

Introduction

Broader Research

- Examines how access to early childhood education may affect mother's mental health
 - Positive long-term student outcomes from public preschool
 - Possible effects on maternal work and income as well
 - Increased mobility and SES associated with improvements in health

Summer Project

- Contextualizing *École maternelle*: French universal preschool program primarily for children ages 3-6 and as young as 2
 - Fees abolished in 1881
- Mapping preschool access (number of schools and enrollment) and explaining overlap with increased women's mobility in France
- U.S. Targeted Head Start program vs. French universal preschool model comparison
 - OECD cross-country comparative analysis
- Research provides context for studying relationship between early education and maternal mental health in the future

Main Objective:

Contextualize the French universal preschool program, *école maternelle*, examine its relationship to women's social mobility, and compare this childcare approach to the U.S. and other OECD countries.

U.S. and French Programs

Key characteristic	<i>École maternelle</i> (France)	Head Start (United States)
Primary Age Served	3-6 years old	3-4 years old
Teaching Requirements	3-year university degree (bachelor's equivalent) and 2-year master's degree	50% required to have 4 year bachelor's degree
Curriculum	Learning through play, reflection and problem solving, and memorization- 5 domains (language, physical activity, art, structuring thought, exploring the world)	Learning, social and emotional development, language and literacy, cognition, perceptual, motor, physical development
Additional Resources Available	Meals and afterschool services (with wraparound fees)	Health screenings, meals and snacks, mental health support and parent education for families

Table 1: Institutional comparison of the *École maternelle* and Head Start

Mapping Preschool Development

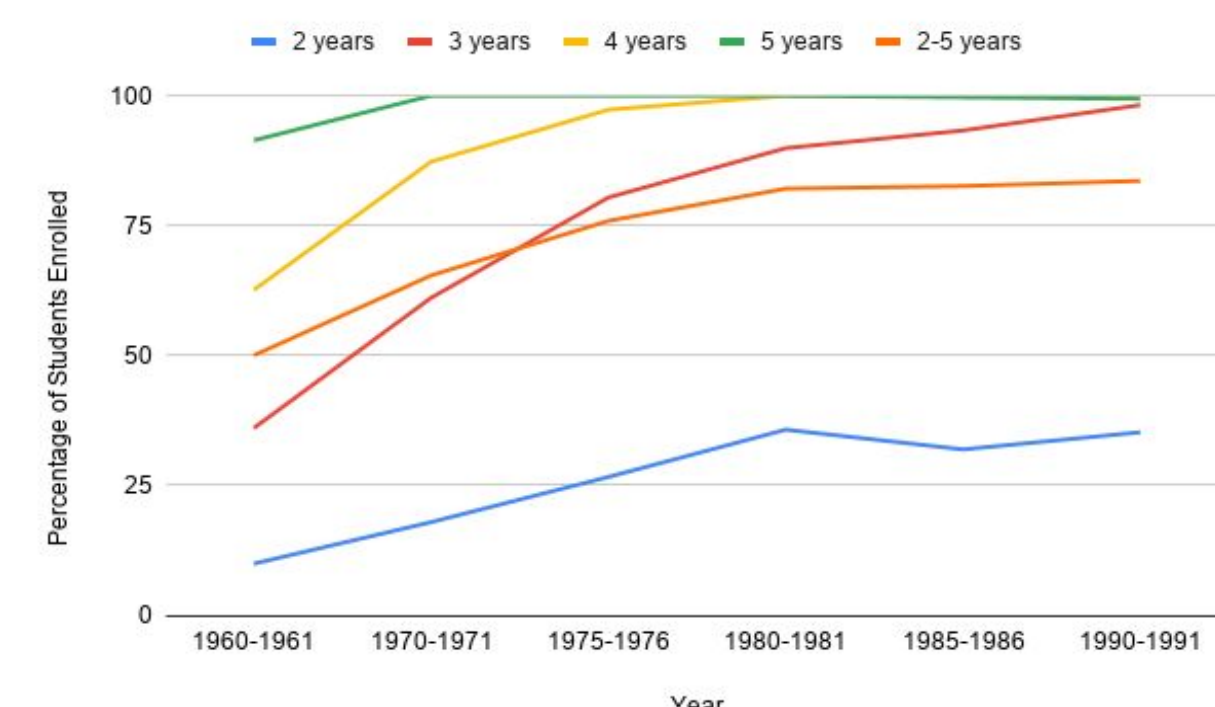
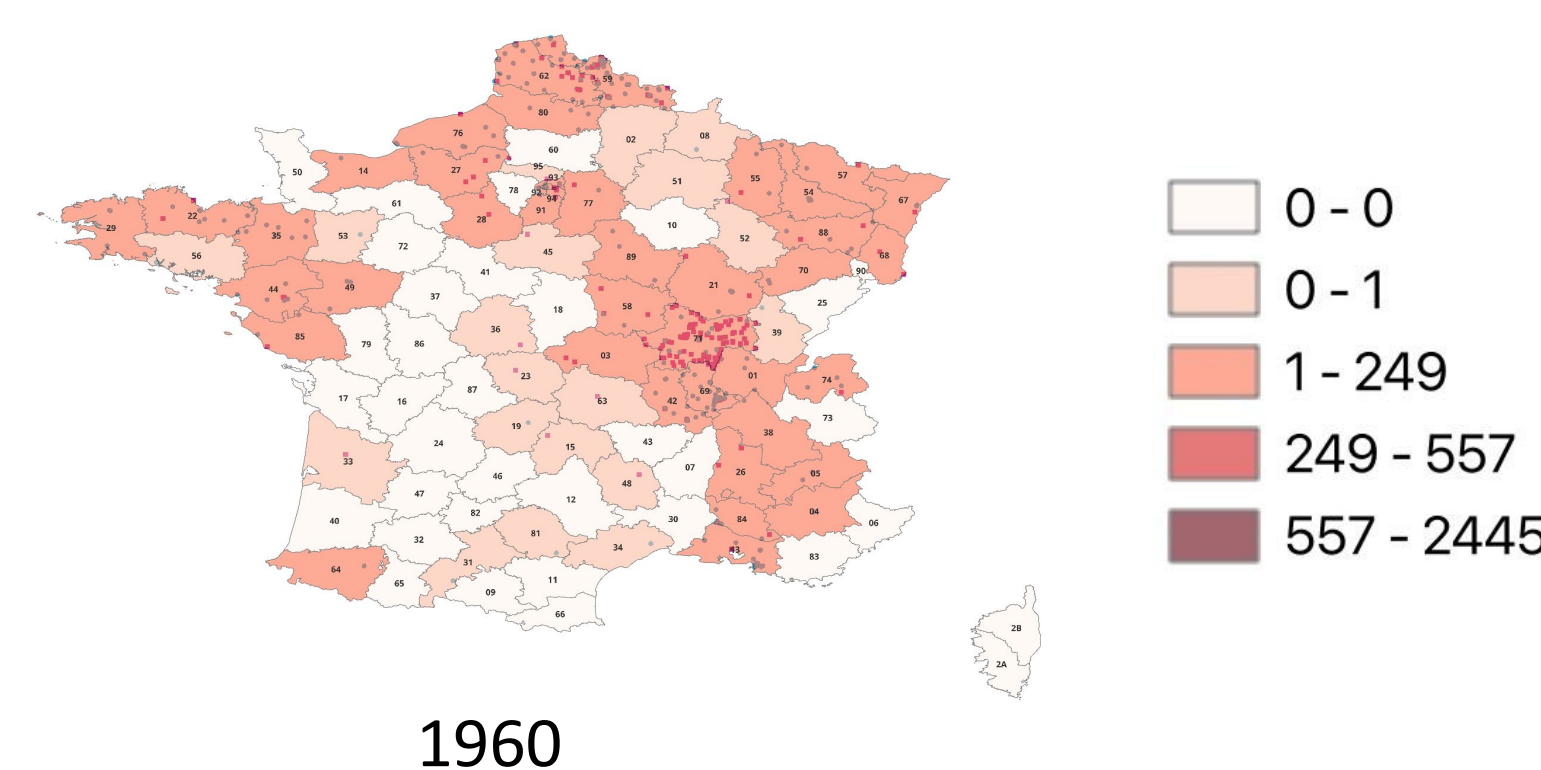


Figure 1: Evolution of Percentage of Students in France Enrolled in School by Age



1960

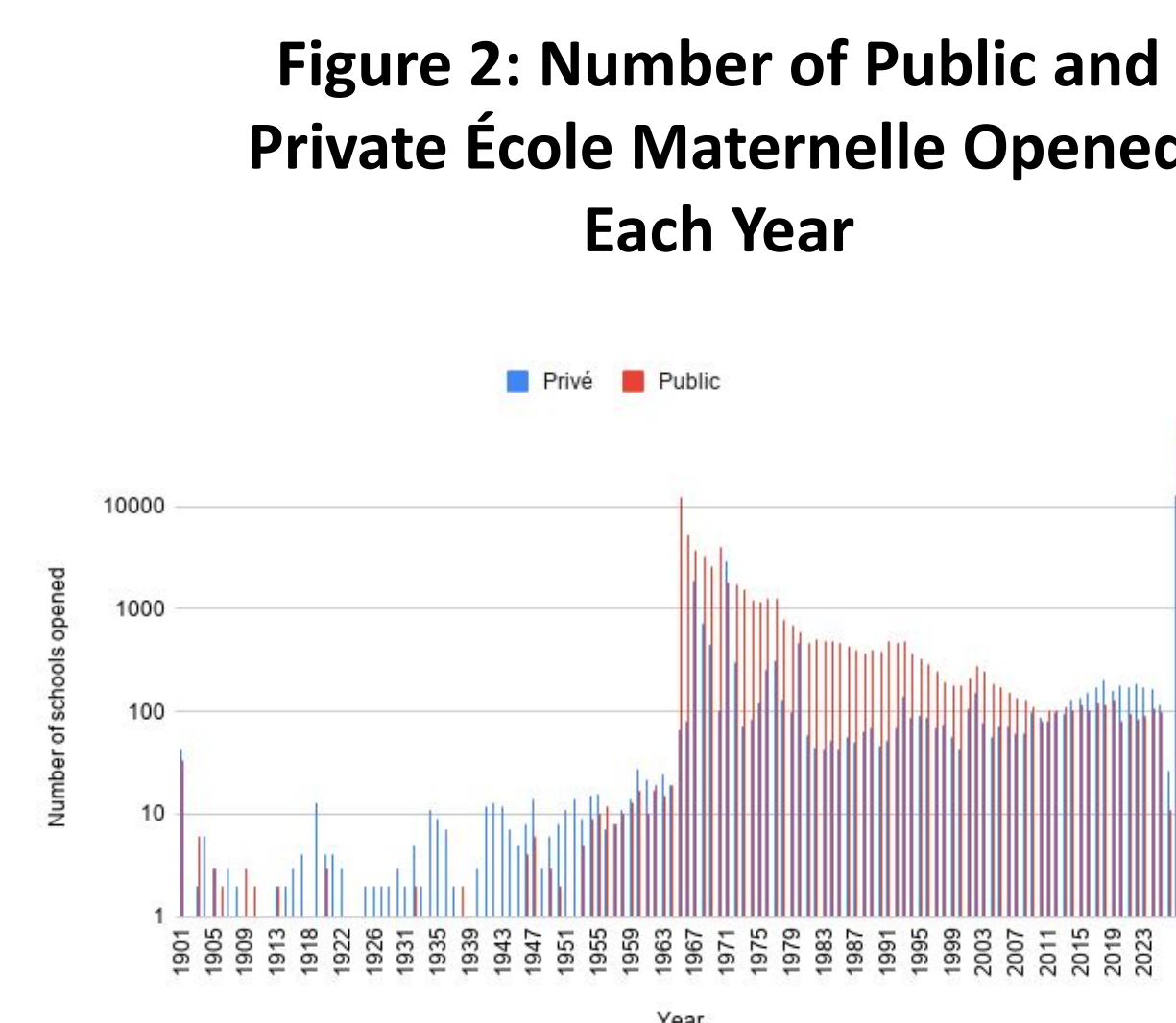
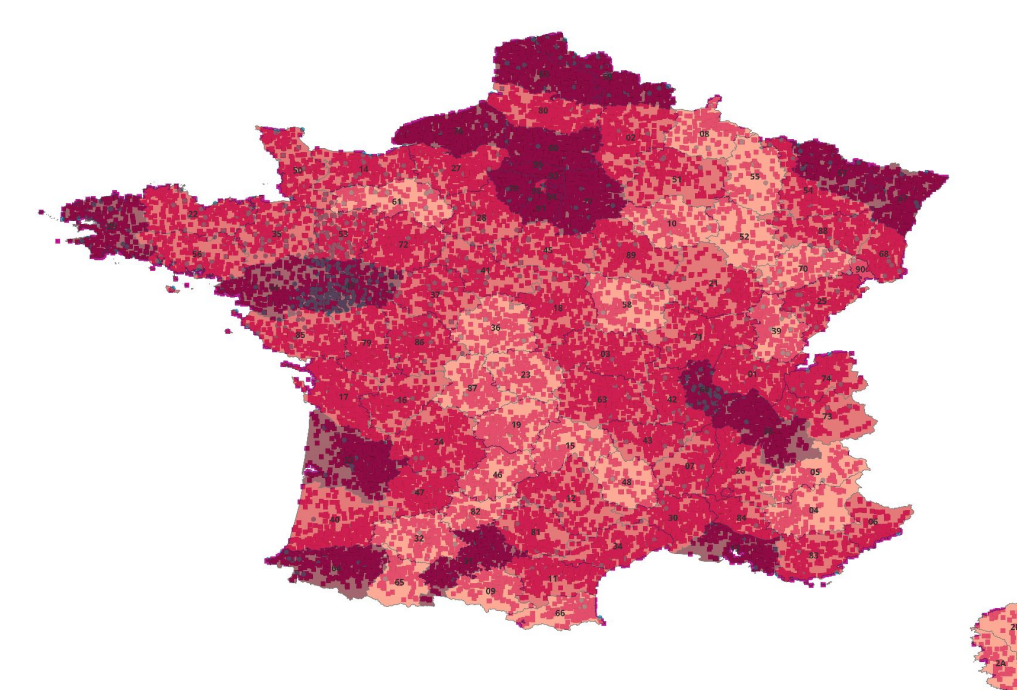


Figure 2: Number of Public and Private *École Maternelle* Opened Each Year



1970

Figure 3: Distribution of Public and Private Preschools by Department in France



1960

2025

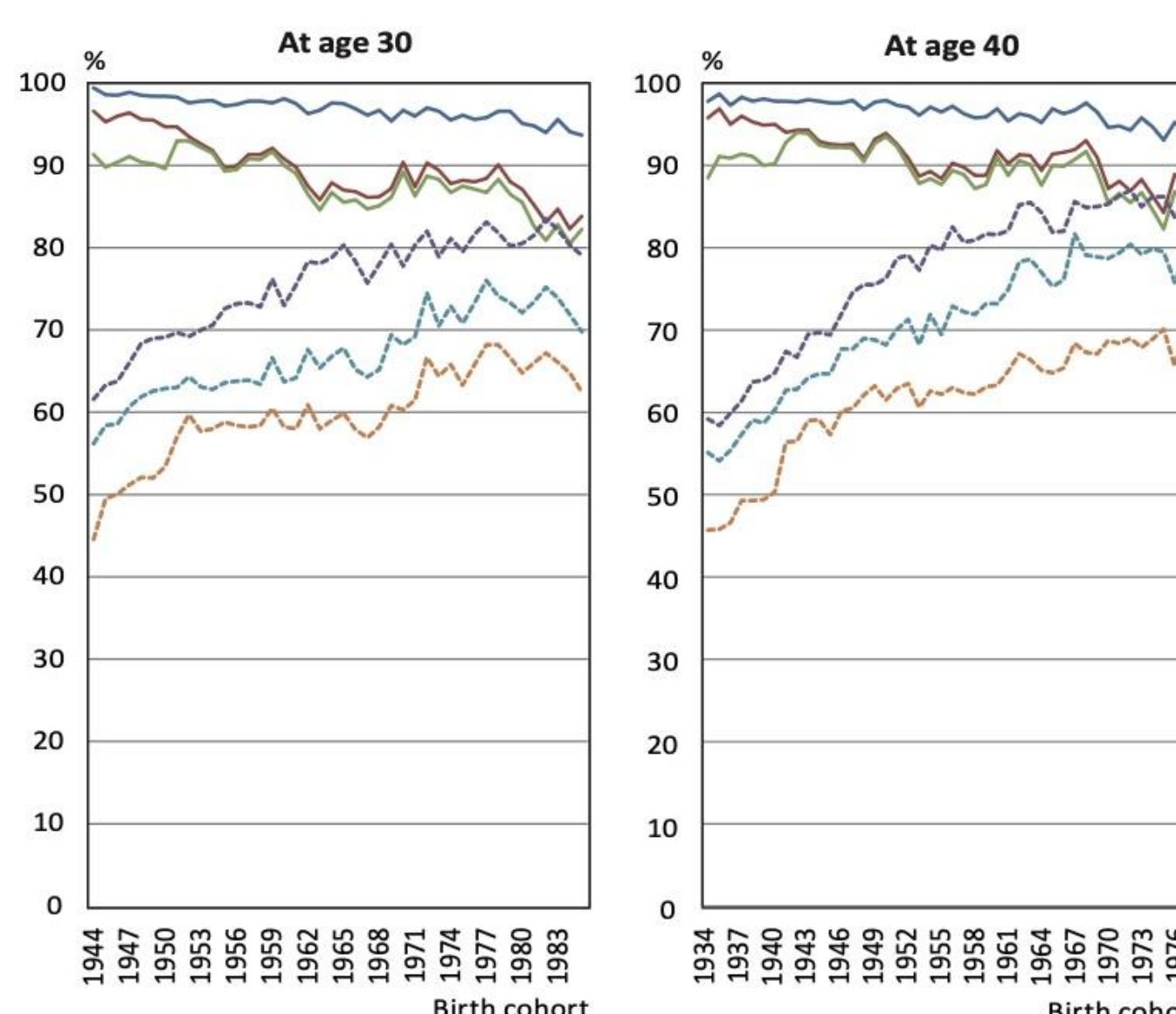
Figure 4: Geographic Distribution of Public and Private Preschools in France

- Concentration of schools is greater in the outer areas of France near the border
- Private schools concentrated in the West along the Atlantic coast.

Women's Mobility in France

- In the late 1960s-1990s, number of preschools & enrollment significantly increased
- Women's LFP & employment in France followed a similar trend
- Financial independence (1965) and Overturn of Single Wage Allowance Act (1978) encouraged women to work
- Increased social mobility correlated with improved physical and mental health outcomes

Figure 5: Labor Force Participation (purple) and full time equivalent (orange) Rates in France for 1900s birth cohorts



OECD Cross-Country Comparison

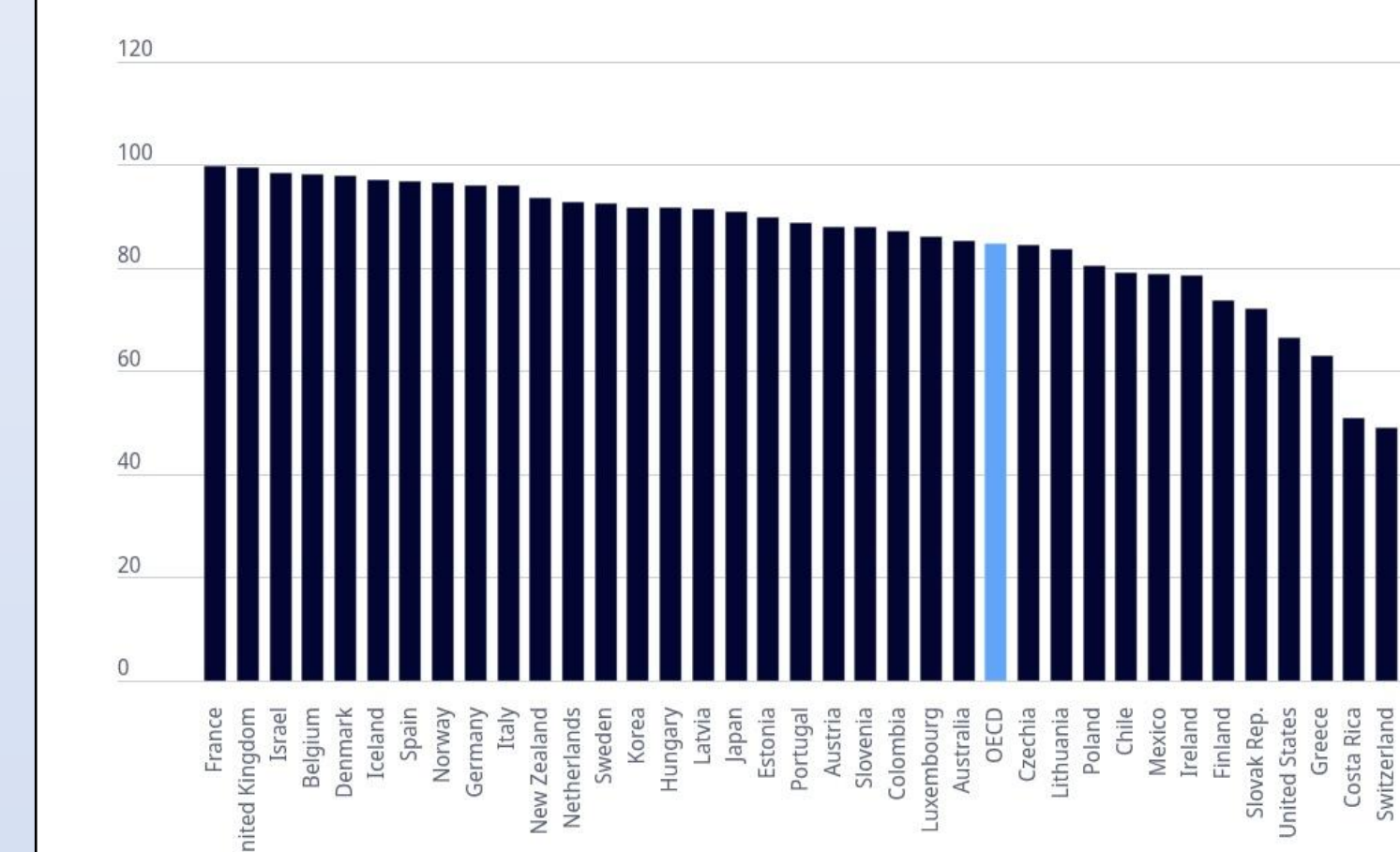


Figure 6: Early Childhood Education by OECD Country

- Three Types of Welfare States (Esping-Andersen)
 - Liberal- U.S., Canada, U.K.
 - Conservative- France, Germany, Italy
 - Social Democratic-Nordic Countries
- U.S. preservation of traditional family model aligns with Conservative
 - Enrollment rate below OECD average
- France promotion of universal preschool program to encourage women to work aligns with Social Democratic model
 - One of highest enrollment rates of OECD countries

Discussion

- Established correlation between women's social mobility and universal preschool in France
 - Evidence for broader project on early education and maternal mental health
- France, U.S. and other OECD country comparison under Esping-Andersen framework
 - Both the U.S. and French approach to early childhood education differs from their typical welfare classification

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Emilie Courtin, Léa Cimelli, and the rest of the LSE Health Inequalities Lab for their support and expertise on this project. I would also like to thank Stephen Barnes for helping coordinate my research in the UK. Finally, I would like to thank the MIT Laidlaw program for funding this opportunity.

References

Full references and paper can be found at the link below:

