

POLITICAL ORIGINS

*of the*

FEMALE FRANCHISE

by

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*Political Origins of the Female Franchise*

Why did male politicians agree to extend voting rights to women? Studying the political inclusion of women around the turn of the twentieth century, this book argues that electoral politics and the strategies pursued by women's movements drive the struggle for voting rights reform. Party leaders were unlikely to get on the reform bandwagon if they were confident that they could survive future elections without the additional votes of women. But parties that were vulnerable to electoral competition, and that believed women would support them, were more likely to agitate for reform. On the other side of the coin, women who hoped to win the vote had to balance their desire to attain the particular right of suffrage against other potential consequences of franchise expansion. If the coalition for suffrage was broad, vulnerable parties with a mass-basis were more likely to support women's enfranchisement. Where the coalition was narrow, vulnerable parties with centrist and conservative leanings had an incentive to extend the franchise, but only if they could exclude large segments of women in the reform. Thus, while the ebb and flow of political competition created opportunities for reform, the decisions of suffrage activists – about which women to mobilize and which parties to align with – determined the results.

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For Sassy and Mads, my homegrown militants.

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*You cannot lift the world at all,  
While half of it is left so small.<sup>1</sup>*

## PREFACE

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In setting out to write about women and democratization I have at several points wondered if it was enough to write about “just” women. The historical, philosophical, and perhaps even the material baggage of democracy is so weighty that it can be quite tempting to write about all of that as well. But time and again when one reads the great tracts on democracy’s founding there is scarcely a mention of the fairer sex. A sophisticated reader could be forgiven for thinking that the story of women’s political emancipation has been quite separate from the progression of democracy itself.

With this book I hope, above all, to convince even those readers not particularly interested in feminism that women were not outside of history when democratic governments were born. In fact, in these new systems women’s struggle against the remnants of authoritarianism bears many resemblances to the struggles of other groups including the non-landed elites, industrial workers, indigenous peoples, and immigrants. For each of these groups, history has produced moments in which members perceived a deep contradiction in their continued exclusion from a purportedly inclusive governmental system. At times, members of these groups contrived ways to change the rules in ways both more congruent with democratic ideals, as well as in line with the group’s own economic and political interests. The biggest lesson that should be imparted by this book is that women’s

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<sup>1</sup> The Socialist and the Suffragist, 1911

inclusion bears many under-explored similarities to these other histories.

I should say that not one of my graduate advisors at Yale balked at the idea of writing a book just about women and democratization. Getting the story correct, they thought, would be an accomplishment in its own right. Still, I have Frances Rosenbluth to thank for always reminding me that formulating connections with other political moments and movements gives greater heft to anyone's argument. Frances has been the picture of support – reliable, confidential, and at times even familial – often having a better clue as to my whereabouts than even my good friends.

To Sue Stokes, too, I owe a tremendous debt. Sue sold me on a graduate education at Yale and made it worthwhile many times over. From contributing one of the best essays to an edited volume I wrote a few years back, helping my dreams of more department “happy hours” come to fruition, to issuing more run of the mill scholarly advice (and a good education on copy editing), I am truly thankful. Alexandre Debs and Thad Dunning were both supportive and exacting throughout this process. I learned so much from taking and teaching methodology with Thad, and hope to emulate his conscientious approach to research design which emphasizes “shoe leather” as much as bootstrapping.

Along with my official team of advisors, many others have aided this project along the way. Elisabeth Wood, Naomi Lamoreaux, and David Mayhew provided important, early guidance to the project. On the United States chapter I would like to thank Stephen Skrowneck, Rogers Smith, Des King, and Andy Eggers, who each made suggestions that are reflected herein. The work on Great Britain was the first and benefited tremendously from the input from others. Initial conversations with Adam Tooze, Jay Winter, and Iain MacLean, as

well as later conversations with David Soskice, were especially helpful. Thanks too to the editors of *Politics & Society*, especially Mary Ann Twist and Molly Nolan, for their enthusiasm and thoughtful feedback on a segment published in their journal. Special thanks to Brendan O’Leary, whose exacting comments taught me a good deal about Ireland as well. On the study of France I am indebted to John Merriman, Steven Hause, and Timothy Tackett. Grey Anderson and Alexandra Cirone also deserve thanks as reliable first stops before the reference section for all matters related to French politics in the Third Republic.

It heartens me to acknowledge the many sources of funding and the many contributions of friends, family, and colleagues to this process. Yale was an incredibly generous institution – the department of political science, the Leitner Program in Political Economy, the Latin American and Iberian Studies Council, the MacMillan Center’s Doctoral Research Fellowship and the Robert Dahl Fellowship all made the years of study and travel possible. Outside organizations have also been tremendously helpful. A prize from the Carrie Chapman Catt Foundation and the National Science Foundation’s doctoral dissertation research improvement grant gave much needed provisions to my fifth year progress. These grants allowed me to do research abroad for long stretches of time, and to employ a few excellent people to help with my data collection efforts, including Joshua Kalla, Michelle Fogarty, Stephanie Gustafson, Mohamed Gamal, Casey Libonate, Daniel Almedia, Julia Hug, and Samira Noronha. Thanks are due, too to Marie Cornwall, Erik Engstrom, and Lee Ann Banaszak for generously sharing with me datasets which they labored to build.

At several points I relied on advice from archivists at the New York Public Library, and Yale’s own collections. I also spent many months in England at the Women’s Library, the People’s Library, Manchester

Local Studies, the Cumbria Archive Center, the British Parliamentary Archives, and at Oxford's Bodleian Library. In France I had help at the Bibliothèque nationale, and from Jean-Antonin Caheric at the archives of the Assemblée nationale. I am thankful to all of those involved in making this assistance possible.

Over six years, this book has been scrutinized by many. A book conference in the spring of 2016, in which Lisa Baldez, Gary Cox, and Carles Boix commented on the entire manuscript was both humbling and inspiring. Additionally, I would like to thank Kimberly Morgan (my guardian scholar), Kathleen Thelen, and Peter Hall for their guidance and encouragement. Thanks, too to Daniel Ziblatt, Isabella Mares, Steven Wilkinson, Dan Kelemen, Mark Pollock, Phillip Ayoub, and Marcus Kreuzer.

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The support of my family has been no less important for this project even though most of its members thought they were cheering me on for a career in politics. For his part, my father knew better, but to him I still must apologize for not matriculating to HBS. Dad, I would ask for forgiveness if this book ever goes into a second edition, but perhaps there is a lower bar? Returning to the United States made this book possible, largely because my mom and grandmother stepped in as child-carers during crucial career moments. My sister Emily and

my Aunt E, my lifelines to the outside world, have saved me from always sporting the pallor of academic towers.

At last I must shower praise on my husband Josh Simon. From my senior thesis at Reed, the some thousand odd applications for schools, grants, and jobs, not to mention these very pages, he has scrutinized nearly every word I have written since 2002. If the reader suffers from too many commas, he is certainly to blame. For everything else, the responsibility rests with me.

## INTRODUCTION

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The masculine nouns that describe belonging to a nation, such as citizen, citizen, ciudadano, and bürger, are often vested with universal meaning: in constitutions and jurisprudence, the duties of a citizen apply equally to both the sexes. But once upon a time, albeit not very long ago, the rights and privileges associated with political membership applied only to men. In the mediaeval period, societies where communal right rested on a material basis (such as property rights) often included women in communal suffrage. But the transition to absolutism and then later to representative institutions actually took rights away from women with material resources.<sup>1</sup> This was the case even in the world's first democracies, and it was true in spite of the fact that as organizers of tea boycotts, white-clad rabble-rousers marching on the Bastille, and invaluable supporters in the supply chains of revolution, women played a role in democracy's origins.<sup>2</sup>

One hundred years passed before the first declaration of universal manhood suffrage in France gave way to a truly universal suffrage in New Zealand in 1893.<sup>3</sup> Since then, though, voting rules across the

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<sup>1</sup> Ostrogorski 1891: 679-680, 684. See too McDonagh 2002 who argues that contemporary levels of women's representation in a given country are highly influenced by the prior monarchical institutions were open or closed to women.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of women's role in the American Revolution, see Flexner (1995 [1959]: ch1, p.12); on Mexico see Montes-de-Oca-O'Rilley (2005). Jayawardena (1986) links the struggle for women's emancipation in Asia to movements for national liberation from empire.

<sup>3</sup> By some accounts, the first place where women were given the vote was the Pitcairn Islands in 1838. Markoff (2003: 102-103) recounts the tale of the British Captain Elliott, who, passing through the Tahitian archipelago, took a moment to provide a few regulations for the island which included a provision for equal suffrage. The



the industrial revolution produced new orderings of society and the economy. Traditional rules of “coverture” – in which fathers and husbands were the public representatives of women – were upended as women became better educated, and delayed marriage in order to work. These changes set the stage for innovations in the legal environment faced by women, who eventually gained enhanced rights to property, inheritance, earnings, and custody in the case of divorce.<sup>5</sup> In the early period, then, women’s changing social and economic roles opened up a space in which their public presence was up for debate. In the later period, women’s enfranchisement peaked in the 1940s and 1950s, decades in which many colonial territories won independence for the first time. While many of the early democracies extended voting rights gradually, several of the late-comers adopted universal franchise rights in their founding constitutions.<sup>6</sup>

This book is about the politics of women’s enfranchisement in countries that extended voting rights gradually, under institutional arrangements that I term ‘limited’ democracy. A limited democracy is a regime that uses elections as a decision rule for appointing lead-

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men and women. The figure gives the year of the first major enfranchisement of women that would have allowed for the majority of women to vote. See appendix I for further details. Pitcairn Islands, 1853, are not pictured here. New Zealand was the first major principality to extend the franchise in 1893; but Norway was the first independent country to do so in 1906.

5 The question of whether women were citizens, and whether, by virtue of being citizens, they had the right to vote, was adjudicated in several countries. In *Minor v. Happersett* (1874) the U.S. Supreme Court held that the Constitution did not confer voting rights on citizens, that suffrage was not a right of citizenship, and that the States had the right to withhold voting rights from certain groups of citizens (see Flexner 1995[1959]:161ff.). In the 1880s, French feminists appealed to various ministries and the courts for a decision as to whether the words *citoyen* and *Français*, used in constitutions to confer political and civil liberties, applied to women. Several rulings implied that these words had different meanings in different contexts: that women did not fulfill all the legal conditions to make them French citizens, but that tax law could apply to women so long as a qualification for taxpaying did not require enjoying full civil rights (Hause and Kenney 1984: 11-12).

6 After 1950, every newly independent state included women in the franchise. Ramirez et al. 1997. This is true of both limited democracies and non-democracies. Today, in the words of Schedler, 2002, formal disfranchisement is uncommon “even in the most hard-boiled electoral autocracies”. And international influences have been a large factor in more recent democratizations. Geddes 2007, 330.

ers, and where turnover of leaders is possible, but which may lack many features that are considered essential to democracy today including, *inter alia*, freedom of the press, secret voting, direct-election of all legislative houses, and voting rights for all citizens. In contrast to non-democratic systems, in limited democracies a reorganization of the laws that govern political participation can have quite substantial effects on electoral politics. These potential effects shape the incentives politicians face and their ultimate decisions over whether to reform the law. They also constrain the set of options available to identity groups that are mobilized for reform. This institutional distinction is important, I argue later, because the politics that drive enfranchisement during a moment of democratic founding are distinct from those in countries that have already begun the transition to republican institutions. Here, electoral politics and the (mostly) peaceful strategies of organized movements are key to understanding electoral reform.

Succinctly, the logic of women's enfranchisement that this book advances depends on the strategies and actions of two types of actor: suffragists and elected politicians. Depending on the particular, context-specific conflicts in a given society, suffragists make calculated choices about whether and how to mobilize for reform. They decide which women to organize, and which politicians to align with. At their most effective, they form alliances of interest (rather than solely of conscience) with powerful political leaders which can raise the cost to the politicians of maintaining the status quo. On the other hand, politicians choose whether to support suffrage in voice or votes, and how far to take any given episode of reform. When politicians needed more votes in order to win, and believed that on average women's votes would fall in their favor, expanding the franchise to include women became a political possibility.

As I will argue in the coming chapters, these simple ideas help to explain several lingering historical puzzles, such as why Leftist parties supported reform in some countries while Conservative parties heralded the change in others; and why the women's movement sometimes pursued mass-based constituencies, and at other times did not advance the cause outside of salons. The theory also explains why some legislatures enfranchised women shortly after the first petition for reform, at the same time that other legislatures clung to the status quo for decades; and why some legislatures were the site of short-term reversals, passing reform just a year or two after refusing to do so.

This account of women's enfranchisement, which draws on theories of identity politics, social movements, and the political economy of electoral reforms, links the strategies of women's movements and changes in electoral competitiveness to voting rights reform. The argument applies best, I believe, to the set of cases where women won the vote within semi-democratic systems. It may not explain countries like Finland, which gave both men and women voting rights in its founding constitution in 1906, because the immediate concerns of electoral politics did not drive Finnish women's enfranchisement. Instead, women were included in the first constitution because of their ties to the anti-imperial movement before the constitution was established. This is true in spite of mobilization by Finnish women for the vote.<sup>7</sup> But in Switzerland, which adopted a limited set of democratic

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<sup>7</sup> Prior to 1906 Finland had been a "Grand Duchy" of Russia. Between 1886 and 1899 the Finnish Diet had some independent legislative authority, but a maximum of 8 percent of the male population would have been allowed to participate in elections. Taxpaying women were given municipal franchise in the countryside in 1863, and in the towns in 1872. 1897 Finnish "Women's Association" brought petition for full suffrage to Diet which did not reach second reading. In 1904 a suffrage rally in Helsingfors drew 1000 protestors, which was followed by another mass meeting of suffragists in December 1905. On the tails of a general strike in 1905 (which included male and female leaders), the radical Social Democratic party came into power. The party overhauled the structure of the legislature and the electoral laws, extending universal suffrage to men and women in 1906. In 1907 the first election took place under the new laws, and brought 19 women into national office. These

principles in 1848 and kept women from the polls until the 1970s, my theory applies. Swiss women had to wait so long for the vote because of calculations made by Switzerland's elected politicians, and the strategy pursued by Swiss suffragists. With very little turnover in national elections, the Swiss parties did not need the votes to maintain political power, and thus had little incentive to pursue reform. The suffragists, meanwhile, were more concerned with the implications of organizing across cantons than with challenging the status quo legal framework. Together, these factors explain the delayed incorporation of women into Swiss politics.<sup>8</sup>

The present text shows how the logic of women's suffrage applies to suffrage politics in the United States, France, and the Great Britain. These three countries were the first to experiment on a large scale with representative institutions, and they produced some of the earliest and most vociferous feminist political thought.<sup>9</sup> In 1900, all three had well-established and growing suffrage movements, yet by 1920, only the United States and the United Kingdom agreed to let women into the fold. France, which was always the boldest in its institutional reforms, had many opportunities to extend the franchise in the 1920s, but refused women until the late date of 1944. As I will show,

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women constituted the world's first female legislators. The universal franchise law was reaffirmed in 1919, after the fall of the Russian Empire. See Anthony et al. 1969 [1881] volume VI: Ch. LIII; Berins Collier 1999: 35; Ray 1918.

8 Swiss suffragists advocated for reform over many decades, but in 1971 they were finally able to secure voting rights through an innovative cross-cantonal strategy with large-scale mobilization that had been implemented in the several years' prior. Banaszak 1996.

9 In 1791, during the French Revolution, Olympe de Gouges authored a *Declaration of the Rights of Women* proclaiming that "Woman has the right to mount the scaffold; she must have the right to mount the rostrum," (Hause and Kenney 1985: 5). Her calls were not heeded. Instead, de Gouge was guillotined. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* reverberated through British "salons" after 1792, followed, in 1869, by J.S. Mill's *The Subjection of Women*, long thought to have been influenced through his relationship with the indelible Harriet Taylor (see Holton 1986: ch 1). Finally the famous 1848 Women's Rights Convention, which took place at Seneca Falls, New York, produced a second *Declaration of the Rights of Woman*, spurred the formation of the world's first organized movement for women's suffrage (see Flexner 1995 [1959]: ch X).

the differences between these countries boil down to the strategic interactions between suffrage movements and elected politicians. The strategies pursued by suffragists and politicians depended heavily on the economic and political cleavages in each country, with each group balancing the downstream political consequences of including diverse women in the electorate. Political and economic cleavages also explain variations within each country, including regional patterns of suffrage mobilization, shifts in partisan support for women's enfranchisement over time, and, in the federal United States, the timing of voting rights reform at the state level. The rest of this chapter describes my research design, outlines the chapters, and clarifies the contributions to scholarship on democratization and women's enfranchisement.

#### RESEARCH DESIGN

To examine the role of political cleavages, electoral competition, and movement strategy in the formation of women's voting rights, I employ a multi-method and multi-level research design that gains inferential leverage through both across-case and within-case analyses. The primary method of investigation, at the heart of each substantive chapter, is a single country case study. Each case study – of the United States, France, and Great Britain – foregrounds its discussion of suffrage politics with reference to the historical and institutional context in each country, attempting to uncover features that are relevant for the argument, such as which political cleavages were salient when franchise was debated, and which women organized for reform. Often drawing on primary accounts, or secondary interpretations of primary texts, the chapters also give an overview of the crucial episodes in which reforms failed or passed in each country. This detailed ap-

proach is important for establishing what politicians really thought in each political context, and helps us to interpret how organized movements responded to cultural and institutional constraints.<sup>10</sup>

Because the institutions and political conflicts in each of these countries are different, the empirical portion of each chapter is tailored to the context. Specifically, I investigate the theory at different levels of aggregation, focusing on macro-level implications of the argument in the federal United States, meso-level predictions in France, and micro-level interactions in the United Kingdom.<sup>11</sup> The intuition behind the research design is that by studying women's enfranchisement at different levels of aggregation, using general predictions that can be gleaned from the argument, different dimensions of this simple argument can be illuminated across and within countries.

The theory, articulated in Chapter 3, examines both the demand for women's enfranchisement as well as its supply. The first section describes the conditions under which women decide to mobilize for suffrage reform, highlighting how the relative position of women within social groups as well as the distance across groups determines the size of the suffrage movement and the extent of the movement's demands. I contend that suffragists were concerned with the impact of women's enfranchisement, and deliberately chose to keep the movement small, or to grow it, depending on their expectations about what women's votes would do for their programmatic agendas. Even women who wanted rights in theory may have been willing, in highly stratified societies, to set this desire aside so as not to undermine other political priorities.

On the supply side, I present a simple argument in which politicians only agree to reform if the status quo is not working for them,

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<sup>10</sup> Echoing the case made by Capoccia and Ziblatt (2010) for "episode" analysis.

<sup>11</sup> This approach is of a feather with Lieberman's (2005) call for "nested" analysis.

and if they believe they can capture a greater share of the female vote than their competitors. In this account, franchise extension should be likelier when incumbents and challengers are closely matched, and unlikely when a party has a strong hold on power. Demand meets supply in so far as a larger movement improves the information available to politicians and gives clues about which women will be most likely to turn out if the vote is extended. We can expect a competitive political environment to produce reform if the information gleaned from the large suffrage movement is compatible with the incentives of a party with enough power to push reform through.

These insights produce three implications that are explored in the empirical chapters. On the broadest level, we should find a positive interaction between the strength of the women's movement and level of electoral competition. Casting the argument in this way allows for it to be corroborated (or discredited) at the macro-level through a large-n statistical analysis. Exploring, on the meso-level, the behavior of individual parties, we should find support for reform coming from parties that believe they will benefit from the additional voters, whereas parties that do not foresee such advantage should resist extending the franchise. Finally, on the micro-level, we should have the ability to study the strategies of organized movements in shaping political reform, determining whether (and when) they focused on changing perceptions and beliefs, and when they attempted to intervene in the sphere of political competition. These three levels of analysis correspond to studies of the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, respectively.

In addition to clarifying the reasons for differences in the timing of women's enfranchisement across countries, the research design that I employ allows for aspects of the theory to be tested within countries. In particular, I can account for three specific puzzles: why the West-

ern United States were early adopters of women's suffrage when, by all accounts, the movement was stronger in the East; why the Liberal government in the United Kingdom refused to support a women's franchise bill from 1906 to 1912, but ultimately included women on the Reform Act of 1918; and, finally, why a successful suffrage measure that was passed by the French Chamber of Deputies in 1918 received no hearing by the Senate throughout the 1920s. The answers to these questions, which have to do with the ebb and flow of political competition and the strategic choices made by the suffrage movements in these environments, demonstrate the explanatory power of my argument.

#### PLAN FOR THE BOOK

The book begins with two short chapters, the first of which describes the need for an original theory of women's enfranchisement, and a second that works toward that goal. In reviewing the seminal accounts of democratization, chapter 2 demonstrates that women have been absent from these theories, and then argues that this omission is problematic on empirical and theoretical grounds. Ignoring women's inclusion means, first, that political scientists fail to explain how about half of the world's population, in most of the world's countries, gained access to political power. Leaving women out of mainstream studies of democratization further risks elevating certain theoretical accounts, particularly those that focus on violence, over accounts that allow a greater space for peaceful mobilization to affect democratic reforms. Non-violent and strategic mobilization of civil society has been critical for forging reform within democratic societies around the world, and yet this type of mobilization is almost absent from the literature on franchise expansion. I argue that this is because scholarship has

aimed at establishing a single, “unified” account that has the power to explain both why democracies form and how democratic practice becomes deeper. Focusing on women reveals the flaw in this logic and has the potential to expand the set of cases drawn on by scholars of democracy.

Along with laying out the social scientific theories that I engage with throughout the text, chapter 2 describes how the historiography of women’s enfranchisement has contributed to my comparative understanding of suffrage movements. There have been three waves of historical scholarship on women’s suffrage since the 1960s. The first wave began with histories of bourgeois movement leaders; the second moved toward revisionist accounts of the movement which stressed the importance of “militant” activism; and the final wave settled into a new political history of the women’s movement. Writings from all three of these schools appear in the footnotes of this text, but the recent political histories are given more weight in the book as a whole. The new political histories are explicitly concerned with understanding relationships between suffrage activists and legislative politics. In other words, they provide insight into the strategic interactions that, I argue, are key to understanding the political dynamics of women’s inclusion.<sup>12</sup>

Chapter 3 elaborates on these political dynamics, providing a simple account of the electoral conditions in which excluded groups have a better chance at winning reform, namely, when the incumbent is vulnerable and believes that it will benefit from widening the electorate. A key revelation of this chapter is that petitions for voting rights reform fail either because the party in power does not think the disfranchised group will support it, or because it does not need

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<sup>12</sup> While falling short of reconstructing the entire “distribution” of historians’ explanations of women’s suffrage, I hope my justification of the use of history in Chapter 2 overcomes some of the problems outlined by Lustick 1996.

the extra votes in order to win. This drives the status quo bias against electoral reform. Yet suffrage movements can intervene in this struggle because parties have to continually fight for electoral power. Even when the odds seem low, movement leaders can draw on what I call the “ordinary” democratic toolbox to spur reform. In deciding which political groups to ally with and which women to mobilize, suffrage organizations can change politicians’ beliefs about group preferences, or attempt to ensure the victory of sympathetic legislators. In these ways, an organized movement can catalyze political reform in seemingly infelicitous electoral environments.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are dedicated to showing how the theory plays out in the context of suffrage politics in the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. Each chapter dedicates substantial space to explaining the institutional context in which suffrage reform (or non-reform) took place, as well as the alternative hypotheses that have been used to explain suffrage politics in each country. This level of engagement with history will, I hope, bolster the plausibility of the causal claims that I make.<sup>13</sup> With history in the background, I then draw on multiple social scientific methodologies to help make sense of why the United States and the United Kingdom were successful cases of women’s enfranchisement just before 1920, while France, which was given a similar opportunity to extend the vote, failed to reform prior to 1944.

The federal system and the fact that all male citizens had (at least *de jure*) voting rights make the United States an ideal place to evaluate the link between political competition and women’s suffrage at the macro-level. Chapter 4 uses an event-history design to estimate the correlations between competition, movement strength, and women’s enfranchisement at the state level. Drawing on the politi-

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<sup>13</sup> Here I take up Kreuzer’s (2010) call for a more thorough dialogue between qualitative and quantitative research and historical knowledge.

cal competition literature, I generate several measures which track an incumbent's strength, a legislature's openness to new entrants, and the division of power across the state houses. I also create a new measure of party structure in the Gilded Age, extending David Mayhew's concept of Traditional Party Organization back in time to the 1880s. Analyzing a state-level dataset encompassing 48 states over a period of 70 years, I find strong positive correlations between the strength of the women's movement, robust political competition, and support for women's suffrage in state legislatures. The magnitudes of these effects are large; they are maintained under several different measures of political competition; they are consistent across parameterizations and when outliers are excluded; and they remain strong when accounting for potential confounding variables, such as partisanship, political culture, gender-egalitarianism, progressivism, temperance, and women's scarcity. The study of the United States thus provides compelling evidence at the macro-level that the interaction between large political movements and robust political competition matter for women's enfranchisement.

Moving to a meso-level analysis of party decisions on franchise reform, Chapter 5 accounts for the failure of the French suffragists to gain voting rights during the Third Republic. Analyzing the debates, roll call votes, and historical texts surrounding several suffrage measures from 1918 to 1925, I argue that the incumbent Radicals refused to extend the vote because of a prevailing perception that women in the countryside would support conservative causes and candidates. Radical politicians feared turnover of power or a recapture of the state by the church if they were to include women among the voting public. Importantly, the actions of the women's suffrage movement were not designed to overcome the Radical resistance: the largest suffrage league based in Paris deliberately neglected to form ties with

the country's rural, Catholic organizations, believing, along with the Radical MPs, that the majority of French women would provide votes for the church. The fears of both the suffrage movement and the Radical party explain each group's actions during the 1920s. Although the Radical party was too weak in the Chamber of Deputies to prevent a Conservative and Left coalition from passing a suffrage bill, it had enough strength in the Senate to block the reform throughout the decade. Along with substantiating the relevance of cultural and political cleavages to divisions over electoral reform, the French example highlights the nuances of the relationship between political competition and suffrage expansion.

The final substantive chapter investigates the interaction between political movements and electoral leaders on the micro-level. Studying the United Kingdom, I trace the process that led to women's inclusion on the 1918 Representation of the People Bill. I show, first, that given the preferences of political parties and the constellation of power in the House of Commons, women could secure the vote through a government sponsored bill so long as the Liberals were in power. Realizing this, in 1912 the Liberal *National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies* forged an alliance with the nascent Labour party. Under the "Election Fighting Fund" the suffragists helped the Labour Party to enter into new electoral contests and to unseat anti-suffrage Liberal candidates in by-elections by making available the suffragists' vast financial resources and broad grass-roots network. In return, the Labour party promised not to support any extension of the franchise to men that did not include at least some provision for women. Analyzing election results before and after the Election Fighting Fund was established, I show that the policy was effective in fielding more Labour candidates, in forcing three-cornered competitions, and in provoking turnover of seats. These outcomes were favorable to the

Labour party, and made credible its promise to suffragists. In a situation where the political balance shifted favorably towards the Labour party, the suffragists could expect Labour to support a government measure for women's enfranchisement. The confluence of a targeted movement strategy and a shift in political power that emerged during the First World War, perfectly illustrate the theory's dynamics.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS

The findings generated in the course of this research enhance long-standing debates in political science about the determinants of franchise extension, and they also produce novel contributions to the country-specific literatures on suffrage reform.

The research on the United States brings new ideas to bear on a long-standing puzzle in the historiography of the women's suffrage movement: why the Western states gave women voting rights before the Eastern states, even though the movement was relatively weaker out West. The answer, I claim, lies in the very different political landscapes across the regions. Parties in Western states were more vulnerable to new entrants, and the Western state legislatures were less likely to be controlled by a single party than in other regions, which caused politicians out West to be more open to the entrepreneurial task of recruiting new supporters, including women. On the other side of the country, single party rule in the South translated into large legislative majorities and little need for new constituents to bolster Democratic control. The single-party dominance of state legislatures allowed Southern leaders to ignore, for nearly 70 years, the pleas of the well-funded and highly subscribed women's suffrage movement. Finally, though the Northeastern states exhibited variation in partisan control, the clientelistic practices that kept urban political machines

in power reinforced parties' need to exclude new voters. Hence, the Western states extended voting rights to women earlier than the rest because their political landscape was much more competitive than in the other regions.

Using simple social scientific tools, the work on France confirms that Radical party politicians resisted women's enfranchisement because they feared women's religiosity. From the 1789 Revolution to the Fourth Republic, the history of French politics has been mired by conflicts between the church and the state. So much so that electoral geographers of the present era see similarities between revolutionary alliances and electoral politics today, finding that regions which remained devoted to the Catholic church in the eighteenth century are more electorally conservative in the twentieth. I use historical data on the share of priests who swore fealty to the civil constitution during the Revolution (hence breaking with the Church) as a proxy for a smaller religious cleavage in the 1900s. With this measure I show that Radicals in more religious areas were overwhelmingly against suffrage reform, while those in more secular areas were more likely to support reform. Demonstrating that individual Radical legislators were motivated to vote against suffrage to the degree that it would hurt their chances in the next election brings new depth to the consensus view among French historians.

Through debates, letters, and organizational minutes, the chapter on the United Kingdom traces the reasons for women's exclusion, and the causes of their eventual enfranchisement. Its original archival research intervenes two historiographical debates among suffrage scholars, one related to the role of the Labour party, and another related to the role of the War, in leading to women's enfranchisement. As many scholars have noted, entry into and losses from the First World War greatly altered all aspects of the political environment in the United

Kingdom. While a few suffragists and some subsequent scholars have claimed that women's role in preparations for the war paved the way for their inclusion, I argue that on its own, a shift in public opinion was not enough to guarantee women's enfranchisement, nor was it strictly necessary. The war's greatest influence on suffrage lay in the creation of a multi-party wartime cabinet which saw Arthur Henderson, a Labour leader, appointed to the government for the first time. Henderson was a key player in forging the Election Fighting Fund Alliance, and his early and persistent lobbying prior to the 1916 "Speaker's Conference" on electoral reform is, I argue, critical for understanding how Clause 4, which granted limited suffrage rights to British Women, appeared in the fourth Representation of the People Act. In light of the debate among historians, this project shows that the success of the alliance between the Labour Party and the Liberal Suffragists is inextricably linked to the war: without the alliance, the change in power that emerged during the war would not have led to suffrage.

In summary, if the macro-level evidence from the United States reinforces the idea that robust political competition is requisite to franchise reform, the meso-level analysis of France establishes that on its own, competition cannot produce reform if political cleavages cut against the incumbent's interests. Unlike British suffragists, who formed a strategic alliance across cleavage groups, French suffrage organizations internalized fears about these cleavages and were thus unwilling to intervene in the electoral arena to precipitate reform. The micro-level research on the United Kingdom shows how a robust and strategic organization can capitalize on small shifts in the electoral environment, catalyzing reform in only slightly favorable winds. Taken together, the book develops a political economic account of how women won the vote, arguing that party competition,

political cleavages, and concerted movement strategies are powerful and tractable drivers of women's enfranchisement.

## BRINGING WOMEN “IN” TO THE STUDY OF DEMOCRACY

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The study of democracy has been central to political science, but women, either as political actors who have taken part in the politics of democratization, or as beneficiaries of the fruits of democracy, have rarely been given center stage in the seminal accounts of democratization. With the work of Göran Therborn standing as the exception that proves the rule, social science has, both tacitly and explicitly, left women “outside history” during the first key era of democratization.<sup>1</sup> Among the classic texts written, for example, by Moore, Huntington, and Lipset, none mention sex as relevant during democratization.<sup>2</sup> Berins Collier’s work, which builds on the classics by analyzing the relative importance of the elites and the masses during democratic episodes, provides no evidence of women’s role in these processes, even when women gained the vote at the same time as men.<sup>3</sup> And more recent contributions, by Acemoglu and Robinson,

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- 1 Therborn (1977) was ahead of his time, conceding that many of the world’s democracies in earlier periods would be more accurately labeled “male democracies”. The phrase “outside history” comes from Eric Hobsbawm, an august marxist historian who has written important economic and political histories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is quite candid: women did not make the politics, wars or revolutions that defined the Age of Empires, and so are irrelevant to its telling. Hobsbawm [1989] 2010: 196.
  - 2 Moore (1966) mentions women nine times in the tome. Almost all of these references are to a feudal lord’s rights over women in his demesne. Huntington (1993) does not mention the big surge of women’s enfranchisement in the “second” wave; nor does he consider women’s role in the decolonization struggles that demarcate democracy’s “third” wave after 1974. For an account of women’s role in decolonization struggles, see Jayawardena 1986.
  - 3 Berins Collier 1999. Women got the vote during several of the “joint project” episodes she studies in depth, including Finland (1906), Germany (1918) and the U.K. (1918). The omission is especially curious in the U.K. because it was women, rather than men, who had mobilized extensively for the 1918 reform.

and Boix, are explicit in their focus on men. Women are missing not only in theoretical texts, but also in empirical benchmarks. As Paxton has shown, studies commonly use fifty-percent male franchise as an operational definition of democracy, implying that countries can completely exclude women but nevertheless be democratic.<sup>4</sup> The study of democratization is therefore most accurately described as the study of democracy for men.

To justify the focus on male democratization many scholars simply assume, with Acemoglu and Robinson, that there is nothing mysterious about the politics of women's inclusion, that "when the roles began to change as women entered the workforce, women also obtained voting rights."<sup>5</sup> Or they agree with Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens that the "dynamics of [women's] struggle follow quite different principles from that of inclusion of subordinate classes or ethnic groups and would require a whole separate analysis."<sup>6</sup> Statements like these, which commonly appear as rationalizations for scholars' scope conditions, suggest that there is either no puzzle surrounding why women gained entry into the body politic, or, if there is one, its solution is distinct from most other instances of political inclusion.<sup>7</sup>

Each of these claims deserve scrutiny. Since industrializing countries were among the first to experiment with democratic governments, it is undoubtedly true that industrialization was a background factor in both male and female enfranchisement during the first wave

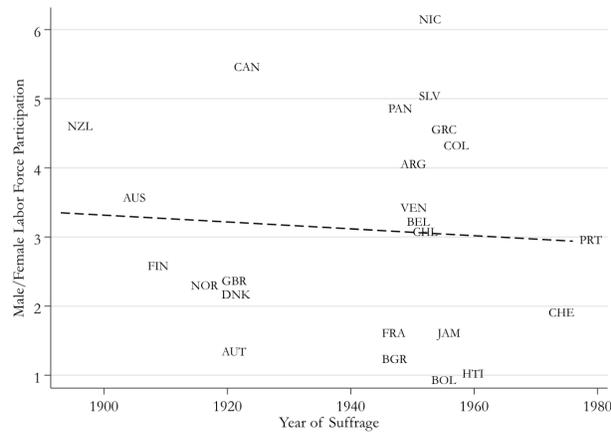
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4 Paxton's (2000) article on measurement validity in democratization studies brilliantly shows how, despite having a conception of democracy that features universal inclusion, most studies in practice utilize a "50 percent male" benchmark as an operational measure. Cf. Therborn (1977) who adopts rigorous standards of full inclusion for being labeled a democracy.

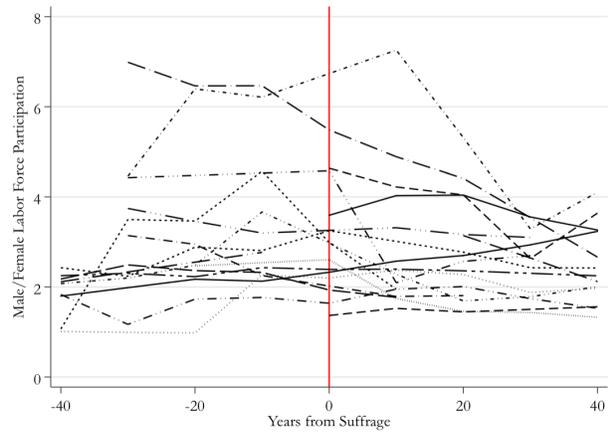
5 Acemoglu and Robinson 2006: 8.

6 Rueschemeyer et al. 1992: 301.

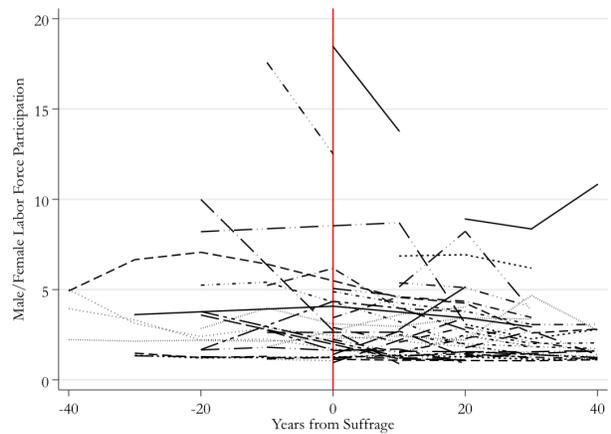
7 The issue of the relevance of women's enfranchisement to other moments of participation will be taken up in the conclusion.



(a) Whole World



(b) Industrial Countries



(c) Non-Industrial Countries

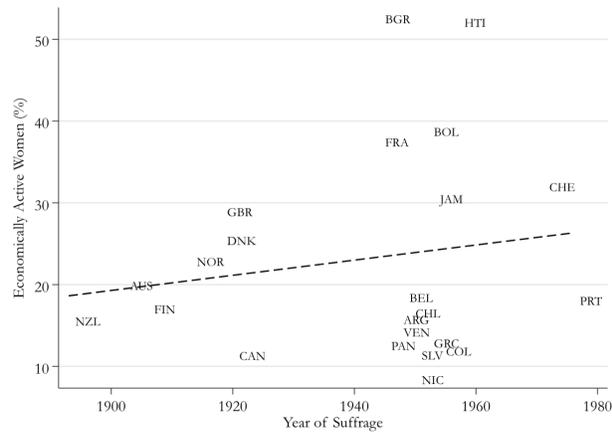
**Figure 2: Ratio of Male to Female Labor Force Participation and Year of Suffrage.** Notes: in the top panel the three-letter country code marker appears in the year suffrage was extended. Panel (a) excludes outliers Libya and Jordan. Panels (b) and (c) plot the ratio over time for industrial and non-industrial countries centering the graphs on the year of suffrage.

of democratization. But a brief glance at cross-national statistics of labor force participation and the dates of women’s suffrage casts doubt on the existence of a simple link between economic modernization and suffrage reform. Figure 2 plots the ratio of men to women in the labor force and the year of suffrage. It shows that many of the first countries to extend the electoral franchise to women, such as New Zealand and Australia, had low female labor force participation. Moreover, as demonstrated in panels b and c, growth in women’s economic activity does not appear to precede suffrage reform.<sup>8</sup> Figure 3 plots female labor force participation (as a percent of all women). The top panel shows that the early enfranchisers had a relatively low share of women in the labor force, while the bottom two panels show that in the years just prior to suffrage, some countries saw growth in women’s economic activity while others saw declines. In terms of correlations, then, there is little evidence that a major shift in women’s formal economic participation preceded reform. On the second claim, that women’s enfranchisement is fundamentally different from men’s, we will have to reserve full judgement until later in the text.

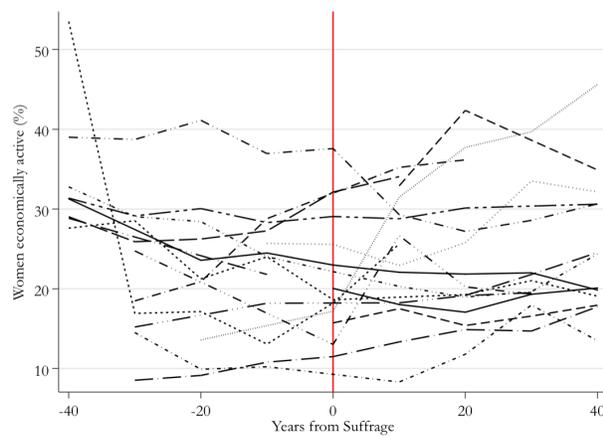
Through a critical review of the literature, in this chapter I argue that our current understanding of democratization does not provide a coherent explanation of women’s enfranchisement. Drawing on the historical accounts of the women’s movement, as well several pieces of original data, I suggest that studying women challenges the theoretical literature on democratization for three reasons. First, women’s inclusion calls into question recent attempts to form “unified” theories of democratization because women were generally enfranchised after a democratic transition had occurred. In these semi-democratic systems, an electoral – rather than a transitional – logic dominated women’s inclusion. Second, while many theorists insist on the pri-

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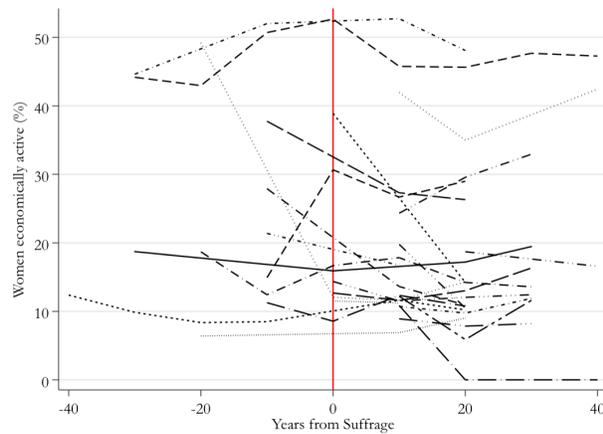
<sup>8</sup> Labor force participation by sex comes from Mitchell, 2003, 2007a, 2007b.



(a) Whole World



(b) Industrial Countries



(c) Non-Industrial Countries

**Figure 3: Percent of Women Who are Economically Active.** Notes: in the top panel the three-letter country code marker appears in the year suffrage was extended. Panel (a). Panels (b and c) plot the percent of women who were economically active over time for industrial and non-industrial countries centering the graphs on the year of suffrage.

macy of "revolutionary unrest" as driving democratic concessions, violence was not the primary mechanism through which women won the vote. This does not discount the importance of women's mobilization, as Przeworski has contended, but instead underlines the need for other, non-violent, mechanisms of contestation to play a role in theories of democratizing reforms.<sup>9</sup> The final way in which women's enfranchisement stretches current theories of democratization is by making it clear that class is not the only locus of conflict in franchise politics. Empirical scholarship has documented a growth in public spending as a result of women's enfranchisement, but politicians debating whether to give women the vote rarely voiced distributive concerns. More often, the actual political debates centered on how women's religiosity would influence social policy, and on how their natural pacifism would interfere with affairs of state. To the extent that models of democratization hinge primarily on economic factors, they have failed to incorporate the key cleavages that dominated the politics of women's suffrage.

The challenges that women's enfranchisement raises for theories of democratization does not mean, however, that women's inclusion is completely different from men's. Instead, as I discuss below, the context in which women's voting rights emerged – generally after an initial transition away from authoritarianism – is similar to that in which many other groups gained political inclusion. For example, prior to the 1867 Reform Act, which extended the vote to include 60 percent of adult men, only 14 percent of men could vote in the United Kingdom. Absent large-scale popular pressure for the vote, by extending the electoral franchise to "compound" householders whose landlords paid taxes for them, the shrewd Tory Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli sought to gain electoral advantage over his long time

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9 Przeworski 2009.

rival and Liberal leader William Gladstone.<sup>10</sup> Himmelfarb argues that "the party had a practical interest as well as a philosophical disposition towards democracy. The Tories were democratic, one might say, because they assumed that the demos was Tory."<sup>11</sup> While still far from a "consolidated" democracy, the U.K. in the era of the Second Reform Act boasted an institutional structure which was similar to that of many countries at the moment of women's enfranchisement.

In this institutional context – what I call a "limited" democracy – politicians debating whether to extend the vote to lower class men, minorities, or women, faced many of the same constraints and incentives, though the exact electoral calculations may have differed. Hence, in the final instance, the dynamics of women's struggle may not, as Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens and Stephens suggest, require a whole separate analysis from the inclusion of other subordinate groups. Instead, by bringing women "in" to the study of democratization, a more flexible analytic can emerge, one which has the power to explain more than just class-based enfranchisement.<sup>12</sup>

#### WOMEN WERE ENFRANCHISED AFTER DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS

In the past fifty years, political scientists have vacillated between seeking theories of democratization that are highly detailed and contex-

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<sup>10</sup> Himmelfarb 1966. Citing the general "apathy" of the British public prior to the Reform, she refutes the notion that unrest or economic crisis led to Act. Originally, the Liberals had proposed a reform bill that was more modest than the one eventually heralded by Disraeli. This move was prior to a stock market crash and a failure of the harvest, which, she argues, had little influence on the course of public or parliamentary debate on the issue (*ibid.*: 101). When the Liberal bill failed, there were a few demonstrations, but the most significant of those in Hyde Park was over the right to assemble, rather than the right to vote (*ibid.*: 104). The violence of that event, she argues, has been vastly over-emphasized by historians, though not by the press at the time.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*: 113.

<sup>12</sup> With the scare quotes I am alluding to Skocpol's 1979 argument that the state needs to be brought "back in" to the study of social revolutions. Since women were never a crucial case for democratization theorists, there is no "back", at least not yet.

tually specific, and those which are general and ostensibly timeless. Huntington, Linz and Stepan, and O'Donnell and Schmitter, all fall into the former camp, offering historically grounded and highly contingent accounts of democratic transitions in specific countries or regions.<sup>13</sup> A recent and rich explosion of theoretical research, sparked by the contributions of Acemoglu and Robinson, and Boix, but also visible in earlier texts by Dahl, Moore, Therborn, and Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens, has taken the latter approach, searching for a "unified" theory of democratization which has the power to explain both the transition to a democratic form of government, as well as later improvements in the degree of democracy that a country achieves.<sup>14</sup> Along with accounting for transition and reform within countries, unified theories are temporally unanchored – they should perform just as well in light of the revolutions in the late eighteenth century as they do for explaining the third, or even fourth, waves of democratization.<sup>15</sup>

While nothing is inherently wrong with searching for a simple, encompassing theory of democratization, problems arise when these unified theories are tested in actual cases. For example, studying changes in democracy scores over five-year intervals from 1955 to 2004, and between 34 and 91 countries (depending on the specification), Freeman and Quinn find mixed empirical support for the theories of both Acemoglu and Robinson and Boix.<sup>16</sup> They find ev-

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13 Huntington 1993; Linz and Stepan 1978; and O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986. Huntington does not believe a unified theory of democratization is possible while O'Donnell and Schmitter claim to provide no theory for transitions from authoritarianism in Latin America in third quarter of the Twentieth century.

14 Acemoglu and Robinson 2006: 15; Boix 2003: 2; Dahl 1971; Moore 1966; Rueschemeyer et al. 1992. Geddes (2007: 323) credits the single theory approach with mixed results of large-N statistical studies.

15 Structural features of society, like the basis of elite wealth or the extant regime type, may also be different for the earlier democratizations than for the later, giving additional theoretical reasons for separate models of the process. Geddes 2007: 331.

16 Acemoglu and Robinson 2009; Boix 2003; Freeman and Quinn 2012.

idence of an inverted-U shape relationship between inequality and democracy, as suggested by Acemoglu and Robinson, but only within autocratic countries.<sup>17</sup> In line with Boix, Freeman and Quinn further suggest that asset mobility is correlated with positive changes in democracy scores, but again only in autocracies.<sup>18</sup> Thus, while there is support for both unified theories, it is only in the context of autocratic regimes.<sup>19</sup> In one sense, these results go against an earlier study by Houle, who studies 116 countries from 1960-2000, finding that inequality affects democratic consolidation but not transitions to democracy.<sup>20</sup> In another sense, though, the results are complementary: when tested in different contexts – using a set of countries that is either democratic or authoritarian – neither of the leading empirical studies find support for the unified theories across systems.

In this reading, it should come as no surprise that the unified theories have received mixed empirical depending on the time periods analyzed and a country's institutional form: politics have very different flavors in authoritarian settings in comparison to democratic settings, and the same economic factors that may have mattered for democratization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may be mirrored in the twentieth.<sup>21</sup> The configurations of power, the set of actors, and even the political conflicts may have changed across the regimes. If Capoccia and Ziblatt are correct in their claim that democratization is

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17 Freeman and Quinn 2012: table 1, models 1.5 and 1.6.

18 Ibid.: table 1, model 1.5; table 2, model 2.1.

19 This is also true in Freeman and Quinn's "robustness" checks in table 3, where they consider a change in political regime (based originally on Przeworski et al. 2000) rather than a change in Polity IV democracy scores. See Freeman and Quinn 2012: footnote 20.

20 Houle 2009. Freeman and Quinn (2012: 58, 65, 75) argue that Houle's results are a function of his measure of inequality and on his omission of financial openness as a key dimension of the story.

21 A recent book by Ansell and Samuels (2014) provides a nice example of a non-unified account. Whereas high landholding inequality reduces the probability that countries democratize, after a democratic transition high levels of inequality increase the probability of further democratizing reforms.

not a single episode of transition but rather a "protracted and punctuated process", unified theories of democratization should place considerable weight on the conflicts that arise and political tactics that are used after an initial transition to democracy has transpired.<sup>22</sup> In practice, though, unified theories allow the same groups, conflicts, and tactics that were important during a democratic transition to linger after the new government is established. When the initial conflict was between owners of different types of capital, between elites living in different geographic areas, or between classes struggling to overcome their subordination, these conflicts are assumed to persist once democracy is established.<sup>23</sup> This has resulted in unified theories wherein the politics of founding moments have been given more weight than subsequent configurations of power and interests.<sup>24</sup>

Acemoglu and Robinson's *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* is the most paradigmatic example of an attempt at a unified theory of democratization that is heavily informed by the politics of founding rather than electoral politics. In their model, the elites and the masses have different preferences for democracy, as democracy empowers the masses to demand redistribution (through higher tax rates) in the future. While elites have the capacity to repress citizens' attempts at collective action, high costs of repression or low costs of mobilization will allow democracy to emerge. Similarly, revolutionary unrest propels reforms within extant democracies. The masses are able to wrest further guarantees of political power after the regime

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22 Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010: 940.

23 A recent formal paper by Xi (2014) takes the point that democratization occurs in stages, noting that across the world, countries extended franchise laws twice on average. Yet his stepwise model of franchise extension still only applies to male enfranchisement.

24 Geddes (2007: 319) takes a similar line of argument even further, arguing that the process of transition itself needs to be disaggregated and subgroups need to be separately theorized. Some models may apply to transitions in Western Europe and the Americas, while others are better suited for the "third wave" cases.

has shifted through a willingness to overthrow the state.<sup>25</sup> Under the model's dynamics, it is only when an excluded group has the power to credibly threaten revolt that a ruling group will agree to initial, or continuing, demands to share in future political power.

The model's intuitive appeal is hard to deny. We need only recall the Glorious, French, and American revolutions to agree that revolutionary unrest has existed and likely caused many momentous instances of regime change.<sup>26</sup> Importantly, too, the revolutionary mechanism transcends historical time: in recent years, revolutionary mobilization was crucial in democratic transitions in South Africa and El Salvador.<sup>27</sup> Because many of the world's revolutions have led to major changes in the electoral franchise, scholars have been right to focus on the importance of revolutionary unrest as one key driver of democratization.<sup>28</sup> But it is important to remember that the constitutions, institutions, and interest groups that emerge after the revolution arise in response to conflicts during founding moments. Under a new set of rules, alliances shift, and new political issues become salient. Above all, the institutional environment has changed from an authoritarian system where the people are inherently denigrated to an electoral system where, at least in theory, the people have a say. In this context, other types of mobilization – and in particular those not undergirded by violence – are important for democratic reforms.<sup>29</sup> These ideas suggest that the politics of founding need to be

25 Among theories of franchise reform it is safe to say that Acemoglu and Robinson's is "dominant" because of all of the subsequent literature it has spawned.

26 This is true even though the revolutionary mechanism was not present in nineteenth century male franchise reform in the U.K. or the U.S. For example, Berins Collier 1999; Haggard and Kaufmann 2012; Himmelfarb 1966; Keyssar 2000.

27 Wood (2000).

28 Following McAdam et al., revolution is "a rapid, forcible, durable shift in collective control over a state that includes a passage through openly contested sovereignty," (1996: 24).

29 Note that violence is neither necessary nor sufficient for revolution. Revolution, rather, is a re-ordering of the way that decisions are taken for the body politic. Pincus 2007: 398.

separated from later steps that deepen democracy. They argue for non-unified accounts of democratization.

Studying women makes this obvious. Before women gained the vote, most countries had already undergone a transition away from authoritarianism. (See table 1.) The key decision-makers were no longer autocratic leaders but elected legislators with diminished coercive leeway. These systems, what I call “limited” democracies, often allowed for public contestation of rules and ideas. Groups that mobilized for reform in these more permissive contexts sought to convince other people, and especially elected leaders, that change was just and necessary. Here political conflicts may be fought in the streets, but they are won in the legislature. Hence the dynamics of electoral politics – of how leaders get elected and hold power, of how reforms are proposed and laws passed – become key for understanding changes in the franchise. To the extent that unified theories of democratization fail to consider how the rules, actors, and motivations change in the new regime, they cannot shed light on the politics of women’s enfranchisement that were played out in the context of electoral institutions.

#### WOMEN RELIED ON NON-REVOLUTIONARY MOBILIZATION

Scholars working in both the unified tradition and in the contextually-bound accounts of democratization are drawn to the idea that “revolutionary mobilization” plays a key role in democratic reforms. Revolutionary mobilization entails public displays of discontent that signal a willingness on the part of the citizens to use violence to achieve their ends. From the “Age of Revolutions” in the nineteenth century, to the uprisings that brought the “Arab Spring”, mass-mobilization with the potential to foment a revolution has been a key factor in the

Table 1: Cross-national dates of Women's Enfranchisement and Democratization.

Country	Limited Democracy	Women's Enfranchisement	Difference
United States	1776	[1890 (f)] 1920	144
Haiti	1806	1950	144
Norway	1814 / 1884	[1906 (p)] 1913	29
Peru	1823 (p,l)	1933 / 1956	110
Brazil	1824 (p)	[1927 (f)] 1932 (l)	103
Bolivia	1825 (p,l)	1952	127
Uruguay	1830	1932	102
Venezuela	1830 (p,l)	1946	116
Chile	1830s	1949	119
United Kingdom	1832 (p)	[1918 (a, p)] 1928	96
Honduras	1839	1954	115
El Salvador	1841	1939	98
Germany	1848	1918	70
Switzerland	1848	[1959 (f)] 1971	123
Denmark	1849	[1915 (a)] 1918	69
Portugal	1852 / 1878	1974	96
Argentina	1853	1947	94
New Zealand	1854	1893	39
Greece	1864	1952	88
Sweden	1866	1921	55
Canada	1867	[1916 (f), 1917 <sup>^</sup> ] 1920 (r)	53
Italy	1870	1945	75
France	1877	1944	67
Finland	1886	1906/1916	20
Spain	1890-1923, 1931	1931/1976	86
Nicaragua	1893 (p,l)	1955	62
Puerto Rico	1898 (p, l)	[1929 (l)] 1936	38
Australia	1901	1902	1
Cuba	1902	1934	32
Panama	1904	[1941 (e)] 1946	42
Ecuador	1906 (l)	1929 (l)	23
Mexico	1910	[1917, (f)] 1953	43
Costa Rica	1913	1949	36
Trinidad/Tobago	1921	[1924 (a)] 1946	25
Jamaica	1944	1944	0
Guyana	1953	1953	0
Iceland	1911	[1911 (p), 1914 (a)] 1919	8
St Lucia	1924 (p)	1951	27
St Vincent/Grenadines	1930s	1951	20
Belize	1936 (r, p)	[1936 (a, r, p)]/1954	18

formation of democratic regimes.<sup>30</sup> What remains unclear, however, is the degree to which revolutionary unrest has undergirded franchise reforms *within* limited democracies.<sup>31</sup>

Though it requires a bit of explication, my claim is that the history of women's enfranchisement demonstrates that women did not win the vote through violent means. The "militant" wing of the suffrage movement – lead by the famous Pankhurst family and the Women's Social and Political Union in the United Kingdom, and by Alice Paul and the Women's Freedom League in the United States – have been celebrated in recent popular movies about the suffrage movement.<sup>32</sup> Thus it may come as a surprise to some readers that militancy, as a form of revolutionary unrest, does not get credit for winning women the vote. The reasons I make this claim are historiographical – that most historians think militancy was a second-order cause of reform – as well as conceptual – that militants were not trying to overthrow the state. Even if militant mobilization deserves credit for changing politicians' actions in the direction of suffrage, the purpose of these actions – to wrangle concessions rather than to force regime change – calls the revolutionary thesis into question.

*Militancy has a small place in the historiography of women's suffrage*

Early accounts of suffrage politics were often first-hand, recorded in memoirs and detailed chronologies written by the leaders of the suf-

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<sup>30</sup> The conflation of revolutionary unrest with mobilization for reform has trickled down in to the empirical literature that tests these theories. In several empirical studies, strikes, protests, and waves of mobilization by men are coded as instances of revolutionary unrest, regardless of whether the underlying aspiration of the mobilized was regime change. Przeworski 2009, 2010; Ziblatt and Dasgupta 2015; Xi 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Berins Collier 1999. Note that this is true even in the case of Britain's second reform act, which Acemoglu and Robinson herald as a prime example of their theory.

<sup>32</sup> For example *Iron Jawed Angels* (2004) about the United States and *Suffragette* (2015) about the militant movement in the United Kingdom.

frage movement.<sup>33</sup> With a few exceptions, male political historians of the early twentieth century paid little attention to women's role in the era, perhaps agreeing with the quotation by Hobsbawm referenced in the beginning of this chapter that women were outside history in this period.<sup>34</sup> Historians began advancing knowledge of suffrage movements in earnest after the cultural turn in historical studies.

For cultural historians, the project had two intentions: to account for the emergence of feminism; and to recover lost voices of suffrage activists, albeit with an emphasis on the voices of bourgeois leaders. These early accounts focused less on the electoral and legislative dimensions of the struggle and more on how suffrage leaders conspired to win the hearts and minds of society at large. Work in this tradition places credit for the expansion of voting rights to women in the hands of movements and the mobilized, often attributing changes in the legislative sphere to suffragists' effective arguments about how allowing women political rights would elevate political discourse for society as a whole.<sup>35</sup>

In due course a revisionist school emerged to challenge the first narratives of suffrage politics.<sup>36</sup> By tracing the doctrines and actions of organizations such as the Women's Social and Political Union, which emerged in the U.K. in 1903 and the Congressional Union, founded in the U.S. in 1913, the revisionists argued for the importance of the radical, or "militant", elements of the suffrage movement in shap-

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33 For example, Anthony et al. 1969 [1881]; Catt and Shuler 1923; Pankhurst 1914

34 Blaming the demise of the Liberal party in part on the suffrage movement, Dangerfield (2011 [1935]) is perhaps an exception to this claim. He does not, however, go into detail about the issue.

35 See Kraditor (1981) on the ideas of the women's suffrage movement in the United States.

36 A second part of the revisionist literature worked to uncover the stories of ordinary women's contributions to the movement. This approach is epitomized by Liddington and Norris (1978) an in depth study of working class women's role in the United Kingdom.

ing the politics of women's enfranchisement.<sup>37</sup> Leaders of these radical organizations, who became known as the "suffragettes", grew tired of waiting for foot-dragging politicians to change their clip.<sup>38</sup> They made headlines for their unusual tactics, including interrupting political meetings; throwing stones through windows; using acid to write "Votes for Women" in the grass of a favorite parliamentary golf course; and burning Lloyd George's (empty) country house to the ground. When suffragettes were arrested for their actions they took to hunger-striking. Fearing their deaths, political leaders in both countries originally mandated force-feeding, decisions which were widely admonished by the British and American press. With these sensational episodes close in mind, the revisionists suggested that by pushing conventional boundaries, militant suffragettes brought greater pressure to bear on political actors than the marches staged by polite societies of mainstream suffragists.<sup>39</sup> Hence militants forced the hand of politicians toward greater rights for women.

On the shoulders of both the cultural and the revisionist accounts, the 1980s brought a transition to a new political history of women's suffrage. These accounts combine the tools of political history with the subject matter of feminist historians in order to bring attention to the interactions between the suffrage movement and political forces. While these relationships were not completely absent in earlier accounts – for example, Flexner's seminal text on the American Suf-

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37 For introductory accounts of the militant movement under the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in the U.K. see Pugh 1985, 2000, 2001; Holton 1986, 1996; Mayhall 2000. Note that the WSPU was founded in 1903 but the tactics didn't turn properly militant until after 1910. Information on Alice Paul and the militant movement in the U.S. see Flexner (1995 [1959]: 262), as well as Dubois (1998: ch. 10) and Fischer (1995).

38 The term "suffragette" originally appeared in the British press in 1905 to distinguish the militant from the constitutional wing of suffrage activists. It took on a derogative connotation until the WSPU claimed it as the militants' own. Pugh 2001: 137.

39 In the United States, an original text that emphasized militancy is Kraditor (1981). A second key revisionist account is Lunardini (1986). See also Ford (1991) whose research contributed to a popular movie adaptation.

franchise movement, or even Carrie Chapman Catt's first hand account – the later works of Holton, Morgan, and Pugh on the United Kingdom, dissertations by Lerner and Behn on the United States, and books on France by Smith, and Hause and Kenney, epitomize the hybrid approach.<sup>40</sup> These new political histories maintain a high level of attention to primary source materials generated by the suffrage movement, but devote more space to documenting suffragists' correspondence with political leaders (like members of parliament and prime ministers), and more attention to numbers and geography (for example, pinpointing movement membership in various organizations across diverse spaces).

From these and other histories we can glean a few key facts about militancy. First, it did not exist at all in most countries in the world, including the early enfranchisers like New Zealand and Australia, any countries in Latin America, or the late enfranchisers like Portugal (1974) and Switzerland (1971). In France, too, there was virtually no militant movement, except among a small group of led by Hubertine Auclert.<sup>41</sup> In 1876 Auclert formed the first sustaining French suffrage league, *Suffrage des femmes*, which was militant (in the sense of uncompromising) from the first. She encouraged women to stop paying taxes, organized public marches – which were uncommon in the French suffrage movement – and publicly burned pages of the *Code Napoleon*. Auclert's violent actions began in 1908 with an attempt to knock down urns of male votes, but her organization had no more

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<sup>40</sup> Behn 2012; Hause and Kenney 1984; Holton 1986; Lerner 1981; Morgan 1975; Pugh 1974, 1985, 2000; Smith 1996.

<sup>41</sup> Hause and Kenney 1981.

than 20 active followers, reaching 50 at most.<sup>42</sup> Overall, militancy had no place in the French movement as a whole.<sup>43</sup>

In the United States militancy emerged after 1913 when Alice Paul returned from a study trip with the British militants and formed the Congressional Union, which later became the National Woman's Party.<sup>44</sup> A brief glance at the dates of enfranchisement in chapter 4 shows that that most states which enfranchised women prior to the Nineteenth Amendment did so before Paul sailed back across the Atlantic. As almost all Western states had enfranchised women by 1914, militant activity cannot explain most instances of franchise extension at the state level.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, militant activities might have mattered for securing the Nineteenth Amendment. Paul's militant Woman's Party was the first group in history to use the novel tactic of picketing the White House. In all conditions fair and inclement, the White House picketers drew public ire and inspired mob violence with signs bearing slogans such as "Kaiser Wilson" and "Democracy Should Begin At Home".<sup>46</sup> These demonstrations, which resulted in arrests of 218 women from 26 different states, linger in our minds as singular displays of bravery by a subordinated group.

The undeniable presence and bravery of militant action does not, however, mean that militants were responsible for securing voting

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42 Hause and Kenney 1984: 9, 47, 76, 102. We might think the French suffragists failed to force reform because it lacked a militant wing. But the inference would require that militant movements were key to most other countries (which they were not), and that militancy made the difference in the United States and the United Kingdom. Instead, the French suffragists and suffragettes alike refused to organize a national women's suffrage society along the lines suggested to country delegates in 1904 by Carrie Chapman Catt, leader of the American movement (Hause and Kenney 1984: 75).

43 Ibid.: 105.

44 Flexner 1995 [1959]: 276ff. In an attempt to hold the party in power responsible (and echoing the Pankhurst's repudiation of the Liberal Party in the U.K.), one of the Congressional Union's early acts was to campaign against the Democratic Party. In the 1916 election they campaigned explicitly against Woodrow Wilson.

45 Mead 2004: 1.

46 Flexner 1995 [1959]: 294ff.

rights for American women. They are part of the history, and at the time they invigorated popular debate about suffrage reform (both for and against). But the key question remains as to the militants' role in the critical moments that changed the fate of suffrage legislation. For example, did the militants influence President Woodrow Wilson's decision to come out in favor of suffrage in 1918?<sup>47</sup> Despite having begun his career as a professor of politics at Bryn Mawr, an all women's college, Wilson was long known to be against women's enfranchisement.<sup>48</sup> During his 1912 presidential campaign he confessed to being

definitely and irreconcilably opposed to woman suffrage; woman's place was in the home, and the type of woman who took an active part in the suffrage agitation was totally abhorrent to him.<sup>49</sup>

Yet in September 1918, nine months after the bill which would become the Nineteenth Amendment was passed in the House, Wilson appeared before the Senate to exhort the chamber to adopt the measure. Among other things, Wilson argued "We have made partners of the women in this war; shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil and not to a partnership of privilege and right?"<sup>50</sup> Two days later the bill failed, by two votes, to get the requisite two-thirds support. But it passed under a special session

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<sup>47</sup> The Nineteenth Amendment, also known as the "Anthony" amendment in honor of Susan B. Anthony's long term commitment to the suffrage movement, passed the U.S. House on 10 January 1918, 274 to 136. This was exactly the two-thirds necessary for an amendment. The vote was evenly split within the Democratic Party, though Republicans voted 165 to 33 in favor. The no votes came from the solid south, as well as Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Ohio (*ibid.* 303). Note that 10 January 1918 is also the same date that the House of Lords in the U.K. passed the suffrage clause in the 1918 Representation of the People Act.

<sup>48</sup> Behn 2012: 15.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Behn 2012: 1.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*: 322.

in early June 1919, and then was sent to the states for ratification, ultimately becoming law on 26 August 1920.<sup>51</sup>

In the view of many scholars, Wilson's advocacy emerged at a crucial moment in the campaign: the House was in favor but the Senate still needed convincing, and the President plays an important role as convincer-in-chief. But given his past as a noted anti-suffragist, his change of heart is somewhat mysterious. Behn's work, which looks in detail at Wilson's "conversion", argues against the revisionist view that Wilson was primarily influenced by militant actions.<sup>52</sup> Instead, Behn stresses that while the bad press related to militant activity was a point of frustration for Wilson, he chose to support suffrage for entirely different yet highly political reasons. After several pieces of legislation alienated the country's progressives, Wilson used the issue of suffrage as an attempt to regain creditability and secure re-election among his core voters. Electoral politics, then, are key to understanding the reform as a whole.

In the United Kingdom, where the militant Women's Social and Political Union gained 4,000 adherents by 1913, it is perhaps more difficult to discount the importance of militancy in driving suffrage reform. We can get part of the way by pointing out that in the same year the mainstream movement, lead by Millicent Garrett Fawcett and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, was, with 53,000 members over 380 branches, vastly larger than the militant wing.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, the rise in militant activity after 1912 definitely raised

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<sup>51</sup> After the Amendment passed the House Wilson pressured the Senate to adopt the measure. The first attempt, 2 October 1918, failed to gain the requisite two-thirds, 62 to 34. The second attempt, in a special congressional session passed by the needed margin (*ibid.* 326ff.). Thereafter it took another year for the Amendment to be ratified. On 26 August 1920, Tennessee became the final needed state to adopt the Amendment.

<sup>52</sup> The conversion took place over many years. In 1915 Wilson reported to the press that he voted affirmatively in his home state of New Jersey's suffrage referendum, but maintained that the issue was not partisan, and should be left to the states. Behn 2012: 56-59.

<sup>53</sup> Pugh 2000: table 8.4.

the profile of suffrage in the media (often to the chagrin of Fawcett and her organization). Yet, as I argue in chapter 6, the enfranchisement of women in 1918 ultimately hinged on an alliance between the Labour party and the Liberal, non-militant, suffragists. In fact, during the spring of 1916, when the language that would become the Fourth Reform Act was being drafted, militant leader Emmeline Pankhurst promised Millicent Fawcett that she would not revive militant tactics until the draft was released. In the key moment of the reform, militant activity was non-existent.

*Militant actions are not necessarily revolutionary actions*

Although some historians have focused on the importance of militancy for securing suffrage in the U.S. and the U.K., this perspective is not dominant for either country. But even if militant actions are given credit for suffrage reform, there is an important way in which this is not the same as believing that "revolutionary" activity drives democratization in the sense used in democratization theory. When determining whether revolutionary mobilization led to an episode of democratic reform, the purpose of the movement needs to be taken into consideration.<sup>54</sup>

Militant tactics were novel and sometimes violent, but they were intended to spur reform rather than foment revolution. In promoting acts of civil disobedience, militants did not want to overthrow the regime, rather, they sought inclusion within the state as it existed,

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<sup>54</sup> A similar conceptual point is made by Adria Lawrence (2013) that just because members of a particular nationality are mobilized for reform, does not mean that this constitutes "nationalist" mobilization. The demands actually matter for the assignment. Lawrence goes on to argue that groups that constitute a separate nation within an empire may seek, originally, political equality within the empire rather than automatically demanding national liberation. It is only when ongoing requests for inclusion were denied by the French that Moroccan protest turned toward secession. This suggests, however, that mobilized groups are operating in dynamic environments: that they can become nationalist, or, by extension, revolutionary, as time goes on.

albeit with enhanced rights and privileges for women. The militants' caustic acts of rebellion were meant to be symbolic above all, and were thus of a very different nature, reinforced by quite different intentions, than the unrest of the American revolutionaries or the French *sans culottes*. In the words of Emmeline Pankhurst, leader of the British militants,

We are not going to prison to get the vote, merely to say we have the vote. We are going through all this to get the vote so that by means of the vote we can bring about better conditions not only for ourselves but for the community as a whole.<sup>55</sup>

This is to say that the suffragists employed militant tactics with the aim of winning the vote in the current institutional environment. Their ability to reform society would stem not from a violent upheaval and rupture, but instead from securing the right to vote in and of itself.

Though the suffragists – members of the non-militant wing of the movement – were aware of the difference between reform and revolution, social scientists have been less discerning, unreflectively linking extreme tactics to a desire for regime change. This is problematic because the purpose of movements' actions should influence how they are conceptualized by social scientists. Reflecting on the Pankhurst quote, it would seem that regardless of the tactics, a group mobilized for minor but substantive changes in the rules of the game, but which does not seek a new constitution, or a total re-ordering of society, is probably not revolutionary. This point is lost when the politics of founding are collapsed with those of democratic deepening, precisely because the institutional setting is so different across political regimes.

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55 Pankhurst 1913.

Indeed, many democracies allow for groups to form and hold meetings, and to contest the rules in the public sphere. For these reasons, groups agitating for more democracy are often acting within the bounds of their society. They are contesting the conditions of their inclusion within a regime that they believe in fundamentally. To borrow a phrase from Rustow, these groups already know “what political community they want to be a part of” and will be guided by different motivations, and utilize different means to effect reform, than groups mobilized for regime change.<sup>56</sup> By eliding the distinction – between what movements want and the tactics they use – the democratization literature has incorrectly concluded that large scale movements for reform have revolutionary aims.<sup>57</sup> This conceptual error has begun to mean, further, that the only groups which can get credit for effecting their own emancipation are those with revolutionary aims.

Working in this tradition, social scientists who have studied women’s enfranchisement have determined that because women generally did not take up arms against the state, because they were not “revolutionary”, they were passive recipients of voting rights. While men conquered the right to vote by their own devices, the argument goes, women were merely granted these rights as pawns in a greater political game. This idea, made famous by Przeworski, is pervasive among social scientists. Women are passive recipients of rights in formal models of women’s enfranchisement, and in empirical analyses of rights extensions to women.<sup>58</sup> One scholar even goes as far as to

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<sup>56</sup> Rustow 1970.

<sup>57</sup> In this sense, the unified theories of democracy explain revolution – by which I mean a new beginning marked by regime change – instead of reform within the structure of a specific set of institutions.

<sup>58</sup> Przeworski 2009, 2010. Formal models include: Bertocci 2010; Doepke and Tertilt 2009. Empirical papers: Bertocci 2010; Braun and Kvasnicka 2013; Miller 2008. Doepke and Tertilt theorize that as societies’ demands for human capital rose in the Nineteenth century, men were voluntarily induced to support women’s rights. While Brauna and Kvasnicka posit that a lower fraction of women relative to men

claim that women's enfranchisement in the United States was exogenous to (meaning historically and therefore statistically independent from) women's mobilization for the vote.<sup>59</sup> This view is problematic on several levels, not the least because it discounts the important non-violent channels through which voting rights were obtained. Because women usually did not win voting rights in founding moments, and because the suffrage movements were specifically aimed at reform rather than revolution, democratization theory needs a non-unified account that allows movements to secure reform through non-revolutionary means in order to explain women's enfranchisement.

#### CLASS WAS NOT THE PRIMARY CLEAVAGE DRIVING WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT

The final way in which incorporating women into the study of democracy upends our seminal theories relates to the specific cleavages that dominated political conflict over women's enfranchisement. Historically, property rights or taxpaying status were used by governments as a way to regulate male participation in the political sphere. These rules linked the right to participate to class-based characteristics, naturally elevating class distinctions in the politics of reform. Yet many countries had already abandoned income restrictions for male voters before the women's movement emerged. Hence women were not admitted or excluded from the franchise because of their class, and class politics was not the most prominent feature of debates about women's enfranchisement.

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reduces the costs to men of enfranchising women, again taking women's agency off the table. Historically, though, men put up quite a fight against the expansion of rights to women. This included men in the labor movement, conservative men, and even liberals in many countries, Dubois 1991.

<sup>59</sup> Miller 2008.

Whether franchise extension is modeled as “bottom-up” or “top-down” process, most models of enfranchisement are united in using class politics as a key locus of resistance to reform.<sup>60</sup> For example, Llavador and Oxoby suggest that because the interests of different economic sectors are channeled through political parties, support for suffrage should divide on party lines.<sup>61</sup> Specifically, urban parties that represent industrial interests will support political reform and franchise extension while rural parties, which represent landed interests, will vote against such reform. Lizzeri and Persico make a similar, albeit more specific claim, arguing that urban elites will extend voting rights to the urban masses because they hope to grow their coalition for urban reform.

The impact of urbanity on suffrage reform is a well trod issue in the literature on women’s suffrage. Overall, industrial economies were earlier on the road to women’s political inclusion. Figure 4 shows the sectoral composition of the economy and the year of women’s enfranchisement for as many countries as data are available. Panel (b) shows that countries with a higher share of their labor force in manufacturing and construction (as opposed to agriculture or services) were earlier to enfranchise than countries whose economies were less industrial, giving some credence to an implication of the Lizzeri and Persico argument that industrialization is linked to suffrage reform.

There is evidence, too, that class concerns figured in some politicians’ discussions of women’s enfranchisement. For example, Conservative politicians in New Zealand took an anti-suffrage stance because they feared that the women would champion liberal causes.<sup>62</sup> In a letter to a conservative MP, a fellow Kiwi conservative cautioned

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<sup>60</sup> Berins Collier (1999) builds on this dichotomy by suggesting that many democratizing moments which have included changes in voting rights have been “joint projects” with actors from both the elites and masses coalescing on the need for reform.

<sup>61</sup> Llavador and Oxoby 2005.

<sup>62</sup> Grimshaw 1972: quoted on p. 104.

that extending the vote to women "will double the majority against us and make the country more communistic than it is already."<sup>63</sup> But in general other issues, such as social policy, religiosity, and even affairs of state, were more concerning.

In contrast with the models described above, support for women's enfranchisement did not necessarily stem from the industrial parties or the industrial workers<sup>64</sup> As we shall see in our study of the United States, the agricultural states in the American West extended voting rights before the manufacturing states in the East.<sup>65</sup> This, in spite of the fact that the movement was largest in the industrial centers of New York and Massachusetts. Moreover, even within U.S. states, voters from urban areas were more likely to vote against suffrage referenda than rural ones.<sup>66</sup> Over time the alliances could shift, such as in New York state, where the socialist party took suffrage on their platform in 1916, but these changes were not inherent to the interests of the economic sector, but rather emerged as a result of a concerted strategy pursued by the New York suffrage movement.<sup>67</sup>

In the world as a whole, too, support for women's enfranchisement was not driven solely by class-based preferences. Women voted earlier in some of the more rural economies, like Australia and New Zealand, than in the industrial economies of the U.K. or France. Moreover, in places where the Catholic Church was an important political actor, such as Chile in the early twentieth century, religious issues could drive conservative parties to be the primary proponents of re-

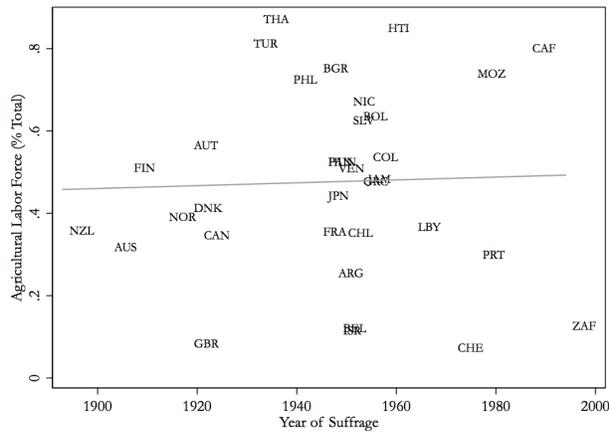
63 Letter from G.G. Stead, chairman of directors of *The Press*, to John Hall of the New Zealand Legislature. Quoted in Grimshaw (1972: 63).

64 This idea has a long history; from Marx, to Lipset (1960: ch VII), to Rueschemeyer et al. (1992), many scholars assume and argue that the working classes will be the hand-men of democratic reforms.

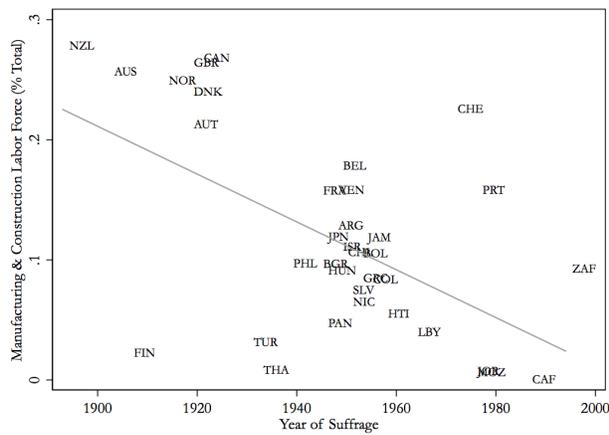
65 The eleven states that enfranchised women before the Nineteenth Amendment had, on average, 3.9 cities with more than 25 thousand inhabitants in 1900. The 34 that did not had, on average 4.5 cities at that size.

66 McDonagh and Price 1985: 423.

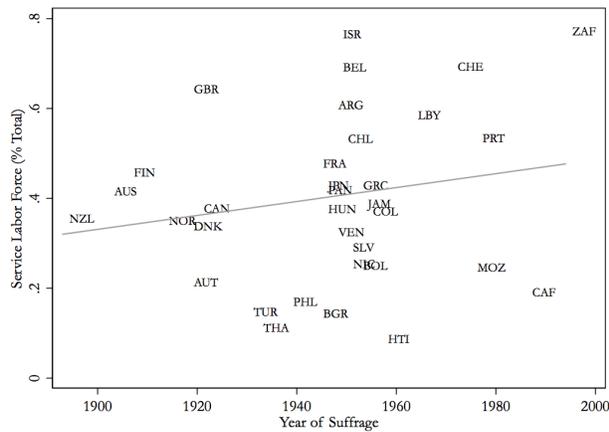
67 Lerner 1981.



(a) Agricultural Labor Force



(b) Manufacturing and Construction



(c) Service Sector

Figure 4: **Sectoral Composition and Women's Suffrage.** Notes: in each panel the three-letter country code marker appears in the year suffrage was extended. Panel (a) plots the agricultural workforce as a fraction of all laborers. Panel (b) plots manufacturing workforce as a share of total. Panel (c) plots the service sector. Source: sectoral composition coded from Mitchell, various years.

form within the national legislature.<sup>68</sup> Christian Democratic parties in Europe, which had worked to develop a Catholic political identity even among more secular Church members, may also have supported the relatively early enfranchisement of women in Austria and Belgium.<sup>69</sup> As we will see in France, it was often in response to fears of clerical control of government that Liberal parties resisted women's voting rights.<sup>70</sup> In debates about women's enfranchisement, class-based political cleavages were therefore not always (nor even generally) the primary concern of political leaders. This fact vitiates an easy application of most models of franchise extension to the case of women's suffrage. A full account of democratization, one which can also explain women's inclusion, must allow cleavages other than class into its analytical framework.

#### FINAL THOUGHTS

I have argued in this chapter that current theories of democratization cannot provide a clear account of women's enfranchisement either across or within countries. This is true to the extent that they focus on a unified account of democratic transition and democratic

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68 Valenzuela 1995. The first politician who defended suffrage in Chile was a Abdon Cifuentes, a Catholic leader who made his views known in 1865. And, in October 25 1917, several members of the Chilean *Conservadores*, the party associated with the Catholic Church, were the first to formally present a suffrage bill to parliament.

69 Belgium's measure was limited until 1946. As Kalyvas (1996) shows, in several northern European countries the Catholic Church united with conservative parties in order to confront anti-Catholic Liberalism. In these countries, Christian Democratic parties took on lives of their own but continued to use religious cleavages to maintain the salience of a Catholic political identity.

70 Here I depart from the view of of Richard Evans (1977), an historian of Germany, who sees the late enfranchisement of women in Catholic countries like Greece, Spain, Italy, and France as stemming from traditional views of women's role in society. My contention is that parties with traditional views of women were happy to support women's political rights if it could help their own fortunes, while parties with more progressive views were happy to resist reform if they would suffer. The outcome depends on the nature of political competition and the strategies of the women's movement.

consolidation; that they elevate revolutionary mobilization as the key strategic lever available to subordinated groups; and that they rely on class cleavages as the most important locus of political conflict. Social science's failure to account for women's enfranchisement means that half of the variation in electoral reform, in most of the world's countries, is unexplained. Bringing women in to the study of democracy requires flexible concepts that can integrate several dimensions of political cleavage. It requires an understanding of how organized political movements can draw on a repertoire of non-violent strategies to contest their political exclusion. And, finally, it requires a nuanced understanding of the role that electoral competition plays in creating opportunities for reform. With these goals in mind, the following chapter outlines the logic of women's enfranchisement in limited democratic systems.

THE LOGIC OF WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT

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In most of the world's first democracies, the lag between the initial extension of voting rights to men and later laws that brought women to the polls was quite long. Nearly 144 years passed from America's democratic founding until 1920, when the Nineteenth Amendment enfranchised women nationally. In the Southern hemisphere, women in Argentina, Uruguay and Chile waited, respectively, 94, 102, and 119 years between when the first men could vote and women's political inclusion. Similar gulfs materialized all over Europe, where, in the most extreme case, many Swiss women were prevented from voting until 1971.<sup>1</sup> In all of these countries, women gained the right to vote after an initial transition to democracy, in what I call a 'limited' democracy.

The task of this chapter is to lay out a general theory of enfranchisement in limited democracies that accounts for the behavior of two groups of actor – suffrage organizers (whom we might call activists), and elected politicians – each of whose strategic choices affect and are affected by one another in the struggle for voting rights reform. Members of these two groups will face opportunities for and constraints against collective action and reform depending on a variety of contextual and historical factors, such as the salience and divisiveness of electoral cleavages and the nature of political competition. Yet despite the particularities of any given historical conjuncture, because of the electoral logic inherent in limited democratic systems, there

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<sup>1</sup> And some could not vote until the 1980s.

are marked similarities across suffrage movements and legislative responses that make more abstract theorizing possible.

Building on Robert Dahl's concepts of "competitive oligarchy" and "inclusive hegemony", and O'Donnell and Schmitter's concept "democradura", a political community can be described as a limited democracy if an elected body has the power to legislate, if elections are held regularly, and if there is some potential for turnover of office.<sup>2</sup> In a limited democracy representation takes place in part through the choice of leaders, and there are some institutionalized checks on the power of the head of state, but the system may lack many safeguards that would be necessary for full polyarchy such as freedom of the press, secret voting, and so on, and only some people may be allowed to exercise a choice and a veto over leaders.<sup>3</sup>

Yet whether the electorate is five percent or fifty percent of the population, a limited democracy is fundamentally distinct from an authoritarian system because elections legitimately empower leaders to make the rules, and because opponents have the ability to win in competitive elections. In these settings, a reorganization of the laws that govern political participation can have quite substantial effects on electoral politics and programmatic policies. These potential effects shape the incentives politicians face and their ultimate decisions over whether to reform the law. They also constrain the set of options available to identity groups that are mobilized for reform.

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2 Writing about the pre-WWII democracies, Geddes states the idea of a limited democracy succinctly: "legislatures existed, elite parties or proto-parties competed for office, and struggles by legislatures to limit the power of monarchs or executives had played an important role in determining the shape of political institutions." Geddes 2007: 331. She calls them non-democracies.

3 Dahl 1971; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986. Note that the concept of limited democracy is somewhere between Przeworski's 1999, "minimalist" binary and Dahl's richer definition of polyarchy which requires regimes to be highly liberal – in that they accept public contestation as a core principle, and highly inclusive – in that they put few restrictions on political participation.

In limited democratic contexts, women who hoped to win the vote had to balance their desire to attain the particular right of suffrage against the other potential consequences of franchise expansion. These consequences might include shifts in party platforms, changes in the relative power of different interest groups, or new policy agendas. In some places, such as post-World War I France, movement leaders perceived too great an ideological distance between themselves and the masses of French women, especially those in the religious countryside, and thus suffrage organizers pursued only modest forms of organization that appealed to a narrow segment of society. In other contexts, suffrage leaders decided that life without the vote was worse than the potential additional consequences of reform, leading them to organize broadly by integrating women from across the political spectrum into the mainstream movement.

Like suffragists, elected leaders were also engaged in a balancing act, weighing the probability that women would vote for their party with the desire to expend their political capital gradually. In the vast majority of countries, an organic demand for voting rights emanated from a group of organized suffragists (who were often, though not always, women) prior to any discussion of women's enfranchisement by elected politicians. Once the issue of suffrage reform was brought to debate, inherited political conflicts, institutional rules, and electoral procedures impinged on politicians' incentives and abilities to enact reforms. For all the reasons we might expect, the first proposal for suffrage was generally rejected, and sometimes ridiculed. But over time politicians began to take the issue more seriously, and became more involved in learning about women's political preferences.

They did this by observing and interacting with organized societies of women, including suffrage groups, charities, and volunteer networks of party activists. Politicians also learned about women's pref-

erences by observing and commenting on the outcomes of political contests after women won the vote in other contexts, be they local government elections, sub-national entities, or contests in other national states. Party leaders were unlikely to get on the reform bandwagon if they were confident that they could survive future elections without the additional votes of women. On the other hand, parties that were vulnerable to electoral competition, and that believed women would support them, were more likely to agitate for reform. This explains the approach of minor parties on the American frontier, which often took up suffragist platforms in the hopes of boosting their electoral returns.

This argument, whose component parts will be elaborated in more detail below, has been generated through an iterative process which included unstructured readings of a vast suffrage literature covering many of the world's limited democracies; structured readings of secondary literature and many primary sources describing franchise politics in the United States, France, and the United Kingdom; as well as examinations of theoretical tracts on identity politics, social movements, and political economy. In reading the history of America's political development in light of the puzzle of early Western enfranchisement – in spite of relatively lower suffrage mobilization out West – I came to understand that party identification and the political parties themselves were more fluid out West. This gave rise to the idea that the non-entrenchment of power, which I conceive of as one indication that political competition is robust, undergirds an opportunity in which reform might emerge. Secondary texts on the situation in France, which in the early 1920s had a moment where reform seemed possible but where the suffragists essentially de-mobilized instead of pressing harder, led me to an insight that both mobilizing *and* de-

mobilizing could be manifestations of a strategic logic followed by female organizers.

Understanding why suffragists might voluntarily de-mobilize took longer to work through, but was revealed in part by reading parliamentary debates in France, and in part through extensive archival research in England.<sup>4</sup> By reading all of the organizational minutes covering the 1900-1920 period, and all of the correspondence of several key leaders in the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, the trade-offs that bourgeois suffragists endured in order to mobilize broadly became apparent. After the U.K.'s Liberal government failed to support suffrage reform in the 1910-1912 period, the National Union went through a period of radicalization and policy innovation that drove them to a new electoral strategy. In making a strong (but internally contentious choice) to broaden the basis of the movement and ally with the Labour party, the moderate suffragists proclaimed that getting the vote was worth the trade-off involved in aiding a party and mobilizing women that were, from the outset, rather unlike them. This work also revealed that the formation of an alliance of interest with the Labour party, which generated a credible commitment from the party based on financial and organizational incentives, was key to winning the majority of women in the United Kingdom the vote in 1918.

It is my hope that developing the theory in this iterative, case-conscious way gives the argument both inductive legitimacy and a dose of external validity. Of course, neither the primary argument nor the case studies were written in stone. Instead, each have been revisited to examine aspects of the argument that became manifest by reading other histories. In this way, there is also a crucial deductive

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<sup>4</sup> All archives that I visited are located in England. Since the Isle of Man gave women the vote in the 1880s, it is technically inaccurate to speak about the "British" suffrage movement, so I often refer to England or Great Britain instead.

aspect of the research design which has generated testable implications at different levels of analysis than the level originally planned. Together, the inductive and deductive aspects of the research process have produced many theoretical insights about identity formation, social movement mobilization, and electoral strategy that should apply even more broadly than to the study of women's enfranchisement.

The chapter proceeds in four sections. The first section focuses on the formation of a women's suffrage movement while the second section focus on the incentives for reform faced by elected politicians. The third section describes how the interaction between strategic suffragists and elected politicians can produce suffrage reform. In particular, in order for a political party to support reform, two conditions must hold: the party must be electorally vulnerable under the status quo policy; and it must believe that the new group of voters prefers it to its opponents. Operating within this electoral environment, the reform movement chooses which political groups to align with, and which women to mobilize. Suffrage movements can intervene directly in the electoral arena, working to secure alliances with powerful political actors, or to unseat dissenters and empower allies. The chapter's final section shows how this argument applies to the cases of women's enfranchisement examined in the rest of the book.

#### STRATEGIC MOBILIZATION FOR THE VOTE

At the heart of my account of enfranchisement is the question of how women, as voters, would change the landscape of politics. While it is relatively straightforward to see why the answer to this question might matter to elected politicians (whose very jobs are at risk if the female vote does not go their way), the connection between women's

vote choice and suffrage mobilization has not been explored in other texts and therefore requires a bit of unpacking.

Consider a woman in the late nineteenth century who believes it perfectly reasonable and perhaps just that women should vote. My claim is that transforming this sentiment into a suffrage movement is a strategic decision that depends on the consequences of the women's vote for her, or, more generally, for women like her. Similarly, deciding not to form a movement, or to ratchet back mobilization after it has begun, are decisions that also reflect strategic considerations. To see why this is so requires an understanding not only of electoral politics, but also of the politics of identity.

As shown in the previous chapter, accounts of democratization in political science have rarely given women center stage because, I argue, women's mobilization has (correctly) not been viewed as activating revolutionary demands. But a second reason that women have been excluded from theories of democracy is because of the thoroughly structural logics that pervade the literature. To the extent that theories of democratization mention the disfranchised groups at all, they tend to assume that the "masses", by which they mean the working-classes, have a natural, shared affinity for higher levels of redistribution that can easily be called upon to promote collective action, by which they mean protest which affects a revolutionary form of unrest.<sup>5</sup> This move, of working-class identification followed by collective action (a class in-itself that easily becomes one for-itself) is a powerful simplifying assumption in the democratization literature.<sup>6</sup> But this conception of how a class pursues political concessions has beguiled a strict application in the case of women's politics.

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5 To be fair, Reuschemeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens (1992) and Berins Collier (1999) give mobilization a more thorough treatment than Acemoglu and Robinson (2000, 2006) or Lizerri and Persico (2004).

6 The evidence is of course mixed. See chapter 2.

Drawing from the literatures on gender and identity politics, it is easy to understand why a more nuanced account of mobilization is needed to include women in theories of democratization. Despite having certain biological affinities, women may be hard to mobilize for feminist initiatives because of their heterogeneous locations across social groups. Given the nature of human reproduction and historical patterns of household formation, women can be found at the intersections of all of a society's other cleavages. As Erving Goffman writes, what is curious about women as a "sex-class" is that they are cut-off ecologically from their group – because they live mostly among non-women – and that they are "separated from one another by the stake they acquire in the very organization which divides them."<sup>7</sup> Indeed, loyalty to one's own menfolk, and to the other identity spaces that the household occupies, may impede the process of identification as a woman. Thus a woman may see herself as a woman whose grievances are linked to the marginalization of her religion, or to her linguistic traditions, rather than as a Dutch speaker whose gender inhibits her free movement, and so on. This is what makes gender different than other social categories, and what makes women's mobilization so fascinating. For the sake of clarity and brevity, in what follows I will refer to the process whereby women come to see their primary aim as contesting women's subordination to men as the formation of a feminist identity.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Goffman 1977: 308.

<sup>8</sup> I follow Ferree and Mueller's (2004: 577) conception of feminism to distinguish between women's movements more generally, and those with specifically feminist aims. Although women's movements can take on feminist aims, and feminist movements can alter goals toward reconciling other social injustices, this distinction recognizes that women have historically been mobilized as women in order to contest any number of social ills, while specifying that feminist movements are specifically concerned with contesting injustices that relate to gendered divisions of institutions, resource allocations, and status.

*Intersectionality and the Suffragists' Dilemma*

The issue of “intersectionality” lies at the heart of the suffragists’ dilemma.<sup>9</sup> First, women’s fundamental diversity may limit their social networks to include only those women who are quite similar to them (who share ethnic, religious, or class ties) and those who are quite different from them (like employers or employees). This may reduce their sense that they have things in common with women from other groups, and limit their ability to conceive of their shared commonalities as grievances against patriarchy. Note that the problem of organizing women is not simply one of finding selective incentives to dole out to group members, as Mancur Olson would see it, but rather that the very idea that women form a group at all is questionable.<sup>10</sup>

Feminist political theorists from Judith Butler to Chandra Mohanty have used women’s fundamental diversity as an argument against theorizing about women as a group, and have challenged a politics that groups women from very different backgrounds together. But as Iris Marion Young has argued, feminist politics loses meaning if women cannot be conceptualized as a group, and so there are practical reasons to think of women as having certain shared experiences, even while acknowledging that laws, policies, and market conditions may affect women from different backgrounds differently.<sup>11</sup>

A second issue that exacerbates the problem of feminist mobilization is the specific nature of *suffrage* politics itself: enfranchisement

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<sup>9</sup> Intersectionality theory. The idea that women’s identities cut across cleavages is well developed in the women in politics literature. Among others, see Crenshaw ( ), Hancock ( ). Women’s intersectionality has implications not only for suffrage politics, but also for inquiries into institutional design such as how to increase women’s representation in politics (Htun 2004).

<sup>10</sup> And, I should note, of mobilization of other potential groups that have cross-cutting cleavages. Beltrán (2010) offers a further critique of identity politics in cross-cutting groups....

<sup>11</sup> Young 1994: 719.

does not promise a single reform (like the extension of property rights to women) but instead holds the possibility of multiple, lasting, and downstream changes in political and economic rules prompted by women's votes.<sup>12</sup> Thus an activist's decision over whether to mobilize for voting rights reform requires that she think through the potential political consequences of including all women – many of whom will not share her same values or policy priorities – in the electorate. Importantly, to choose to mobilize for a broad reform (for example, one which included all women) would require suffrage activists to see the issues that lie along the intersecting line of “women's interests” as more important than those that lie in the other planes of identity that the suffragists occupy. In other words, because of women's intersectionality, activists would have to prioritize contesting patriarchy over pursuing other social reforms in order to mobilize broadly for women's suffrage.

### *The Mobilization Metric*

I theorize that the key determinants of feminist collective action are 1.) the degree to which society separates women from men, both in legal structures and in social ones, and 2.) the degree to which other cleavages separate society more generally. In circumstances where women are very unequal based on characteristics related to their bodies – let's call this simply *gender inequality* – they may have more in common with women from other social groups than when there is gender equality within groups.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, if a society has

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<sup>12</sup> Although Acemoglu and Robinson (2009) conceive of this transfer of *de jure* power as a problem for elites, I claim that the possible multiplicity of social changes inherent in suffrage politics is also a problem for other members of the disfranchised group.

<sup>13</sup> For the sake of argument, let's suppose that gender inequality, when it exists, is the same across society's groups so that if one group in society is gender unequal, all the other groups are as well.

Table 2: The Suffragist's Dilemma

		Inter-Group Inequality	
		Low	High
Gender Inequality	Low	II. broad mobilization possible with little male resistance.	I. narrow, within- group mobilization.
	High	III. broad feminist mobilization possible but with substantial male resistance.	IV. feminist mobilization possible depending on relative importance of different inequalities.

Note: cells describe the theorized opportunities for suffrage mobilization.

a reasonable degree of gender equality (say in the household, or in the distribution of rights), but high levels of *group inequality* due to class, religious, or ethnic divides, then women may find they have more in common with male group members than with women from other groups. In this case, the potential for women to organize as women is reduced. These ideas are arranged in a simple schematic in table 2.

The basic idea in table 2 is that the ways in which women can be mobilized depend on the contexts in which they live. Feminist identification and mobilization, which requires women to see themselves as having shared grievances against men, is based on the existence of gender inequality. But large-scale feminist mobilization emerges not only from conditions of gender inequality but also depends on inequality between groups.

In quadrant I, where there is high inter-group inequality but low gender inequality, broad feminist mobilization is unlikely as the other identity groups will probably be able to impinge on feminist consciousness formation. While women in quadrant I can be mobilized into group politics, to the extent that they form suffrage organizations, they will do so along group lines. In quadrant II, broad mo-

bilization of women is possible but perhaps unnecessary as women are equal in their groups and the groups are equal to one another. In quadrant III, there is a reasonable amount of equality between groups but high levels of gender inequality. Here, large scale feminist mobilization is possible because gender demands can trump demands for inter-group changes.

Finally, in quadrant IV, the outcome is difficult to predict. When high levels of group inequality exist alongside gender inequality, social activists may effectively argue that group politics are more important than women's politics, and women hopeful for the vote may fear the other economic or social consequences that would prevail if women unlike them are given the vote. Depending on how heavily feminist activists weighed inequalities along the various cleavages that they occupied, cross-cutting forces of identity politics could prove more or less detrimental to feminist mobilization.

#### *Predictions for Mobilization*

The simple schematic in table 2 can tell us a bit about what type of reform movement might emerge in a particular social context. Quadrant I, with high group inequality but reasonable equality between the genders within groups, might look like the U.S. South in the nineteenth century, or apartheid South Africa, where narrow demands for reform came from women mobilized only within their social groups. Similarly, demands for the "literate" vote cropped up throughout South America as women from the educated ranks attempted to secure rights for themselves without necessarily seeking to include women from the other classes. Although the electoral environment in the U.S. South disincentivized leaders from supporting reform for white women (described in more detail below) the situation in South Africa

(or Kenya, or Australia) allowed for racially-segregated franchise policies to co-exist alongside of women's enfranchisement for racially privileged groups. A situation of low gender inequality and low group inequality (quadrant II) could produce broad mobilization among women and low barriers to reform. Some of the frontier societies like the U.S. West and New Zealand can be seen in this light.

Societies that exist in quadrant III are likely to have formal rules and informal practices that separate people based on their bodies, but the structures that would generate inter-cleavage inequality are relatively absent. This situation presents the greatest possibilities for feminist mobilization, and, what is more, a need for it since the allocation of resources in society may be highly driven by gender.

The mobilization outcome in quadrant IV will depend heavily on the political context in any given country. The existence of and pressure exerted by other political movements and identity groups can exacerbate the problem of feminist identification faced by suffrage activists. When feminist claims chafe against the priorities set by other ethnic, class, or religious movements, feminist consciousness can unravel. As the long and fraught history of feminism within the labor movement makes abundantly clear, communist and socialist leaders and rank-and-file cadres (of both non-feminist and feminist varieties) often argued that liberating women was less important than liberating the working class.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, in the movement for Latino rights in the U.S. in the late 1960s, Latina feminist demands were often subordinated in the name of group solidarity.<sup>15</sup> In both of these cases, the group leaders argued that liberation along the group cleavage would liberate the "gender" cleavage – a trickle-down sort of identity politics – suggesting that it was pointless for women to mobilize inde-

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<sup>14</sup> This type of argument was used at the first and second International Working Men's Association conferences. See Offen 2000: 138, 165, 200-205.

<sup>15</sup> Beltrán 48-55.

pendently from the group itself. Arguments of this sort, which also were raised in the French suffrage movement, can serve to under-cut the possibilities for feminist collective action.

### *Relativity and Time*

Before moving to the electoral determinants of women's enfranchisement, it bears being stressed that the allocation of countries to quadrants in table 2 can be both relative and subject to change over time. On the issue of relativity, it is important to note that while politics do not take place in a vacuum, they are often influenced by highly local concerns. Thus while a 21st century researcher might look to Switzerland in the early 20th century and see quadrant III – a high degree of gender inequality and only modest inequalities between groups relative to other countries in that time period – women living in Switzerland may have perceived the situation differently. If Swiss women believed that they were not doing so poorly in their own homes, the cantonal cleavages and emphasis on local government may emerge as more salient to women than fighting gender battles. This point is not meant to discourage comparative investigation, but merely to emphasize that activists' beliefs about the state of the world are an important element of the actions that activists take.

The second caveat emphasizes that the structural environment can change over time. Sometimes, policy change that reduces gender inequality will undermine collective action. As Mala Htun writes, "Being excluded from power makes women conscious of belonging to a group; once they have power, this group identity tends to weaken and dissipate" (2004: 451). Innovations like property rights for women, or gender quotas, may make gender inequality retreat from the horizon and allow other injustices to rise to the fore. In other periods, falling

inequality along other cleavages may facilitate, or at least make space for, feminist identification.

These ideas suggest that long-term trends in the political economy of a country, or major legislative reforms on issues related to gender equality, or ruptures caused by man-made or natural disasters, can each shift the structural terrain and thereby change the opportunities available to and incentives faced by political activists. Events of this sort, which are sometimes theorized as "critical junctures" in the historical institutionalist literature, constitute moments in which polities can set off on new paths, and in which possibilities for mobilization along gender or group lines transform as well.

The applications of the mobilization metric presented here are numerous. Any identity category can be put on either axis in order to study whether and how group action emerges. The emergence of group action can be examined not only quantitatively (as one might be able to do with a large time series of protest moments), but also historically, by tracing the vicissitudes of a single identity group over time (as one might do for the case of the women's movement in the United States).<sup>16</sup> It is, moreover, amenable to the qualitative investi-

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<sup>16</sup> Consider the trajectories of women's mobilization in the the United States. The middle of the nineteenth century saw the first demands for women's equality transform into proto-movements. Situated historically with the beginnings of the industrial revolution, this was an age in which economic inequality fell. Feminist identification emerged and women's groups coalesced around a series of policy demands and won many concessions just prior to the 1890s (in terms of property rights, increased educational opportunities in many states, and so on). These changes served to reduce gender inequalities and, I would hazard, lower the perceived urgency of mobilization along the gender dimension.

In the 1890s, income inequality again rose and women's mobilization fell. So much so that historians of this period often call the turn of the century the "doldrums" for women's mobilization. The tensions which led to the First World War and the chasms that the war produced served as a major rupture wherein reform was possible despite the fact that suffrage movements had effectively de-mobilized during the war. Many scholars have lamented that women's mobilization nearly ceased in the 1920s after suffrage was won, and that women remained de-mobilized until the 1960s. Coming on the tails of a major increase in gender equality stemming from the expansion of the franchise, the depression era produced a situation where redistributive needs reigned supreme. Rising equality after the New Deal era, and expansions in women's labor force participation which brought to light various inequalities in employment and pay, may have reduced the salience of class demands again allowing for the emergence of feminist identities. While the testing of this

gations of ideas – both of the emergence of particular sets of ideas, as well as the triumph of some ideas over others in institutional formation – given the particular settings of group politics.<sup>17</sup> Quadrant IV, in particular offers exciting possibilities for qualitative examination. Here, stories of peoplehood, and the strength of allegiance demanded by different political groups, will be key to understanding how group members settle on the weights they give to competing demands, like those of gender versus class.<sup>18</sup>

### *Limitations*

Along with the possibilities inherent in the mobilization metric come several limits. My approach to identity politics is constructivist, in so far as it does not assume that there is something essential about women's bodies that will drive collective identification or action by women. But constructivism aside, it may still seem too draw over-much on a rational-choice framework, or appear as too materialist an argument, for some who work in the tradition. Although I cannot apologize for the materialism inherent in this argument, I do hope it is not too crude. Here, gender inequality is not conceived of as a timeless social fact but rather an historical phenomenon that may have emerged with the transition to sedentary homesteading and capitalism, and which can potentially recede with large scale social and economic transformations, and, clearly, with collective action.<sup>19</sup>

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logic on a large-scale and outside of suffrage mobilization is not in the purview of the present book, I hope it might be explored by others' attempts to understand long term trends in feminist mobilization.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g. Simon (2015).

<sup>18</sup> See Rogers Smith (2015).

<sup>19</sup> Here I am happily casting my lot with Heidi Hartmann (1976) and even Engels (1884) who see the division of labor in capitalism as giving rise to the patriarchy.

As to the critique of the rational choice framework, I do not claim that identity *groups* are bound more by interests than by shared values, cultures, or traditions, but instead that identity *politics* are based in the creation of shared interests which can be transformed into petitions for the representation of those interests in political institutions. With Amy Gutmann, I think that identities and interests interact, and acknowledge that interests do not always precede identity but instead are created through the process of the mobilization of that identity for political ends.<sup>20</sup> Along with the rational choice identity scholars, the mobilization metric predicts that different identity groups can become more politically salient depending on how social and economic opportunities change.<sup>21</sup> Yet even if collective action is possible, the success of identity groups in achieving these shared goals depends, crucially, on the electoral environment in which they emerge.

#### ELECTORAL DETERMINANTS OF FRANCHISE EXTENSION

Having explored the theoretical determinants of mobilization for suffrage – the “demand” side – we now need to consider the calculations of those with the legal power to change the rules – the “supply”. In a limited democracy, the reasons underlying why a ruling group would agree to let an even larger group of people share in political decision-making emerges as a puzzle.<sup>22</sup> In this setting, it is hardly controversial to assert that elected leaders care about getting re-elected.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Gutmann 2002: 545-546.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. David Laitin 1998, and Daniel Posner 2004.

<sup>22</sup> This is also the puzzle in an authoritarian system (Acemoglu and Robinson 2006), but as I explain in this chapter, the opportunities open to actors are constrained, to an important degree, by the very presence of limited democratic institutions. More explicitly, to contest their position society, societal actors have easiest recourse to ordinary as opposed to revolutionary repertoires.

<sup>23</sup> In some accounts of politics, stemming from Downs 1957, every political agent including individuals, parties, and coalitions formulate policies based solely on the likelihood that it will elicit votes.

Political positions provide elected leaders with income, with prestige associated with their offices, and with the power to contribute toward the making of public policy.<sup>24</sup> Each of these perquisites incentivize politicians to make choices that will bolster rather than inhibit their bids for (re-)election. Cast in this light, electoral competition is linked to the struggle for voting rights insofar as rights extension affects the likelihood of turnover in office.<sup>25</sup>

On the one hand, voting rights laws constitute part of the toolbox that leaders can use to grow their coalitions. Expanding the franchise can potentially benefit a party by enlarging its basis of support, and might ultimately allow passage of the party's preferred policies.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, a small electorate has many advantages: when fewer people vote, fewer people contribute to the making of policies; the problem of gathering information about voters' preferences are diminished; and there are fewer people with which to share the spoils of office. Extending the franchise changes all of this. Not only do politicians, if they want to keep their posts, need to concern themselves with how the newly incorporated voters will cast their ballots, but they also have to contend with a multiplicity of expectations about what their election can do for the (now greater) number of people that propelled them into office.

Several questions will emerge: Do the excluded demand far-reaching changes in the composition of the leadership, in the disbursement of public funds, in the institutions of the workplace? Or will they be of the sort that, once a small concession is made, will easily fall

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24 Absent programmatic commitments, the spoils of office may be enough to make winning worthwhile. See Eggers and Hainmueller 2009; North and Weingast 1989; and Truex 2014.

25 Berins Collier (1999: 55) finds that competition and programmatic preferences influence leaders' choices about suffrage extension. This is consistent with the dimensions of incumbent strength and cleavages.

26 Lizzeri and Persico 2004.

in line with what the ruling groups want?<sup>27</sup> Will giving this group more political rights mean that, sooner or later, other groups will have to be incorporated too?<sup>28</sup> Depending on the answers to these questions, there are many potential costs to enlarging the electorate, and so politicians may devise a growing list of reasons to resist efforts to reform the franchise. Indeed, in the face of so much uncertainty, many political leaders will prefer to maintain the status quo and will oppose any change to the rules of the game.

A key insight that I wish to stress is that ambition fuels creativity for the politically vulnerable. Party actors whose positions are at risk will look to any number of avenues which hold promise for maintaining power. As suggested by Carles Boix's discussion of the adoption of Proportional Representation in today's advanced democracies, parties can reform the nature of electoral institutions to insulate themselves from losses.<sup>29</sup> Parties can also manipulate the outcomes of electoral contests through outright fraud and intimidation, or, as Isabela Mares shows, even move to protect voter's autonomy if they believe it will help them.<sup>30</sup> Alternatively, to employ Gary Cox's language, entrepreneurial politicians can "mobilize" supporters by increasing the turnout of those who are entitled to the vote but do not generally participate in politics, or they can try to "persuade" voters with weak political loyalties to join their cause.<sup>31</sup> When none of these possibili-

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27 Therborn's (1970) grim view is that by the turn of the twentieth century, when many franchise extensions were granted, the ability of the working classes to influence politics was already so meager as to render the decision unimportant to politicians.

28 The effect of enfranchising one group on another's claim to participation was especially important in places where franchise rights depended on property, literacy, or race. If giving women the vote would require relaxing restrictions for other groups, politicians, such as those in the U.S. South, may have been particularly wary.

29 Boix 1999, 2010.

30 Mares 2015.

31 Cox 2009.

ties seem strategically appealing, politicians can also reform the rules governing who has the right to vote.<sup>32</sup>

I theorize that strategic enfranchisement has two components: the electoral landscape in a given polity, and politicians' beliefs about the preferences of potential voters. Of primary importance to parties is their *need* for the votes: incumbents will be reluctant to enlarge the set of electors if they already have enough support to maintain power and to push their preferred policies through. Thus it is only when parties are (or become) vulnerable to challengers that their members might be willing to take a chance on enlarging the electorate.<sup>33</sup> Second, given the need for new supporters in order to win, parties will only support reform if they think the disfranchised will support them. Politicians' beliefs about the disenfranchised are therefore key to understanding their choices.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Political Competition and Electoral Cleavages*

Consider, from an incumbent's point of view, whether it is rational to change voting laws. At the most basic level, two issues frame this decision. The first is the incumbent's hold on power – is it weak or strong? The second is the nature of the disfranchised: do they appear to be natural allies of the incumbent or of the opposition party? The answers to these two questions go a long way toward understanding whether politicians are willing to extend the franchise.

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32 In some situations, as Trounstein (2008) has shown for municipal reform movements in America after 1950, this means selectively *disenfranchising* certain groups.

33 There is a healthy debate about the influence of strong versus weak party systems on the quality of democracy. See Stokes (2001: ch. 4) for a review of the debate. In an analysis of policy switching, Stokes finds longevity, a proxy for strength, to be negatively related to renegeing on campaign promises once elected. In this sense strong parties may be good for democracy.

34 Ansolabehere et al. 2001. Politicians' preferences do not perfectly overlap with the general position of the party, but party can trump preferences in key decisions.

In developing this argument I maintain two rather uncontroversial assumptions. First, politicians care about winning office and will make decisions that are consistent with that aim. Second, in decision-making on the whole, politicians will generally be risk averse – they prefer a sure bet of re-election to running a risk of losing even when the odds are fair. Taken together, my claim is that rational, risk averse politicians will only extend the franchise to groups when they are vulnerable to competition, and when their only hope of winning is to capture the votes of a yet un-tapped electoral bloc.<sup>35</sup> Even then, however, politicians will only change the voting laws if they believe the disfranchised to be their natural political allies.

The schematic in table 3 specifies the incumbent's decision set. On the horizontal axis is arrayed the incumbent's strength. In the simplest world the incumbent can be weak or strong. A weak incumbent has an uncertain hold on power now and likely faces a real threat in the next election. Conversely, a strong incumbent believes its position to be secure now and into the future. Arrayed on the vertical axis of table 3 is the incumbent's belief about the political preferences of the disfranchised. For a bundle of salient political issues, the disfranchised group can be thought to have preferences that do align, or that do not align, with the incumbent party. If preferences align, the incumbents will assume that the disfranchised will support them in future elections. Conversely, if preferences do not align, the disfranchised group will support their opponent.

Inside the cells are predictions about the incumbent party's actions when the issue of franchise extension is brought to a debate. Basic rationality suggests that the party will always "resist" enfranchisement when the excluded group has non-aligning preferences. This is the

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<sup>35</sup> This harks back to Bueno de Mesquita et al.'s (2003) idea that members of a "winning coalition" expand the selectorate when it is beneficial to them vis-à-vis a ruler, but that they try to keep the selectorate as small as possible to extract the maximum amount of rents for themselves.

Table 3: Schematic of argument for the Incumbent.

Incumbent Beliefs about Women's Preferences	Political Competition	
	Low	High
	Align	do nothing
Do not Align	resist	resist

Note: cells describe incumbent's action based on strength and beliefs about women's preferences.

bottom row of the matrix. On the other hand, aligning preferences alone are not enough to prompt the incumbent party to expand the franchise. In the top left cell a strong incumbent will "do nothing" to change franchise rights because it is already secure in power now and in the future. Because the party is already winning, it has no reason to change the rules of the game; it will not play a card before it needs to.

The only time an incumbent supports enfranchisement is when the top right cell is reached – that is, when it is weak and thinks it can capture the new voters. Competition sets the stage for reform in a more general sense as well, because in limited democracies challengers also have some ability to influence political outcomes.<sup>36</sup> The challenger's decision set has the same options as the incumbent. The challenger can do nothing, resist, or support reform. Because the challenger is out of power and hopes to get in, it will support reform any time women's preferences align. Table 4 puts the actions of both challenger and incumbent side by side. *Political change is unlikely when the incumbent is strong, even if the challenger supports reform. Political change is likely when the incumbent is weak, as either the incumbent, or challenger, will support reform.*

<sup>36</sup> This argument does not need to apply only to a two-party system. An incumbent could be weak if it holds only a simple majority, or if the largest party has only a plurality and is forced to form a coalition. In these cases the preferences of the pivotal voters will have to be considered, as I will in the U.K. case study.

Table 4: Schematic of argument for Incumbent and Challenger.

	Political Competition	
	Low	High
Women Align Incumbent	(do nothing, resist)	( <b>support</b> , resist)
Do Not Align Incumbent	(resist, <b>support</b> )	(resist, <b>support</b> )

Note: the first item in each ordered pair is the Incumbent's choice under the conditions of strength and preference convergence. The second item is the Challenger's choice.

This argument stands apart from other models of enfranchisement insofar as strong parties do nothing to support reform even when women are potential allies. In the work of Acemoglu and Robinson, Lizzeri and Persico, and others, parties are vote maximizers. They will support reform (given some budget constraint) so long as the vote share under the reform is greater than the vote share without the reform. In my account, parties are not just vote maximizers, but 'minimaxers', where they want to minimize the probability that they lose, which may not require a change in electoral rules when they are strong. Other scholarship on electoral reform, such as Boix (1999: 611), takes this approach, arguing that so long as the electoral rules serve the interests of the governing parties, the parties have no incentives to change the system.

To situate this argument in the literature on parties it should be stressed that although the schematic suggests that parties have preferences and women have preferences and the trick is finding out whether these two things align, this presentation is by necessity a simplification of how preferences are generated in reality. I am not assuming that parties are mere aggregators of preferences, as the responsible party government model of E.E. Schattschneider (1942) would hold, nor do I agree fully with Joseph Schumpeter ([1942] 1950: 263) who claimed that "the will of the people is the product and not the motive of power in the political process", but instead I lean to-

ward the perspective that in the course of politics and over time, both party platforms and voters' preferences are subject to change, often based on how elites and identity groups interact with one another.

*Politicians' Beliefs about the "Women's" Vote*

The preceding discussion suggests that politicians' beliefs about the future preferences of female voters are key to understanding which parties will support reform under conditions of robust political competition. Because of women's fundamental diversity – what we have called their intersectionality – Corinne McConnaughy has claimed that the very notion of a “women's vote” is itself meaningless.<sup>37</sup> She contends that in contrast to American black voters, whom Paul Frymer argues were “captured” first by the Republican and then by the Democratic party, women could in no way credibly deliver a bloc of votes to a single party and therefore could not be enfranchised based on a strategic logic.<sup>38</sup> Although I agree that women's diversity limits the ability to think of women's votes as a solid bloc, this does not mean that strategic enfranchisement of women is impossible.

If men's preferences can be mapped in an n-dimensional space, so too can women's. In a two-party system, such as that famously theorized by Anthony Downs, high levels of competition indicate that parties will try to compete for voters in the middle of the distribution (even if they also work on increasing turnout among their base), and so the relevant question is whether a given party believes it can capture more of the women's vote than the other party. If a party in electoral trouble thinks it can retain its male constituents and shave

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<sup>37</sup> McConnaughy.

<sup>38</sup> See Frymer 2010 [1999] on electoral capture & McConnaughy's 2013 conclusion.

off enough of the women's vote to pull off a win, it has an incentive to do so, even if it cannot win the votes of all women.

A second point to make about the women's vote is that while McConaughy argues that politicians in the late nineteenth century United States conceived of the women's vote as a "family vote" whereby adding women to the electoral registers simply would have doubled the electorate, in my own work I have rarely found evidence that politicians thought women would vote exactly like men. In most contexts, it appears that politicians believed women would be more conservative than men on average, which drove historical resistance of radical and leftist parties to extensions of the franchise.<sup>39</sup> (There are a few counter-examples, like a letter from a Tory in New Zealand, quoted in chapter one, which suggested adding women to the electorate would make the island more communist.)

We have, moreover, evidence that women did and do vote differently from men. This is shown in the work of early studies by Duverger (1955) and Tingsten (1937) which, relying on a handful of localities that used separate ballots to tally male and female votes prior to 1960, found that when women differed from men, their commitments were generally more conservative.<sup>40</sup> Later work by Inglehart and Norris (2000) shows that while a conservative gender gap in voting existed prior in the middle of the twentieth century, beginning around the 1980s women started to vote more liberally than men

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39 For example, in Chile, in the UK (Lloyd George and Winston Churchill), and so on.

40 Summarizing the limited polling data available for the Netherlands, Norway, France and Germany in the 1940s and 1950s, Duverger (1955) finds that there are substantial differences between male and female voting patterns, with women tending to be more conservative than men overall. But he also finds that these differences vary by marital status, age, profession, and country. Married couples of the highest and lowest income brackets tended to vote together, while the wives of professional men voted differently from their husbands 17 percent of the time. Depending on the age distribution of the population, marriage patterns, and the composition of women's labor force participation, women's votes may or may not have mirrored those of similarly situated men, and therefore the bases of support for political parties could have changed substantially after women's enfranchisement.

in most of the advanced industrial democracies. Although the fact that women proved to vote differently does not imply that politicians would have known this in advance, my claim is that in most countries and settings there was not a sense that women's votes would have zero influence on the partisan landscape thereafter. In any case, politicians' beliefs about the shape of the distribution of the women's vote is likely to vary a lot based on the political context, institutional environment, and even based on the mobilizational choices made by the suffrage movement itself.

#### *Legislative Rules and Party Discipline*

Several institutional conditions may impinge on the explanatory power of the simple electoral logic described above. There are two in particular worth mentioning. First is the issue of legislative rules, which may make electoral reform more difficult if, for example, reform requires support by a "super"-majority. In this case, support for reform may be very high, and located in the expected places, but there may not be enough votes to see the bill passed.<sup>41</sup>

The second institutional condition that may influence enfranchisement is party discipline. Passing reform requires a belief that the bill will benefit the party (in a time of need) and the ability to deliver the needed votes. If parties are highly disciplined, and my model is correct, then we can expect actual outcomes will be quite close to the predicted ones. But if parties are undisciplined, then legislators may feel free to respond to their own moral views, constituent preferences,

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<sup>41</sup> For example, amendments to New Mexico's state constitution were nearly impossible as they required three-fourths of the vote in both state legislative houses, three-fourths of the vote in a public referendum, and a two-thirds majority in each county. McConaughy 2013: 196. McCammon and Campbell 2001 measure the ease of the amendment process in the United States but were not able to share their data with me.

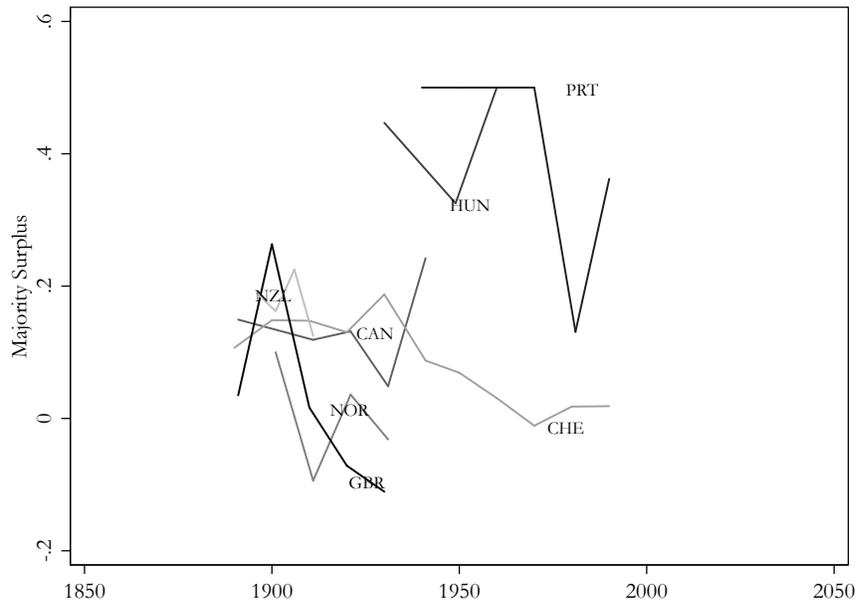


Figure 5: **Political Competition and Women's Enfranchisement.** The figure plots majority surplus by year, with majority surplus defined as the share of seats held by the largest party over fifty percent. The three-letter country code marker appears in the year suffrage was extended.

or their personal sense of risk involved in reform. Deviation from the average party position may be more common in some legislative arenas, such as social policies, than in other arenas, like economic policy.<sup>42</sup> Even if party leaders believe that the party will, in general, benefit from reform, some individual legislators may not see it that way, and in an environment where deviations from the party are not punished, legislators may feel free to vote with values or individual interests. Such, I will show, was the case for many Radical politicians in France.

#### *From Theory to Evidence*

When moving from theory to evidence, a final concern is the unit of analysis. If the unit of analysis is the party, then knowledge of the

<sup>42</sup> Washington 2008.

party's strength and their beliefs should reveal, on average, a party's action that maps onto the schematic in figure 3. If, on the other hand, the unit of analysis is the legislature, beliefs become less important than the robustness of political competition. This is because either the incumbent or the opposition might push for reform and succeed when the incumbent is weak. In other words, at a high level of aggregation a weak incumbent is all that is needed to predict the possibility of franchise reform.

As suggestive evidence that lower levels of competition is associated with reform, figure 5 shows the share of seats over fifty percent held by the largest party and the timing of women's enfranchisement.<sup>43</sup> While the number of countries is small, the figure suggests that in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Great Britain, and Norway competition was rising (in other words the majority had a smaller surplus) in the time period just prior to women's enfranchisement. The aforementioned caveats imply that when taking the theory to data careful consideration needs to be given to legislative rules, the nature of the electoral system, and the unit of analysis.

#### INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MOBILIZATION AND ELECTORAL POLITICS

In this final theoretical section I want to outline the ways in which the logics of feminist mobilization and electoral politics interact with one another to reproduce the status quo or to produce enfranchisement. As the schematic in table 3 makes clear, in many electoral settings, franchise extension will be unlikely because neither a strong incumbent party, nor a weak one who fears its opponents will bene-

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<sup>43</sup> The cross-national data on competition reflects an individual data collection effort that is underway. Only countries for which I have information on party shares in the 20 years prior to women's enfranchisement are represented here.

fit from the reform, will agree to extend the franchise.<sup>44</sup> In spite of this electoral logic – the “opportunity” structure of franchise politics – the activities of suffrage activists still matter for producing policy change.

Drawing on what I call the “ordinary” democratic toolbox, suffrage activists can disseminate information to raise issue awareness; lobby leaders to influence their choices; draft editorials to shape public opinion; hold meetings and conferences; stage rallies; join campaigns; and fund candidates.<sup>45</sup> Using these tools, organized movements can intervene on either axis of the schematic in table 3. That is, their mobilizational choices can influence politicians’ beliefs about how the disenfranchised will vote, or they can work to influence the axis of political competition, strengthening the position of the party that supports their inclusion. At their most effective, suffrage activists will form coalitions of interest with political parties that can alter the political landscape and thus shape the fate of suffrage reform.

### *Influencing Politicians’ Beliefs*

Suffrage mobilization can affect the axis of politicians’ beliefs. Because politicians want to be re-elected, organized movements can demonstrate that their inclusion will help that goal. Through the types of people they recruit to the movement, and the types of demands they make, an organized movement has the potential to re-

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44 The role of an organized movement is key to this story, but there are examples in history of political parties deliberately going afield to generate a new group of voters. In early US history, this was said of Jefferson who took his compatriots to the country in order to get the rural interests on his side (Schattschneider 1942: 47-48). And in some of the world’s imperial outposts, colonial rulers established a broad franchise in order to stand in good favor with the metropolises and the democratic super powers (such as Sri Lanka). In general, however, I claim that securing the right to vote is preceded by agitation among the excluded.

45 Repertoires of contention are historically-established ways of demanding rights, which are shaped by the context in which the movements operate, McAdam, Tarrow, Tilly 1996: 22.

duce politicians' uncertainty about of the future demands and political behavior of the excluded group.<sup>46</sup>

Here, the overall conditions of mobilization will be important. When inter-group inequality is high (quadrants I and IV of table 2) suffrage activists may eschew broad-based mobilization and instead organize narrowly within their own group. If only one group of women is mobilized in this way, this sends a fairly good signal to politicians about which women want the vote (what their preferences are) as well as which women are likely to actually utilize this right. I employ the term "good signal" to imply that politicians have a clear sense of the distribution of women's preferences, knowing the average, with a small amount of uncertainty. If the institutional conditions are such that politicians can give voting rights to only some segment of women (as would be the case in countries where manhood suffrage had not yet been extended), then this narrow mobilization tactic may prove useful.

But in conditions where the manhood suffrage already exists, opportunities for selective enfranchisement of the disfranchised will be smaller. Hence narrow mobilization for voting rights may not communicate enough information about the preferences of all women to be useful to politicians. In this case, the group in power may think that the mobilized women will support it, but fear the currently unmobilized, but in theory mobilizable, among the rest of the women. Alternatively, in cases where there are lower levels of inter-group inequality, suffrage activists may see the benefit of mobilizing women

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<sup>46</sup> Uncertainty comes from several places. 1. The excluded may not be politically active and so are not communicating about preferences; 2. Even if there is a movement the opinions of the leadership may not perfectly represent the average group member; 3. Empirically, polling was very uncommon until the twentieth century. 4. Even with polling, it can be difficult to distinguish potential loyalties when excluded groups are themselves divided on dimensions such as class, race, or gender. For example, disfranchised Latinos in the U.S. may have cross-cutting preferences: socially conservative but economically liberal, the "best guess" of politicians may seem too risky to take.

across cleavage groups. Here, broad-based mobilization will give a good signal of the mean of women's preferences, although the dispersion around the mean is likely to be larger. Nevertheless, in this situation the strategy pursued by women will teach politicians about the group, sometimes demonstrating a more complex set of preferences for women than the politicians originally imagined.

### *Changing the Landscape*

A second way that the mobilization metric can interact with the electoral logic of women's enfranchisement is when movements intervene more directly in the political arena to influence the axis of competition. In this sense, organized groups might also go on the offensive, and work to form relationships with politicians that will influence political outcomes, by supporting (or contesting) the electoral bids of politicians that promote (or oppose) the group's inclusion. As McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly have written:

Cumulative nonviolent action only makes a difference, in fact, to the extent that it: a) forges alliances of conscience or interest with existing members of the polity, b) offers a credible threat of disrupting routine political processes, c) poses another credible threat of direct influence in the electoral arena, and/or d) elicits pressure on authorities from external powerholders.<sup>47</sup>

Building on these ideas, in order to bring about reform, organized groups of the disfranchised must form ties with powerful people and bring pressure to bear in the political arena. This requires a thorough understanding of legislative processes necessary to change voting laws, and careful observation of changes in political tides in

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

order to capitalize on those shifts. Advocating for the election of sympathetic legislators, or working to destabilize politicians and parties who are unfriendly to their cause, are therefore crucial tools for disfranchised groups.

The question that remains, of course, is how organizations decide whether to participate in shaping politicians' beliefs, or whether to intervene in the electoral arena. In some sense, all actions taken by political movements communicate information about their members' preferences to politicians and the broader public. At least in the early years, the bread and butter of most organizations will be forming relationships or "alliances of conscience" with politicians and powerful groups. But since the efficacy of changing beliefs is still subject to the dimension of political competition, it would seem that if, after initial alliances are formed, reform is not forthcoming, the next step is to dabble with intervention in the political arena.

The decision to intervene directly in the political struggle will depend on whether the gains from attaining the goal are worth the costs of such an intervention. For suffrage reforms in particular, movement leaders have to be confident that intervening in the political arena to win the vote will not undermine their other political goals. In the language of political science, we can think about what the political position of the median voter is under the status quo policy and compare it to the position of the new median voter after the expansion of the franchise.

If suffrage leaders perform a calculation of this sort, there may be instances in which the current median voter is closer to their preferences than the median voter that would emerge if women unlike them are included in the electorate. This idea is put succinctly by 1908 article in the *New Ireland Review*:

[T]here are first the women who want to vote at any price; there are second the women who don't want the vote at any price; and third the women who want the vote but are prepared to pay only a certain price for it.<sup>48</sup>

A sense of the 'price' of suffrage would determine whether suffrage leaders would mobilize narrowly for their cause (and risk non-reform) or mobilize broadly (and risk the down-stream political effects of the reform). If the particular reform under question will affect only a small, relatively homogenous group (like immigrants of a certain ethnicity who also more or less share the same class position), then the costs of intervening along the competition axis to effect reform will be lower than for a larger, more heterogeneous group. In the latter case, a long history of mobilization that does not bear fruit may make the costs of intervention seem lower over time.

#### *Institutional Environment*

Finally it bears being stressed that the policies that are already on the books for other groups will affect the specific proposals made by suffrage activists as well as the actions taken by politicians.

If the coalition for suffrage was broad, vulnerable parties with a mass-basis were more likely to support women's enfranchisement. Where the coalition was narrow, vulnerable parties with centrist and conservative leanings had an incentive to extend the franchise, but only if they could exclude large segments of women in the reform. Politicians operating in countries that had already granted manhood suffrage – without regard to property or literacy – would have a more difficult time justifying a piece-meal approach to women's enfran-

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<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Kelly (1996: 34).

chisement. Hence where the male franchise was expansive, leftist support for reform proved crucial.

Importantly, though, even if the main lines of political conflict were relatively static, the interactions between suffragists and politicians were dynamic: the choices made by both groups reflected and influenced one another, often over a period of many years. Continued exclusion could nudge organizers' preferences in radical directions, driving suffragists to pursue more daring strategies, or to decide to organize a mass movement, even if the potential policy changes on other dimensions were farther from the suffrage leaders' original optimum.

When property, inheritance, wage-earning, and public participation are conditioned on one's sex – as they definitely were at the turn of the last century, and as they really still are today – the structure generates the condition under which women have some interests in common, and thus at least some reasons to justify collective action in spite of other basic diversities.

#### THE ARGUMENT AND THE CASES

The rest of the book is dedicated to understanding the strategies and efficacy of women's suffrage movements in light of the mobilization metric and the nature of political competition in three countries.<sup>49</sup> The theory suggests that in the face of a well-organized and highly subscribed suffrage movement, franchise extension is likelier when incumbents and challengers are closely matched, and unlikely when a party has a strong hold on power. It further predicts that support for reform should emanate from parties whose leaders believe they will

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<sup>49</sup> Its simplicity offers several advantages over other theories of franchise extension, especially in so far as the factions and preferences of excluded groups are not assumed ex-ante. The conclusion discusses these issues in more detail.

Table 5: **Argument and the Cases.**

	Incumbent Strength	
	Strong	Weak
Women Align Incumbent	US Southern Democrats	<b>US West Parties</b> <b>UK 1919</b>
Do Not Align Incumbent	US North	French Radicals III Republic UK Liberals 1906

benefit from the additional voters, whereas parties whose leaders do not foresee such advantage will resist the measure. Finally, the strategies of organized movements should reflect these strategic considerations, and movements should respond to barriers in the electoral realm by changing perceptions and beliefs, and by intervening directly in sphere of political competition, working to unseat dissenters and elevate allies. This is especially likely in less fractionalized societies.

Loosely, these three implications of the theory correspond to the qualitative and empirical evidence that I provide through case studies of the United States, France, and Great Britain. Figure 5 gives a rough guide to how the theory fits with the evidence. The event-history study of the United States provides ample evidence in a large-n investigation for the importance of robust political competition in allowing for voting rights reform. Democrats in the south were invulnerable to external challengers, and so the fact that southern white women would support their party was irrelevant. They would resist reform and support the status quo. In the Northeast, political parties and machines believed women to have preferences different from their base constituents, and resisted reform as a result. In the West, on the other hand, parties were much more competitive and the movement, though smaller than in the East, was able to capitalize on shifts in political power to win the vote.

Moving across the Atlantic, an analysis of French legislative politics shows how, in a context of political weakness, an incumbent will fight against reform when it believes the disfranchised are not political allies. Though the Radical party was vulnerable in the Chamber of Deputies, it had enough power in the Senate to block women's enfranchisement. Finally, the chapter on the United Kingdom gives very detailed evidence about why and how a suffrage movement decides to intervene in the electoral arena, arguing that Liberal suffrage leaders decided that victory was worth the cost of aligning with the Labour party to secure reform. Through a clever cross-cleavage electoral strategy, the movement expanded its base and made credible its commitment to helping Labour win. Together, the political circumstances of women's enfranchisement in these three countries demonstrate the importance of social cleavages, party competition and women's mobilization in catalyzing voting rights reform.

#### CONCLUSION

Taken together, political competition, preferences over political cleavages, and the nature of mobilization among disfranchised provide a simple scaffolding for understanding the logic of women's enfranchisement. A key insight gleaned from this discussion is that if the party in power does not need extra votes, or is vulnerable but does not think it can win the new voters, it will resist reform. This formulation of the politicians' decision calculus helps to explain why petitions for voting rights generally fail. It also distinguishes this book's argument from other political economic approaches to franchise reform in so far as most accounts simply claim that politicians will change the laws so long as they get more votes under the new regime than under the old. In fact, because political capital must be

expended to reform voting laws, and because increasing the number of voters has informational costs and may require platform changes, it is costly to pursue reform unless the votes really are needed. That is, unless the party would lose under the status quo.

Highlighting the electoral constraints that politicians face does not mean, however, that suffrage organizers are hamstrung. Organized members of the excluded group have several strategies available to them to contest their exclusion. They can generate information about the excluded group's preferences, perhaps shaping the parties' expectations about their group's future political behavior. Or they can get involved in the business of elections, working to seat political allies and unseat opponents. My claim is that a suffrage movement will be more likely to undertake bold actions if its leaders perceive the costs of enfranchising a diverse group of women, in terms of future policy outcomes, as lower than the cost of the status quo. In very heterogeneous societies, for example, which are highly divided across ethnic or religious cleavages, suffrage leaders may fear the set of policies that would be promoted by the other female voters. In these contexts, the movement is likely to remain small and non-contentious. On the other hand, in more homogenous societies, the risks of enfranchising a diverse group of women are lower, and the movement is more likely to pursue a mass movement, and to promote bold actions in the political arena.

This argument is novel in the context of political economy approaches to franchise extension because it takes women's mobilization seriously, and because it pitches suffrage battles in strategic instead of cultural terms. The validity of these assumptions have emerged from a vast historical literature on women's suffrage. Even a cursory reading of the suffrage literature reveals the importance of political calculations to electoral reform. From countries as varied as New

Zealand, France, Mexico, and the United States, it is clear that politicians cared about how women's enfranchisement would affect their prospects for re-election. For example, in the 1930s President Cardenas, of Mexico, refused to sign a bill that would have given women equal voting rights, even though the bill had previously been ratified by all of the state-level legislatures. Believing that women were too religious and generally conservative, Cardenas resisted the reform for electoral reasons.<sup>50</sup>

The second assumption acknowledges the fact that political inclusion is rarely (if ever) gained without some organic demand for reform. Though suffrage movements faced varying degrees of resistance and took on different forms, at least some segment of women were mobilized for voting rights prior to reform in limited democracies.<sup>51</sup> To cite a few examples, in New Zealand, women mobilized for five years under a tightly organized, hierarchical suffrage organization before they won the vote in the colonial legislature. In 1893, the year that the reform passed, suffragists presented the legislature with a massive petition – bearing signatures from three-quarters of the adult women in New Zealand – as evidence of their resolve. In Argentina, bourgeois suffragists were active for a half a century before they conspired to form a mass-based organization. Juan Perón, who saw an opportunity to bolster his electoral coalition when women from the urban working class began to demand the vote, agreed to the reform in 1947.<sup>52</sup>

Along with these more thoroughly studied examples of suffrage movements, some segment of women are known to have petitioned for voting rights in Germany as early as 1864; in China after the col-

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50 Montes-de-Oca-O'Reilly 2005: 183.

51 DuBois (1991, 2000) provides key references for scholarship on local suffrage movements across the globe.

52 Hammond 2011: 204. On suffrage reform in Argentina see also Lavrin 1994, 1995.

lapse of the Qing Dynasty; Japan shortly after the First World War; Greece after 1924; Mexico from late nineteenth century; India in the 1920s; in Hawaii; and a small suffrage movement existed within the Turkish nationalist movement.<sup>53</sup> Further reports of suffrage societies came to the leaders of the American movement from Finland, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Hungary, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Canada, and South Africa.<sup>54</sup> As this long list makes clear, women around the world were interested in political equality. Moreover, the advocacy of groups like the Women's Christian and Temperance Union, and Catholic suffrage organizations in Chile, make clear that voting rights reform was not only or always a project of left-leaning feminists.

Along with showing that the basic features of the theory that I outline have considerable support in the literature on women's suffrage reform, the parallels to other studies of women's enfranchisement from the field of political science bear being stressed. For example, Lee Ann Banaszak's comparative study of women's enfranchisement in the U.S. and Switzerland provides evidence that a key structural feature that drove early enfranchisement in the U.S. and which hindered reform in Switzerland, was party competition. From 1919-1975, the Swiss party system was extremely stable – no party lost or gained more than 10 percent of seats in the national legislature – but in Cantons where the power of the Center and Right was contested by viable Left parties, the incumbents adopted pro-suffrage positions in order not to be outflanked by the Left.<sup>55</sup> In a recent book on state-level

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53 Germany: Anderson 2000: 421; Evans 1977. China: Edwards 2004. Japan: Molony 2004: 135-142. Greece: Stamiris 1986. Switzerland: Banaszak 1996. New Zealand: Grimshaw 1972. Mexico: Macías 1982; Montas-de-Oca-O'Reilly 2005. India: Pearson 2004. Hawaii: Grimshaw 2004. Turkey: Jayawardena 1986: 41. Argentina: Hammond 2004, 2011.

54 Harper 1922: chs. LI-LIII.

55 Banaszak 1996: 112, 120, 127-128ff. Her empirical analyses, however, do not control for political competition.

enfranchisement in the United States, Corinne McConaughy shows that in most states where suffrage was adopted, politicians faced increasing electoral vulnerability just prior to the reform.<sup>56</sup>

Moreover, as demonstrated by several important texts on women's movements, moments of political instability can provide an opening for movement leaders to more effectively agitate for reform. In her work on Chilean women's movements, Lisa Baldez (2002) shows that the political opportunity afforded by a period of partisan realignment allowed both conservative and progressive women's organizations to coalesce into mass mobilization. In a similar vein, Anna Harvey (1996) demonstrates that the realignment of American parties in the late 1960s provided new avenues for independent women's organizations to press for reforms, resulting in several policy concessions that the women's movement was unable to secure in the previously stable party environment. As both of these studies highlight, the competitive conditions that led to partisan realignment provided fertile ground for organized segments of women's movements to press for political demands. By these lights, women's mobilization can become a more effective tool to secure voting rights reform when competition is robust.

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<sup>56</sup> McConaughy 2015. This argument is supported by statistically significant relationships between two measures of political competition – the governor's vote margin in the last election and third party presence – and enfranchisement. See p.215 and tables 6.5 and 6.7. Note that McConaughy finds only limited statistical support for her argument that the presence of coalition partners drove women's suffrage.

ELECTORAL COMPETITION, MOVEMENT  
STRENGTH, AND THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF  
AMERICAN WOMEN

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In a well known letter written to her husband, then a delegate to the 1776 Continental Congress, Abigail Adams implored the future president to “remember the ladies and be more favorable and generous to them than your ancestors.”<sup>1</sup> She meant, by this, that the Congressional delegates should remember the many sacrifices that women had made for the sake of their country’s independence, and thereby reward women with more freedom under the new regime than they had enjoyed under the old.

Despite Abigail Adams’s exhortation, the constitution written down by the founders after the Revolutionary War was won made only two provisions for the electoral franchise, neither of which made full citizens of American women. Article I, Section 2, established that whoever was eligible to vote for the ‘most numerous’ office in each federal state would be allowed to vote for the national House of Representatives;<sup>2</sup> and Article II, Section 1 established that state legislatures had the power to choose the president’s electors.

After the founding nearly 144 years passed before an amendment was ratified by the federal government which declared that voting rights could not be withheld on the basis of sex. Yet, because the Constitution devolved authority over elections to the U.S. states, a

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<sup>1</sup> 31 March 1776. Quoted in Butterfield et al. 2002: 121.

<sup>2</sup> Under the state legislature’s discretion a person who could vote for the state House could vote for the national House. Until the Seventeenth Amendment provided for “direct” election in 1913, national senators were chosen by state legislatures.