independent of prior local government actions. In this paper, I use the case of the childcare movement by feminists that emerged in the 1980s to estimate the impact on the scale of subsequent childcare policy of the differences between municipalities where the movement was active and those where it was not.

I argue that the long-term impact of the feminist movement has affected local government welfare policies through the mediation of an average increase in the number of female council members. In regions that have been progressive in raising issues regarding childcare, not only have women's social advancement been encouraged, but the positioning of the childcare issue as a feminist issue has also improved the local awareness of women. Past successful experiences also increase the expectations for subsequent social movements and actions for women's social advancement. As a result, an environment in which women are more likely to hold political power in the region is created, leading to an expansion of welfare, especially an increase in the scale of childcare policies.

This study has two contributions. First, it demonstrates that the medium- to long-term impact of social movements includes shifts in political opportunity structures and institutional changes within affected regions. While the theoretical literature emphasizes these impacts, empirical evidence spanning several decades has been scarce. Second, this study shows that feminist movements may have contributed to the subsequent empowerment of women. Although feminist studies have explored the role of such movements, much of the existing research is case study-based, with limited examination of their long-term impacts.

This paper is organized as follows. The next section reviews research on political

legacies and the outcomes of social movements, summarizing key issues related to their long-term impacts. The subsequent sections present this paper's theory and hypotheses, followed by a detailed explanation of the case study and analytical strategy. The results of the analysis are then discussed, and the paper concludes with a summary of findings and their implications.

## **Political Legacy, Outcomes, and Long-term Effects of Social Movements**

In recent years, an increasing number of political science studies have examined the long-term effects of political repression and conflict ([Henn and Huff 2024](#); [Rozenas, Schutte, and Zhukov 2017](#)). Scholars investigating the historical legacy of political violence and repression have demonstrated that the short-term consequences of repression often depend on the extremity of the tactics employed. States facing potential unrest deploy various measures, such as censorship, forced violence, mass starvation, and even terrorism, to suppress dissent.

Other research has explored how families and communities transmit memories of past government actions, shaping long-term local attitudes. For instance, Lupu and Peisakhin ([2017](#)) found that individuals whose families experienced violence during the 1944 Crimean Tatar deportations exhibit lower levels of trust toward external groups. Similarly, Rozenas, Schutte, and Zhukov ([2017](#)) demonstrated how state violence in Soviet Ukraine continues to influence contemporary voting behavior. Wang ([2021](#)) documented the enduring effects of state terror during China's Cultural Revolution, showing that individuals raised in provinces experiencing higher levels of violence are less likely to trust political leaders and institutions today.

As these studies illustrate, communities pass down negative memories of death and destruction caused by events such as genocide and famine. For example, Henn and Huff ([2024](#)) showed that the Irish Potato Famine (1845–1849) had a profound legacy on subsequent Irish political behavior. Communities most affected by the famine had lower rates of participation in pro-British Irish militias and the British Army during World War I, while exhibiting higher

rates of rebellion against British rule. Furthermore, these areas were more likely to support the Sinn Féin party, which was pro-Irish and anti-British. This transmission of memory was facilitated through books, monuments, and commemorative community events.

Drawing on the logic of these studies, we can hypothesize that political legacies emerge in communities with strong negative memories of the past. Prior research suggests that these legacies arise because negative information, such as the death and destruction associated with oppression, is preserved and transmitted through local memory. However, can political legacies arise solely from negative memories of oppression, conflict, and state violence? Scholars of social movements have grappled with this question, examining the political, social, and individual consequences of protests and civil disobedience that do not necessarily involve violence ([Gamson 1975, 1990](#); [Gillion 2012](#); [Amenta et al. 2010a](#)).

Gamson ([1975, 1990](#)), seminal work on the outcomes of social movements focused on the U.S. civil rights movement, documenting mobilization strategies and their measurable outcomes. He demonstrated that various forms of protest achieved tangible results. Later, McAdam and Su ([2002](#)) analyzed the Vietnam anti-war movement in the U.S., showing that intense protests negatively affected congressional activity related to peace and anti-war legislation. Their study used protest event data derived from newspaper coverage alongside roll-call vote data from state legislatures.

Elsewhere, Gillion ([2012](#)) argued that politicians are sensitive to protests in their constituencies and may adjust their behavior accordingly. Using econometric analysis of U.S. state legislators' roll-call votes and district-level protest event data, Gillion demonstrated that legislators from districts with higher protest activity were more likely to align their voting behavior with the issues raised in those protests. Although roll-call votes do not always translate directly into policy, Gillion's findings highlight the signaling function of protests in influencing political behavior.

The discussion of political opportunity structures and political mediation model is a theory originally developed to explain the outcomes of social movements ([Kitschelt 1986](#); [Amenta 2006, 2022](#)). Theories emphasizing external variables argue that a social movement's success or failure depends on its interactions with political power and available opportunities.

For example, Herbert Kitschelt demonstrates that the success of a social movement in influencing the political process and shaping nuclear policy outcomes depends on both input and output structures ([Kitschelt 1986](#)). According to his analysis, in addition to an environment receptive to the views of social movements (input), an environment that facilitates the translation of their views into policy (output) is a critical external factor influencing social movement outcomes.

Since then, research on political opportunity structures and their role in social movement outcomes has proliferated. Among these, Edwin Amenta's analysis highlights that the presence of collaborators within the government significantly impacts the success of social movements ([Amenta 2006](#)). Thus, the theory of political opportunity structures has evolved to incorporate more nuanced variables. However, it has also faced criticism for the deliberate alteration of its definitions, which can potentially affect analytical outcomes. Therefore, more specific institutions and factors should be examined when analyzing social movement outcomes, rather than relying solely on the broad framework of political opportunity structures.

In this sense, Holly McCammon's series of studies also provide thought-provoking insights for this study. McCammon examines the consequences of women's protests, quantifying the protests of women's organizations in the U.S. and finding gendered opportunity structures, such as framing and women's entry into the labor market, are organizations contribute to their "success" ([McCammon et al. 2001, 2008](#); [McCammon 2012](#)). Thus, it is important to keep in mind that the importance of the variables will vary depending on the policy area to which the social movement intends to commit.

While these studies provide valuable insights, most focus on the short-term impacts of social movements. Empirical research on their medium- and long-term effects remains scarce. This paper seeks to fill this gap by investigating how past feminist movements have influenced subsequent childcare policies, thereby offering a deeper understanding of the long-term consequences of social movements.

## Theory and Hypothesis

Discussions of political legacies in political science suggest that major historical events shape collective memory, thereby influencing individuals' behavior and emotions. How, then, does the experience of a social movement's emergence and success impact subsequent behavior?

Research indicates that successful social movements can inspire further political participation. Moreover, simply participating in these movements may foster sustained engagement (e.g. [Munson 2008](#)). On the other hand, it has also been suggested that mere participation can encourage continued participation ([Ikeda, Kobayashi, and Hoshimoto 2008](#)). Feminist studies have yielded similar suggestions. In particular, feminists have used the Sisterhood to form solidarity and expand their circle of support from the past into the future.

But how might such participation influence government policy? Drawing on the collective memory argument, the achievements of past feminist movements could shape the political attitudes of later generations of voters ([Henn and Huff 2024](#)). These achievements might also foster a shared identity among residents of a region, encouraging political preferences aligned with the externalization of childcare responsibilities. In either case, the successes of earlier feminist movements are likely to contribute to the expansion of childcare services in those regions. We can therefore offer the following hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 1: Municipalities and neighborhoods where significant feminist movements have arisen in the past have larger government budgets for childcare than other municipalities.*

On the other hand, when considering the long-term effects of social movements, it is difficult to say that collective memory and identity alone explain the mechanism. Rather, through various routes, past social movements influence future political societies. In considering this mechanism, studies on the outcomes of past social movements are important. Based on previous research, this paper argues for the three mechanisms described below.

First, social movements that have arisen in the past can directly influence policies and government services ([Annesley and Gains 2013](#); [Annesley 2010](#); [McCammon 2012](#)). In many

cases, protests address transitory policy issues, but the policies and institutions created by protests define the actions and institutions of subsequent actors. Administrative services as a result of protest actions benefit stakeholders. For example, the expansion of welfare obtained by a feminist movement may lead to the empowerment of women in the area. Specifically, the expansion of childcare services may encourage women's economic and political advancement. The increased economic advancement of women may also lead to changes in the behavior of voters and those in power.

Second, social movements that have occurred in the past influence voters, memories passed on to the community, and subsequent political attitudes ([Munson 2008](#); [Ikeda, Kobayashi, and Hoshimoto 2008](#)). As a result, social movements can influence power structures in a community. The actions of feminists, for example, may alter other people's values about gender roles. In accordance with the case study in this paper, the childcare movement may make the socialization of childcare a commonplace value.

Third, past social movements and their subsequent successes influence future social movements. As has been pointed out in discussions of so-called political process and protest cycles, past movements feed future movements. For example, future social movements may use past movements as a reference to determine their strategies, and tactical innovations may occur ([Tarrow 1994](#); [Tarrow and Tilly 2009](#)). Sometimes, they use symbolic references to past movements in an attempt to mobilize. The existence of political repression or counter-movements may also determine the mobilization and success or failure of the social movement in question ([Inata 2021](#)).

With the above mechanisms in mind, this paper argues that the past feminist movement, in particular, influenced the increase in the number of female legislators in the region concerned, and consequently the scale of policies regarding child care. This is because the increase in the number of female legislators is a variable that reflects all three of the above mechanisms. The emergence of feminist movements in the past has led to an increase in government services, which in turn encourages the social advancement of women in the region. The success experiences of feminists in the region have also weakened resistance to women holding power, resulting in an environment that is more conducive to women holding power. In response to



these developments, feminists lead new social movements, giving rise to innovative movements. As a result of these developments, we can expect women's political advancement in the region to increase.

As is known, the increase in the number of women in power in the region expands the welfare budget (Sainsbury 1994; Orloff 1993). In particular, women are oriented toward service-providing policies to remove the obstacles they have experienced, thus contributing to women's advancement in society (Enns-Jedenastik 2017). Given these facts, it can be predicted that childcare-related budgets will increase as the number of female legislators increases as a result of past social movements. Although there has been a change in attitudes regarding gender roles compared to the past, women still bear the majority of the childcare burden. In order to reduce women's child-rearing burden and remove obstacles to social advancement, it is essential to externalize and socialize child-rearing as well as to change men's awareness. In order to completely externalize child rearing, it is essential not only for the community to provide mutual assistance, but also for the government to provide support and expand services. For example, the establishment of more daycare centers, the securing of childcare workers, and support for childcare costs are essential for women to escape the burden of childcare. Women in power are oriented toward the above policies to reduce the burden of childcare. As a result, in regions with relatively more female legislators, budgets related to childcare are likely to increase among welfare budgets.

*Hypothesis 2: The impact of a significant feminist movement in the past will influence childcare budgets through the mediation of the number of female legislators.*

## Methods

### Case

Since around the 1970s, the increased burden of childcare accompanying women's economic advancement has become a social problem in Korea. In 1987, the first non-profit and private joint day-care center was established in Seoul, and this marked the beginning of the day-care movement to build day-care centers centering on joint day-care and inexpensive non-profit services, and to increase pressure on the central and local authorities. It is believed that the crèche movement began to strengthen the crèche. Although this social movement was not necessarily exclusively feminist, many of the stakeholders and participants were "women," and people from churches, labor unions, women's organizations, and the student movement, which was very active at the time, developed the day-care center movement in various parts of the country.

Since the 1990s, the movement has been led by a coalition of daycare centers, women workers, and peasant women. Both groups were increasingly raising issues related to government regulation of childcare and the burden of childcare fees. In particular, they focused on the socialization of childcare, with the goal of shifting the responsibility for raising children from parents to society.

After many legal changes, the daycare movement came to an end as the number of public daycare centers increased in the 2000s. However, in some areas, cooperatives and local communities have come together to continue joint childcare schemes. Women's organizations also continue to operate childcare centers in workplaces, especially to support women workers. As a result, the childcare movement is an important foundation and legacy for local feminists.

We can view this movement not only as a social movement by the local community, but also as a feminist movement, because the externalization of care, including childcare, is a representative demand of feminists in both theory and practice. This is because the externalization of care, including childcare, is a representative demand, both theoretically and practically, of feminists. In fact, many of the participants are "women," and the results

of the movement have been returned primarily to the women who have been responsible for childcare. Needless to say, inexpensive childcare services, shared childcare, and the creation of safe childcare environments will lead to the realization of the feminist vision of society. These were also recognized by existing feminist organizations, especially women workers, peasant women, and women in the church.

This paper argues that regional variations in the South Korean feminist movement have significantly influenced subsequent childcare policies across different regions. While the childcare movement originated in Seoul and later spread nationwide, its degree of success and institutionalization varies widely. In some regions, the movement firmly took root and left a lasting legacy, while in others, it failed to establish a significant presence. Consequently, regional differences persist in how the movement is remembered and whether it remains a part of the collective local memory. This variation makes the case of South Korea particularly suitable for testing the hypotheses proposed in this study.

For analytical purposes, this paper excludes Metropolitan Cities from the analysis to account for disparities in fiscal capacity and administrative authority between urban centers and other municipalities. Metropolitan Cities—defined as Seoul, Busan, Daegu, Incheon, Gwangju, Daejeon, Ulsan, Sejong, and Jeju—are governed by regional governments with greater authority, whereas basic municipalities within these cities wield relatively less power. Differences in governance structures, particularly in childcare and education policies, may result in distinct policy processes that are not comparable to those of other regions. As part of the research design, these cases are therefore omitted to ensure analytical consistency.

## **Data and Analytical Strategies**

The main outcome variable in this paper is the average percentage of child care-related budgets in the welfare budgets of local governments. In this paper, we use the percentage of the average of each municipality's budget from 2010 to 2021 obtained from the Statistics Korea. If the hypothesis of this paper is correct, we can expect that regions with significant social movements in the past will have a larger share of their welfare budgets related to child care

than other regions. In this paper, we consider the budget related to child care to be the number of local government budget items in Korea that is the sum of the budget related to initial education and child care and the budget related to children, women, and families.

The explanatory variable is the presence or absence of feminist movements that occurred in the past. I estimate the long-term impact of the child-care movement in Korea by identifying the prominent social movements that have been handed down to the present day among the child-care movements that occurred from the 1970s to the 1990s, and comparing the municipalities where the movements occurred and their neighbors as the areas where the prominent movements occurred with the other areas. Since we do not have data on past child-care movements in Korea, we constructed our data in the following way. First, I comprehensively verified the existence of child-care movements in local governments using websites and archives. Since what we want to see is the occurrence or non-occurrence of social movements that can be traced back to the past, social movements that can also be verified on the Internet and web resources are appropriate to be used as data for this paper. I then used newspaper article archives to examine the details of these movements in various regions. Specifically, I ascertained when and where the movements arose, the organizations involved, and the activities undertaken in order to verify the correctness of the data obtained through exhaustive research. Through the above, I identified 11 movements as prominent social movements.

I assume that the impact of these 11 exercises will extend not only to the municipality in question but also to its adjacent municipalities. Therefore, we need to determine the extent of the impact by measuring the distance between municipalities. Therefore, I identified each municipality based on the municipalities where significant movements occurred and set the threshold at 30 km to identify the adjacent municipalities that would be affected (Figure 1). Since this threshold cannot be determined mechanically, it is subject to the arbitrariness of the analyst. For this reason, we decided to eliminate this arbitrariness as much as possible by presenting the results of the analysis with thresholds of 20 km and 10 km, in addition to the 30 km threshold. If we preempt the results, changing the thresholds does not change the results of the analysis. Rather, each time the threshold was increased, the results became less statistically significant. This is consistent with the hypothesis of this paper that outcomes occur in areas

where significant movement has occurred in the past.

The Figure 1 shows the geographic distribution of the data used in this paper. Unfortunately, most of the movements we have determined to be active are concentrated in the metropolitan area. However, they are not necessarily present only in the metropolitan area, and there is some variation among suburban areas. While distance from the metropolitan area would normally be expected to influence the results in such cases, in the case of this analysis, it does not seem to be necessarily the case that this is the case only in the urban areas.

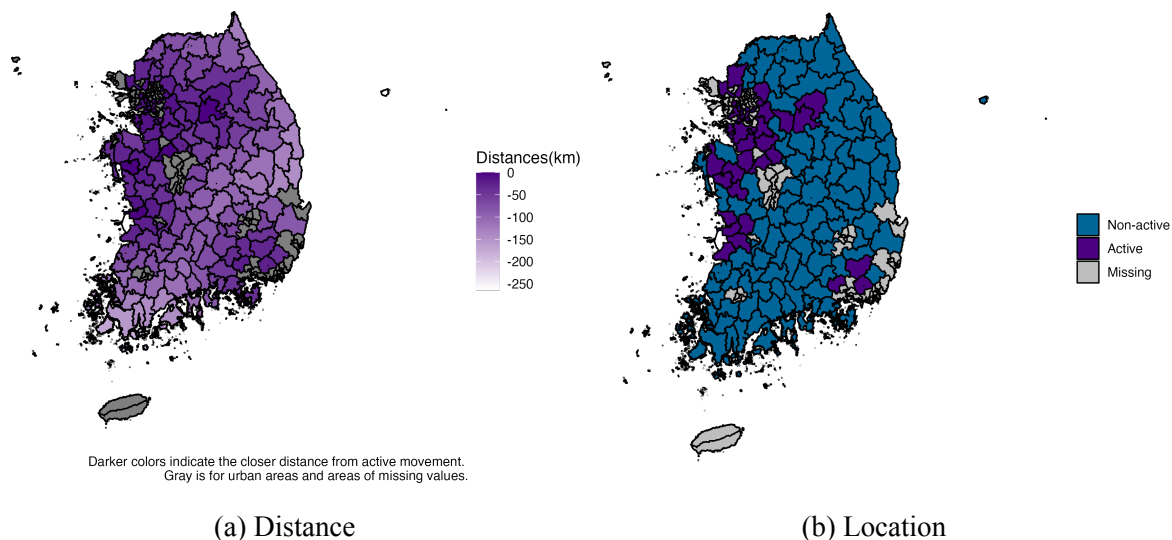


Figure 1: Location and Distance of Active Feminist Movements

However, even if we were able to measure a significant feminist movement using the above methods, we must acknowledge that endogenous characteristics may arise due to biases in the generation of the movement and in the observation process. Many of the movements that are passed down tend to originate in urban areas, and their most notable achievements tend to be concentrated in urban areas. Specifically, there are significant differences in the resources available in urban and rural areas. Not only that, most information on social movements is reported mainly in urban areas, where the mass media is concentrated, while movements in peripheral areas are not reported as much. As a result, when discussing the outcomes of any social movement, it is necessary to address the issue of endogeneity.

In political science, instrumental variables are often used to address endogeneity. In

fact, there have been many attempts to estimate causality by using manipulated variables such as weather when examining the impact of protests. However, review articles on manipulated variables reveal that many manipulated variables related to weather are used incorrectly. In addition, social movements that do not involve demonstrations or outdoor activities are not considered to be affected by weather in the first place. Given that there are many confounding factors in the occurrence of social movements themselves, it would be difficult to easily rely on manipulated variables.

Therefore, in addition to multiple regression analysis, this paper examines causality by considering endogeneity through analysis using a matching strategy. Causal identification by matching strategy allows comparison between groups that are homogeneous in conditions other than treatment based on other covariates. Although the sample size is reduced because the sample to be compared is limited based on the covariates, it instead allows the identification of causal relationships without making strong assumptions such as in regression analysis.

As is known, there are a variety of matching methods, and depending on the matching method, the analysis results can vary greatly. In this paper, in addition to standard nearest neighbor (Mahalanobis) non-replacement and replacement matching, I show that the results are robust by presenting analysis results from propensity score matching and multiple regression analysis.

As covariates used for validation by multiple regression analysis and matching, I set the following variables that could affect the explanatory and outcome variables. First, the average welfare budget as a percentage of the total budget (2010-2021). Second, it is the average rate of women's economic participation (2008-2021). Third, the marriage rate per 1,000 population (1997-2023). Fourth, the fertility rate in the region (2000-2023). Fifth, the average percentage of women in Congress (1995-2022). Fifth, the average percentage of progressive party members in Congress (2006-2022).

In addition, a mediation analysis will be conducted to take into account the increase in the number of female councilors assumed as a mechanism. The mediation variable assumed in this paper is the average percentage of female councilors in the municipality. Mediation analysis is used to estimate the average causal mediation effect (ACME), the average direct

effect (ADE), and the total effect, we show that the occurrence of feminist movements in the past has led to an increase in the number of female councilors, which in turn affects the childcare budget. Descriptive statistics for all variables discussed above are shown in Table 1 .

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std.Dev	Min	Max	N.Valid
<b>Emergence of the Feminist Movement</b>	0.27	0.44	0.00	1.00	153.00
<b>Budget for Child Care</b>	0.27	0.12	0.07	0.63	153.00
<b>Welfare Budget</b>	0.24	0.07	0.07	0.43	153.00
<b>Female Labor Participation Rate</b>	0.53	0.07	0.42	0.69	153.00
<b>Marriage Rate (per 1,000)</b>	4.97	1.14	3.32	8.27	153.00
<b>Regional Birth Rate</b>	1.30	0.16	1.00	1.77	152.00
<b>Percentage of Female Members</b>	0.14	0.05	0.00	0.41	153.00
<b>Percentage of Progressive Members</b>	0.41	0.26	0.00	0.88	153.00

## Results

### Past feminist movements and childcare-related budgets

First, Figure 2 shows how much the sample balance was improved by matching. The figure shows that in the case of non-replacement matching (a), the corrected value exceeds the criterion value of 0.25, indicating that the balance is not well improved. However, the corrected values by matching with replacement (b) and propensity score matching (c) are generally below the criterion value, indicating that the balance of the covariates has been improved.

The results of the analysis and multiple regression analysis with each matching are presented in the figure. We can confirm that the results support the hypothesis that the past feminist movement has an impact on subsequent childcare budgets. The results of each analysis with matching are all statistically significant in the model with covariates. The ATT estimator also shows a positive effect for results that are not statistically dominant, with mostly robust

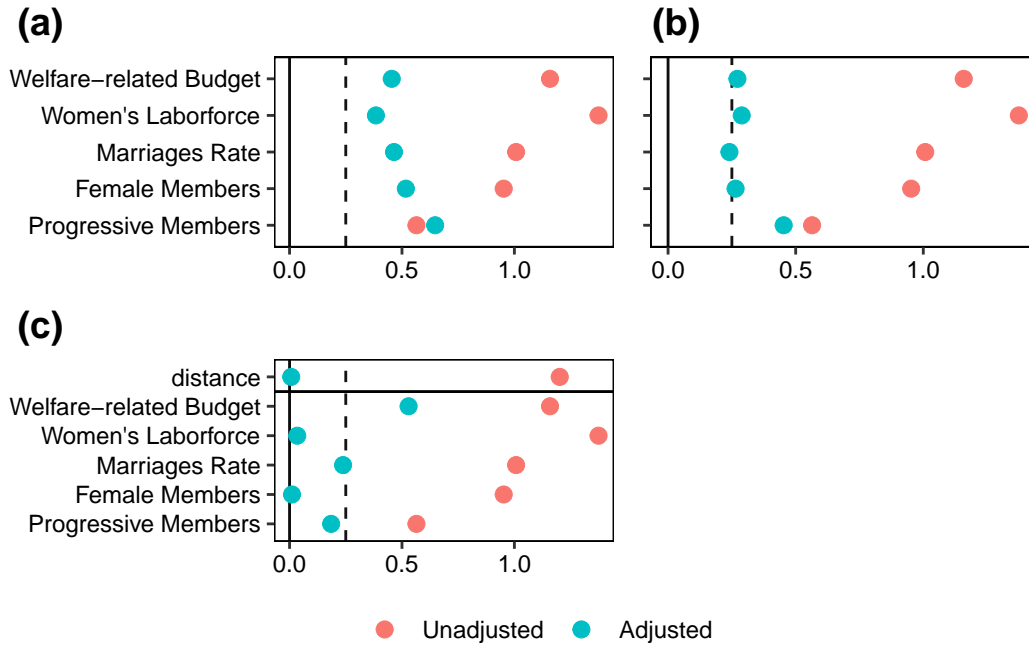


Figure 2: Covariate Balance Checking

effects. Specifically, regions that have seen significant feminist movements in the past have, on average, a 3-4% larger share of their childcare budgets in their welfare budgets than other regions. This figure indicates a substantial and meaningful effect, given that municipal welfare budgets account for more than 20% of municipal budgets.

The results also confirm that there is no significant change in any of the matching methods. The sample size for each analysis converges to about 65, which is not large enough for a normal regression analysis, but the fact that the results are still statistically significant indicates the robustness of the analysis in this paper. The results of the regression analysis are almost the same as those of the causal identification method using matching.

## Number of Female legislators as a Mediation Variable

We used causal mediation analysis to estimate mediation effects in order to examine more detailed mechanisms regarding past feminist movements and subsequent government policies. Reviewing the figures that result from our analysis, we can confirm that past feminist movements have had a positive impact on childcare budgets by influencing women's political



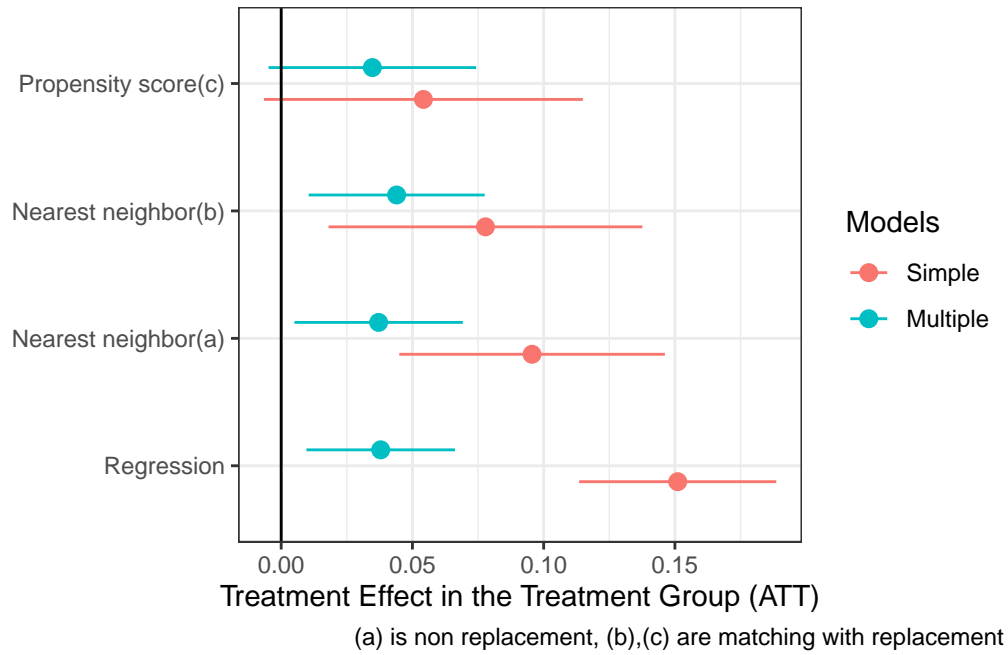


Figure 3: Results of Regression Analysis and Matching

representation. Specifically, past feminist movements have contributed to a 1.6% increase in the childcare budget on average, mediated by an increase in the number of female legislators. The ADE, which indicates an average direct effect, is 0.038, also statistically significant. Taken together, these effects indicate that the past feminist movement contributed on average to a 5.4% increase in childcare budgets.

We can suggest from these results that past feminist movements may have indirectly contributed to the expansion of childcare budgets by encouraging more female legislators. Note that in order to obtain a reasonable estimator for ACME, the assumption of sequential ignorability needs to be satisfied. sequential ignorability is defined as “(a) under observed pretreatment covariates, the treatment variable is independent of the outcome variable and the mediating variable, and (b) under conditions of observed pretreatment covariates and the treatment variable, the mediating variable is independent of the outcome variable”. To confirm this, a sensitivity analysis is required, the results of which are reported in the Appendix.

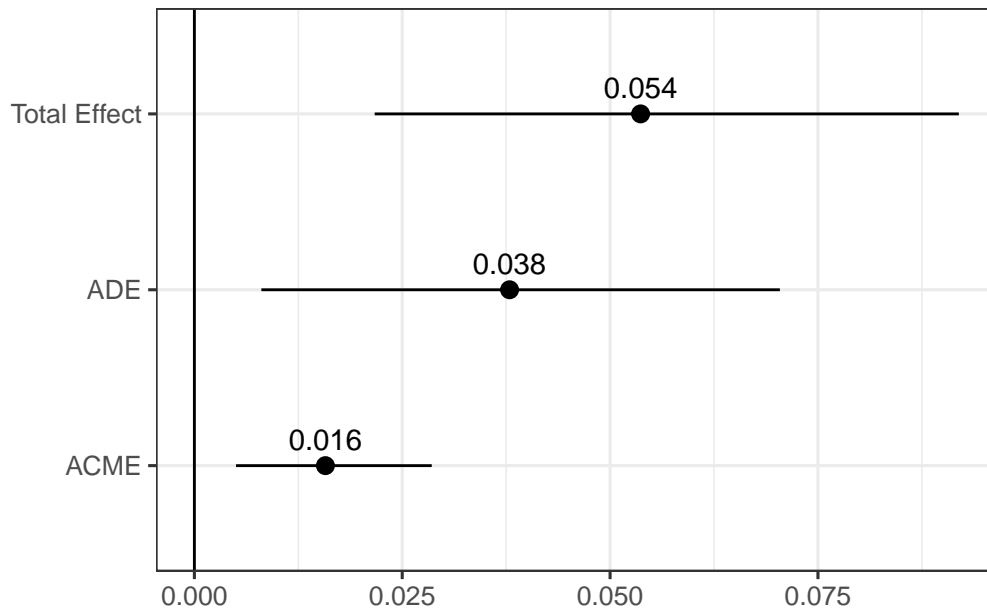


Figure 4: Results of Causal Mediation Analysis

## Conclusion

The results of this analysis suggest that past feminist movements have had medium- to long-term impacts on childcare policies through subsequent political decisions and changes in power structures. Analysis using the matching method reveals that these movements have significantly influenced childcare budgets. Moreover, causal mediation analysis demonstrates that feminist movements have impacted childcare budgets through the mediating effect of an increased number of female legislators.

This evidence confirms that active social movements in the past can exert medium- and long-term effects on government policies and institutions via various channels. This paper assumes that social movements shape politics and society not only through successful mobilizations but also by contributing to changes in public policy, political opportunity structures, and the emergence and persistence of future social movements.

Past feminist movements and the presence of iconic events and leaders are widely recognized for their critical impacts on subsequent generations of women. However, the mechanisms underlying these influences are not always fully understood. This paper highlights that

past feminist movements and their achievements can transform society through the mediating factor of an increased number of female legislators. This finding builds on prior evidence from political science research and establishes causality using a robust analytical design.

These findings contribute to feminist scholarship as well as to broader research on social movement outcomes and political legacies. By measuring the impact of peaceful, localized, and transitory movements, this study extends the discussion of political legacies—particularly in areas that have been underexplored. Few studies have examined the medium- and long-term effects of social movements as rigorously as this one, largely due to technical limitations and insufficient historical data. However, the design employed in this study demonstrates that social movement outcomes can be analyzed even with limited historical information.

Nonetheless, this study has some limitations. In particular, more detailed analyses are necessary to investigate the causal mechanisms proposed in this paper. While there are numerous studies on social movement outcomes and historical legacies, few have rigorously examined the detailed mechanisms involved. Using the methods outlined here, researchers can develop designs capable of supporting causal inference, even with limited sources like online archives. Future studies should explore additional mediating variables, such as public awareness and the presence of subsequent social movements, to further test the medium- and long-term impacts of social movements.

## Appendix

The Appendix will be available at the following URL.

<https://kazuhiroterashita.com/supplementary/Feminist-Legacy-Childcare>

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