Economic Distress and the Demand for Gender Equality Policies

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Abstract

This thesis explores the causal relationship between economic distress and the demand for gender equality policies using survey data from Sweden and the EU. By employing Bartik instruments to address endogeneity concerns, the study estimates the effect of economic distress on the demand for gender equality policies. The findings indicate that negative economic shocks have no significant effect on the demand for gender equality policies in Sweden, while in the EU, the effect is statistically insignificant and slightly positive. Additionally, the analysis suggests that individuals' political preferences might not only be shaped during individuals' formative years but can also evolve beyond impressionable ages. These results contribute to the existing literature by shedding light on the intricate dynamics between economic circumstances, political preferences, and gender equality policies. Further research is needed to fully understand the variation in the relationship across different political and geographical contexts.

1   Introduction

Gender equality policies have led to significant progress in Western democracies towards creating a society where individuals of all genders have equal rights, opportunities, and treatment. However, recent research shows the rise of a movement against gender equality, particularly in Europe, which seeks to reinforce traditional gender roles and undo the progress made towards achieving gender equality (Kuhar and Paternotte, 2017; Wittenius, 2022). Indications for this trend are, for instance, the anti-gender rhetoric used by populist politicians (Grzebalska and Pető, 2018; Sata, 2022), the

emergence of the 'manosphere' movement in Spain (Obst, 2020), the recent change in abortion legislation in Poland and the United States which restricts access to safe and legal abortion, and empirical evidence on the overall political sentiment in European countries such as the European-level survey State of Hate: Far Right Extremism in Europe 2021[1]. Sweden is a particularly interesting case and potentially an example for what might be happening in the rest of Europe as the country has been known to be one of the most gender-progressive nations globally[2], but recent changes in attitudes towards gender equality suggest a significant shift is underway[3].

Gender equality is not only a crucial societal objective by itself but also has strong economic significance. For example, it serves as a fundamental catalyst for economic development (Duflo, 2012; Diebolt and Perrin, 2013). However, despite this recognition, Western democracies have yet to attain true gender parity[4], and continuous policy commitment is needed as gender equality and economic empowerment are likely too weak to be self-sustaining (Duflo, 2012).

While governments may have a self-interest in enacting or ignoring gender equality policies, the ultimate implementation of such policies depends on the demand of voters. In light of recent economic contractions and the aforementioned facts, a crucial question arises: how do individual-level economic circumstances impact the demand for gender equality policies? More specifically, how does economic distress affect the demand for gender equality policies of both men and women? Clarifying the relationship between economic distress and the demand for gender equality policies is crucial for gaining a better understanding of the political, economic, and social factors that drive the implementation of such policies.

In order to address the question at hand, the demand for gender equality policies is explored through a review of the established factors that influence it, along with a theoretical investigation into the specific effect that economic distress may have on this demand. According to the *economic self-interest hypothesis*, changes in economic circumstances can lead to a corresponding change in

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[1] Between 20% and 40% of the respondents in six of the eight countries in which the survey was undertaken, strongly or at least somewhat agreed with the statement "It is feminism's fault that some men feel at the margins of society and demonised". In Sweden, 41% agreed at least somewhat, in Poland 30%, in the United Kingdom 28%, in France 26%, in Hungary 22%, in Germany 19%, in the Netherlands 15%, and in Italy 13%.

[2] Sweden's parental leave policies are amongst the most generous and gender-equal worldwide, it never ranked lower than fifth in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, and at 70.9% in 2021, Sweden has achieved one of the highest female labour participation rates in the OECD (OECD, 2021).

[3] In the Ungdomsbarometern (2022) survey, 64% of girls believed gender equality is a significant issue, while only 21% of boys agreed. Additionally, 20% of boys thought gender equality had gone too far, as did 41% of respondents in the abovementioned State of Hate survey. The latest European Quality of Government Index survey found that the gap between young women's and men's views on advancing women's rights is in the top 10 in the EU (Off, Charron and Alexander, 2022). Olsson Gardell, Wagnsson and Wallenius (2022) also found that 12% of men and 4% of women view feminism as a security threat.

[4] The European Gender Equality Index averaged at only 67.9 of 100 possible points in 2022, with Sweden attaining the highest value of 83.9 and Greece achieving the lowest value of only 53.4 (Statista, 2022). The average unadjusted gender pay gap in the EU in 2021 further remained at 12.7% (European Commission, 2021), while of all members of the national government or political executive in EU countries, only 34% on average were women (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2022).

political preferences, potentially resulting in an increased demand for gender equality policies. On the other hand, the *ideological dispositions theory* suggests that deep-seated beliefs and values shape preferences, indicating that changes in economic circumstances may have little to no impact on the demand for gender equality policies. Therefore, the impact of economic distress on the demand for gender equality policies is an empirical question with potential implications for policy interventions.

The empirical analysis draws on a European-level survey dataset from 2021 and a cross-sectional Swedish survey dataset covering the years 2005 to 2015. The analysis aims to estimate the causal effect of economic distress on the demand for gender equality policies through a regression model. Given the endogenous nature of economic distress measurement, a Bartik instrument is employed. In the Swedish case, this instrument is constructed using sector-specific layoff data, while the European Bartik instrument relies on sector-specific employment data. Measuring economic distress accurately in the European analysis is challenging due to the limitations of relying solely on employment data, which fails to differentiate between positive and negative and voluntary and involuntary changes in employment. Unfortunately, the desired layoff data, which would provide a clearer indication of economic distress, is not available for this analysis. To mitigate this issue, an indicator variable is included to differentiate between positive and negative shocks, aiming to capture the nature of economic distress.

The results indicate that economic distress has no effect whatsoever on the demand for gender equality policies in the Swedish case, supporting the ideological disposition hypothesis. However, in the European-level analysis, a politically significant but statistically insignificant positive effect is observed. The findings of both analyses further indicate that individuals' political preferences might not solely be determined during their formative years but can continue to develop and change even beyond impressionable ages. Despite some limitations to the empirical analysis, including issues related to data availability and limited comparability due to differing time periods, the findings of the two analyses suggest that the effect on the demand for gender equality policies may be contingent on various factors including the measurement of the dependent and independent variables as well as the political and geographical context.

This study makes an original contribution to the literature on what factors shape the demand of gender equality policies (Settele, 2022; Washington, 2008; Warner, 1991; Warner and Steel, 1999; Baxter et al., 2015; Cronqvist and Yu, 2017; Glynn and Sen, 2015; Oswald and Powdthavee, 2010; Sharrow et al., 2018; Perales, Jarallah and Baxter, 2018; Off, Charron and Alexander, 2022), the literature on the consequences of economic distress and unemployment (Autor, Dorn and Hanson, 2019; Schaller, 2016; Aizer, 2010; Anderberg et al., 2016; Macmillan and Gartner, 1999; Guarnieri and Rainer, 2018; Dehdari, 2022; Gidron and Hall, 2017; Connell, 2020; Thoits, 1992;

Jewkes, 2002), and on the literature on the formation of political preferences (Edlund and Pande, 2002; Chong and Druckman, 2007; Wildavsky, 1987; Croson and Gneezy, 2009; Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef and Lin, 2004). Specifically, by employing Bartik instruments to account for endogeneity and to establish a causal link, this study sheds light on the specific relationship between economic distress and the demand for gender equality policies. Furthermore, it advances our understanding of the mechanisms that drive this relationship, highlighting the ambiguous role of age in this context. By addressing these issues, this study fills an important gap in the literature and provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between economic circumstances and political preferences towards gender equality.

The remainder of the thesis is organized as follows. Section 2 introduces two pertinent theories from the literature on political preferences and economic factors, applying them to the analysis of the demand for gender equality policies. Section 3 outlines the data sources employed in the study. In Section 4, the model, estimation strategy, identifying assumptions, and potential threats to identification are explained. The results are presented in Section 5, followed by a comprehensive discussion in Section 6. Finally, Section 7 provides the concluding remarks.

2 Theory

Despite the complexity of the demand for gender equality policies, there is currently no established theoretical framework to fully elucidate this issue. However, prior research has identified several factors that contribute to shaping this demand, including individual beliefs and perceptions of inequality, parenthood, and encounters with intensified labor market competition.

To explore the specific influence of economic distress on the demand for gender equality policies, the resemblances between the demands for redistributive policies and gender equality policies warrant the application of theories from the former to the latter.

Therefore, this section includes an examination of the factors shaping the demand for gender equality policies, an application of theories from the demand for redistributive policies to explore the impact of economic distress, and an exploration of psychological hypotheses within this context.

2.1 Factors Shaping Individual Demand for Gender Equality Policies

The available literature on individual factors and their influence on demand for gender equality policies, albeit relatively small and fragmented, suggests that factors such as beliefs and perceptions of inequality, having children, and experiencing greater competition in the labor market all have a significant impact in this area.

According to Settele (2022), who conducted an experiment within the context of the gender wage gap, beliefs and perceived inequality seem to be a determining factor in shaping the support for gender equality policies. Specifically, pessimism about the effectiveness of government intervention limits the elasticity of policy demand suggesting that people who believe government intervention to be ineffective may be less likely to demand policies aimed at mitigating gender wage gaps.

Research has further indicated that children, and especially daughters, can significantly increase their parents', particularly their fathers', support for feminism and policies aimed at achieving gender parity (Washington, 2008; Warner, 1991; Warner and Steel, 1999; Baxter et al., 2015; Cronqvist and Yu, 2017; Glynn and Sen, 2015; Oswald and Powdthavee, 2010; Sharrow et al., 2018; Perales, Jarallah and Baxter, 2018). This phenomenon appears to hold true across various settings, including legislative and judicial contexts.

While no studies on the causal effect of economic circumstances on gender equality policy demand can be found in the literature, Off, Charron and Alexander (2022) hypothesize that men tend to exhibit anti-feminist views when they perceive a rise in competition between men and women in the labor market and provide descriptive evidence for this phenomenon on a European level.

2.2 Micro-Level Theories of Economic Shocks and Political Preferences: Implications for Gender Equality Policy Demand

The current body of research exploring the connection between personal economic shocks and individual attitudes towards redistributive policies is characterized by two pertinent theoretical frameworks: economic self-interest and ideological dispositions. These frameworks provide contrasting explanations for the impact of economic shocks on political preferences, and ultimately yield conflicting hypotheses for the empirical analysis of the relationship between economic distress and the demand for gender equality policies. Psychological perspectives enrich these hypotheses by corroborating the conflicting theories and introducing the crucial factor of age in shaping preferences.

Drawing on theories from the literature on the demand for redistributive policies to analyze the demand for gender equality policies is a reasonable approach, as both share a common goal of achieving fairness and equal opportunities. While gender equality policies strive to combat systemic gender-based discrimination, redistributive policies aim to address economic inequality resulting from historical and systemic factors. In essence, both types of policies aim to promote social justice and create a more equitable society.

2.2.1 Economic Self-interest

The first commonly recognized theoretical perspective for analyzing the effects of personal economic shocks is based on the idea that individuals' economic self-interest is a significant driver. This view posits that political stances are influenced by factors such as job security, income level, and future earnings (Meltzer and Richard, 1981; Iversen and Soskice, 2001; Mares, 2006). If a person's circumstances change, their interests may shift, leading to a corresponding change in their political preferences as they seek to protect themselves from potential setbacks, for instance, compensation or insurance. This theory also implies that the attitudinal impact of the shock is likely to be temporary if the individual's condition returns to its pre-shock state.

Particularly the evidence for the experience of job loss as an economic shock is strong in this context. Becoming unemployed seems to cause a shift in support for redistribution and a more active government role in welfare provision. Several studies have established this empirical relationship, including those utilizing panel data from the United States, Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark (Margalit, 2013; Hacker, Rehm and Schlesinger, 2013; Owens and Pedulla, 2014; Naumann, Buss and Bähr, 2016; Martén, 2019; Alt et al., 2019), as well as cross-sectional data from Europe and the United States (Alesina and Giuliano, 2011; Giuliano and Spilimbergo, 2014). The demonstrated effects are furthermore not only statistically significant but also politically significant.

Furthermore, economic shocks impact not only economic attitudes, but also non-economic ones such as value orientations and trust in political institutions. Studies have shown that there seems to be a strong association between economic insecurity and trust in political institutions (Guiso et al., 2017; Otten et al., 2017). For instance, import shocks from China led to higher levels of authoritarian values among Britons living in affected areas (Ballard-Rosa et al., 2021), while regional unemployment shocks in Europe were associated with a drop in trust in national parliament (Algan et al., 2017).

The theory of economic self-interest suggests that exposure to negative economic shocks may lead to a significant shift in demand for gender equality policies, but the direction of the effect is unclear, particularly regarding gender-specific effects. While women may exhibit more demand for gender equality policies following a negative shock due to the potential benefits and protection it could offer them, the case for men is not as clear. While gender equality policies may ultimately benefit both genders in the long run, the perception of the outcome could have a greater influence on shaping men's demand for such policies. As research suggests that a notable and increasing proportion of men consider the expansion of gender equality policies as a potential danger (as seen in State of Hate: Far Right Extremism in Europe 2021, Ungdomsbarometern, and Olsson, 2022), it is plausible that experiencing economic distress could further heighten this perception (e.g., due to heightened competition in the labor market), potentially resulting in a negative shift in men's demand for gender

equality policies. As theory provides no specific guidance, the direction of the gender-specific effects also remains an empirical question.

2.2.2   Ideological Dispositions

The second approach centers on the theory of ideological dispositions, which argues that values and deep-seated beliefs shape individuals' preferences and voting behavior. These beliefs tend to be resistant to changes in circumstances. Research on "motivated reasoning" suggests that people are more likely to stick to their prior views and reject new information that contradicts their beliefs, while accepting new information that supports their existing beliefs (Redlawsk, 2002; Taber and Lodge, 2006). Therefore, changes in economic circumstances are unlikely to have a significant effect on how people think about political issues.

The literature also provides evidence for this theoretical approach, as some studies argue and find according evidence that varying ideological beliefs concerning topics like equity, justice, and the appropriate responsibilities of government are critical factors in driving individual attitudes towards welfare preferences (Alesina, Glaeser and Glaeser, 2004; Fong, 2001; Funk, 2000; Linos and West, 2003).

The theory of ideological dispositions implies the empirical hypothesis that being exposed to an economic shock causes no effect on the demand for gender equality policies at all, since individuals' attitudes towards gender equality are believed to be deeply ingrained in their ideological dispositions and not easily influenced by external factors such as economic shocks.

2.3   Psychological Perspectives

Besides the economic shocks and political preferences literature, psychological perspectives also provide aligning theories and implications. The *impressionable years hypothesis* and *increasing persistence hypothesis* suggest that attitudes, beliefs, and values are mainly established during early adulthood and become less malleable with age (Glenn, 1980; Krosnick and Alwin, 1989). These theories are comparable to the ideological disposition theory and offer similar hypotheses, but with the added nuance that younger individuals are expected to respond stronger than older individuals, who may not respond at all. In contrast, the *lifelong openness hypothesis* proposes that individuals remain highly adaptable throughout their lives and continually adjust their attitudes in response to changing circumstances (Brim, 1980), akin to the economic self-interest theory. Hence, according to the lifelong openness hypothesis, no difference in the response of older and younger individuals is expected.

3 Data

The empirical analysis utilizes two survey datasets along with corresponding instrumental variable datasets. The first is a 2021 European-level dataset that contains variables on government quality, including gender equality and individual background information across European countries. The second dataset is a Swedish cross-sectional study from 1986 to 2020 that provides detailed information on society, media, politics, and opinions at the regional level. These datasets, combined with the constructed Bartik instruments, enable an investigation of the relationship between economic distress and the demand for gender equality policies at both national and regional levels.

3.1 European-level data

To conduct the empirical analysis at the European level, the primary variables are sourced from the European Quality of Government Index 2021 individual-level dataset, while Eurostat data on NUTS-2-level employment is used to construct the Bartik instrumental variable[5].

3.1.1 The European Quality of Government Index 2021 Dataset

The European Quality of Government Index (EQI) is based on innovative survey data collected at the regional level within the EU and conducted by The Quality of Government Institute, an independent research institute within the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg. It provides unique data on governance of public sector institutions at the sub-national level. The survey is mainly concerned with corruption, impartiality of services, and quality of public services in several public service sectors. The survey field work took place from October 2020 to February 2021, utilizing simple random sampling of individuals 18 years and older. To ensure a balanced representation of opinions in the sample, the next-birthday method was employed. The selected political sampling unit was the NUTS-2 (or NUTS-1) region within each country. However, for this study, observations that only contain data on their NUTS-1 region are excluded from the sample as the Bartik instrument's applicability is limited to the NUTS-2 regional level. This exclusion applies to observations from Belgium and Germany.

The indicator variable capturing the demand for gender equality policies is derived from the survey's 1-10 agreement scale concerning the statement "Advancing women's and girls' rights has gone too far because it threatens men's and boys' opportunities." Individuals who responded with values ranging from 1 to 4 on the scale are assigned a value of 1, indicating a positive demand

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[5]NUTS-2 regions represent larger subnational divisions in the EU's hierarchical classification system for statistical and administrative purposes. They encompass groups of administrative units such as provinces, states, or counties. For more information, see: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/background

for gender equality policies, while all remaining individuals receive a value of 0. Considering that choosing 5 on the scale suggests indifference towards the statement, observations with values from 1 to 4 are interpreted as distinct opposition to it, reflecting some degree of demand for gender equality policies. It is important to note that the variable used to construct the indicator variable on the demand for gender equality policies was specifically added to the survey for the research by Off, Charron and Alexander (2022) but was not published with the rest of the EQI 2021 dataset due to their later publication date. Therefore, the European-level dataset used for the empirical analysis in this study is sourced from the replication material publicly provided by Off, Charron and Alexander (2022)[6]. See Table 1 for relevant summary statistics.

Table 1: EQI 2021 Summary Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Demand for Gender Equality Policies	26,265	0.683	0.465	0	1
NUTS-2 Employment Bartik Instrument	26,265	−0.001	0.035	−0.213	0.091
Gender	26,265	0.482	0.500	0	1
Age group	26,265	2.423	0.989	1	4
Primary Education	26,265	0.198	0.399	0	1
Secondary Education	26,265	0.391	0.488	0	1
Tertiary Education	26,265	0.411	0.492	0	1
Pop: <10k	26,265	0.312	0.463	0	1
Pop: 10k-100k	26,265	0.374	0.484	0	1
Pop: 100k-1m	26,265	0.215	0.411	0	1
Pop: >1m	26,265	0.065	0.247	0	1
Party: Far Right	26,265	0.110	0.313	0	1
Oppose Immigration	25,820	4.792	3.126	1	10
Party: Left/Green	26,265	0.102	0.303	0	1
Traditional Values	25,613	5.227	3.301	1	10
Unreliability Dummy	26,265	0.487	0.500	0	1

3.1.2 NUTS-2-level Employment Data

The construction of the Bartik instrument for the European EQI 2021 dataset utilizes the Eurostat dataset on employment by sex, age, economic activity, and NUTS-2 region. To capture the labor market shocks from the Covid-19 crisis, employment data from 2019 and 2020 is used since the survey data for the EQI 2021 dataset was collected between October 2020 and February 2021.

Despite not exclusively capturing economic distress, this dataset allows for the construction of an indicator variable that identifies counties experiencing predicted positive shocks versus predicted negative shocks, enabling a specific focus on negative shocks. However, it should be noted that the

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[6]The replication material and dataset can be found here: https://zenodo.org/record/6940021#.ZFZBUC8RpKO

dataset does not provide the means to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary employment changes.

Due to incomplete data for several NUTS-2 regions, a dummy variable is constructed to indicate whether two or more of the employment value sectors per NUTS-2 region are missing.

3.2 Swedish Data

To conduct the empirical analysis in the Swedish context, the Society, Opinion, Media (SOM) Institute Cumulative Dataset is used as the source for primary variables. This individual-level dataset is further supplemented by sector-specific layoff data for all Swedish counties to construct the Bartik instrument variable.

3.2.1 The Swedish SOM Institute Cumulative Dataset

Table 2: SOM Summary Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Demand for Gender Equality Policies	37,649	0.825	0.380	0	1
Layoff Bartik Instrument	39,220	5,523.356	6,805.730	0.000	26,729.830
Gender	39,204	0.474	0.499	0	1
Age	39,220	50.551	18.074	15	85
Education	38,149	4.545	1.920	1	8
Subjective Family Class: Childhood	36,355	1.870	1.050	1	4
Subjective Family Class: Present	36,170	2.183	1.090	1	4
Household with Child	16,398	1.186	0.389	1	2
Preferred Party	36,185	6.132	7.679	1	30
Like/Dislike Sweden Democrats	10,468	−2.848	2.957	−5	5
Area of Upbringing	36,844	2.627	1.437	1	7
Swedish Citizen	38,436	1.094	0.382	1	3
Frequency of Internet Usage	27,242	4.883	2.135	1	7
Placement on Left/Right Scale	37,899	3.041	1.165	1	5

The Swedish SOM Institute Cumulative Dataset is a comprehensive cross-sectional survey data set collected by the SOM Institute of the University of Gothenburg. The SOM Institute initiated the National SOM study in 1986 with the objective of examining the influence of societal transformation on the attitudes and behavior of Swedes. The study encompasses three domains, namely society, opinions, and mass media, each with an extensive range of inquiries concerning politics, society, media, and social context. It further provides relevant background information on the respondents' individual characteristics. The geographical information unit per observation in the dataset is Swedish counties, as finer levels of aggregation (i.e., municipalities) were not available due to data restriction

issues at the time of analysis. The SOM data sample is further restricted to the years 2005-2015 as the Bartik instrument can only be constructed for those years.

The survey includes multiple questions regarding the respondents' views on gender equality, but only one question has been consistently included in all surveys and has a significantly larger sample size of valid observations. This particular question asks for the respondents' opinion on the political proposal "Strive towards a society with greater equality between women and men," offering five possible answers ranging from "Very good proposal" to "Very bad proposal." To capture whether each individual exhibits distinct demand for gender equality policies, this variable can be transformed into a binary variable. It takes the value 1 if the respondent considers the proposal "very good" or "rather good," and 0 otherwise.

When examining the share by gender of those who are in favor of more gender equality, women exhibit higher average demand for all years (see Figure 6 in the Appendix). More surprising, although in line with previously mentioned trends in Sweden, the gender gap between younger respondents consistently seems to be larger than that between respondents older than 35 (see Figure 7 in the Appendix).

Figure 1 shows the share of those with distinct demand for gender equality policies by unemployment and gender. According to the figure, there could be a significantly larger gap between men's and women's demand among the unemployed which could hint on the direction of the effect of interest. Nonetheless, when including the confidence intervals, the interpretation of these figures becomes even more speculative (see Figure 8 and 9 in the Appendix). Table 2 presents the summary statistics of all relevant variables used in the empirical analysis.
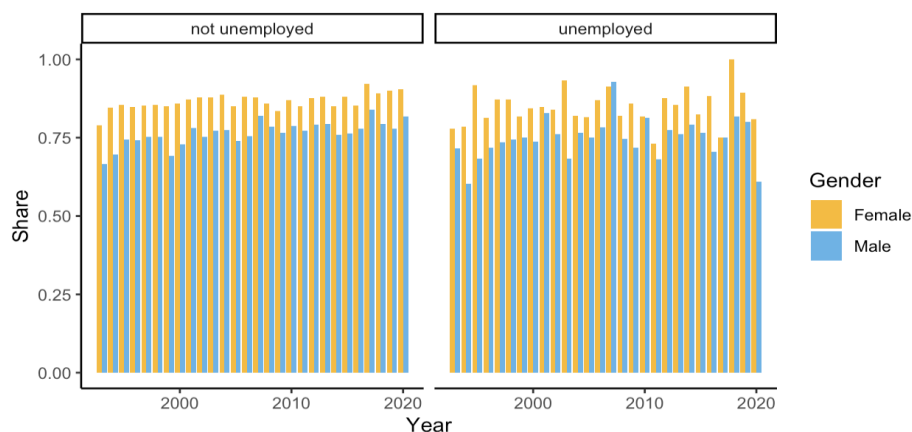

Figure 1: Share of respondents with demand for gender equality policies by gender and employment status

3.2.2 County-level Layoff Data

In addition to the SOM survey, the data used for the Swedish analysis incorporates firm-level layoff notification data from the Swedish Public Employment Service, where firms declare the number of employees they plan to notify. This data covers the period from 2005 to 2015. It is merged with data from the register-based labor market statistics on the number of employed by sector and county to generate the Bartik variable that predicts the number of layoffs per industry, county, and year.

4 Empirical Strategy

The empirical approach uses the aforementioned data to estimate the impact of economic circumstances, specifically economic distress, on an individual's distinct demand for gender equality policies as outlined in Section 3. The baseline empirical model employed in this study is a linear probability model (LPM), and only reduced form results are presented.

The model is specified as follows:

$$y_i = \alpha + \beta D_i + \gamma D_i G_i + \delta D_i A_i + \boldsymbol{\theta} \mathbf{X}_i + \epsilon_i, \tag{1}$$

where y_i is the binary variable that defines the demand for gender equality policies of individual i, D_i is economic distress, measured by an indicator variable on whether individual i is exposed to economic distress, G_i is a gender dummy variable, A_i captures the individual's age, and $\mathbf{X}_i$ is a vector of individual-level control variables such as educational attainment and party preference.

To ensure exogenous variation in economic distress, D_i is instrumented using a Bartik instrument. The Bartik instrument enables an exposure research design, in which industry shares are utilized to assess the distinct exogenous exposure to a shared shock and thereby identifies exogenous variation in economic distress. Because of limitations in data access, the Bartik instrument is constructed using two distinct approaches in the two conducted analyses: for the European-level analysis, the instrument is built using regional, sector-specific employment data by gender; while for the Swedish data analysis, the instrument is created using regional, sector-specific layoff data. Figures 2 and 3 show the differential sector-specific exposure for both the Swedish and the European-level setting[7].

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[7]In the appendix, Figure 10 shows the sector-specific exposure to layoffs in Sweden for the years 2005-2007 due to the change in SNI codes after 2007.

Figure 2: Sector-specific exposure to layoffs in Sweden from 2008 – 2015
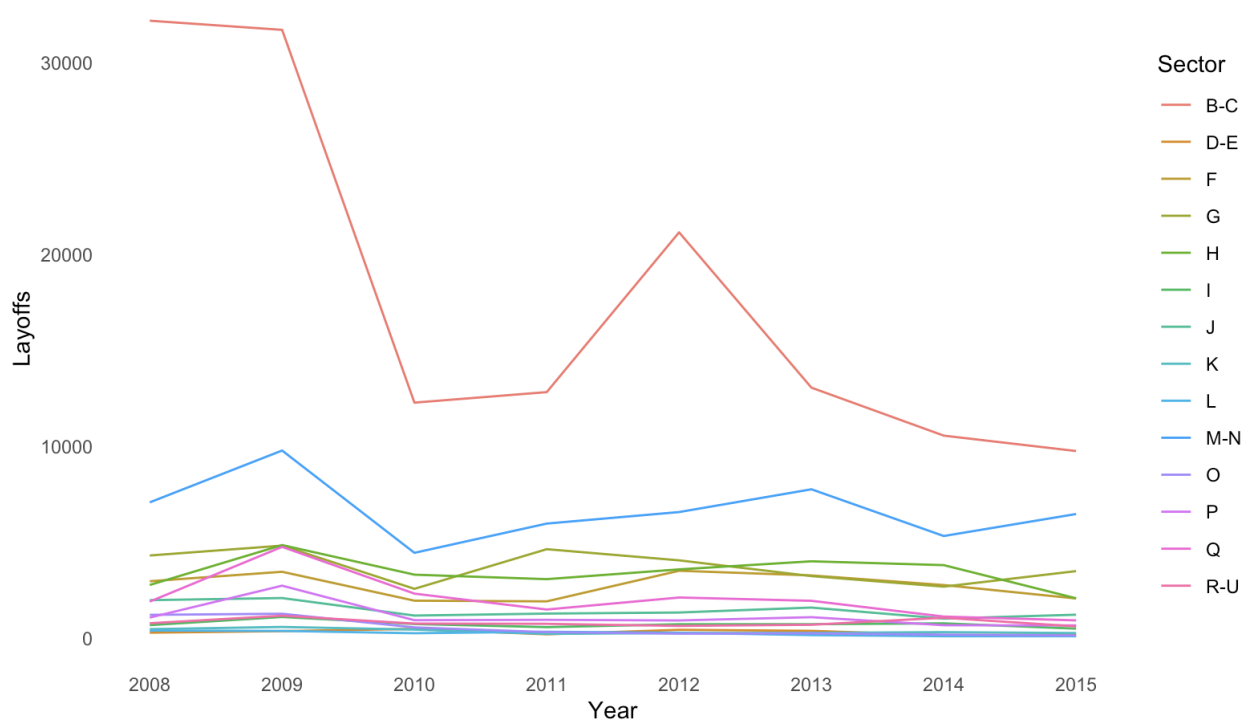
Notes: B-C: Manufacturing and extraction; D-E: Energy supply, environmental activities; F: Construction activities; G: Trade; H: Transportation and warehousing; I: Hotel and restaurant activities; J: Information and communication; K: Financial and insurance activities; L: Real estate activities; M-N: Business services; O: Public administration and defense; P: Education; Q: Healthcare and social services; R-U: Cultural and personal services, etc.

Figure 3: Changes in sector-specific employment in the EU from 2019 to 2020 (number of individuals in thousands)

(a) Men	(b) Women
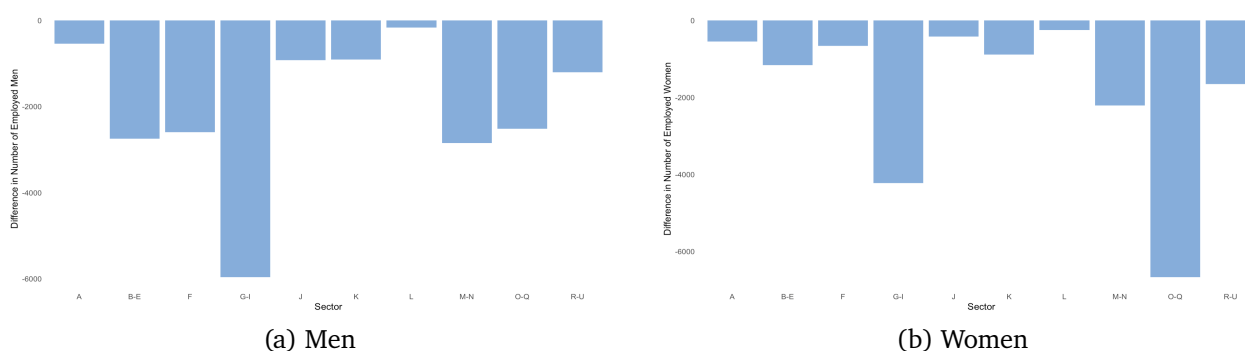
Notes: A: Agriculture, forestry and fishing; B-E Industry (except construction); F: Construction; G-I: Wholesale and retail trade, transport, accommodation and food service activities; J: Information and communication; K: Financial and insurance activities; L: Real estate activities; M-N: Professional, scientific and technical activities, administrative and support service activities; O-Q: Public administration, defense, education, human health and social work activities; R-U: Arts, entertainment and recreation, other service activities, activities of household and extra-territorial organizations and bodies.

4.1 Bartik Instrument for European EQI 2021 Data

The Bartik instrument for the European EQI 2021 Data is constructed in the following way:

$$Bartik_{jmt} = -\sum_{h} L_{mht-1}^{j} \frac{\delta N_{h,t}^{j}}{L_{ht}^{j}}, \tag{2}$$

where $Bartik_{jmt}$ is the Bartik instrument for gender j in NUTS-2 region m for time period t ($t =$ 2020 for the Covid shock, $t - 1 = 2019$ for baseline); L_{mht-1}^{j} is the share of the gainfully employed of gender j in NUTS-2 region m and industry h in time $t - 1$ preceding time period t; and $\delta N_{h,t}^{j}$ is the change in the share of the gainfully employed of gender j in industry h in time period t, i.e, $\delta N_{h,t}^{j} = N_{h,t}^{j} - N_{h,t-1}^{j}$. This measure constructs the change in the gainfully employed by gender in NUTS-2 region m as predicted by the national shifts and the industry composition in NUTS-2 region m, and is unrelated to the impact of local factors.

To interpret an increase in the Bartik variable as a negative shock to employment, the sign of the constructed Bartik variable is flipped. This is possible because the instrument encompasses both positive and negative values and the variation on which the identification strategy relies on remains the same (see Figure 4).
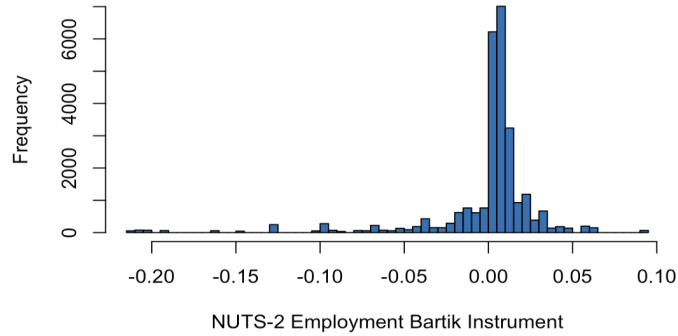

Figure 4: Distribution of the NUTS-2 Employment Bartik Instrument

4.2 Bartik Instrument for Swedish SOM Data

The Bartik instrument for the Swedish SOM Data is constructed in the following way:

$$Bartik_{mt} = \sum_{h} L_{mht-1} \frac{N_{ht}}{L_{ht}}, \tag{3}$$

where $Bartik_{mt}$ is the Bartik instrument for county m over time period t (e.g., 2008 for the financial crisis); L_{mht-1} is the number of workers in county m and industry h in time $t-1$ preceding time period t; and N_{-mht} is the number of layoff notices in industry h in Sweden. This measure constructs the amount of layoff notices in county m as predicted by the national shifts and the industry composition in county m, and is unrelated to the impact of local factors. Due to limitations in data access, the Bartik instrument relies on the overall number of layoffs, although a gender-specific Bartik variable would have been preferable.

Due to the nature of the datasets used to construct the Bartik instrument, not all data from the same county and industry are available for every year in the analysis. Consequently, the merging process that is required to construct the Bartik instrument leads to the loss of some observations. One factor contributing to this is, for instance, the change in the Swedish Standard Industrial Classification (SNI) codes between 2007 and 2008, which classify enterprises and workplaces based on their activities. The Bartik instrument value is further assigned to each corresponding observation of the SOM survey data for the following year of the survey to account for the layoff effect having an impact until the survey was completed.
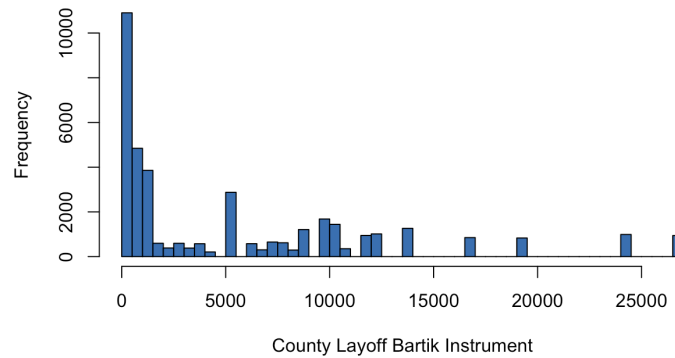

Figure 5: Distribution of the SOM data Layoff Bartik Instrument

Figure 5 presents the distribution of the Swedish Bartik instrument, and hence, the identifying variation of the empirical analysis.

4.3 Identifying Assumption and Balance Check

The identifying assumptions of the Bartik instrument research design include both the relevance and the exogeneity assumption, the latter of which further comprises the exclusion restriction. However, due to data restrictions, this study solely relies on reduced form estimates, making it necessary to assume only exogeneity, without the exclusion restriction. Goldsmith-Pinkham, Sorkin and Swift

(2020) have demonstrated that the Bartik instruments are equivalent in numerical terms to using the initial shares (interacted with time fixed effects in case of multiple periods) as instruments in a weighted generalized method of moments (GMM) estimation[8]. The shifts in the instruments only affect the weights and relevance of the instrument, but not its endogeneity. As a result, in order to fulfil the exogeneity restriction, the initial shares need to be exogenous. Following Goldsmith-Pinkham, Sorkin and Swift (2020), the empirical strategy of the underlying study is based on this shares assumption as it reflects differential exogenous exposure to common shocks, and emphasizes shocks to specific sectors as central to the research design (see e.g., the manufacturing and extraction sector in Figure 2, the wholesale and retail trade sector in Figure 3a, and the sector comprising public administration, defence, education, human health and social work activities in Figure 3b).

To establish the as-good-as random assignment of exposure, a balance check is conducted for the Swedish layoff Bartik instrument, which examines the correlation between exposure and county characteristics. The results of this balance check are presented in Figure 7 in the Appendix. Most of the county characteristic correlates are found to be statistically insignificant, indicating a balanced distribution. However, the estimates of the indicator variables "Upbringing: Stockholm/ Gothenburg/ Malmö" as well as for "Preferred party: Green Party are significantly different from zero". To mitigate the resulting threat to identification, these two variables are incorporated as controls in the main specifications of the empirical model.

5 Findings

5.1 Findings from the Swedish Empirical Analysis

The main regression results for the Swedish SOM data, employing the Layoff Bartik instrument (3) and its interaction terms as the main independent variables, are presented in Table 3 using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis. Although including regional-fixed effects would have been desirable to leverage the within-county variation in Sweden, this specification was unfeasible due to the lack of access to municipality-level data and being restricted to county-level data only. Therefore, the various specifications presented here include progressively more control variables, from the first column to the third[9].

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[8]This result relies on the assumptions that there are no spatial spillovers, meaning that locations are independent of each other, and that the data represents a series of steady-states.

[9]The full set of controls in the specification of column 3 includes the individual's educational attainment, which party they like best, whether they like or dislike the Sweden Democrats, their subjective family class during childhood and at present, whether they share a household with one or more children, their area/country of upbringing, the frequency of their internet use consumption, and their subjective placement on a political left right scale. Note that the number of observations drop significantly between the second and the third specification as only few variables have valid observations on all of the control variables.

Table 3: Swedish SOM Main Specification OLS

	Dependent variable:		
	Demand for Gender Equality Policies		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Male	−0.091***	−0.089***	−0.072***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.019)
Male*Layoff	0.00000***	0.00000**	0.00000
	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)
Layoff	−0.00000**	0.00000	−0.00001**
	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00000)
Layoff*Age		−0.00000*	0.00000*
		(0.00000)	(0.00000)
Age		0.001***	−0.001
		(0.0001)	(0.001)
Compulsory Schooling		0.045**	0.060
		(0.018)	(0.079)
Studies at Upper-secondary School		0.038**	0.064
		(0.018)	(0.076)
Degree from Upper-secondary School		0.035*	−0.003
		(0.018)	(0.076)
Post Upper-secondary Education		0.041**	0.030
		(0.018)	(0.077)
Studies at University		0.058***	−0.008
		(0.019)	(0.077)
Degree from University		0.071***	0.028
		(0.018)	(0.076)
Third Cycle Degree		0.083***	0.044
		(0.024)	(0.090)
Observations	37,634	36,833	3,059
R^2	0.012	0.015	0.068
Adjusted R^2	0.012	0.014	0.051

Notes: The specifications in column 1 and column 2 include no other control variables than those presented in the table. Column 3 adds variables on which party the individual prefers, whether they like or dislike the Sweden Democrats, their subjective family class during childhood and at present, whether they share a household with one or more children, their area/country of upbringing, the frequency of their internet use consumption, and their subjective placement on a political left right scale.
Significance levels: *$p<0.1$; **$p<0.05$; ***$p<0.01$

The findings suggest that the impact of layoffs on the demand for gender equality policies is negligible, as indicated by the close-to-zero coefficients in column 3 and the lack of an effect on the layoff-male and layoff-age interaction terms. These coefficients are precisely estimated but politically insignificant, suggesting zero effects across the board. The robustness of these findings is confirmed by the consistent results obtained when using a probit model which also shows zero estimates (see Table 6 in the Appendix).

Hence, cautiously speaking, the findings support the ideological dispositions hypothesis in the context of Sweden. Exposure to increased layoffs does not seem to affect the demand for gender equality policies, regardless of gender. Additionally, the non-significant difference in the effect of age on response could lend support to the lifelong openness hypothesis. However, it is difficult to definitively attribute evidence to the hypothesis as the zero effect suggests that potential deviations in the political preferences between age groups might not be captured in this context.

5.2 Findings from the EU-wide Empirical Analysis

Table 4 presents the results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis for the reduced form of specification (1), where the Bartik instrument (2) and its interaction terms are used as the main independent variables. The table comprises five columns: columns 1 to 5 present specifications that include progressively more control variables, while column 5 further adds country-fixed effects. Including country-fixed effects is crucial as it enables better identification by exploiting within-country variation, rather than the overall variation across all European countries. As such, the specification in column 5 is the preferred specification and should be the focus of interpretation. The Bartik coefficient estimates the effect of a negative shock to employment in the respective NUTS-2 region[10].

In columns 1 to 3, the coefficient of the Bartik variable and its interaction with gender are statistically insignificant but both estimates become significant in column 4, which includes the full set of controls[11]. A one percentage point increase in the Bartik variable, indicating a predicted decrease in employment of one percentage point, is associated with a 0.51 percentage point increase in the demand for gender equality policies among women aged 18-29. Although the effect remains positive for men in the same age group, it is significantly smaller. However, when country-fixed effects are included (column 5), the impact of economic distress on the demand for gender equality policies becomes weaker and statistically insignificant.

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[10]Considering the exclusion of certain categories in the categorical and dummy variables, the reference group in this empirical analysis consists of women aged 18-29.

[11]The full set of controls includes the individual's education, the population size of the region they live in, as well as the variables Party: Far Right, Party: Left/Green, Traditional Values, Oppose Immigration and an Unreliability Dummy.

Table 4: European EQI 2021 Main Specification OLS

	Dependent variable:				
	Demand for Gender Equality Policies				
	OLS				*Country FE*
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Bartik	−0.181	−0.144	0.190	0.510**	0.370
	(0.141)	(0.141)	(0.229)	(0.219)	(0.240)
Bartik*Male	−0.246	−0.228	−0.211	−0.259*	−0.227
	(0.165)	(0.164)	(0.165)	(0.157)	(0.158)
Bartik*Pos. Shock	−0.156	−0.144	−0.171	−0.247	0.048
	(0.301)	(0.302)	(0.302)	(0.303)	(0.335)
Bartik*30-49			−0.314	−0.324	−0.320
			(0.241)	(0.230)	(0.229)
Bartik*50-64			−0.262	−0.256	−0.281
			(0.256)	(0.242)	(0.241)
Bartik*65+			−0.777***	−0.677***	−0.755***
			(0.274)	(0.261)	(0.261)
Male	−0.096***	−0.096***	−0.096***	−0.077***	−0.079***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Age: 30-49		0.007	0.008	0.039***	0.039***
		(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Age: 50-64		0.045***	0.045***	0.083***	0.083***
		(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Age: 65+		0.007	0.006	0.055***	0.053***
		(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Observations	26,265	26,265	26,265	25,237	25,237
R^2	0.011	0.016	0.017	0.151	0.152
Adjusted R^2	0.011	0.016	0.016	0.150	0.150

Notes: The specification in column 1 includes no other control variables. Columns 2 and 3 present the specifications that include controls for education and population whereas the specification in column 4 further includes controls for Party: Far Right, Party: Left/Green, Traditional Values, Oppose Immigration and an Unreliability Dummy. The specification in column 5 includes the same controls as the one in column 4 but further adds country-fixed effects.
Significance levels: $^*p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

This suggests that between-country variation, including differences in institutions and other factors, could potentially introduce bias into the estimated effect. The difference in effects between genders also becomes insignificant in column 5. Furthermore, it is notable that the results do not seem to be driven by only positive shocks to employment and that the effect of positive and negative shocks seem to be symmetric as the estimate of the interaction between the Bartik variable and the indicator variable for positive shocks is not significantly different from zero in all specifications.

Again, the findings remain robust when changing the functional form of the specification to a probit model (see Appendix Table 5). The coefficients for the interaction terms of age groups 30-49 and 50-64 with the Bartik variable are negative but not statistically significant, indicating that the effect of a negative employment shock on the demand for gender equality policies is not significantly different across these age groups. Among men (women) aged 65 and older, the marginal effect of the Bartik instrument is -0.612 (-0.385), which is statistically significant. This indicates that older individuals tend to decrease their demand for gender equality policies in response to a negative employment shock, particularly when compared to other age groups.

While the effect size of the Bartik estimate is politically significant, its statistical insignificance in the main specification prevents these findings from supporting the economic self-interest hypothesis. On the other hand, while the results do not strongly support the ideological disposition hypothesis, they also do not contradict it. Overall, considering the findings from the Swedish analysis as well, the European data analysis does not yield unequivocal conclusions regarding which theory is supported, but it slightly leans towards the ideological disposition hypothesis. Nevertheless, the analysis reveals that the effect size of negative employment shocks on the demand for gender equality policies does not differ across younger age groups, although this could be attributed to the possibility of no effect existing in the first place. Surprisingly, in the oldest age group, the effect size increases significantly and even becomes negative, potentially indicating support for the lifelong openness hypothesis.

6 Discussion

6.1 Interpretation of the Findings

The findings from the conducted empirical analysis offer some insight into how the demand for gender equality is shaped in relation to the exposure to economic distress. The analysis of the Swedish SOM data suggests that the demand for gender equality policies is shaped by deeper ideological factors that cannot be easily influenced by external factors such as economic distress. This would have important implications: if ideological disposition is indeed the main driver of demand for gender equality policies, then it raises the question of which factors can truly influence this demand and

political preferences in general. As discussed in Section 2, some of these factors might include having children and perceptions of inequality, but also media, early childhood experiences, and family background. Further research would be needed to better understand the complex interplay between these factors and how they shape political preferences regarding gender equality policies.

The European-level data, on the other hand, does not provide strong evidence for the ideological dispositions hypothesis. Instead, the positive coefficients could suggest that economic distress increases the demand for gender equality policies, especially among young women, which would lend support to the economic self-interest hypothesis. Accordingly, individuals would be more likely to support policies which they perceive as directly benefiting them, in this case women, and economic distress may increase people's willingness to support policies aimed at improving their economic situation. Interestingly, the effect also seems to be positive for men, which could imply that they perceive gender equality policies as benefiting them as well and increase their support in times of economic distress. From a policymaker and politician perspective, this would mean that protecting people from economic distress could not only alleviate their economic struggles but also increase their acceptance and support for gender equality policies, potentially leading to more progress towards gender equality. Nonetheless, the statistical insignificance of the results leaves these conclusions in doubt and makes the interpretation of the European-level analysis more difficult.

One interpretation that appears to hold true for both analyses is the lifelong openness hypothesis, which suggests that individuals are capable of adjusting their preferences and demand for certain policies throughout their lives. This would mean that people are open to change throughout their lives and that exposure to different circumstances and experiences can impact their preferences. Surprisingly, older men even seem to react slightly stronger than their younger counterparts in the European-level analysis[12]. This finding could reinforce the implications discussed for the economic self-interest hypothesis. Policymakers and social movements should, in that case, be responsive to changing circumstances and engage in an ongoing dialogue with the public to understand their evolving needs and preferences. However, neither analysis shows a significant effect of the Bartik variable across all demographic groups, implying the possibility that economic distress simply does not influence the demand for gender equality policies, which makes it difficult to assess the psychological hypotheses. Overall, the importance of ongoing dialogue and engagement with the public should not be ruled out as individuals might remain psychologically open to adjusting their preferences in response to changing circumstances.

These findings highlight the complex nature of understanding the demand for gender equality

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[12]One would assume that younger men might react negatively and stronger to a negative economic shock as they might perceive women as a larger threat in the labor market. This mechanism cannot hold true for individuals of the age 65 or older.

policies and the potential role of both economic and non-economic factors in shaping political preferences. The findings of the Swedish and European-level analyses indicate that the effect of economic distress on the demand for gender equality policies may vary across different contexts, emphasizing the need for further research to understand the drivers of political preferences in different national and regional settings. It should also be noted that the different definitions of demand for gender equality policies and especially the different time periods that are used in the analysis could have contributed to the differing results. The European-level analysis focuses on the Covid-19 shock period, while the Swedish SOM data analysis covers a longer time period that includes the financial crisis. This difference in time periods is likely to have a significant impact on the results and should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings.

6.2 Limitations and Constraints of the Empirical Analysis

While this study strives for causal identification, there are limitations and constraints in its empirical evidence.

Firstly, the analysis does not specifically measure the demand for specific gender equality policies but instead captures a broader sentiment or attitude. The constructed dependent variable which captures this sentiment further differs significantly between the European-level and Swedish analysis, making direct comparisons and inferences challenging. While this discrepancy represents a limitation in the analysis, it is important to recognize the value of attempting to define and measure the demand for gender equality policies. This effort provides insights into an area that has been largely unexplored in previous studies. The current analysis serves as an initial exploration of the topic, highlighting the need for further improvement in measuring the demand for gender equality policies in future research.

Additionally, the Bartik instrument used to measure economic distress has certain limitations for both the European as well as the Swedish setting.

The Eurostat data used to construct the Bartik variable for the European-level analysis is somewhat unreliable and incomplete, which could potentially alter the results. However, the analysis attempts to account for this by including an unreliability dummy. Moreover, the EU Bartik instrument may not be ideally suited to capture economic distress, as it also captures the voluntary effect of sector-specific changes in employment. Since the politically significant effect is only observed in the European-level analysis, one could hypothesize that broader changes in employment patterns may influence the demand for gender equality policies, implying that factors other than negative economic shocks that have an effect on the demand for gender equality policies. While the mentioned effect remains statistically insignificant and the analysis does not delve further into this possibility,

it is an area that warrants exploration in future research.

It is furthermore important to acknowledge that the SOM Bartik instrument has limited variation due to the use of county-level data, which significantly reduces its identification power compared to what could be achieved with more granular data. Despite this limitation, the findings of the Swedish analysis demonstrate precise estimation and suggest the validity of the Bartik instrument, as indicated by the balance check in Table 7. However, it is worth noting that the restriction to county-level data also limits the number of observations available for performing the balance check, which may affect the robustness of the findings.

Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the empirical analysis contributes to understanding the complexity of the demand for gender equality policies and the role of economic factors in shaping political preferences.

7 Conclusion

This study aims to shed light on the causal link between economic distress and the demand for gender equality policies on an individual level. The findings suggest that economic distress might not have a significant impact on the demand for gender equality policies, but that this relationship could vary depending on the specific political and geographical context and the way that economic distress and the demand for gender equality policies are defined. In summary, this study provides additional evidence in support of the ideological disposition hypothesis over the economic self-interest hypothesis. This implies that political preferences concerning gender equality might not be simply shaped by temporary external factors, but rather stem from underlying factors that are yet to be fully explained. The limitations of the study, such as data restrictions, unreliability issues and especially the differing time periods of the analyses, should be acknowledged. Further research is needed to fully understand the complex interplay between economic distress and political preferences towards gender equality. For instance, studies could investigate the impact of cultural norms and values, different welfare state regimes, and varying levels of gender equality on this relationship. Furthermore, the development of more reliable and granular measures of economic distress could help provide more accurate estimates. Finally, future research can further advance this subject of interest by utilizing more granular data as well as panel data to capture the causal link between economic distress and the demand for gender equality policies, as well as to investigate how this relationship evolves over time.

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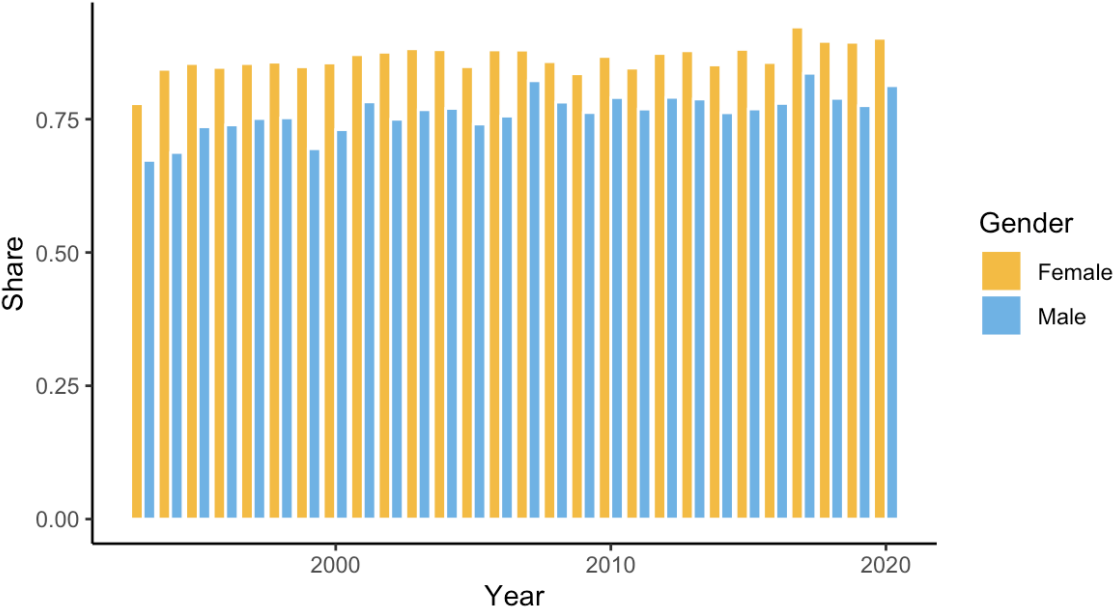
Appendix

Figure 6: Share of respondents with demand for gender equality policies by gender
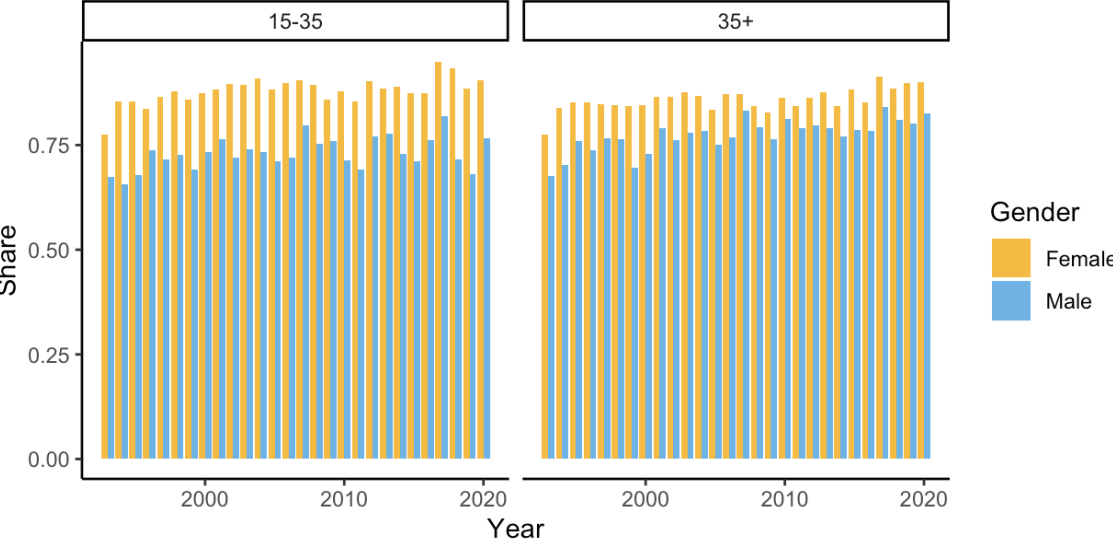

Figure 7: Share of respondents with demand for gender equality policies by age group and gender
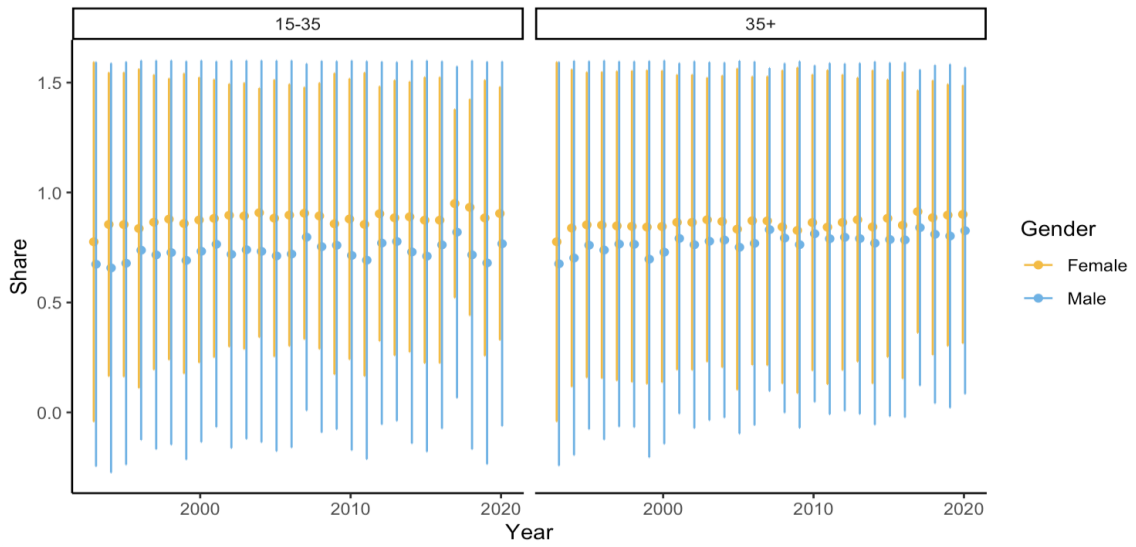
Figure 8: Share of respondents with demand for gender equality policies by age group and gender with 95% confidence intervals
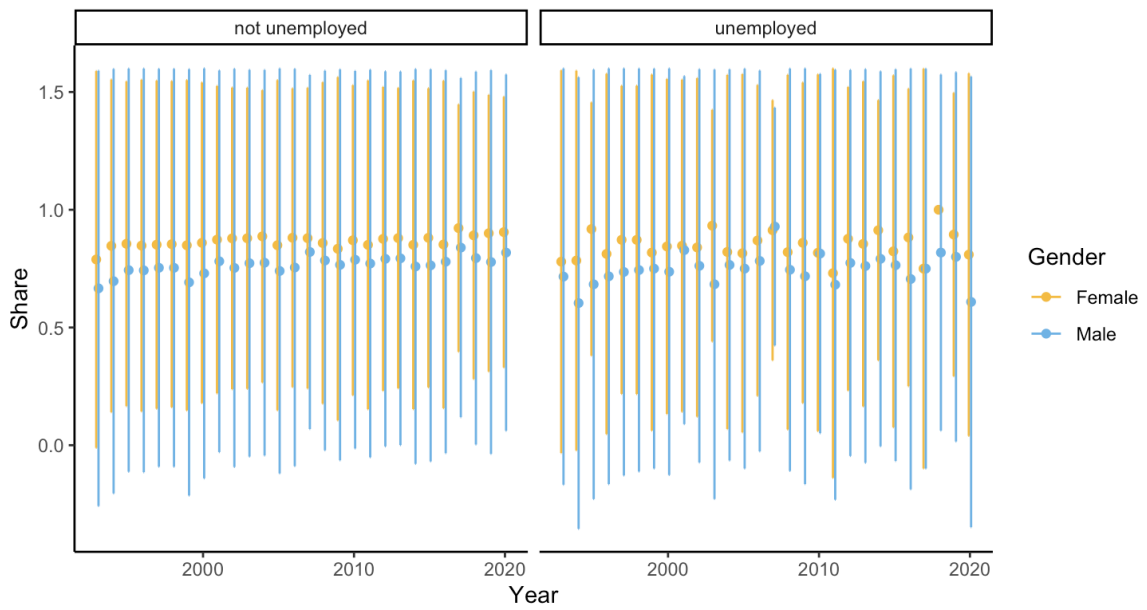
Figure 9: Share of respondents with demand for gender equality policies by gender and employment status with 95% confidence intervals

Figure 10: Sector-specific exposure to layoffs in Sweden from 2005 – 2007
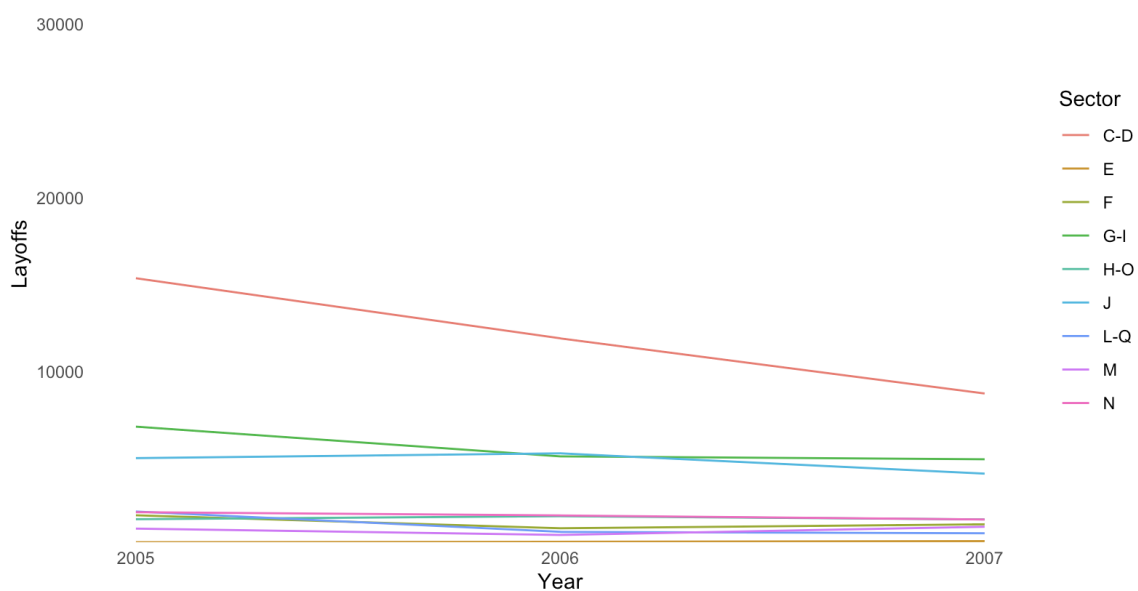
Notes: C-D: Extraction of minerals, manufacturing industry; E: Energy and water supply, waste management; F: Construction industry; G-I: Trade, transportation, warehousing, communication; H-O: Personal and cultural services; J: Credit institutions, real estate management, business services; L-Q: Civil authorities, defense, international organizations; M: Research and development, education; N: Healthcare, social services, veterinarians.

Table 5: EQI 2021 Main Specification Probit

			Dependent variable:		
			Demand for Gender Equality Policies		
		Probit			_Country FE_
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Bartik	−0.580	−0.460	0.504	1.860***	0.370
	(0.412)	(0.413)	(0.652)	(0.705)	(0.240)
Bartik*Male	−0.593	−0.547	−0.502	−0.941*	−0.227
	(0.475)	(0.476)	(0.479)	(0.516)	(0.158)
Bartik*Pos. Shock	−0.386	−0.354	−0.396	−0.722	0.048
	(0.850)	(0.854)	(0.856)	(0.973)	(0.335)
Bartik*30-49			−0.904	−1.193	−0.320
			(0.686)	(0.740)	(0.229)
Bartik*50-64			−0.793	−0.905	−0.281
			(0.732)	(0.786)	(0.241)
Bartik*65+			−2.341***	−2.347***	−0.755***
			(0.796)	(0.859)	(0.261)
Male	−0.271***	−0.272***	−0.272***	−0.243***	−0.079***
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.006)
Age: 30-49		0.020	0.021	0.127***	0.039***
		(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.025)	(0.008)
Age: 50-64		0.128***	0.129***	0.262***	0.083***
		(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.008)
Age: 65+		0.018	0.017	0.171***	0.053***
		(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.009)
Observations	26,265	26,265	26,265	25,237	25,237
R^2					0.152
Adjusted R^2					0.150
Akaike Inf. Crit.	32,503.280	32,389.590	32,386.450	27,529.860	

Notes: The specification in column 1 includes no other control variables. Columns 2 and 3 present the specifications that include controls for education and population whereas the specification in column 4 further includes controls for Party: Far Right, Party: Left/Green, Traditional Values, Oppose Immigration and an Unreliability Dummy. The specification in column 5 includes the same controls as the one in column 4 but further adds country-fixed effects.
Significance levels: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 6: SOM Main Specification Probit

	Dependent variable:		
	Demand for Gender Equality Policies		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Male	−0.356***	−0.348***	−0.302***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.075)
Male*Layoff	0.00001***	0.00001**	0.00001
	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00001)
Layoff	−0.00000**	0.00000	−0.00003**
	(0.00000)	(0.00000)	(0.00001)
Layoff*Age		−0.00000	0.00000*
		(0.00000)	(0.00000)
Age		0.003***	−0.004
		(0.001)	(0.003)
Compulsory Schooling		0.162**	0.259
		(0.068)	(0.308)
Studies at Upper-secondary School		0.134**	0.294
		(0.068)	(0.301)
Degree from Upper-secondary School		0.123*	0.020
		(0.067)	(0.295)
Post Upper-secondary Education		0.144**	0.147
		(0.069)	(0.302)
Studies at University		0.214***	−0.003
		(0.070)	(0.303)
Degree from University		0.271***	0.152
		(0.067)	(0.298)
Third Cycle Degree		0.319***	0.243
		(0.092)	(0.364)
Observations	37,634	36,833	3,059
Log Likelihood	-17,242.600	-16,781.680	-1,351.786
Akaike Inf. Crit.	34,493.210	33,589.370	2,813.572

Notes: The specifications in column 1 and column 2 include no other control variables than those presented in the table. Column 3 adds variables on which party the individual prefers, whether they like or dislike the Sweden Democrats, their subjective family class during childhood and at present, whether they share a household with one or more children, their area/country of upbringing, the frequency of their internet use consumption, and their subjective placement on a political left right scale.
Significance levels: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 7: Layoff Bartik Balance Check

	Layoff Bartik	
	Point Estimate	Standard Error
Age	-69.903	(145.940)
Female	868.679	(5,469.958)
Compulsory Schooling	16,714.550	(22,025.280)
Upper Secondary 1	13,941.190	(23,098.490)
Upper Secondary 2	10,412.610	(21,574.860)
Post Upper Secondary	9,984.017	(22,702.200)
Studies at University	10,719.180	(23,967.190)
Degree from University	15,500.920	(22,833.620)
Third Cycle Degree	5,752.701	(29,807.300)
Childhood: Farmer's home	-2,024.455	(6,490.267)
Childhood: White-collar home	-7,323.811	(6,925.566)
Childhood: Entrepreneurial home	1,804.302	(11,158.830)
Present: Childhood: Farmer's home	-859.164	(12,706.220)
Present: White-collar home	2,646.681	(5,985.712)
Present: Entrepreneurial home	2,597.811	(11,187.580)
No child in household	-8,752.133	(8,411.778)
Preferred party: Social Democrats	5,434.254	(10,432.260)
Preferred party: Centre Party	13,058.810	(14,408.420)
Preferred party: Liberal Party	14,967.040	(14,863.750)
Preferred party: Moderate Party	11,666.120	(12,593.100)
Preferred party:Christian Democrats	10,330.480	(14,876.230)
Preferred party: Green Party	21,789.460*	(12,555.700)
Preferred party: Other Party	21,009.140	(13,297.030)
Strongly like Sweden Democrats	-17,099.750	(36,719.500)
Upbringing: Swedish Village	1,168.263	(6,297.707)
Upbringing: Swedish City	-5,061.312	(5,933.889)
Upbringing: Stockholm/Gothenburg/Malmö	29,787.850***	(6,152.574)
Upbringing: Other Nordic Country	13,691.460	(19,060.210)
Upbringing: Other European Country	6,734.989	(18,182.580)
Upbringing: Non-European Country	15,419.560	(24,858.540)
Swedish Citizen	-1,523.041	(18,379.410)
Citizen of other Country	-5,635.836	(19,944.630)
Daily Consumption of Internet News	4,165.082	(7,841.980)
Political Scale: Somewhat to the left	-3,161.803	(9,418.257)
Political Scale: Neither left nor right	-12,634.850	(9,879.831)
Political Scale: Somewhat to the right	-6,708.681	(11,537.260)
Political Scale: Clearly to the right	-12,359.830	(11,751.500)
Observations	200	
R^2	0.657	
Adjusted R^2	0.505	
Residual Std. Error	2,721.124 (df = 138)	
F Statistic	4.326*** (df = 61; 138)	

Notes: The county characteristic variables stem from the SOM survey data as it is a representative survey for Sweden. Each variable is constructed as the mean for the respective county in the respective year for numeric variables, and as the share for indicator variables.

Significance levels: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01