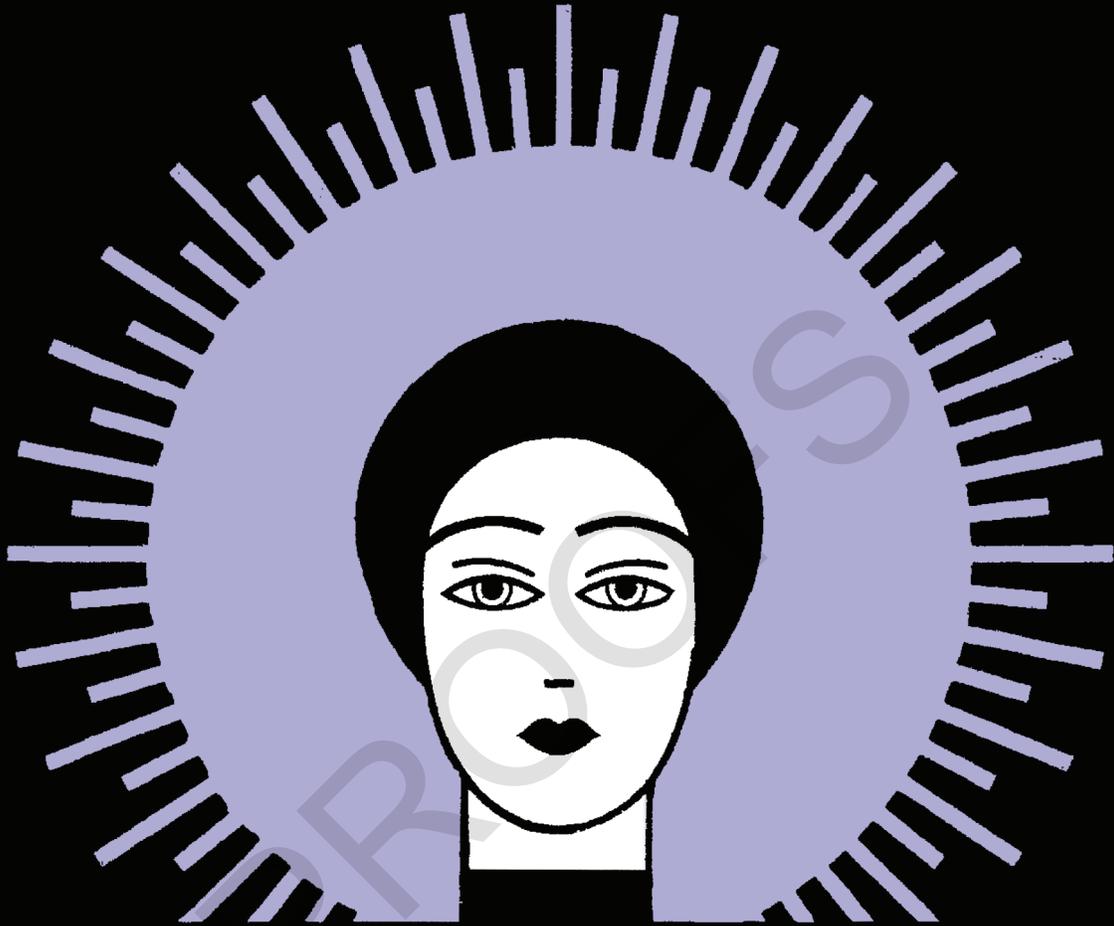


DAWN LANGAN TEELE



FORGING THE FRANCHISE

The Political Origins of the Women's Vote

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1

Introduction

The masculine nouns that describe belonging to a nation, such as citizen, citoyen, ciudadano, and Bürger, are often vested with universal meaning: in constitutions and jurisprudence, many of the duties of a citizen apply equally to both sexes. But once upon a time, albeit not very long ago, the rights and privileges associated with political membership applied only to men. 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 significant roles in democracy's origins.¹ 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 1893.² Since then, though, voting rules across the world have shifted dramatically toward political equality of the sexes. Almost without exception, the very first petition for reform in any given national legislature was rejected. Yet without exception, democratic countries eventually gave women voting rights. What caused

¹ Several scholars have suggested that women have played more important roles in revolutions, especially during early moments, than is realized (Friedman 2000). For a discussion of women's role in the American Revolution, see Flexner (1995: ch. 1, p. 12); on Mexico, see Macías 1982 and Montes-de-Oca-O'Reilley 2005. Jayawardena (1986) links the struggle for women's emancipation in Asia to women's participation in movements for national liberation.

² The Isle of Man, which is part of the British Isles, extended voting rights to women via its independent legislature, the Tynwald, as early as 1881. New Zealand was the first of today's advanced industrial economies to extend the franchise in 1893. Unlike Australia, which formed a federal commonwealth in 1901 and excluded aboriginals in its initial constitution, New Zealand's colonists included Maori voters among their electorate. Norway was the first independent country to enfranchise women in its founding constitution in 1906. But 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 Pitcairn settlers were the survivors of the HMS *Bounty* mutiny. Numbering 194 in 1856, they maintained the female franchise upon their relocation to Norfolk Island.

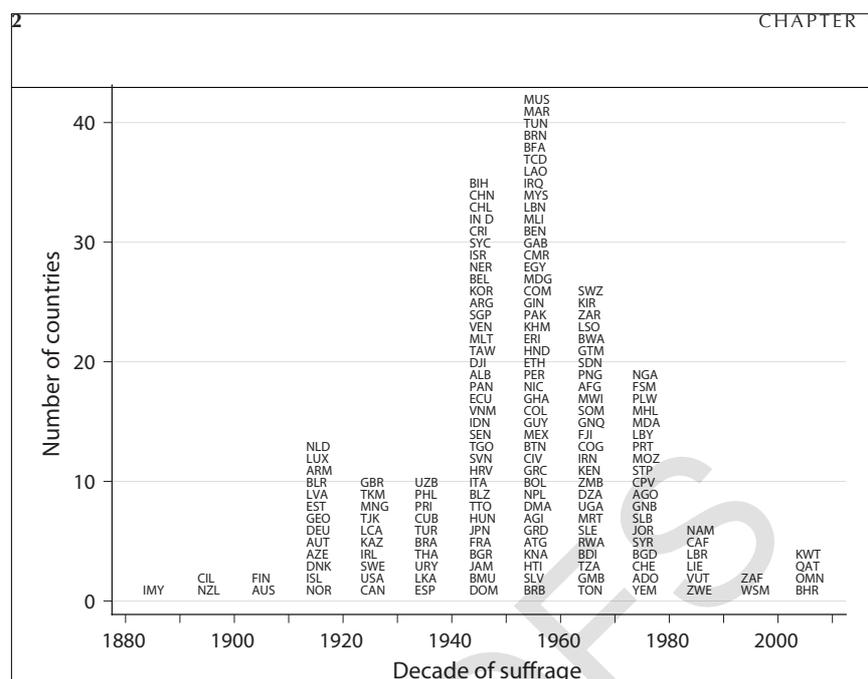


FIGURE 1.1. “Listogram” of Women’s Enfranchisement by Decade. The figure displays a three-letter code for each country and the decade in which women were enfranchised. The y-axis counts the number of such extensions per decade. The countries lower down in each column extended the vote earlier in the decade than those higher up.

this shift? That is to say, why did male politicians agree to extend the vote to women?

The emergence of democratic governments and industrialization are background features in the story of women’s political inclusion. As figure 1.1 shows, the pattern of women’s enfranchisement mimics the pattern of democratization more generally, with distinctive spells surrounding the 1920s, 1940s, and 1960s.³ In the early period, women’s

³ The figure depicts the decade of the first major legislative reform that allowed most women to vote. In all, I was able to find and cross-check this information for 172 of today’s countries. Existing literature on the granting of women’s suffrage (Paxton and Hughes 2016; Przeworski 2009) or solely on broader almanacs (Martin 2000), data handbooks (Nohlen 2005), and encyclopedias (Hannam et al. 2000), as, for example, Nohlen 2005, Nohlen et al. 2001, 1991 provide conflicting dates of female franchise. At times these inconsistencies are due to simple error (particularly in Przeworski 2009) or different coding rules, which, for example, might record suffrage as occurring in the year it passed the legislature, or was finally signed into law by executive or monarch, or the first election in which women voted, or the date can refer to the year in which universal suffrage—the right to vote regardless

changing social and economic roles may have opened up a space in which their public presence was up for debate. In the later period, women's enfranchisement peaked in the 1950s, a decade in which many colonial territories won independence for the first time. Over the course of this history, there were four primary settings in which women gained national voting rights: as part of a universal franchise bill (14 percent of today's countries), as a result of external imposition (30 percent), gradually, after some men had already gained political voice (42 percent), and a hybrid category where combinations of the other three appeared, often due to multiple transitions between political regimes (14 percent).⁴

In the *universalist path*, all adults won the right to vote at the same time. This generally occurred during a "founding" moment when a new constitution sought to establish representative institutions for all citizens. For example, following the elimination of an absolute monarchy, the Thai Constitution of 1932 established a constitutional monarchy and enfranchised all Thai people regardless of sex.⁵ Countries like Finland in 1906 or several of the Caucasus between 1917 and 1919, just prior to the emergence of the Soviet Union, also followed the universalist path.⁶ The *imposed route* to suffrage arose when an occupying power or a colonial metropole required entities under its influence to extend the franchise. Examples of this path include many of the French colonies, such as Cameroon, Madagascar, and Malta, where the *Loi Cadre* promulgated

of race, social status, belief, or gender—was granted. A potentially bigger problem, though, stems from different interpretations of what it means for "women" to gain voting rights, for example, when women gain the right to vote with certain restrictions, such as those regarding literacy, age, or, as in the case of Bulgaria, marital status (Hannam et al. 2000: 45). My coding tries to reflect 1.) the first major reform that would have included most women and 2.) the year the relevant enfranchising bill passed in the national legislature. See appendix I for further details. Pitcairn Islands are not pictured here.

⁴ Classification of countries into paths was done based on the dataset described in the previous footnote, cross-referenced with information on universal and manhood suffrage extension from Boix et al. (2013), Caramani (2004), Mackie and Rose (1991) and Colomer (2016). Dates of independence and colonial relations are from the CIA Factbook.

⁵ Loos 2004.

⁶ For a variety of reasons, founding moments that occurred after 1945 typically produced constitutions that included universal franchise rights for men and for women. After 1950, every newly independent state included women in the franchise. Ramirez et al. 1997. 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. See Towns (2010a and 2010b) on the importance of global norms and international organizations, in particular the Inter-American Council of Women, for transforming suffrage into a reality in Latin America. Finally, see Marino (2018) on the Latin American origins of pan-American feminism.

in 1956 extended voting rights to women in the colonies. Typically, a country that had the vote imposed by an external power would keep equal franchise laws after independence. Third comes the *gradualist path*, wherein many, though not necessarily all, men enjoyed voting rights before women won the vote.⁷ Examples of the gradualist path include Sweden, Mexico, and the United States.⁸ Finally, in the remaining countries, a hybrid path to women's suffrage arose, often because of new rules following regime transitions. Examples include France, which had extended manhood suffrage in the 1870s but denied women the vote until the Fourth Republic was established, and Japan, which allowed men to vote in the early twentieth century, but where the United States, as an occupying power after the Second World War, pushed for the reform in its postwar constitution.

The path that a country took toward women's enfranchisement depended, in an important sense, on the institutional arrangements in place during the past 130 years.⁹ The universalist path is most often associated with having transitioned from authoritarian or monarchical institutions in the twentieth century; the imposed path with colonial subordination or, less commonly, defeat in war; the gradualist path with having established minimally representative electoral institutions in the

⁷ The complexity does not end here. Many countries that gradually extended the vote initially used restrictions that were different than men's, such as age differences (e.g., the UK 1918–1928, Chile 1934–1949), specific income requirements (e.g., Bolivia 1938–1952), educational requirements (e.g., Kenya 1956–1963), racial distinctions (e.g., Australia 1902–1962, South Africa 1930–1994), differences within federal entities (e.g., Canada 1916–1920, US 1893–1920, Switzerland 1959–1971), and even based on distinctions related to husbands, such as whether he had served in the military (Canada 1917–1920, Romania 1929–1946) or if they were widows (e.g., Bulgaria 1937–1944).

⁸ In several countries, such as Venezuela in 1947 and Guatemala in 1945, men could vote in earlier periods, but constitutions that followed episodes of autocratic rule ultimately included women as voters. Towns 2010b: 785 and footnote 19.

⁹ There are some documented reversals in women's right to participate. In the mediaeval period, societies in which communal right rested on a material basis (such as property ownership) sometimes included propertied women in communal suffrage, so the transition to absolutism and then later to representative institutions may have taken rights away from women with material resources. Ostrogorski 1891: 679–680, 684. After 1868 in post-Meiji Japan, women exercised the vote in some local elections until legal loopholes were closed in 1888. Hannam et al. 2000: 156; Molony 2004. The Clergy Endowments Act in "Lower Canada" (present-day Québec) allowed all landlords, regardless of sex, the right to vote. Although only 2 percent of eligible women used this right, it was taken away by the Parliament of the Province of Canada in the mid-nineteenth century. Darsigny 1990: 2. Many feminist scholars argue that the transition to industrialization actually brought diminished rights for women that had to be wrested back through social movements. See footnote 8 in this chapter.

nineteenth century; and the hybrid path with multiple regime transitions in the twentieth century. Given the diverse institutional and historical conditions that gave rise to women's voting rights, it is unlikely that a single set of actors and interests can help to explain why women won the vote when they did. But within each path, the distinctive political features that sparked debates about suffrage may share commonalities with other cases in the same group.

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 rulers and where turnover of leaders is possible, but which may lack many features that are considered essential to full democracy today including, but not limited to, freedom of the press, secret voting, direct-election of all legislative houses, and voting rights for all citizens.¹⁰ 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 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.

In the cross-national context there are several issues that must be attended to for a clear picture of women's enfranchisement in limited democracies to materialize. One is the fact that suffrage movements did not emerge in every country, nor did suffragists always seek a mass basis. Why did women who wanted to vote strive for a large movement in some countries but remain satisfied with a small movement in others? This is a particularly intriguing question in places where suffrage reform was debated but failed to produce reform, in spite of a strong women's

¹⁰ Building on 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. 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. 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.

movement. Second is a puzzle of why leftist parties supported reform in some countries while conservative parties were the first to propose the change in others, and why in many countries the longest standing resistance to women's inclusion came from centrists. Last is the issue of timing—why did some legislatures enfranchise women shortly after the first demand for reform while others clung to the status quo for decades? Why were some legislatures the site of short-term reversals, passing reform just a year or two after refusing to do so?

THE ARGUMENT, IN BRIEF

The answer I provide for all of these questions is a strategic one: winning the vote depends on the alignment of interests between elected politicians and suffragists. The institutional legacies that followed the transition to representative institutions and the nature of political cleavages in a given country determined which forms of women's enfranchisement would have been considered legally and normatively feasible, and influenced the ideas that both suffragists and politicians had about the political ramifications of women's enfranchisement. Both suffragists and politicians were concerned with the impact of women's votes—suffragists because their interests along dimensions other than gender may have been better served by keeping other women from voting, and politicians because their very seats were at stake if the new voters were not natural allies. The uncertainty surrounding women's future loyalties drove a bias toward the status quo electoral rules that could only be overcome when competition was high or during a moment of political realignment. Competition and the threat of losing power inspired entrepreneurial thinking among elected leaders, as it put them in a situation where they needed more votes in order to win. But it was only if at least one political group thought it would have a mobilizational advantage among the new electorate that electoral reform became a political possibility.

The information that politicians had about women's future political loyalties depended in large part on the activities of the suffragists themselves. Suffragists were concerned with the impact of women's enfranchisement, and could deliberately choose to keep the movement small or to grow it, depending on their expectations about what women's votes would do for their broader programmatic agendas. Because gender is, arguably, the ultimate crosscutting cleavage, even women who wanted rights in theory may have been willing, in highly stratified societies, to

INTRODUCTION

set this desire aside so as not to undermine other political priorities. But, in contexts where suffragists decided to pursue a broad movement and mobilize across political cleavages, this was a signal that elite women's preferences were not so far removed from the preferences of other groups, and gives a clue that the votes of women in the middle of the distribution may actually have been up for grabs. In this sense, suffrage mobilization was a demonstration of the potential voting power of the group, and when there was some degree of ambiguity about women's preferences, parties subject to high levels of political competition become open to the challenge of fighting over the women in the middle.

On the electoral side, politicians used information generated by observing and interacting with the suffrage movement to inform their understanding of which women were likely to be politically active in the event of reform. In general, the conditions under which reform was likeliest was when politics was highly competitive and when a political group with enough power to change the laws believed it could capture the majority of women's votes. A key finding of this work is that parties rejected bills related to voting rights reform either because they did not think the disfranchised groups would support them, or because they did not need the extra votes in order to win.

These general arguments can help to shed light on the pattern of political inclusion for many groups both within and between countries. The argument applies best, I believe, to the set of cases where women sought the right to vote in limited democratic systems.¹¹ The strategic account might not explain universalist reforms in places such as Finland, which gave both men and women voting rights in its founding constitution in 1906. Although there was substantial mobilization by Finnish women for the vote, the immediate concerns of electoral politics may not have driven their enfranchisement.¹² Instead, women were included

¹¹ As Krook (2010: 208ff) suggests for the adoption of electoral gender quotas, there are arguably multiple causal pathways to women's suffrage.

¹² 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 a municipal franchise in the countryside in 1863 and in the towns in 1872. In 1897 the Finnish "Women's Association" brought a petition for full suffrage to Diet, which did not reach a second reading. In 1904 a suffrage rally in Helsingfors drew 1,000 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

because of their ties to the anti-imperial movement before the constitution was established. Nor will it provide a complete story for many moments of reform after WWII, for thereafter suffrage appears to have become a global norm, enshrined in international organizations and peace negotiations thanks in part to the advocacy of transnational women's movements.¹³

But the strategic account of enfranchisement can help us make sense of the long road to suffrage in places like Switzerland and Québec. Switzerland adopted a limited set of democratic principles in 1848 but kept women from the polls until the 1970s. Although one might surmise that the late extension in both had to do with Catholicism, it is important to stress that there were several Catholic countries—Austria, Ireland, Poland, and Belgium (to a lesser extent)—which were first-wave adopters of the franchise.¹⁴ Moreover, Catholic women in Switzerland tended to be the leaders of the movement for the vote, while socialist women were more or less uninvolved in the issue until 1957. This, despite the fact that the Social Democrats were in power long before that late date. With very little turnover in national elections, the Swiss parties did not need women's votes to maintain political power, and thus had little incentive to pursue reform. Divided by the cultural and political cleavages across cantons, Swiss suffragists were initially more concerned with the implications of organizing across cantons than with challenging the status quo legal framework. After a resurgence of political competition and a re-grouping of the suffrage movement in the 1960s, an innovative

the first election took place under the new laws and brought 19 women into national office. These 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 volume VI: ch. LIII; Collier 1999: 35; Ray 1918.

¹³ See Towns 2010a and 2010b. This is not to say that norms were irrelevant in the earlier period. In 1931 Sri Lankan women were enfranchised on the same terms as men, meaning that whatever educational and property requirements applied to men would also apply to women. The documentation on this extension points not to the electoral advantage for certain political parties of including women, but rather to the desire of local parliamentarians, both indigenous Sri Lankans and creole colonists, to modernize in line with the British metropole. Female enfranchisement in Sri Lanka came after a report called the "Donoughmore Commission" mentioned it favorably, though Jayawardena (1986: 122ff) does mention limited calls for the measure by bourgeois Sri Lankan women, both national and creole.

¹⁴ Belgium, another Catholic country, extended some national level voting rights in the first wave. The law of 1919 gave the right to vote in national elections to the widows and mothers of servicemen killed in WWI, to the widows and mothers of citizens shot or killed by the enemy, and to female political prisoners who had been held by the enemy. The majority were enfranchised in 1948. Martin 2000: 34; Cook 2002: 88.

cross-cantonal strategy with large-scale mobilization and direct action tactics helped most Swiss women gain political rights.¹⁵

A similar argument might also apply to Québec, where the Liberal Party, which held power for four decades after the 1920s, had little need for more votes and, what is more, operated with the assumption that women would vote for the Conservative Party.¹⁶ After the party was ousted from power by the conservative National Union Party in 1936, the Liberals put suffrage on their platform, formed a coalition with suffrage organizations, and were re-elected. Both a federal MP and a well-known Québécois suffragist convinced the ousted Liberal leaders that women's suffrage, and the votes of women, would benefit their party in the coming elections.¹⁷ Thus, after two decades of voting in federal elections, in 1940 Québécois women could finally vote at the province level. In both Switzerland and Québec, the incentives of political leaders stalled reform, but when the political tides shifted, suffragists were able to exploit the opening to win the vote.

SUFFRAGE POLITICS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, THE UNITED STATES, AND FRANCE

Although I will present evidence from many countries along the way, the present text is primarily concerned with showing how political competition and the alignment of interests between suffragists and politicians helps explain women's enfranchisement in the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. These three countries are apt for comparison: they were among the first to experiment on a large scale with representative institutions, and they produced some of the earliest and most vociferous feminist political thought.¹⁸ In 1900, all three countries

¹⁵ I am interpreting evidence on the Swiss suffrage movement by Banaszak 1996b: 218.

¹⁶ Dupont 1972: 415. Dumas 2016.

¹⁷ Genest 1996: 112. The suffragists may have been mistaken, as that was the last election the Liberals would win for forty more years.

¹⁸ Offen 2000 is the major text on feminist political thought in Europe. 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 1984: 5; Offen 1994: 152). Her calls were not heeded. Instead, de Gouge was guillotined. In Britain, 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* (1989, original 1869), long thought to have been influenced through his relationship with the able Harriet Taylor (see Holton 1986: ch 1). Finally, the

had well-established and growing suffrage movements, and all were on the winning side of the First World War. Shortly after the war, all three had high levels of electoral contestation, and at least one chamber in each country's national legislature passed a woman's suffrage bill. Although they are by no means identical, the similarities across these three countries make the difference in suffrage expansion curious: by 1920 both the United States and the United Kingdom had agreed to let women into polling stations; but 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 1944.¹⁹ A central project of this book is explaining these divergent outcomes.

Any expert on the US, France, or the UK might aver that these distinctive outcomes are due to each country's singular politics—a fact that might render any comparison fraught. And indeed, the sectional conflict in the United States, which divided North from South, slave state from “free” state, and primary product markets from finished goods markets, make the racial and regional divides seem particularly fractious. But of course the Irish question—that is, what should be done about the Catholic southern Irish that were eager for and rebelling in the name of self-government—set British Liberals and Conservatives, not to mention the Irish themselves, in an existential conflict that threatened the stability of the state. So too did the French republicans' concerns about church involvement in national affairs, which, far from having been superseded in the Third Republic, set the lines of contestation throughout the period, giving way to the Vichy regime during World War II. The legacies of institutions such as the Church in France, slavery in the United States, and empire in the UK informed suffrage politics insofar as they created the political cleavages that influenced incentives, beliefs, and therefore the strategic interactions between suffrage movements and elected politicians.

What each of these different but nevertheless major conflicts did was to draw the battle lines in clear ways. That France fell behind might be attributed to Catholic ideology and the relegation of women to the

famous 1848 Women's Rights Convention, which took place at Seneca Falls, New York, produced a second *Declaration of the Rights of Woman*, spurring the formation of the world's first organized movement for women's suffrage (see Flexner 1995: ch. X).

¹⁹ Sociologists of the US suffrage movement often stress that the ease of amendment influenced whether suffrage laws passed. France would have been the easiest on this front—all that was required was “a change of wording in a regime of textual law,” Offen 1994: 156.

“private” sphere. And indeed, at the dawn of the twentieth century, given the legacy of the Catholic Church and Napoleon Bonaparte’s civil code, French women may have had fewer civil rights than their counterparts across the English Channel and the Atlantic Ocean. But other stubborn facts complicate this argument: married French women had easier access to divorce by consent than women in the US and the UK, and unlike women in the US, married or pregnant French women were not easy to force out of their jobs.²⁰ And indeed, women’s overall level of economic participation in France was quite high, including by married French women, who were two times more likely to work outside the home than married women in the other two countries.²¹ Instead of Catholicism *per se*, the religious cleavage impacted suffrage in France because French women’s education remained under the Church’s auspices long after republican men were educated in public schools.²² This led to a popular perception that French women would side with the Church on political matters—a belief that influenced both political parties’ decisions and suffragists’ strategies. In other Catholic countries such as Austria, where the church and state were initially aligned, women won national level voting rights in 1918.²³ In other words, political cleavages influenced popular perceptions of women’s future political loyalties, and these expectations influenced the groups that believed they would win or lose from franchise reform.

Beliefs about women’s political preferences became politically salient during moments of heightened competition. The postwar realignment of power in the UK, and the threat of realignment in the US, brought several parties that hoped to benefit from women’s votes into a position to fight for reform. Although the French political system was similarly in flux, prominent members of the Radical Party expressed fears that women would not support their republican agenda. Since the Radicals had veto

²⁰ See Morgan 2006: 43. See Goldin (1994: 160ff) on “marriage bars,” policies that effectively kicked women out of companies when they married. These practices did not decline in the US until the 1950s, and eventually became illegal.

²¹ Moreover, we should not overstate women’s civil rights in the United States or the UK. In 1907, the US Congress passed the Expatriation Act, which denaturalized—i.e., stripped citizenship from—any American woman who married a foreign man. See Gunter 2017: 6.

²² See Pedersen 2014: 38 and Clark 1984: table 1.

²³ Many scholars of gender complicate the relationship between religious institutions and ideology on the formation of progressive gender policies, arguing that it is the relationship between the church and the state, not just the existence of a strong state, that is important. Morgan (2006) makes this point with regard to maternalist welfare state policies in Europe, as does Htun (2003) for understanding the complex politics of divorce, abortion, and women’s civil rights in Latin America.

power in the upper chamber of the legislature throughout the 1920s and 1930s, they were able to block women's suffrage for two decades. Leading French suffragists also expressed similar reservations—that the majority of French women would vote as the clerics told them—and so they did not build a coalition across the dominant cleavage—of the sort that proved crucial in the US and the UK—to fight for reform. In each country, an analysis of periods in which successive legislative debates failed, and ultimately were successful, reveals the conditions under which an alignment of interests between elected politicians and the organized women's movement promoted women's suffrage. Together, these within-case analyses illuminate the broader cross-country questions.

READING THIS BOOK

This book can be read in several ways. For those primarily interested in understanding the actual dynamics of suffrage politics, any of the case studies should be fine to read on their own. Chapter 2 provides a longer discussion of different social scientific arguments about women's enfranchisement, and describes the theoretical claims forwarded in the text in detail. It evaluates several alternative explanations of women's enfranchisement, such as economic modernization, growth in women's labor force participation, sex ratios, and warfare, that have been generated from scholarship on male democratization. It lays out an alternative argument that links political cleavages and electoral competition to politicians' and suffragists' strategies surrounding suffrage. Drawing on the massive literature on suffrage movements, which has historical and social scientific branches, the theory forms insights into the tensions among suffragists and between suffrage organizations, and outlines the political hurdles that suffragists must overcome to make suffrage bills become law.²⁴ I rely, finally, on several rich texts on women and politics that have theorized the conditions under which women's movements can best

²⁴ These insights come from three waves of historical scholarship on women's suffrage. The first wave began with histories of bourgeois movement leaders; the second moved toward revisionist accounts of suffrage movements which stressed the importance of "militant" activism; and the final wave settled into new political histories and social scientific accounts of the women's movements. Writings from all three of these schools appear in the footnotes of this text, but the recent political accounts are given more weight in the book as a whole. The work by political historians such as Holton (1986, 1996), Pugh (1974, 1985, 2000), Hause and Kenney (1981, 1984), Morgan (1972, 1975), and Smith (1996) and that of social scientists, such as Banaszak (1996a,b, 1998), McConaughy (2013), McDonagh and

contest exclusion to describe the way in which political competition and women's mobilization together form a logic of suffrage reform.²⁵

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 substantiate these arguments through case studies of the UK, the US, and France. They attend specifically to three puzzles: why the Liberal government in the United Kingdom refused to support a women's franchise bill from 1906 to 1914, but ultimately included women on the Reform Act of 1918; why the western United States were early adopters of women's suffrage when, by conventional accounts, the movement was stronger in the East; and, finally, why a successful suffrage measure that was passed by the French Chamber of Deputies in 1919 received no hearing in the Senate throughout the 1920s. These chapters suggest that the confluence of a targeted movement strategy and shifts in political power allowed American and British women to vote much earlier than their French counterparts, as in France the party with veto power expected to lose women's votes.

Some readers may be curious about the bigger picture—what these three countries reveal, theoretically and empirically about women's suffrage in a larger set of countries. For this, turn to the conclusion, which delves into a discussion of what thinking about women's suffrage can teach us about the comparative politics of democratization, and about the study of gender and political development more generally.

Price 1985, McDonagh (1989, 2002), McCammon and Campbell (2001), and McCammon et al. (2001), 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 origins of the female franchise.

²⁵ E.g., Baldez 2002, Htun 2003, Beckwith 2014, and Friedman 2000.

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Democratization and the case of women

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 the time that 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 1971.¹ The majority of these countries gave women the vote after they had already begun to experiment with elections as a way of choosing leaders.

The story of women's enfranchisement in limited democracies is fundamentally one of democratization. It is about changing electoral institutions to increase the political voice of an historically marginalized group, and about enhancing contestation for political power based on the new issues and ideas favored by female voters. These themes are all in the purview of comparative politics, but for the most part the field has considered women to be "outside history" during the first key era of democratic transitions.² In seminal works on democratization, women, either as political actors who have taken part in the process or as beneficiaries of the fruits of democracy, have rarely been given center stage.³ This is true even

¹ Even the Swiss federal reform in 1971 did not guarantee women the vote in all elections: in some cantons they had to wait until the 1980s.

² The work of Göran Therborn is perhaps an exception that proves the rule. Therborn (1977) conceded 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 2010: 196.

³ In the classic texts written, for example, by Barrington Moore, Samuel Huntington, and Seymour Lipset, there is scarcely a mention of women, let alone as actors relevant to the