

# THE POLITICAL ORIGINS OF MISSING WOMEN

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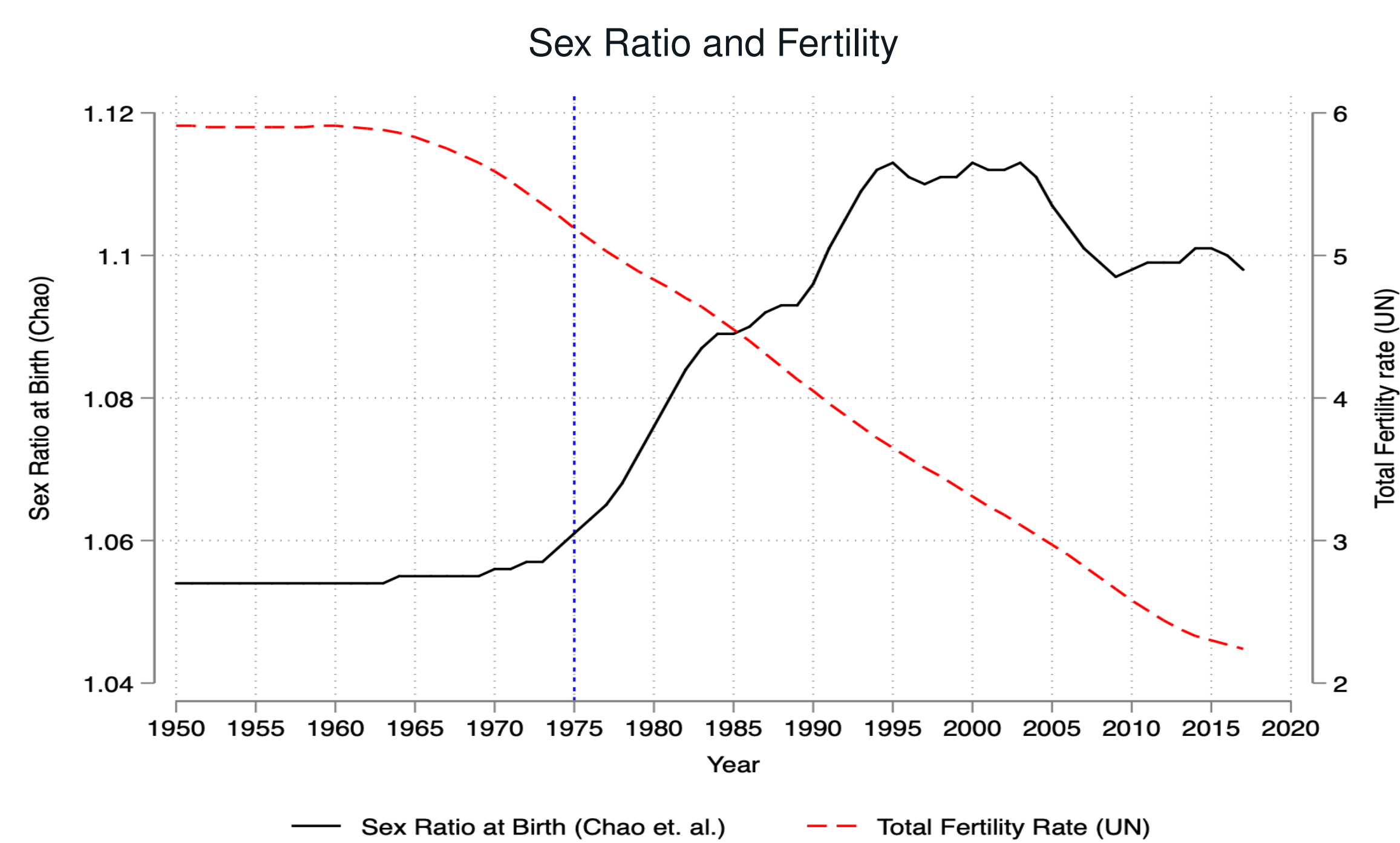
Asian Growth Research Institute (AGI) and Osaka University

## Motivation

- India is the first country to experience an inflated sex ratio at birth (SRB) favoring men (Chao et.al 2019)
- Only country to have a higher SRB starting in the 1970s

These facts are interesting and puzzling at the same time because:

- Sex-selection technology was not available in the 1970s (Anukriti et. al. 2021)
- Extremely high level of fertility-rate



## Research Question

- What explains such a phenomenon in India?
- Explore the political origins of Missing Women

## Context

Examine the legacy of forced sterilization during "the Emergency": a draconian family planning policy implemented between April 1976 and January 1977

- Implemented by the government
- Sterilization of individuals (of productive age) with more than 2 children
- Use of force: Eg., by police and other government officials
- Extensive evidence of disincentives, coercion, and misinformation for sterilization

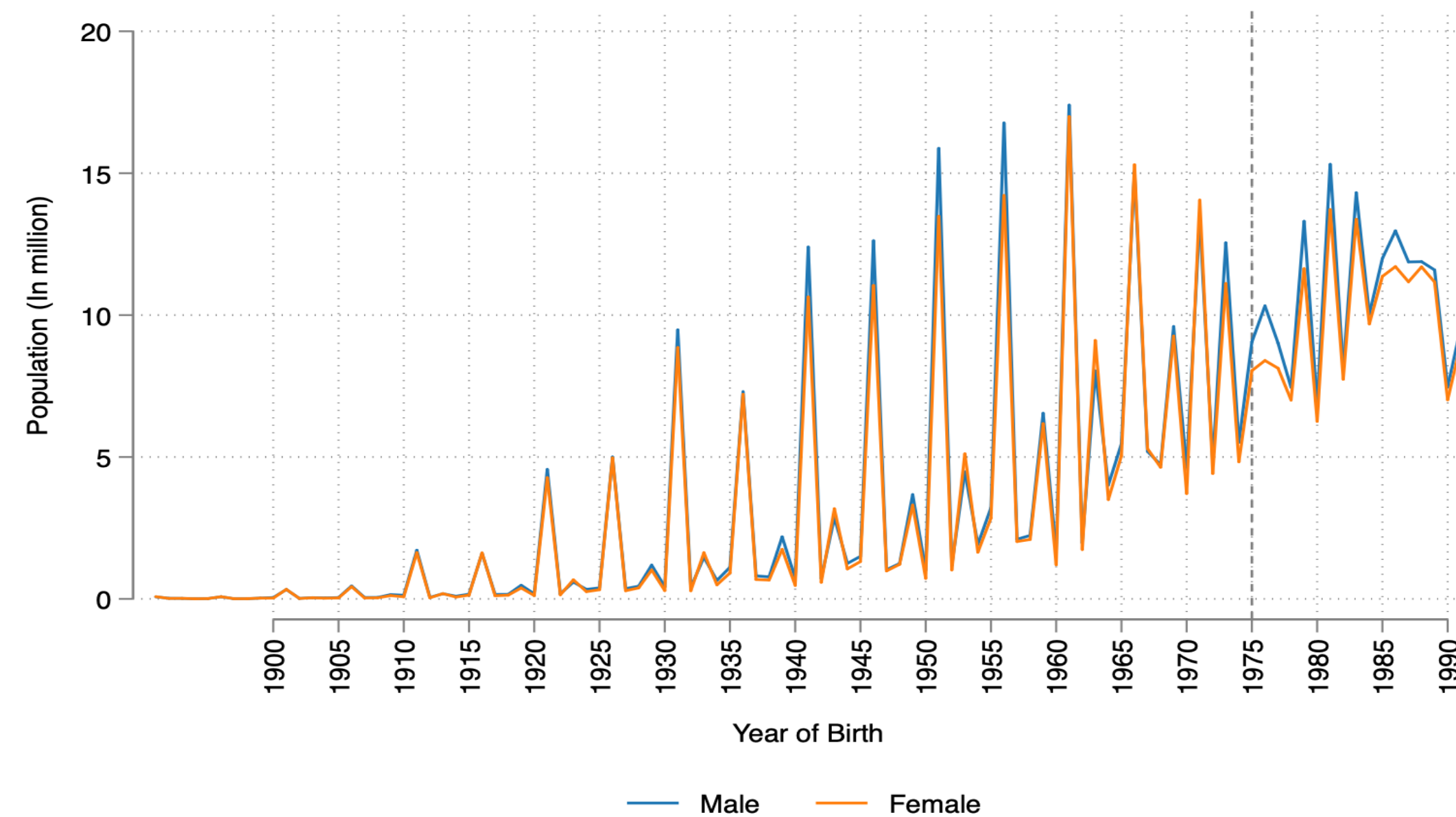
## Why Forced Sterilization impact Missing Women

Combination of Factors

- The same political party continued to remain in power (except 1977-79)
- Forcible nature: by the government
- Cultural practices: Son Preference, patriarchy

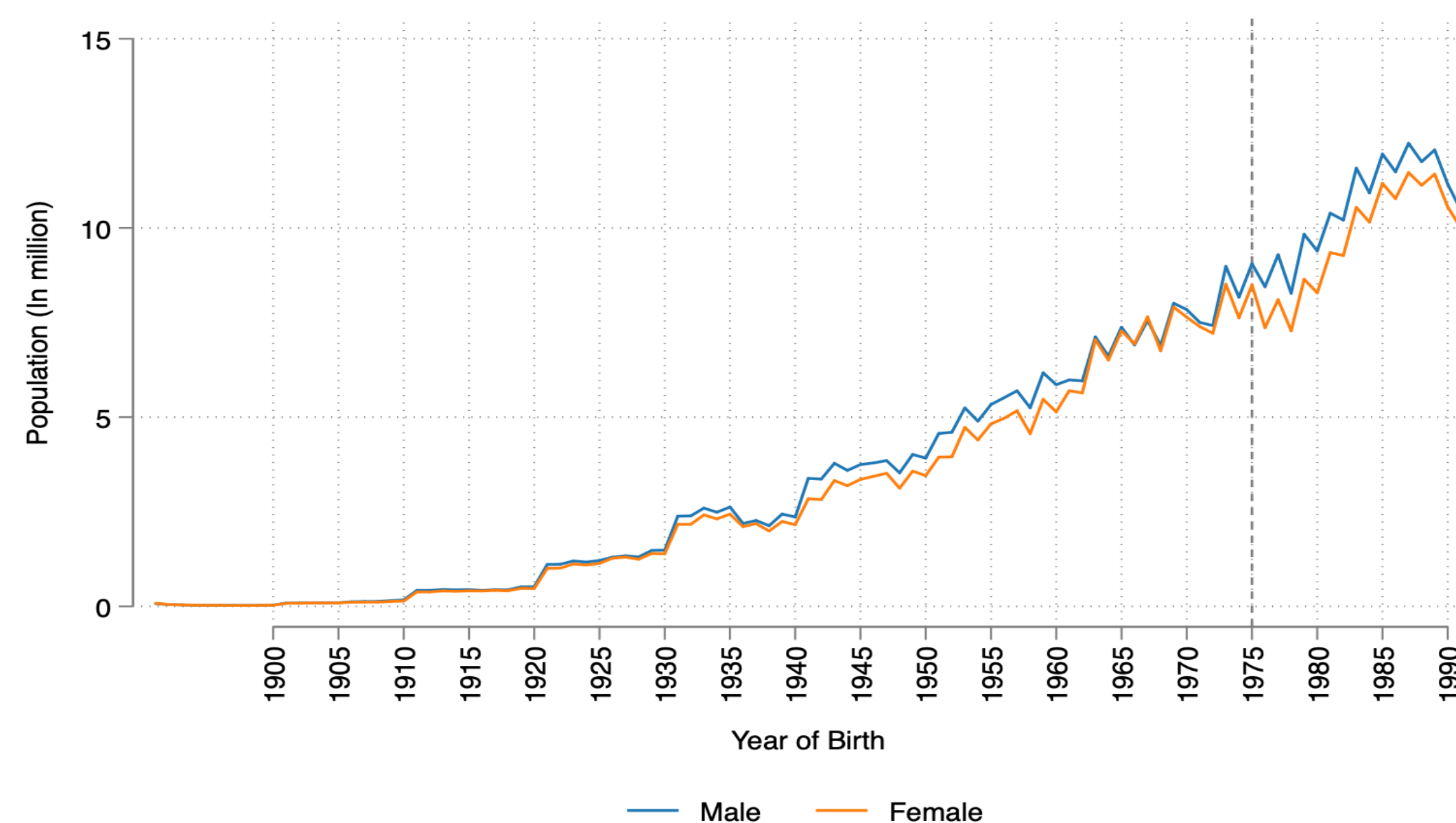
## Descriptive Evidence

Population by Sex and year of Birth: Raw Data (1991 Census)



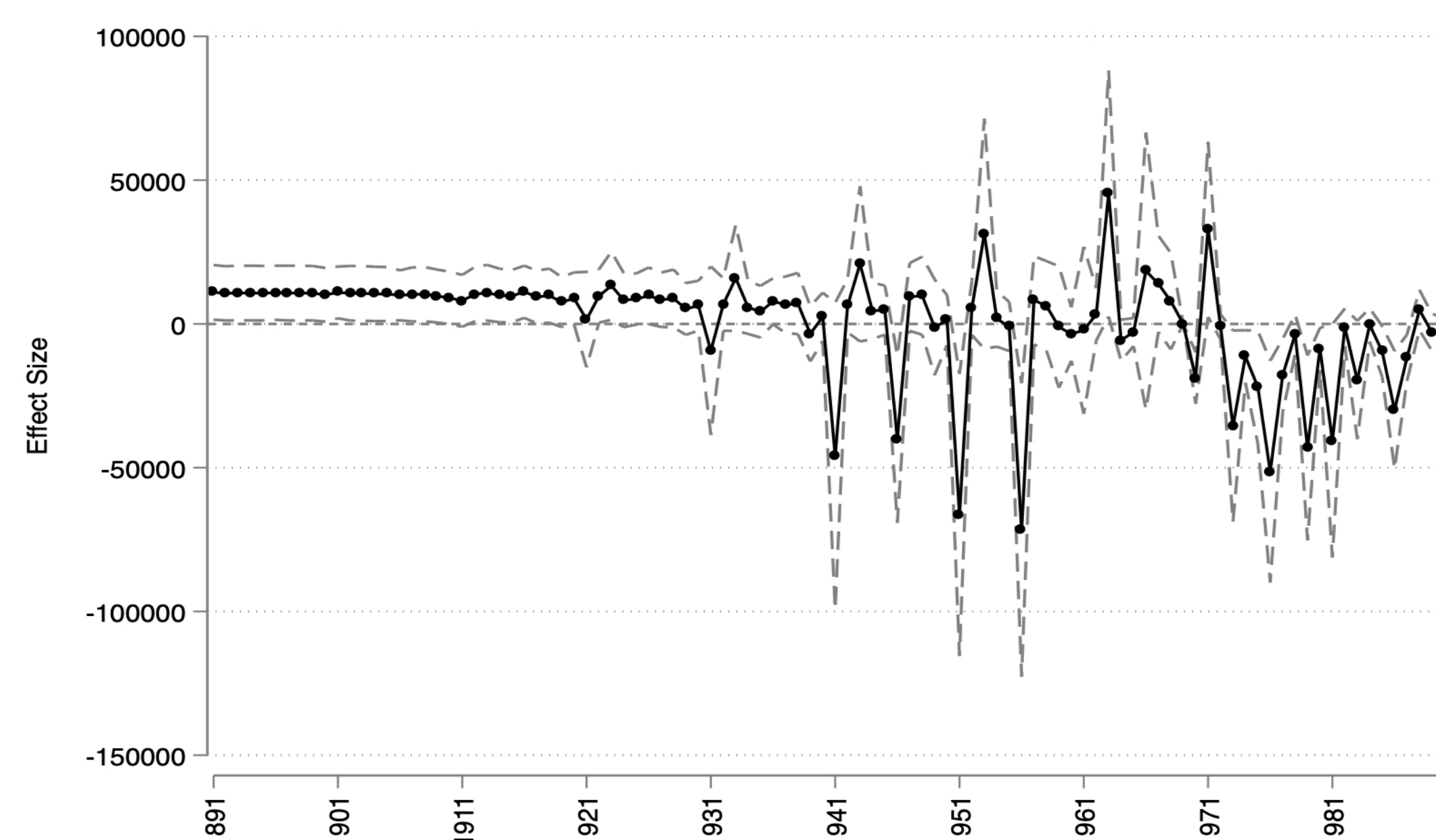
Source: Population Census 1991

Population by Sex and year of Birth:: 5 Year Moving Average



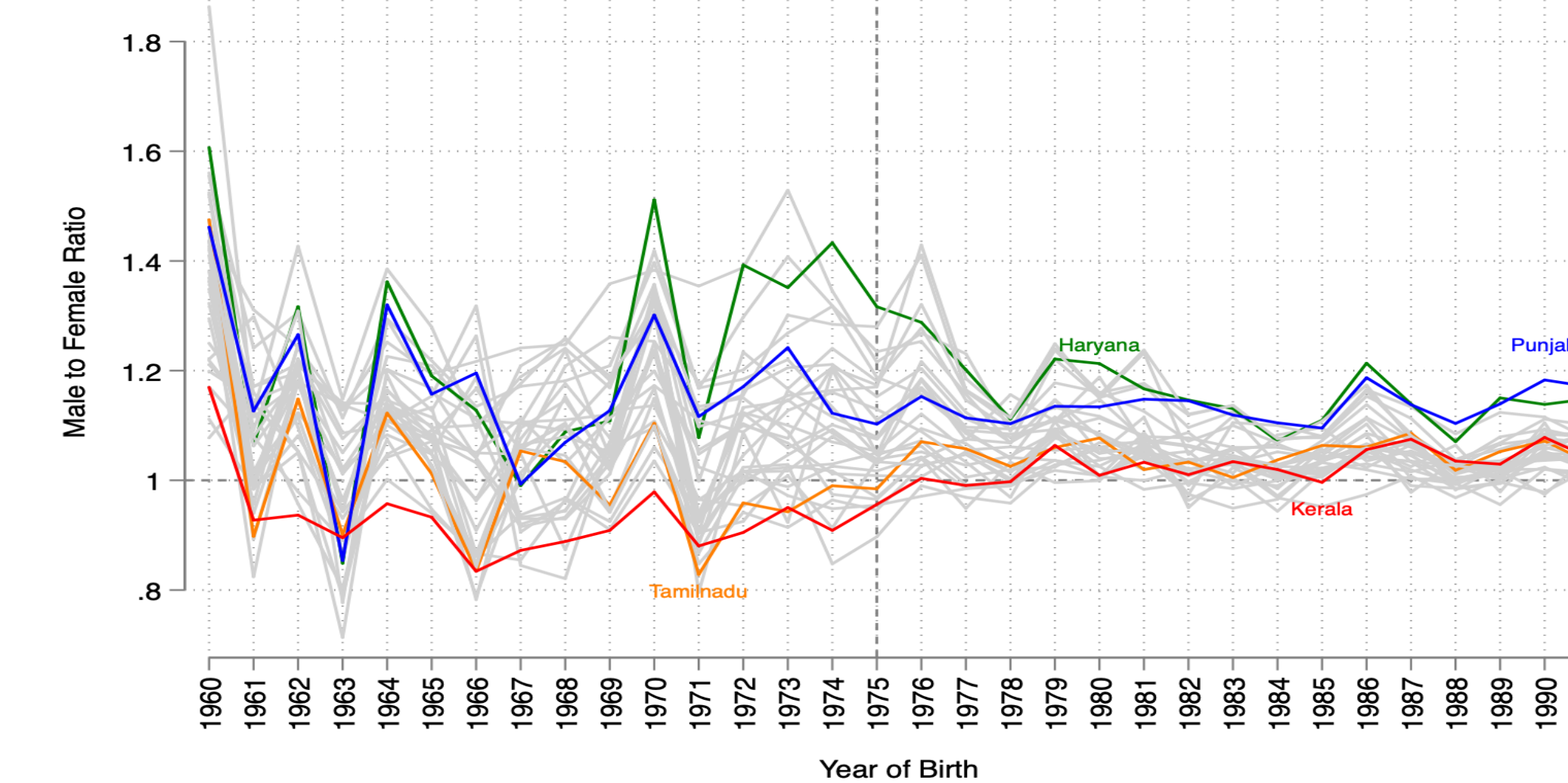
Source: Population Census 1991

## Main Findings: DID Estimates



## Heterogeneity by State

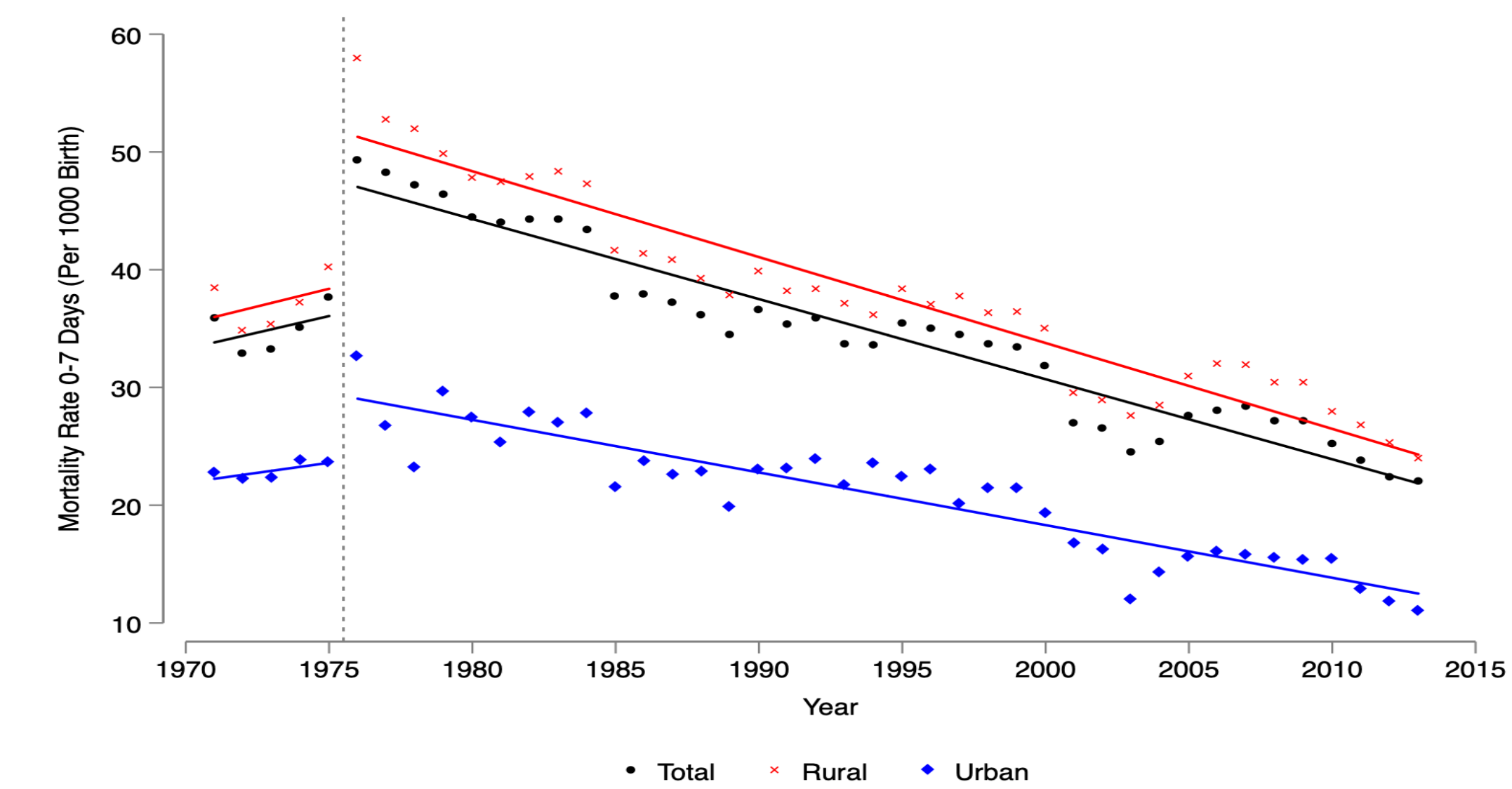
States with lower sex ratio earlier likely to experience inflated SRB



Source: Population Census 1991

## Potential Mechanism: Infanticide

Infant Deaths between 0-7 days: (Sample Registration System)



## Summary

- Study the political origins of missing women in India.
- Document that a short-term policy implemented by the government in the past can induce significant changes in the sex ratios and initiate long-term persistent effects.
- Examine Forced Sterilization: a family planning policy implemented between 1976-77
  - The Short-lived policy led to an increase in the ratio of boys to girls.
  - Document a sharp rise in the death rate of infants less than 7 days.
  - The enduring legacies persist in the long run.