

Enfranchisement and Representation: Evidence from the Introduction of “Quasi-Universal” Suffrage in Italy*

Valentino Larcinese

London School of Economics and Political Science

Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, United Kingdom

v.larcinese@lse.ac.uk

Short title: Enfranchisement and Representation

Abstract

Does introducing de jure political equality affect legislative representation and the identity of elected politicians? This paper exploits differences in enfranchisement rates across electoral districts to present evidence on the consequences of one of the most sizeable franchise extensions in European history, the 1912 Italian reform, which trebled the electorate and left electoral rules and district boundaries unchanged. Enfranchisement increased the vote share of left-wing social reformers but had no impact on their parliamentary representation, on the parliamentary representation of the aristocracy and traditional elites, or on political competition. We document and analyze elite’s efforts to minimize the political impact of enfranchisement: social reformers were systematically defeated in districts that saw a surge in political violence as well as in districts where conservative candidates had signed a secret pact (the Gentiloni pact) with the Catholic Electoral Union. We discuss the implications of our findings for theories of democratization and elite persistence.

Keywords: democratization, voting, electoral competition, inequality, swing districts, political violence, Vatican, Gentiloni pact, socialism.

*Replication files are available in the JOP Data Archive on Dataverse (<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/jop>). The empirical analysis has been successfully replicated by the JOP replication analyst.

“Everything must change so that everything can remain the same”

[Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa: The Leopard]

Introduction

Does enfranchisement affect the identity of elected representatives? This is a central question in political studies since modern democracy is based on representation and empirical research consistently suggests that the personal characteristics and party affiliation of representatives are strongly related to the policies they advocate.¹ Correlations between the extent of political rights and the presence of public policies with a broad appeal are also well documented both across contemporary states and historically.² Lindert (1994), for example, documents the historical proximity between franchise extension and public provision of education, increased spending in social transfers, labour market reforms and the creation of income tax systems.³ Stasavage (2005a and 2005b) and Kroth et al. (2016) show that, also in more recent instances, democratization might have led to better provision of public services to the poorer segments of the population.

Causal evidence on the consequences of enfranchisement is difficult to establish. Most empirical studies exploit institutional variation that occurs across countries. In such settings, however, it is difficult to convincingly establish causality.⁴ Micro-level studies of specific reforms have a better chance to identify causal relations, although both institutional changes and potential outcomes are more limited than across countries. Both cross-country and

¹Examples include Besley and Case (2003) and Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004).

²See for example Acemoglu and Robinson (2006a).

³See also Boix (2001) and Aidt and Jensen (2009).

⁴For a discussion of the limits of cross-country analysis for the study of institutions see Capoccia and Ziblatt (2010). Acemoglu et al. (2015) show how instrumental variables can sometimes be credibly used even in cross country settings. See also Aidt et al. (2022) for a method based on structural breaks.

within-country studies also face the challenges posed by the fact that institutional reforms often come in “bundles”, therefore not allowing the identification of the effect of political equalization in itself.⁵

This paper presents evidence on the political consequences of the introduction of “quasi-universal” male suffrage in Italy in 1912. This reform provides an ideal setting to empirically analyse the political consequences of enfranchisement for at least three reasons. First, from an historical point of view, this is a very important franchise extension. The reform almost trebled the size of the electorate from slightly less than three million to 8,650,000 and left only about half a million adult males disenfranchised.⁶ In most other countries enfranchisement was more gradual. In the UK, for example, there were three Reform Acts (1832, 1867, 1884) which gradually extended the franchise before universal manhood suffrage was passed in 1918. In the years preceding 1912, the enfranchised amounted to 38.7% of total adult population in Germany, 32.5% in Sweden, 28.8% in the UK and 43.4% in France. In Italy it was only 15% and reached 42% with the 1912 reform (Flora, 1983).

The second characteristic making this reform particularly interesting from an empirical viewpoint is that it left the electoral law and the electoral district boundaries unchanged: this makes pre-reform (1909) and post-reform (1913) elections directly comparable. Third, enfranchisement levels varied substantially across the 508 single-member electoral districts. In the Sicilian district of Regalbuto, for example, registered voters increased from 2,145 to 16,704, an almost eightfold increase which transformed the previously enfranchised voters into a tiny minority. At the other extreme, the district of Milan II saw an increase from 8,493 to 10,702 and the impact of the newly enfranchised on the outcome must have necessarily

⁵The British Second Reform Act of 1867, for example, almost doubled the electorate but modified the boundaries of most electoral constituencies (see Berlinski and Dewan, 2011).

⁶Figure A1 in the Appendix shows the number of registered voters in the Italian Kingdom from the annexation of Rome to the advent of fascism.

been more modest. This heterogeneity can help identify the political impact of adding previously disenfranchised voters into the electorate. The main identification challenge is that districts like Regalbuto and Milan II were different in other ways that can confound the impact of enfranchisement, a concern that will be addressed at various stages in this article.

Apart from its intrinsic historical interest, the evidence we provide can be related to several streams of literature on democratization and elite persistence. We find that the political changes associated with the reform were minimal. Although social reformers saw an increase in their vote share, legislative representation remained broadly unaffected. Enfranchisement did not increase the number of seats won by the left, did not increase political competition and did not cause a displacement of traditional and aristocratic elites from their parliamentary seats. Our findings are in line with classic theories of elite persistence first proposed by Pareto (1935), Michels (1962) and Mosca (1939) and more recently re-elaborated by political sociologists like Highly and Barton (1989) or economists like Acemoglu and Robinson (2008). According to Higley (2008), for example, the elites *"by virtue of their strategic locations in large or otherwise pivotal organizations and movements, are able to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially"*. For Acemoglu and Robinson (2006b), *"when elites who monopolize de jure political power lose this privilege, they may still exert disproportionate influence in politics by increasing the intensity of their collective action"*. "Captured democracies" can emerge because newly created institutions maintain an advantage for elite groups. One example is the presence of a non-elected chamber, like in the UK and in the Kingdom of Italy, or an extremely malapportioned one like in the USA.⁷

The Italian 1912 reform illustrates very well the elites' strategic advantages during periods of transition. These advantages had institutional and political consequences. While on the one hand the ruling elites extended the franchise, on the other they retained the majori-

⁷Ahmed (2013) shows how electoral systems were devised to protect pre-democratic elites from the impact of democratization.

tarian single-member electoral system⁸ with the existing malapportioned electoral districts.⁹ They also enjoyed strategic advantages in the use of the monopoly of force and in their ability to use the persuasion capacity of the Catholic Church. We provide direct evidence of elites' *de facto* influence, which was exercised in the form of unpunished violence and by striking a secret pact with the Vatican (the Gentiloni pact) immediately after the franchise extension. Although enfranchisement increased the vote share of social reformers on average, this increase was concentrated in electoral districts where it made no difference. We show that political violence and intimidation damaged social reformers in key swing districts and we document the important electoral consequences of the Gentiloni pact.

Our findings can also be related to redistributivist theories of democratization *à la* Acemoglu and Robinson (2000, 2006a). These theories, based on the Meltzer and Richard (1981) political economy model of redistribution, claim that elites were forced to extend the franchise by credible revolutionary threats. By extending the franchise they could appease the masses by committing not only to current but also to future redistribution.¹⁰ This approach is characterised by three key features: 1) society can be divided into two groups (or classes) in conflict: the poor and the elite; 2) conflict is only of an economic nature; 3) regime change generates commitment to future policies because institutional changes are costly (and this is known to and understood by everybody).¹¹

Our findings suggest that electoral outcomes do not mechanically respond to institutional changes and that *de jure* extensions of democratic rights are only partial steps towards the *de facto* empowerment of ordinary citizens, hence leaving unclear how democracy could be used by elites to commit to future policies. Our results are hard to reconcile with theories

⁸This favoured local networks and patronage rather than programmatic parties.

⁹District boundaries had not been changed for 30 years in spite of rapid urbanization.

¹⁰See Boix (2003) for an alternative model also based on Meltzer and Richard (1981).

¹¹An alternative approach highlights the role played by conflict within the elites. For examples see Lizzeri and Persico (2004) and Ansell and Samuels (2014).

of democratization based on unidimensional economic conflict of the sort captured in the Meltzer and Richard (1981) model. These theories give only second-order importance to non-economic political cleavages, institutional details (like malapportionment) and short-term strategic considerations. We show that non-economic cleavages (in our case religious values and the related pro-Catholic policies of the Gentiloni pact) can interact with distributive conflict hence creating other dimensions of electoral (intra-elite) competition not taken into account by the redistributivist approach. In our case enfranchisement offered to the clerical elites new opportunities to influence Italian politics. Models à la Meltzer and Richard are unable to capture this complexity and the multidimensionality of institutional change.

It is important to acknowledge that our conclusions only apply to the first post-enfranchisement election. The left, in particular the Socialists, won the subsequent 1919 election. Although the impact of *de jure* political equalization could be small in the short run, it may nevertheless trigger changes that manifest their effects after some time, when newly enfranchised voters are sufficiently organized, mobilized and informed. Causally identifying these long run effects is tricky and, in our case, it's complicated by changes in the electoral law and in the district boundaries. With all the necessary caveats, I will provide a discussion and some data analysis also on the 1919 election.

Historical background

For the purposes of this study it is useful to divide the Italian political parties and factions of the early XX century into three main groups: the Estrema, the Constitutionals and the Catholics

The Estrema. The parties with a programme of social and institutional reform, namely the Radicals, the Republicans and the Socialists, were together referred to as the “*Estrema*”. Although coming from different histories and traditions, they advocated similar policies, sharing demands for both economic and democratic reforms.¹² They were moderate and

¹²The parties of the Estrema shared proposals for important economic reforms (like abol-

reformist when the electoral reform was passed.

The Constitutionals. The dominant “*Constitutional*” camp included both moderately progressive and conservative members of parliament (MPs). These people, however, had no party, no leader and no electoral manifesto.¹³ Factions were created around personal networks and were rather unstable, leading to “*trasformismo*”, “*a system of political clientelism based on the formation of ad hoc parliamentary groups that monopolized political office by using patronage and fraudulent elections to ensure electoral success*”.¹⁴ Constitutional MPs were divided into Ministerial and Opposition on the basis of whether they supported the current government or not but parliamentary coalitions were unstable and lacked a clear political identity. All Constitutionals, however, accepted current institutional arrangements and recognized the authority of the Monarchy. Whether conservative or moderately progressive, they regarded themselves as the only people that could possibly govern the country.

The Catholics. Italy had been unified half a century before the events described in this article at the expense of, among others, the Catholic state. The Vatican had never recognized Italy and still maintained the *non expedit*, the prohibition for Catholics to par-

ishing import tariffs on grain and reducing military spending) and ambitious changes to the tax system, schooling and labor regulations. Proposals for institutional reforms included universal suffrage, an elected upper chamber and the replacement of Monarchy with Republic.

¹³ “*In Italy only the Republicans, the Radicals and the Socialists can be called parties. They have a programme, distinct from the programme of other parties, and they are kept together by the purpose of implementing that programme. The programmes of the various constitutional groups, instead, are not clear (...) More than political parties (...) these can be called factions*” (Duca di Gualtieri, 1910: Necessità di una ricostituzione dei partiti politici, *Rassegna Nazionale*, 31-171, p.133. My translation from Piretti, 1990, p. 107).

¹⁴ Collier (1999), p. 70.

ticipate in political life. From the early 20th century, however, local bishops could demand a dispensation from the Pope, usually on the ground that Catholic votes were necessary to prevent the election of “subversive” candidates. A few dispensations were granted for the first time in 1904 and again in 1909. This led to the election of a few Catholic MPs which were part of the Constitutional galaxy but could not, because of the Vatican’s prohibition, create an independent parliamentary group. In 1913 this process of unofficial entry of Catholics in Italian politics led to a secret alliance (known as “*Gentiloni pact*”) between the Catholic Electoral Union (*Unione Elettorale Cattolica Italiana* or UECI) and many conservative candidates. The *non expedit* was then suspended in more than two thirds of electoral districts. By signing the secret pact candidates committed to support pro-Catholic policies (for example promoting Catholic education in public schools, opposing divorce etc.).

The electoral law and the 1912 reform

The electoral reform was proposed by Prime Minister Giolitti in June 1911.¹⁵ The existing 1882 franchise law granted voting rights on the basis of literacy and census criteria. Only literate males aged at least 21 could be included in the electoral registers. In addition, they needed to satisfy at least another condition from a list including: (a) having a minimum of formal education (a two-year certificate); (b) paying at least 19.80 liras of income tax; (c) other conditions mostly consisting in owning or renting accommodation of a minimum size (the exact square meters depended on the town population). An income tax payment of 19.80 liras was easily reached by most workers in urban areas. According to estimates by Zamagni (1984), the average industrial salary in 1911 was 2.67 liras per day. The income tax rate was 8%. Hence, industrial workers regularly paying taxes could often satisfy condition (b). The literacy condition could be met either with a two-year primary school certificate (which was then sufficient to be registered) or by writing an application in front of a public

¹⁵Giovanni Giolitti, a moderately progressive Constitutional close to the northern industrial elite, was the dominant political figure from 1901 to 1914.

official (in this case the applicant needed to meet another condition).

The 1912 reform granted voting rights to all males over 30, only keeping the preexisting restrictions for those aged 21-30. Giolitti's proposal was not greeted with favour by the Estrema. Socialist Gaetano Salvemini, a fervent campaigner for universal suffrage, called it a "*lunch at 8am*", making clear that the Socialists were not ready for it. The official newspaper of the Socialist Party (*Avanti!*), commented: "*Democratic progress is not only and always obtained by extending political rights. The bourgeoisie easily concedes freedom and voting rights, but they know other ways to keep their economic tyranny intact, while they concede more economic reforms in favour of the masses when they have a firm grip on the monopoly of political power*".¹⁶ The Socialists were also remarkably absent from the parliamentary debates on the proposal, to the point that their leader Filippo Turati felt the need to defend their scarce participation on the ground that "*the new law has all the signs (...) of a benefit which has not been conquered, but imposed and to which our party could not give any of our characteristics*".¹⁷ This could have been a tactic to avoid conceding any merit to Giolitti for the reform. More likely, however, it reflected a real dilemma and ongoing debate inside the Socialist party between advocates of universal suffrage and a moderate leadership which only paid lip service to the cause of enfranchisement. These leaders came from urban areas of the North (where blue collar workers were often already enfranchised) and were generally suspicious about the political attitudes of disenfranchised peasants.¹⁸

Why did Giolitti extend the franchise?

In Italy, as in the rest of Europe, suffrage extensions were a concession from the elite,

¹⁶L'Avanti!, May 9, 1912. My translation.

¹⁷"Il suffragio colla museruola", *Critica Sociale*, XXII, n. 10-11, pp. 145-146, May 1912. My translation from Ballini (2007), p. 176.

¹⁸The Appendix provides further details on the debate about franchise extension that took place both inside and outside parliament.

leading historians to speculate for decades about their real motivations. It is unlikely that the 1912 reform was triggered by a revolutionary threat or by an economic crisis.¹⁹ A number of factors indicate that revolutionary pressure was low, and certainly lower than in previous years. In 1911, when the reform was proposed, the parties of the Estrema were controlled by relatively moderate leaders and one party, the Radical, had taken three ministerial positions in the Giolitti government. Compared with previous years social conflict was low, as shown by the number of strikes and participants in strikes in Fig.1.²⁰ From an economic standpoint, Italy's estimated average annual GDP growth rate between 1899 and 1913 was about 2.7%. The average annual growth rate of salaries between 1901 and 1911 was 2.5%, in a context of rapid industrialization and good order in the public finances (Toniolo, 1988).

What are, then, the reasons that induced Giolitti to extend the franchise? One possibility is modernization. Some parts of Italy (and most notably the North-West) were "modernizing", i.e. becoming more urban, industrialized and less illiterate. Since Giolitti was politically close to the Northern industrial elites (and was himself from the North-Western region of Piedmont) his electoral reform is at least compatible with the modernization hypothesis, although our findings have no direct implications for modernization theory.

According to some historians, Giolitti was convinced that suffrage extension was inevitable and that it was better for the Constitutionals to guide the process rather than being forced to concede it (Gentile 2003). This might have been a pre-emptive move against the

¹⁹Giolitti himself appears to avail this conclusion by declaring in parliament that "*the big reforms must be proposed when the time is ripe, when the Country is calm*" (my translation from Ballini, 2007).

²⁰Giolitti established a modern system of industrial relations by refusing to use the military and the police to repress organized labor during disputes with employers. Giolitti's years saw a substantial increase in real wages, particularly in the industrial sector, possibly as a consequence of the increased bargaining power of unions (Zamagni 1984; Gentile, 2003).

Socialists. Also, by controlling the process of franchise extension, Giolitti could steer its implementation in a way which was advantageous for the Constitutionals.²¹ This interpretation is compatible with the *party-competition hypothesis* which emphasizes the importance of short term strategic considerations by actors who are not mere representatives of economic interests (Schattschneider 1942). It is also compatible with the idea that, when conceding voting rights, elites try to retain or introduce institutional features that minimize their loss of political influence (Acemoglu and Robinson 2008 and Ahmed 2013).

Another possibility is that the reform emerged from Giolitti's desire to stabilize his majority by enlarging it to the left, hence as a consequence of an intra-elite conflict (Lizzeri and Persico 2004, Ansell and Samuels 2014). It was difficult for Giolitti to fully implement a moderately progressive agenda in a predominantly conservative parliament. He had made repeated attempts to absorb parts of the Estrema into the government, succeeding with some Radicals but not with the Socialists, even the most moderate. Expanding the electorate could, therefore, represent a way to extend his majority to the left, in a context in which the Estrema was sufficiently moderate.²²

Some theories also link democratization to the presence of war and the need for mass-mobilization (Scheve and Stasavage 2010, Ticchi and Vindigni 2008). This hypothesis fits

²¹There were no revisions in district boundaries and no concessions towards a more proportional representation. Both would have benefitted the Estrema, since rural (and conservative) electoral districts were overrepresented. The Socialists also felt that proportional representation would have moved attention from individuals to programmes and that they could benefit from a more party-centered politics. This is consistent with more general patterns of strategic use of the electoral system discussed in Ahmed (2013).

²²According to Montaldo (2001) this amounted, in Giolitti's view, to a strategic alliance between the most progressive components of the elite and the emerging organized working classes in order to modernize the country.

well with the speculations made at the time about a possible link between the electoral reform and the war for the colonization of Libya.²³ “*With that concession, Giolitti wanted to secure the support of the reformist Socialists to the conquest of Libya*”,²⁴ or at least to appease the anti-militarists in the Estrema.²⁵ This interpretation, however, has lost credit among historians (Montaldo 2001).²⁶

Finally, according to the so-called *enlightenment hypothesis*, democratization could be driven by the elites’ changing values.²⁷ Historical evidence shows that Giolitti genuinely believed in a stronger and more representative parliament²⁸ and this could have been just another step in a process of institutional modernization that Giolitti was confident he could keep under his control (Ullrich 1979 and De Felice 1980). Whether this was the consequence

²³See for example Carocci (1961). The Libyan war was declared in September 1911, a few months after Giolitti’s electoral reform proposal. Although Libya’s annexation to Italy was declared in November 1911, the war only ended in October 1912. Hence, when the proposal was debated and voted in parliament, Italy was still at war. This provided a new argument to pass the law: in the words of MP Sidney Sonnino “*they have conquered*” their right to vote “*in the Tripoli battlefields; no-one asked Southern peasants then whether they were illiterate or not*” (my translation from Ballini, 2007).

²⁴Salvemini (1955), my translation. As a matter of fact, some reformists and, for different reasons, even some revolutionaries in the Socialist Party supported the war.

²⁵On the other hand the war could be seen as a concession to the nationalists and the Catholics. The Vatican had important economic interests in Libya that felt were not adequately protected by the Turkish government.

²⁶Giolitti had probably not yet planned to invade Libya when he proposed the reform.

²⁷See the discussion of this hypothesis in Acemoglu and Robinson (2000).

²⁸He had increased the discretion of parliament in regulating its internal organization and had instituted the vote of confidence at the start of new governments. Until then, there was presumption of confidence unless a confidence vote was called and lost by the executive.

of changing values or, rather, of strategic considerations remains a moot point. Parliamentary records show that Giolitti's opinion on universal suffrage changed rather suddenly, making the enlightenment hypothesis less plausible.²⁹

To sum up, the motives that induced Giolitti to massively extend the franchise remain unclear and still debated today. Without pretending to provide definite answers, this section has highlighted the main links between a consolidated historical research and some influential theories of democratization. Perhaps historians and theorists face the same difficulties, which ultimately lie in insufficient evidence to discriminate between different hypotheses. For the purposes of this study it is important to note that, as long as the motives that led Giolitti to extend the franchise are not directly related to the geographic distribution of the intensity of the treatment (the share of new voters), not knowing what caused the reform is not an obstacle to evaluating its consequences.



Research design and data

²⁹He had publicly opposed universal suffrage only two years earlier by declaring *“I believe that we need to have universal suffrage but by a different means: by teaching everybody how to read and write”* (my translation from Piretti 2001).

Empirical strategy

Our identification strategy is based on comparing the first post-reform election (1913) with the last pre-reform (1909). This tries to approximate an experiment comparing actual outcomes in 1913 with the outcomes that would have occurred without the reform. If we indicate with S_i^{13} the *Estrema* vote percentage (or any other outcome of interest) in district i in 1913, we can write

$$S_i^{13} = \alpha^{13} + \gamma_i + \beta_P \frac{E_i^P}{E_i^{13}} + \beta_N \frac{E_i^{13} - E_i^P}{E_i^{13}} + e_i^{13} \quad (1)$$

where E_i^P is the number of citizens in district i that would have been enfranchised in 1913 under the old electoral rule and E_i^{13} is the actual number of enfranchised citizens in 1913. β_P and β_N represent the average propensities to vote *Estrema* among, respectively, the formerly and newly enfranchised. α^{13} is a time effect common to all electoral districts in 1913, γ_i is a district fixed effect and e_i^{13} is a district-specific error. E_i^P is unobservable but we can approximate it with E_i^{09} , the actual number of registered voters in 1909, under the assumption that exit from the electorate (voters that died or moved elsewhere) and entry (new voters that met the capacity condition or moved into the district) compensate each other.³⁰

If we assume β_P and β_N to be constant, at least in the short time span we consider, then we can write a similar equation for 1909:³¹

³⁰This assumption is explored and discussed in the Appendix.

³¹This ignores the possibility of strategic voting and possible reactions of the formerly enfranchised to the new political situation. These voters could be induced to more conservative choices to compensate the votes of the new electorate. In this case β_P and β_N would not capture the different "intrinsic" propensities to vote *Estrema* among the newly and formerly enfranchised. In our estimable equation (3), however, we only need to estimate $(\beta_N - \beta_P)$ and for this purpose (estimating an aggregate response to enfranchisement) the voting returns of

$$S_i^{09} = \alpha^{09} + \gamma_i + \beta_P + e_i^{09} \quad (2)$$

By subtracting (2) from (1) we can write our estimable equation:

$$S_i^{13} - S_i^{09} = (\alpha^{13} - \alpha^{09}) + (\beta_N - \beta_P) \frac{E_i^{13} - E_i^{09}}{E_i^{13}} + (e_i^{13} - e_i^{09}) \quad (3)$$

$$\text{or} \quad \Delta S_i = \tilde{\alpha} + \tilde{\beta} \Delta E_i + \tilde{e}_i \quad (4)$$

where, to facilitate the interpretation of the coefficients, the explanatory variable has been rescaled to $\Delta E_i = 100 \frac{E_i^{13} - E_i^{09}}{E_i^{13}}$. This specification allows us to recover the difference in the propensity to vote *Estrema* (or any other outcome of interest) among the two groups of voters. This is a diff-in-diff specification with a continuous treatment variable, hence we need to worry about the changing rather than fixed characteristics of the electoral districts. To address these concerns we use control variables, province specific shocks and previous changes in dependent variables. Regressions using placebo treatments help us understand the impact of preexisting trends on our results. Using methods proposed by Altonji et al. (2005) and Oster (2019) we provide an estimate of the omitted variable bias (OVB) under the assumption that selection on unobservables is proportional to selection on observables.

Data description

Between 1892 and 1913 Italy had 508 single-member electoral districts with a two-round majority system. Registration data and electoral results were collected from the Parliamentary Archive in Rome (*Archivio Storico della Camera dei Deputati*). A key dependent variable is the vote percentage of *Estrema* candidates in the first election round. Information on MPs' family and social background comes from Malatesta (1940), which reports whether 1909 remain a valid counterfactual.

an MP is an aristocrat, a big landowner, a high-ranked military officer or a diplomat. These groups were generally close to the Monarchy and represented the traditional (and often most conservative) elites.³² I also collected information on whether the MP belongs to a political dynasty, which also signals being part of an established influential family.³³ Data on the socioeconomic characteristics of electoral districts have been reconstructed using the 1911 Census. To capture trends in these characteristics I use the 1901 Census. Regression analysis uses both 1901-1911 changes and 1911 levels of the following variables: total population in the districts and the percentages (over the total population) of employees in industrial sectors, landless agricultural workers, agricultural workers cultivating their own land, real estate owners, illiterate males (over total male population aged six and above). For 1911 only it has been possible to also reconstruct the percentage of urban population.³⁴ The Appendix provides further details, including a graphical inspection of the data and correlations between enfranchisement rates and socioeconomic characteristics of the districts.³⁵ Information on other variables is provided in the Sections where they are used.

The political impact of the 1912 reform

Estrema vote share. We start our regression analysis reporting results when the de-

³²There is a substantial overlap between these groups (for example, most high ranked military officers were aristocrats).

³³An MP is classified as member of a political dynasty when it's possible to establish a family link with at least one other MP from the same or previous Italian parliaments (including the non-elected Senate).

³⁴Literacy, urbanization and industrialization are clearly linked with the modernization theory. For the importance of land ownership and inequality see Ziblatt (2008).

³⁵These regressions, reported in Table A4, suggest that, compared with previous trends, the 1912 reform created an important discontinuity in the socioeconomic characteristics of the electorate.

pendent variable of equation (4) is the vote percentage of Estrema candidates. Starting with a simple regression in Table 1 we progressively include control variables and province specific shocks.³⁶ To account for possible preexisting trends we then introduce the percentage change in Estrema vote between 1904 and 1909 in column 5 (and interacted with ΔE in column 6). Point estimates are positive and statistically significant. They range between a minimum of 0.167 and a maximum of 0.294. The coefficients are easy to interpret, since both the dependent and independent variables are expressed as percentages. Taking column (4) as a benchmark, a unitary increase in ΔE caused a 0.29% increase in the votes of Estrema. The smallest estimate (column 3) is such that one standard deviation in enfranchisement (almost 12%) corresponds to a 2% increase in Estrema votes.³⁷ This implies that the difference between the district of Regalbuto ($\Delta E = 87$) and that of Milan II ($\Delta E = 21$) generates a difference in votes for Estrema of about 11% due to enfranchisement only.

[Table 1 here.]

Estrema MPs. Table 2 provides estimates of the impact of enfranchisement on the net seat gains of Estrema. The dependent variable is equal to 1 if the seat was gained, -1 if lost and 0 otherwise. A non-linear control for preexisting Estrema vote share takes into account that the impact of marginal votes on the probability of victory is different depending on preexisting vote shares. The coefficient of ΔE remains negative across all specifications and becomes statistically significant when control variables are included. In spite of average vote gains, Estrema candidates appear to have been disadvantaged by the reform in terms of

³⁶Given that the dependent variable is expressed in differences, province fixed effects represent 1913 province-specific shocks compared to 1909 levels.

³⁷A similar magnitude is implied by column (4), considering that within-province standard deviation is equal to 6.4.

chances of victory. Columns (6) and (7) distinguish between the probability of gaining a seat (where the incumbent was not from the Estrema) and that of losing a seat for incumbent Estrema MPs. Enfranchisement had no impact on the victory chances of Estrema challengers but adversely affected incumbents. *Ceteris paribus*, one standard deviation increase in ΔE makes an Estrema incumbent 8% more likely to be defeated.

[Table 2 here.]

Aristocrats and traditional elites. In 1909 and 1913, aristocrats represented almost one fifth of elected MPs.³⁸ Let us call ΔA a variable equal to 1 if a district changes from a non-aristocrat MP to an aristocrat, -1 if the transition happens in the other direction and 0 otherwise. The first 2 columns of Table 3, which use ΔA as dependent variable, display a statistically insignificant coefficient of ΔE . The coefficient is never negative, indicating that a higher ΔE is more likely to have caused an aristocrat to gain a seat rather than losing it.³⁹ Columns 3 and 4 use as dependent variable $\Delta elite$, which includes aristocrats and non-aristocratic landowners, military officers, diplomats and members of political dynasties. The results are similar to those found with ΔA , with slightly larger coefficients but far from acceptable statistical significance.

Candidacy. There were 156 districts with no Estrema candidate in 1909 and only 95 in 1913.⁴⁰ Observing an Estrema candidate in 1913 in a district where there was none in 1909 (or viceversa) could signal a change in expectations. Even not winning a seat, a good

³⁸See Table A2 in the Appendix for more details.

³⁹In the interest of space we only report the equivalent of columns 4 and 6 in Table 1. The results are similar in other specifications, with and without control variables.

⁴⁰Some districts, especially in the South, were contested by more than one constitutional candidate but not by a candidate of the Estrema.

performance could set the stage for future progress and send a signal to voters that Estrema candidates were viable. In Table 3 (columns 5 and 6) the dependent variable ΔC is coded as 1 if there is an Estrema candidate in 1913 in a district with no Estrema candidate in 1909, -1 if the reverse occurs and 0 otherwise. The estimated coefficients show that larger enfranchisement was associated on average to a small positive ΔC but this effect becomes statistically insignificant when controls and province specific shocks are included.

Electoral competition. Regulated competition for power is a key characteristic of democracy. Did enfranchisement increase the overall level of electoral competition? This question has been addressed by using the Herfindahl-Hirshman index (HHI) of competition among candidates. Indicating with s_i the vote share of candidate i , the HHI index is calculated as $H = \sum_i s_i^2$. The results (reported in Table 3, columns 7 and 8) show that enfranchisement did not cause any change in electoral competition at the district level.

Turnout. The 1913 election saw a generalized decline in electoral participation, with the overall turnout rate decreasing to 59% from 65.4% in 1909. Table 3 (columns 9 and 10) shows that this decline was caused by the increase in the number of registered voters, since the newly enfranchised had a lower propensity to participate than pre-reform voters. The effect of ΔE on turnout is negative in all specifications. Using column 9 as the benchmark, an increase of 1 in ΔE decreased turnout by 0.24%. Hence, the political impact of the reform was mitigated by lower turnout among the newly enfranchised. That voters from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to participate is one of the most robust findings in the electoral behaviour literature, both across countries and over time. While the political implications of our findings remain unaffected by this consideration, a better understanding of the role of mobilization for effective democratization remains of very practical and theoretical relevance.

[Table 3 here.]

Robustness checks

Placebo regressions

The most important empirical concern associated with our identification strategy is that we cannot control for unobservable characteristics of the electoral districts that change over time and that could be correlated both with ΔE and the outcome of interest, hence leading to inconsistent estimates of the effect of enfranchisement. A standard procedure is to check whether results are driven by preexisting trends by using placebo tests: hence all regressions have been re-run using, for each outcome, the corresponding 1904-1909 and 1900-1904 changes as dependent variables. Due to space constraints these regressions, which provide in most cases a favourable outcome, are reported and discussed in the Appendix (Table A5).

Using observables to assess the bias from unobservables

It is possible to estimate the size of potential OVB under the assumption that the selection due to unobservables is proportional to the selection due to observable variables (proportional selection assumption). This insight, due to Altonji, Elder, and Taber (2005), is based on the sensitivity of the estimates to the inclusion of control variables. Here I follow Oster (2019) who shows that if the selection on unobservables is perfectly proportional to the selection on observables then the bias of an OLS estimate $\hat{\beta}$ of a coefficient β is equal to $(\beta^0 - \hat{\beta}) \frac{(R_{Max} - \hat{R})}{(\hat{R} - R^0)}$, where $\hat{R}$ is the R-squared corresponding to the specification in question, β^0 is the simple OLS estimate without controls and R^0 the corresponding R-squared. R_{Max} is the maximum value that R-squared can achieve and we will set it equal to 1.

For the effect of ΔE on Estrema vote shares, using the estimates of Table 1 (column 4), our estimated bias is -0.1353 and the coefficient-bias ratio is equal to 2.18. This implies that our estimate might be biased downward, with an upper bound estimate of about 0.43. If selection on unobservables is perfectly proportional to selection on observables the estimated effect is more than double the estimated bias.

For what concerns the net seat gains the estimated bias equals 0.024, which implies that

the “true” coefficient could be more negative than our estimated $-.01$ (Table 2, column 4). If we focus on the probability that the Estrema lost a seat (Table 2, column 7), the bias is -0.0011 and the coefficient-bias ratio is 6.36, which makes a shift in sign highly unlikely.

In all other cases (Table 3), the size of the estimated bias is larger than the estimated coefficient, implying that these estimates, which are mostly statistically insignificant anyway, are not entirely reliable. In the case of turnout, the only statistically significant results, the bias is -0.35 and coefficient-bias ratio is 0.7, which means that the bias could induce a shift in the sign of the estimate. Overall, this robustness check makes us more confident about our main results, concerning Estrema vote shares and net seat gains. We are left, however, with less confidence in the results of Table 3.

Other robustness checks

Another concern is that the results for Estrema vote share could be biased by the presence of an upper bound to the dependent variable. To deal with this problem I restrict the sample by removing districts with a high percentage of Estrema votes in 1909. The results are reported in the Appendix (Table A6) and show only minor changes to the estimated coefficient of ΔE , both in magnitude and statistical significance. We also note little change when we remove the few districts where the Estrema reached 100% in 1913.

Finally, our results are robust to including male illiteracy rate in 1911 among the controls, suggesting that it did not matter whether franchise expansion was due to the removal of the literacy barrier or to the removal of other obstacles: literate and illiterate newly enfranchised voters did not behave differently on average.⁴¹

⁴¹This variable is not included in the main regressions because it would absorb part of the causal effect that we are trying to estimate (since franchise was restricted on literacy grounds). The 1901-1911 difference is instead always included since this helps identifying a more appropriate counterfactual: franchise would have naturally expanded with literacy even without the reform.

Why so little effect on representation?

Swing districts

Enfranchisement had an average positive effect on Estrema vote share without causing Estrema seat gains: this is a puzzling result, suggesting that votes were gained where they were not needed and possibly lost where they mattered. That many votes end up making little or no difference is typical of majoritarian single-member districts.

To further investigate this hypothesis I construct a dummy variable to separate swing from non-swing districts. The swing districts are defined as those satisfying at least one of the following conditions: 1) the elected MP changed from Estrema to non-Estrema or vice versa in the 1909 election; 2) there was a run-off between an Estrema and a non-Estrema candidate in 1909; 3) the vote share of parties of the Estrema in the first round of the 1909 election was between 40% and 60%. The three criteria identify 170 swing districts.

[Table 4 here.]

Table 4 shows that, on average, the Estrema did not perform well in swing districts (column 1). Moreover, the interaction between swing and ΔE is negative (column 2), although not statistically significant at conventional levels when province fixed effects are included (column 3). In terms of parliamentary seats, the negative and statistically significant interaction term with ΔE (columns 4 and 5) shows that enfranchisement adversely affected the Estrema in swing districts. But why did the Estrema perform poorly in swing districts? We document how the conservative elites engaged in activities to countervail the new franchise rules and how these activities were strategically focused on swing districts.

Political violence and intimidation

In the early XX century political violence and intimidation was not uncommon. Violence consisted sometimes in clashes between supporters of different candidates and could involve

the beating of campaigners, the ridding and destruction of offices, and even the use of firearms with occasional killings. Anecdotal accounts suggest that the 1913 election was particularly violent. Articles from a reputable and moderate source like the *Corriere della Sera* report numerous instances of violent attacks against labour unions premises or cases of Estrema supporters (particularly Socialists) confronted by violent groups that often operated under the implicit protection of local police forces.⁴²

We document a surge in the number of episodes of political violence reported in Italian newspapers during the 1913 electoral campaign.⁴³ We have collected such news during the thirty days preceding (and including) the first round election date from three newspapers, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *Il Messaggero* and *l'Avanti*.⁴⁴ News articles reporting episodes of political violence surge from 121 in the 1909 election to 338 in 1913. Districts with reported episodes of political violence are 139 in 1913 versus 64 in 1909. The increase is particularly strong in the South. The newspaper articles also suggest that in some cases on the election day armed groups operated with the purpose of preventing Estrema supporters from voting. The premises of union organizations were raided and sometimes destroyed and voters who were likely not to vote for the local mainstream candidate were threatened and kept away

⁴²See for example “Ricordi di una domenica di passione” by Ugo Ojetti (*Corriere della Sera*, Nov. 6, 1913), providing a detailed reportage from the southern district of Molfetta.

⁴³See Table A10 in the Appendix.

⁴⁴The Milan-based *Corriere della Sera* and the Rome-based *Il Messaggero*, both moderate and supporting the Constitutional establishment, were the most important newspapers of the time. *L'Avanti* was the official newspaper of the Socialist Party and has been selected because it was probably more likely to report violence against Estrema candidates. The correlation coefficients between the data collected from each of these 3 outlets range between 0.22 and 0.62.

from the voting premises.⁴⁵ This violence was usually tolerated by the police.⁴⁶

[Table 5 here.]

Using the newspaper articles I construct the indicator *Violence* equal to 1 for districts where political violence is reported in 1913 but none of our selected newspapers reports violence in 1909, and 0 otherwise.⁴⁷ Column 1 of Table 5 shows that new episodes of violence (in previously non-violent districts) were more likely where ΔE was higher and where the Estrema had seen larger gains in the 1909 election. This indicates that political violence could have been part of a strategy to favour conservative candidates. It also means, however, that *Violence* is not randomly distributed and regression coefficients using *Violence* as explanatory variable should be interpreted with caution. To mitigate omitted variable bias we always include in our regressions the correlates of *Violence*. With this caveat, we regress $\Delta Estrema$ on *Violence* and interact it with *Swing*. The results show that in swing districts with *Violence* equal to 1, $\Delta Estrema$ was, ceteris paribus, 7% lower than in non-swing districts. Consistently with the hypothesis that intimidation might have kept voters away from the ballot box in key districts, *Violence* is associated with lower turnout in swing

⁴⁵Since the vote was secret (and secrecy was sufficiently guaranteed), Estrema supporters could not be forced to vote for other candidates but could be “persuaded” to stay home on the day of the election.

⁴⁶Giolitti was accused of indirectly supporting violence against Estrema candidates in Southern districts. See Salvemini (2007).

⁴⁷This means that some districts with and without episodes of violence could get the same score. The justification for this choice is that violence pre-dating enfranchisement could not be part of a strategy to intimidate new voters. Instead our indicator isolates districts with new episodes of violence from districts where political violence could have been just endemic and due to other (unobserved) reasons.

districts than in non-swing districts (column 3).

The “Gentiloni pact”

Several candidates in the 1913 election signed a pact with the Catholic Electoral Union (UECI) led by Conte Ottorino Gentiloni. The Union was not allowed by the Vatican to have its own candidates but could support candidates committed to Catholic values and policies. Local bishops could also demand from the Vatican a suspension of the *non expedit* which, if obtained, would allow them to openly support certain candidates.⁴⁸

A detailed reconstruction of these events, based on research conducted in the Secret Vatican Archives, can be found in Piretti (1994), which also provides a list of elected MPs who had signed the pact. This list was part of a detailed report prepared by Gentiloni for the Pope. There is instead no evidence in the Vatican Archives about signatories of the pact who were defeated. We will use therefore a list appeared on the newspaper *Il Messaggero* on 15 November 1913 and the amendments to this original list that were reported in other articles during the following days. The list aggregated local information about the conduct of electoral campaigns and the suspension of *non expedit*. In this way we can identify 357 candidates who are likely to have signed the pact: we will refer to their electoral districts as “Gentiloni districts” and create a dummy variable *Gentiloni*.⁴⁹ Of these 357 candidates, 228 were elected and are mentioned in Gentiloni’s report to the Pope.

Where was the non expedit suspended? Column 1 in Table 6 suggests that the non expedit was at least 1/3 more likely to be suspended, ceteris paribus, in districts that both were swing and had an Estrema incumbent. In other terms, Gentiloni’s strategy consisted in targeting vulnerable Estrema and other anti-clerical incumbents. Column 2 shows that $\Delta Estrema$ was, ceteris paribus, almost 8% lower in Gentiloni districts. Column (3) includes both *Gentiloni* and *Violence* and interact them with *Swing*. We find that in swing districts

⁴⁸More details are provided in the Appendix. See also Marongiu Buonaiuti (1971).

⁴⁹There was never more than one signatory per district.

the impact of *Gentiloni* on $\Delta Estrema$ reaches -14% (although not statistically significant at conventional levels). Both violence and the suspension of the *non expedit* appear to have played a role in swing districts, although statistical significance is only achieved for *Violence*.

In columns (4) and (5) of Table 6 the dependent variable is turnout. The Gentiloni pact and political violence should have opposite effects on participation: the first should increase turnout by mobilizing the Catholics, the second should decrease it by discouraging Estrema supporters. Column 4 shows that, *ceteris paribus*, $\Delta turnout$ was 3.5% higher in districts where the *non expedit* was suspended. We cannot detect, however, any substantial difference between swing and non-swing districts. When we include both *Gentiloni* and *Violence* in the same regression, the positive impact of *Gentiloni* remains unaltered and the results of Table 5 about *Violence* are substantially confirmed. Overall, our results are compatible with a mobilizing effect of the Gentiloni pact.

[Table 6 here.]

Finally, columns (6) and (7) show that the targeting of marginal districts with an incumbent of the Estrema was a successful strategy. While there was no impact of the suspension of *non expedit* in districts with a non-Estrema incumbent (hence Constitutional candidates were neither more likely nor less likely to retain their seat as a function of Catholic mobilization), incumbents from the Estrema were at least 1/3 more likely to be defeated in districts where the *non expedit* was suspended. These results provide a coherent picture of a successful strategy, summarized by Gentiloni's claim in his report to the Pope that "*victory was achieved in those districts where the honour of the Union was at stake*". The social background and party affiliation of the *Gentilonizzati* contributes to reveal the conservative nature of the pact: of the 228 elected, 222 were Constitutionals and many were from an aristocratic background, like Gentiloni himself. In fact, almost three quarters of the aristocrats

in parliament had signed the pact, compared to less than 40% for non-aristocrats.

The 1919 election

Our findings only apply to the 1913 election and the immediate consequences of enfranchisement. The subsequent (1919) election saw a surge in Socialist votes (from 22.88% to 32.2%) and seats (from 78 to 156). Unfortunately, however, to assess the impact of enfranchisement on that election is difficult.⁵⁰ Between 1913 and 1919 World War I and the Bolshevik revolution brought dramatic social and political change. Moreover the 1919 election was held under a new (proportional) electoral law with new electoral districts. The reform, passed in 1918, also introduced full universal manhood suffrage, extending the franchise to adults aged 21-30 (if still subject to literacy and census restrictions). Hence the 1919 election is not directly comparable with previous ones.

In this section, with all the necessary caveats, I use the 54 electoral districts of 1919 as observation units and compare 1919 outcomes with the outcomes obtained in 1909 and 1913 within the 1919 districts boundaries. This is possible since the 1913 electoral districts are nested within the 1919 districts.⁵¹ The comparison is therefore based on real and not notional data, although the process that generates the data is different.

Table A8 shows the results. In the first two columns the dependent variable is the 1909-1919 difference in Estrema vote share and the main explanatory variable is $\Delta E_+ = 100 \times \frac{E_i^{19} - E_i^{09}}{E_i^{19}}$, capturing the overall effect of the 1912 and the 1918 franchise extensions. Control variables are similar to those used previously but calculated using the 1911 and

⁵⁰It is even more difficult to make that assessment for subsequent elections, since in the early twenties the advent of fascism made elections practically irrelevant. Political parties (except the Fascist Party) were eventually outlawed.

⁵¹Data on electoral results of the 1919 elections are taken from Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (1946) and Caramani (1999).

1921 Censuses.⁵² The results show again an overall anti-Estrema effect of enfranchisement.

Columns (3) and (4) separate the effect of the two reforms by using two explanatory variables, $\Delta E_1 = 100 \times \frac{E_i^{13} - E_i^{09}}{E_i^{19}}$ and $\Delta E_2 = 100 \times \frac{E_i^{19} - E_i^{13}}{E_i^{19}}$. Given that these indicators span a 10-year period, the assumptions for their reliability are now more likely to be violated. They should nevertheless provide a rough indication of the share of 1919 voters who were enfranchised, respectively, in 1912 and 1918. Both specifications (without and with area dummies) display negative coefficients, with the effect being particularly strong (and statistically significant) in the case of ΔE_1 . Columns 5-8 repeat the same exercise using as dependent variable the net seat gains of Estrema candidates in the 1919 electoral districts. Neither ΔE_1 nor ΔE_2 are statistically significant, suggesting that the Estrema seat gains in the 1919 election might have no direct link with the two franchise extensions.

As discussed above, these estimates should be taken with caution. It is however quite likely that the transition to a proportional system played a more important role than enfranchisement in the 1919 election. Candidates of the left were more likely to win seats in dynamic urban districts, where population was growing faster. Given that the district boundaries had remained unchanged for three decades, urban areas were substantially underrepresented compared with more conservative rural areas. If we could proportionally translate 1913 votes into seats, for example, we would obtain for the Socialists 116 seats rather than the 78 they obtained. And in 1909 they would have been 96 rather than 41. Overall it remains unclear whether, among the possible explanations of the remarkable Socialist success of 1919, franchise extension should receive any prominence.

Conclusions

The introduction of quasi-universal suffrage in Italy constitutes an ideal setting to study the political consequences of democratization. A laggard until then, in 1912 Italy passed

⁵²See Table A9 in the Appendix for further details and summary statistics.

a reform Act that suddenly made it one of the countries with the most generous franchise regulations. When this happened labour unions and democratic and socialist parties were well established political forces, pushing in the direction of radical economic and institutional reforms. Our analysis delves into the details of this institutional transition to show how, in spite of change in *de jure* power, *de facto* power remained firmly in the hands of the elites thanks to the persuading and mobilizing capabilities of the Catholic Church and to the use of police force to exercise unpunished violence against opponents. This represented a forewarning of what would happen ten years later with the advent of fascism.

Three other papers are particularly related to this study. Aidt et. al (2010) show that the expansion of the voting franchise in English and Welsh municipalities between 1868 and 1886 had a retrenchment effect, since demand for local public goods came from urban elites and not from the middle classes. Berlinski and Dewan (2011) and Berlinski et al. (2014) find that the UK Second Reform Act of 1867 had no impact on the vote share of the Liberals and did not reduce the presence of aristocrats in parliament.⁵³

The accumulation of evidence of "minimal effects" suggests that *de jure* political equality does not mechanically translate economic conflict into political representation. The absence of the expected effects on representation in the short run highlights the importance of political organizations and institutional details as well as the limits of theories which try to establish deterministic relations between democratic institutions and political outcomes. Malapportionment to overrepresent conservative voters and persuasion by using violence or

⁵³These papers focus on a British reform that enfranchised only a fraction of the population. After the Second Reform Act, which enfranchised mainly the urban working classes, only about 1/3 of adult males had the right to vote. Moreover, and differently from Italy in 1912, the reform took place when workers' organizations were small and weak: the Trade Unions were legalized in 1871 and the Labour Party was founded in 1900. Hence, null results on the Second Reform Act are slightly less surprising than ours.

propaganda constitute powerful antidotes to political equality available to economic and political elites in all democracies. Far from being anomalies of the early stages of democratization, these obstacles to a fair representation are quite important to understand the current crisis of liberal democracies. Theories that focus only on suffrage extension but neglect other aspects of electoral institutions, like malapportionment or the electoral formula, do not give due consideration to the complexity of electoral processes and ignore how democratization in one dimension may be offset by other changes (or lack of reform) in other parts of the electoral rulebook.

Viewing democracy as the product of distributive conflict and as a conquest of the working classes to achieve better economic conditions constitutes the core of the redistributivist approach and conforms to a widespread idealized but simplistic view of human progress. In the case we analyse here, and arguably in many others, democratization is instead a process on which the existing elites retain full control. It's unlikely to be a coincidence if the clericals' full and active involvement in Italian politics is triggered precisely when quasi-universal suffrage is introduced. We cannot rule out the possibility that a fine political strategist like Giolitti used democratization precisely to please the Catholics rather than to generate more progressive policies, suggesting that economic conflict did not mechanically translate into political cleavages and was not the only source of policy change. Moreover, by signing the Gentiloni pact candidates in the 1913 election committed to a pro-Catholic agenda, suggesting that models of electoral competition based only on economic cleavages are insufficient to fully understand the complexity of democratization processes and their consequences. This conclusion is not only valid for early Western European reforms but is also consistent with evidence from more recent instances of democratic transition (Haggard and Kaufman 2012).

A better understanding of what drives democratic transitions requires therefore a careful consideration of the mechanisms used by elites of all times to perpetuate their power.

The precise mechanisms discussed in this paper may be specific to the political situation of Italy in the early XX century, but the use of violence, institutional manipulation and propaganda⁵⁴ are instead common to all regimes, making our main takeaways not so specific. The main limitation of our study is instead that we are only able to consider short term effects. Although the impact of *de jure* political equalization could be small in the short run, it may nevertheless manifest its full effects only after some time, when the newly enfranchised voters become sufficiently organized, mobilized and informed. One important consideration is that elites may not be able to anticipate these long term effects and may focus therefore more narrowly on immediate strategic considerations. In the end, complex backward induction calculations can only partially explain institutional change, making reallocation of *de facto* power a possibility even in the absence of violent revolutions.

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⁵⁴The Gentiloni pact exploited the reputation of the Church as an information source offering to the Conservatives a formidable propaganda machine.

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BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT: Valentino Larcinese (v.larcinese@lse.ac.uk) is professor of public policy at the Department of Government of the London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, United Kingdom, and a research affiliate at STICERD and CESifo.

This paper is dedicated to the memory of my father, Pasquale Larcinese, who passed away while I was working on this project.

Table 1: The effect of enfranchisement on the vote percentage of Estrema candidates

	Dep. variable: vote percentage change (1909-1913) of Estrema candidates					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	0.2509*** (0.0756)	0.1771** (0.0818)	0.1672* (0.1004)	0.2943** (0.1478)	0.2515* (0.1437)	0.2533* (0.1423)
Vote percentage change of Estrema candidates (1904-1909)					-0.2126*** (0.0547)	-0.5456 (0.3381)
Vote change (1904-1909) x Enfranchisement (1909-1913)						0.0048 (0.0050)
Constant	-8.9633* (4.7169)	-4.8679 (6.1427)	-44.5906 (62.5930)	-66.5627 (66.4891)	-76.3220 (67.1687)	-74.8758 (67.1198)
Controls (differences 1901-1911)	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Controls (1911 levels)	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Province fixed effects	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.0167	0.0327	0.0483	0.2555	0.2891	0.2907

Control variables in 1901-1911 differences include: natural logarithm of population, percentage of male population above six which is illiterate, percentage of population employed in industry, percentage of agricultural workers (owning land), percentage of agricultural workers (not owning land), percentage of the population that owns real estate. Controls introduced as 1911 levels include all the above controls except illiteracy rate and adds the percentage of the population living in urban areas. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 2. The effect of enfranchisement on the Estrema net gain of seats

Dependent variable	Estrema net gain of seats					gained	lost
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	-0.0022 (0.0018)	-0.0029 (0.0020)	-0.0044* (0.0025)	-0.0100*** (0.0036)	-0.0080** (0.0035)	0.0007 (0.0028)	0.0070* (0.0036)
Estrema % in 1909		0.0016 (0.0020)	0.0025 (0.0021)	0.0004 (0.0024)	0.0024 (0.0024)	0.0002 (0.0040)	-0.0044* (0.0253)
Estrema % in 1909 (squared)		-0.0001** (0.0000)	-0.0001*** (0.0000)	-0.0000 (0.0000)	-0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0001 (0.0001)	-0.0002 (0.0002)
Controls	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Province fixed effects	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	no
Lagged d.v. and interaction	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	393	115
R-squared	0.0033	0.0351	0.0726	0.2444	0.3222	0.1793	0.2835

All regressions contain a constant term. See the note to Table 1 for the list of control variables. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 3: The effect of enfranchisement on elites, Estrema candidacies, electoral competition and turnout

Dependent variable (DV)	Aristocratic elite only		All elites		Estrema candidacy		Herfindhal-Hirshman index		Turnout	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Enfranchisement (1909-13)	0.0027 (0.0042)	0.0016 (0.0039)	0.0044 (0.0044)	0.0022 (0.0042)	0.0026 (0.0028)	0.0029 (0.0023)	-0.0009 (0.0014)	-0.0012 (0.0012)	-0.2470*** (0.084)	-0.1533*** (0.071)
Province fixed effects and all controls included (both at 1911 levels and 1901-11 differences)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
lagged DV and its interaction with enfranchisement	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.1289	0.1433	0.1227	0.1469	0.2306	0.4475	0.2173	0.4352	0.3253	0.5042

All regressions contain a constant. See the note to Table 1 for the list of control variables. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 4. Elites' anti-democratization efforts: the effect of enfranchisement in swing districts

Dependent variable	Estrema vote percentage change			Estrema net gain of seats	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Swing	-4.7824* (2.601)	18.3736* (10.621)	12.582 (11.127)	0.5594** (0.279)	0.4843 (0.302)
Enfranchisement		0.2846** (0.128)	0.3713** (0.172)	0.0000 (0.003)	-0.0060 (0.004)
Enfranchisement x Swing		-0.3610** (0.179)	-0.2614 (0.187)	-0.0089** (0.004)	-0.0081* (0.005)
Control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Estrema % in 1909 and its squared value	no	no	no	yes	yes
Province fixed effects	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.2573	0.0646	0.264	0.0841	0.2527

All regressions include a constant term. See the note to Table 1 for the list of control variables. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 5. The electoral consequences of political violence

Dep var	(1) Violence	(2) Δ extrema vote %	(3) Δ turnout
Violence		6.1862* (3.221)	5.3134*** (1.479)
Swing	0.0567 (0.049)	-0.5762 (2.768)	-2.223** (1.104)
Swing x Violence		-13.2547** (5.366)	-3.8561* (1.997)
Enfranchisement	0.0059* (0.003)	0.2194 (0.148)	-0.211*** (0.072)
<u>Δ Extrema vote % 1904-1909</u>	0.0020** (0.001)	-0.2053*** (0.053)	
Δ turnout 1904-1909	-0.0034* (0.002)		-0.481*** (0.046)
Extrema % in 1909 (p-value)	0.71		
Control variables		yes	yes
Province fixed effects		yes	yes
R-Squared	0.258	0.303	0.528
N	508	508	508

Violence is a dummy variable equal to 1 if reported episodes of political violence are more numerous in the 30 days preceding the first round election in 1913 compared with 1909. All regressions include a constant term. See the note to Table 1 for the list of control variables. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 6. The electoral consequences of the Gentiloni pact

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Dep var.	Gentiloni	Δ estrema	Δ estrema	Δ turnout	Δ turnout	P(Estr. gain)	P(Estr. loss)
Gentiloni		-7.505*** (2.682)	-6.088** (3.071)	3.434*** (1.127)	3.327** (1.419)	0.055 (0.043)	0.306*** (0.069)
swing	-0.038 (0.068)		1.421 (5.942)		-1.735 (2.242)		
Estrema incumbent	-0.455*** (0.133)	2.034 (3.497)	-1.999 (6.178)	-0.843 (1.359)	0.254 (2.086)		
Estrema incumbent x swing	0.349** (0.137)		9.014 (7.046)		-0.78 (2.423)		
Δ violence			7.76** (3.271)		4.672*** (1.49)		
Δ violence x swing			-13.992** (5.441)		-3.514* (1.939)		
Gentiloni x swing			-6.946 (6.011)		-0.491 (2.361)		
Enfranchisement	-0.005 (0.003)	0.221 (0.146)	0.111 (0.153)	-0.14** (0.07)	-0.192*** (0.074)	0.0000 (0.003)	0.006 (0.004)
Lagged dep var. (1904-1909)	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no
Estrema % in 1909 and its squared value	yes	no	no	no	no	yes	yes
Control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Province fixed effects	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no
R-squared	0.302	0.308	0.334	0.517	0.537	0.175	0.361
N	508	508	508	508	508	393	115

Gentiloni is a dummy variable equal 1 for districts where the non expedit was suspended. All regressions include a constant term. See the note to Table 1 for the list of control variables. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Enfranchisement and Representation: Evidence from the Introduction of “Quasi-Universal” Suffrage in Italy

Valentino Larcinese (LSE)

Appendix: Supplementary Information For Online Publication

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1 Data description

All the essential information regarding the data and their sources is provided in the main text of the article. This section of the Appendix provides further details and a descriptive inspection of the data.

Our regression analysis is based on data at the electoral district level. All electoral (and biographical) information was collected at the district (and member of parliament) level, hence all dependent variables and the main explanatory variable (enfranchisement) were collected from archive sources directly at the unit of analysis. Control variables were instead not available at the electoral district level and have been reconstructed using other administrative or Census units, as explained later in this Section.

Figure A1 reports the number of registered voters in Italy from unification (1861) until fascism, showing the massive jump that occurred in the 1913 election. From a quantitative point of view this reform is much more important than the 1918 introduction of universal male suffrage (often used in cross country studies). Figure A2 reports the distribution of registered voters by electoral districts in 1909 and 1913. Our main explanatory variable is $\Delta E = 100 \times \frac{E_i^{13} - E_i^{09}}{E_i^{13}}$, which varies substantially across electoral districts. Figure A3 reports the histogram of ΔE . Figure A4 plots ΔE against changes in Estrema vote percentages (1909-1913) and indicates whether the district was from the North-West (NW), North-East (NE), Centre (C) or South (S).¹ This graph illustrates how higher enfranchisement rates are associated with higher variance in Estrema vote share. Table A1 reports aggregate information on the electoral performance of the parties of the Estrema between 1900 and 1913. The table has been produced by matching the names of the candidates with their political affiliation, as reported by the main newspapers. Candidates were not officially affiliated with political parties and their political leaning can only be recovered by careful scrutiny of news and public debate.² Table A2 provides further details on aristocrats and elites in the Italian parliament between 1900 and 1913, as collected from Malatesta (1940).

The regressions reported in the paper use as measure of turnout only the validly expressed votes for any of the candidates (as a percentage of the registered votes), rather than the

¹See Table A3 for a precise definition of these geographic areas. In particular, the island of Sardinia, already ruled by the Savoia Kings before the Italian unification, has been classified as North-West. The most commonly used classification would include Sardinia and Sicily into a group called "islands", even if the pre-1861 history of these islands was quite different. In our context it seems more appropriate to acknowledge these historical differences and classify Sardinia as North-West (like other regions ruled by the Savoia before 1861) and Sicily as South (like other regions of the former Kingdom of Naples).

²This information has been kindly made available by Maria Serena Piretti. It constitutes part of the raw material which has been used in Corbetta and Piretti (2008).

official number of total votes reported in the archival books. This choice has been dictated by the fact that in some cases the official turnout is inferior to the sum of the valid votes for all candidates, and in others the total number of votes is higher than the number of registered voters. Although these problems are limited to only few cases (about 2% of electoral districts), they suggest that the number of voters reported in archival books might contain some errors. Using the total of validly expressed votes provides an alternative which has the advantage of being consistent across the districts. A third possibility was to use the number of validly expressed votes only for districts with anomalous reported turnout and leaving the official turnout for other districts, but this meant using different measures across the districts. In any event the anomalies are rare and these measures (official turnout and turnout using only valid votes) are highly correlated (the correlation index is 0.99 in all years). The difference in regression analysis is negligible and therefore the estimates using alternative measures are not reported. All measures of turnout are reported in the dataset published on Dataverse and interested readers can perform these robustness checks.

Control variables were not available for the years 1909 and 1913. For this reason we have used the closest Census data, from the years 1901 and 1911. By using variables measured in 1911 we can capture the demographic and socioeconomic situation of Italian electoral districts in a year which lies just half-way between 1909 and 1913: any cross-sectional difference between the districts should be well reflected in the 1911 Census. The differences between the 1911 and the 1901 Censuses aim instead at capturing the trends in those variables.

The control variables included in the regressions try to gauge the socioeconomic and demographic conditions of the districts in order to rule out the possibility that changes in the outcomes of interest could be driven by changes in observable characteristics of the districts. The choice of control variables was dictated both by their availability on the Census and by the fact that these variables are expected to have an impact on voting behaviour³. As explained in the main text, there are good theoretical reasons for the use of each of our control variables.

The Census provides population data by gender at the town level in both 1901 and 1911. Town-level data can be aggregated into electoral district data by using the list of towns belonging to each district (available in the *Archivio Storico della Camera dei Deputati*). Literacy is also available at town level by gender in 1911 and we can therefore accurately

³For example, blue collar industrial workers were the main electoral base of the Socialist party, while peasants owning their own land can be expected to be more conservative than landless agricultural workers. Analogously, urbanisation rates can be associated with industrial development and the presence of workers' organisations.

measure male literacy rates by electoral districts. The most detailed territorial level for which data is available for all the other variables is the *circondario*. The Italian territory was divided at the time into 206 *circondario* for Census purposes (the *circondario* was not an administrative unit). Of the 508 electoral districts, 318 were entirely contained within a single *circondario* and the *circondario* variables have been used in those cases. In the remaining 190 cases I have estimated the electoral district variable by using weighted *circondario* data, with weights given by town-level population data. This is a reasonable approximation since between-*circondario* variation is plausibly larger than within-*circondario* variation. For the percentage of illiteracy, for example, which is available at town level, the within-*circondario* standard deviation is 7.9 while the corresponding between-*circondario* measure is 17.9. Using contiguous *circondario* variables to reconstruct electoral district variables is therefore reasonable, although not immune from measurement error. This is, in any event, the only possible route to reconstruct a number of social and economic indicators at the electoral district level. The resulting variables are summarised in Tables A3, which reports summary statistics for all variables used in this research. To my knowledge this is one of the first datasets (of any country) to provide detailed socioeconomic variables by electoral districts for that period. It is useful to note, however, that our regression analysis does not appear to be particularly sensitive to the introduction of control variables.

1.1 Correlates of enfranchisement

The variation in ΔE can be related to a large extent to heterogeneity in illiteracy. Figure A5 plots ΔE on male illiteracy rates. The correlation coefficient is 0.74. An OLS regression of ΔE over male illiteracy rates (column 1 in Table A4) shows that 55% of the variation in enfranchisement can be explained by literacy alone. Column 2 in Table A4 introduces other covariates: ΔE is smaller in urban districts and where the percentage of industrial workers is higher but also, controlling for other covariates, in areas with a higher share of agricultural workers that do not own their own land. Columns 3 and 4 use ΔE_{t-1} (change in enfranchisement between 1904 and 1909) as dependent variable, showing that pre-reform changes in enfranchisement are positively correlated with the size of a district (overall population) and with population changes but not with other district characteristics. ΔE_{t-1} is larger in districts with lower illiteracy rates, the opposite of what happens for ΔE . These results suggest that the 1912 reform created an important discontinuity with respect to existing trends in enfranchisement: the post-1912 enfranchised population across the electoral districts was

substantially different from what it would have been under the previous law.

An important question is whether ΔE is correlated with the political orientation of the districts. Columns 5 to 10 of Table A4 show that ΔE was higher in districts with historically weaker Estrema. Although not surprising (the Estrema was stronger where larger shares of the poor were already enfranchised), these results suggest that simple OLS regressions would deliver biased coefficients. Our specification removes fixed characteristics of electoral districts, including previous Estrema electoral strength. Our main concern, therefore, is not much represented by preexisting strength of the parties of the Estrema but rather by the possibility that the Estrema was trending differently in districts with high and low enfranchisement.

1.2 A graphical inspection of the data

Figure A6 provides a simple graphical inspection of the performance of Estrema candidates between 1900 and 1913. Panels (a) and (b) divide the districts into ΔE tertiles. In 1913 we observe an increase in Estrema vote share in districts with higher ΔE . Compared with other elections, the distance between districts with low ΔE and the others is now much narrower, which is consistent with the idea that the 1912 reform, making the electorate relatively more similar across districts, should have reduced differences in Estrema vote shares.⁴

The pattern for the share of elected MPs is different (panel b). In 1913 the number of elected MPs from the Estrema increases in all tertiles, and particularly in districts with low ΔE . At first sight the reason might be that a smaller vote change can nevertheless be sufficient to gain a seat if starting from a higher share (see panel a). Conversely, in districts with high ΔE the Estrema might have experienced higher gains, but not sufficient to win seats. This hypothesis, however, is contradicted by panels (c) and (d), which divide the districts by Estrema vote share in 1909. It appears that where the Estrema was already strong it made progress neither in votes nor in seats. Gains were instead concentrated in districts with an intermediate or a weak Estrema. Comparing (a) and (b) with (c) and (d) it is evident that there is only partial overlap between ΔE and Estrema pre-reform vote share. Vote gains appear to be concentrated in districts with high enfranchisement and weak Estrema. Seat gains are instead concentrated in districts with low enfranchisement

⁴Blue collar workers were sometimes already enfranchised in parts of the country because of higher literacy rates and higher incomes. Hence, before the reform, the poorer segments of society were partly enfranchised in some districts and not enfranchised in others. In this sense the reform made the social composition of the electorate more homogeneous across districts. Nevertheless, with respect to some variables, like for example literacy, the electorate became instead less homogeneous across districts after the reform.

and intermediate (pre-reform) Estrema.

2 Placebo regressions and other robustness checks

Table A5 reports the results of our placebo regressions. For what concerns the vote share change of Estrema candidates, both in 1904-1909 and 1900-1904, the coefficient of ΔE is negative and never statistically significant at conventional levels. This makes it unlikely that the effect found in Table 1 is due to preexisting voting trends. For other outcomes too, the coefficient of ΔE is never statistically significant for the period 1900-04. For 1904-09 all coefficients are statistically insignificant with the exceptions of ΔA , $\Delta elite$ and $\Delta turnout$, where they appear with signs which are opposite of those found for the 1909-13 period. These findings might induce some concern about mean reversion. For $\Delta turnout$, a well established literature on the differential propensity to vote of individuals from different socioeconomic background allows us to rule out with some confidence that all the effect found in Table 3 is purely due to mean reversion. For what concerns ΔA and $\Delta elite$, we cannot rule out that enfranchisement stopped, at least temporarily, the decline in representation of aristocrats and other elite groups.⁵

Table A6 reports other robustness checks discussed in the article.

3 Further results: the geography of the effect

Italian regions in 1912 were far from homogeneous in a number of important characteristics. The North-West was the richest and most industrialised part of the country. It also had a higher share of agricultural workers who cultivated their own land, while large estates employing landless agricultural workers prevailed in the South. The North and some regions of the Centre, both in industrial and agricultural areas, had a better organised labour force, stronger unions and political organisations. Hence, an important step in uncovering heterogeneous effects is to run our regressions with an interaction term between ΔE and area dummies, corresponding to districts in the North-West, North-East, Centre and South. Results are reported in Table A7, which focuses on the vote share of the Estrema and on

⁵These results are consistent with the presence of an intra-elite conflict of the following form: suppose that an emerging enfranchised bourgeoisie was increasingly displacing aristocrats and other elite groups from parliamentary seats; then the massive franchise extension of 1912 might have helped some elite members to keep their seats. Whether effects of this sort were anticipated or not makes a big difference for the interpretation of the results but remains moot in the absence of further evidence.

net seat gains of, respectively, Estrema, aristocrats and elite. We now include area dummies instead of provinces: columns 1, 3, 5 and 7 report the results and show that, although some differences occur, the sign and approximate magnitude of the coefficient of ΔE are not substantially affected by replacing the province-specific shocks with area-specific shocks. Notably, Estrema candidates performed substantially better in the South (the omitted dummy) than in all other areas, particularly the North-East and Centre. This is true both for vote percentages and for net seat gains and can be due (for vote percentages) to the low starting point of Estrema in Southern districts.

In columns 2, 4, 6 and 8 we introduce interaction terms between area dummies and ΔE . For what concerns vote returns, although no interaction term is statistically significant, the magnitudes indicate that enfranchisement mainly benefited the Estrema in the South, with a smaller positive effect in the North West and negative effects in the North East and Centre. In terms of net seat gains, the effect was negative everywhere; the coefficient is statistically significant at the 5% level in the Centre, where we also have a positive and significant effect on the net seat gains of aristocrats. Aristocracy and traditional elites appear to have been damaged by enfranchisement only in the South (although the effect is smaller and statistically insignificant in the case of $\Delta elite$). It was instead in the North-West that the elite benefited the most and the effect has similar size and direction, although with larger standard errors, in the North East and the Centre. In conclusion, and contrary to what most politicians of the time expected, there is nothing to suggest that newly enfranchised Southerners voted more conservatively than in other parts of the Country. In fact, the opposite appears to be more likely.⁶

4 The Parliamentary debate on the reform

On March 18, 1911, during a parliamentary debate on an electoral reform proposed by Prime Minister Luttazzi,⁷ Giolitti gave a landmark speech, declaring to *“believe that today an enlargement of the franchise cannot be postponed any longer. Twenty years after the last*

⁶There also appears to have been no significant difference between urban and rural areas. An interaction between ΔE and the proportion of population living in urban areas turns out to be always far from any acceptable statistical significance. Results are not reported in the interest of space but are available from the author.

⁷Luttazzi's proposal would have had only a limited impact on franchise but included other important institutional reforms: for example, it would have transformed the Upper Chamber, the Senate, into a partially elected body.

electoral reform, a big revolution has happened in Italy, which has produced vast progress in the economic, intellectual and moral condition of the popular classes (...) I don't think that an exam on how easily a man can use the 24 letters of the alphabet should decide if he has the aptitude to evaluate the big issues that interest the popular classes".⁸ By expressing his favour to an extension of the franchise to the illiterate, Giolitti was making a u-turn from what he had declared in Parliament only two years earlier: *"I believe that we need to have universal suffrage but by different means: by teaching everybody how to write and read"*.⁹ In the words of the socialist Gaetano Salvemini, Giolitti was now serving *"lunch at 8am"*. After this unexpected turn in the parliamentary debate, the Luzzatti government resigned and Giolitti was called by the King to form a new government, the fourth of his political career. The electoral reform was, therefore, a central element in the programme of the fourth Giolitti government.

The reform, strongly advocated by Giolitti and his ministerial group, was proposed in June 1911. The key points of the proposal were the extension of the franchise and the payment of MPs.¹⁰ As discussed in the article, the last franchise extension, passed in 1882, granted the voting right on the basis of "capability", which was in turn identified with literacy and census criteria. Giolitti's proposal maintained the capability criterion and therefore did not recognize voting as a citizenship right.¹¹ In practice, it granted universal male suffrage to the over 30s, while keeping the 1882 restrictions only for the population between 21 and 30.¹² The right to vote was also granted to anyone above 21 that had served in the army. Since the tax payment threshold was already set at a rather low level, the main consequence of the reform was to extend the franchise to the illiterate. This posed some practical problems, as we will see below.

The parliamentary committee in charge of the reform was firmly in the hands of Giolitti's "ministerials", but the proposal was passed with some amendments. The main amendment regarded the creation of an official ballot paper. Until then, there was no official ballot

⁸ *Camera dei deputati, Atti Parlamentari, Discussioni, legislatura XXIII*, 18 Marzo 1911, pp. 13549-13554. My translation from Ballini (2007), p.149.

⁹ My translation from Piretti (2001), p. 552.

¹⁰ *"I would like direct representatives of the popular classes to enter parliament and I prefer these direct representatives to those who are only their advocates"* (Giolitti, parliamentary speech of June 27, 1911. My translation from Piretti, 1995).

¹¹ *"The electorate is undeniably a fundamental function of the State, but only those that have been proved to have sufficient capacity to accomplish this very delicate function can have the right to exercise it"* (Giolitti, parliamentary speech of May 9, 1912. My translation from Piretti, 1995, p. 175).

¹² This age restriction was based on the grounds that life experiences generate the capacity to evaluate political matters. When such experience was not sufficient (i.e. below the age of 30), then this capacity had to be demonstrated through literacy and the census.

paper, there was no list of candidates and no need to officially declare candidacy. Voters would simply write the name of their preferred candidate on a piece of paper. To ensure that a person that could not read or write could vote, Giolitti proposed the creation of an official ballot paper with pre-printed names: voters would then be required to cross the name of their preferred candidate. This required that candidates had to officially propose themselves a few days in advance of the election day to allow enough time to print the ballot paper. This proposal was rejected by the committee, that did not like the idea of putting restrictions of any sort on candidacy. Instead, to ensure that illiterate voters could exercise their right, they could bring a pre-written ballot paper from home. This would then be inserted in an official envelope (called the Bertolini envelope, since this proposal came from MP Bertolini) and sealed to guarantee secrecy.

In spite of the many critiques received in parliament and outside (either because it was “*a jump in the dark*”¹³ or because it was still too little), in the final secret vote on May 25, 1912, the 346 present MPs were mostly favourable (284 voted in favour, 62 against). On June 29 the Senate approved the law with 131 votes in favour and 40 against.¹⁴

Very few MPs spoke in parliament against the reform. Even the leader of the conservative opposition, Sidney Sonnino, had in fact always been an advocate of universal suffrage: “*It is only from universal suffrage that the government can achieve the strength to represent and protect the general interest, which is continuously endangered by the particular interests of individuals, localities and small and egoistic groups*”.¹⁵ During the parliamentary debate Sonnino declared himself in favour of an even more radical reform, that could have included women. He supported Giolitti’s proposal on the grounds that it was a move in the right direction. Not all conservatives, however, agreed with Sonnino. The MP and sociologist Gaetano Mosca, for example, was among the few to publicly oppose the reform. According to Mosca the inclusion of millions of illiterates could “*not increase the capacity of the electoral body to understand the big issues of national politics*”.¹⁶

The reform was received with extreme favour by the Catholics in parliament, who proposed an extension to all adult males. The Catholic Filippo Meda, during the parliamentary debate, declared himself in favour of compulsory voting, although no such amendment was

¹³ “*This is an enormous jump in the dark.(...). Thirty-one out of sixty-nine provinces, containing 215 districts, will have a majority of illiterate voters*”. Corriere della Sera, May 4, 1912. My translation.

¹⁴ Senators were not elected. Life-time membership of the Senate was either acquired by birthright (for relatives of the King) or by King’s appointment. In practice, the King would usually appoint names proposed by the government, so most Senators were de facto appointed by the government.

¹⁵ Sidney Sonnino, “Il partito liberale e il suffragio universale”, *Nuova Antologia*, s. 5, vol. 239, pp. 305-314. My translation from Ballini (2007), p.164.

¹⁶ Gaetano Mosca, parliamentary speech of May 9, 1912. My translation from Ballini (2007), p. 172.

proposed.

The public debate seemed to assume that the extremists would benefit from the reform. Not all commentators agreed on this point: *“The prevailing opinion is that the reform will damage the constitutional liberal party and benefit the extreme parties. It is widely believed that - with some exceptions - the beneficiaries will be the extreme parties in the urban areas and the conservative and reactionary parties in the rural areas. (...) There are in Italy around 80 prevailingly urban electoral districts and 428 rural districts. If the prediction is correct then the conservatives and reactionaries will prevail”*.¹⁷ This might be a reason why the parties of the *Estrema* did not display much enthusiasm for the *lunch at 8am*, in spite of having demanded universal suffrage for some time.¹⁸ Floor debates show that MPs of the *Estrema* generally expressed a view that every adult male should have been enfranchised. Some, like the Radical Giulio Alessio, expressed their concern that universal suffrage could create the conditions for *“conservative forces to prevail in future national representations”* and for a halt to the *“reformist policies so strictly linked to the future of our country”*.¹⁹ Republican MP Mirabelli proposed an amendment to extend the voting rights to women, which was received favourably by most of the speakers of the *Estrema* (and by the conservative leader Sonnino, as we have seen), but was defeated by a large majority (209 against, 48 in favour).

As the previous numbers show, attendance and voting during the parliamentary debate was not particularly high. The Socialists were remarkably absent from the debate, possibly in order to avoid having to praise Giolitti for a reform which was on their agenda. More likely, however, views on universal suffrage inside the Socialist Party were far from consensual and reflected a debate which had taken place for at least a decade before Giolitti's initiative. One of the most fervent supporters of universal suffrage, Gaetano Salvemini, had already in 1905 expressed in clear terms his view (which was in many ways rather "Downsian") of how universal suffrage could change implemented policies: *“it opens the field to the competition of all interests and of all parties. Disenfranchising a part of the population means that political parties will not normally be interested in the needs of the excluded; and that a big cause of political education is suppressed, since the many excluded from the voting rights will not find anybody interested in mobilizing them”*.²⁰ For the dominant reformist faction, however, *“universal suffrage is (...), like for any other democratic institution, the foundation of true*

¹⁷ “Suffragio universale e analfabetismo”, *Nuova Antologia*, 46, 237, p. 335. My translation from Piretti (1990), 114-115.

¹⁸ See the discussion in the article.

¹⁹ Parliamentary speech of Radical MP Giulio Alessio, May 4, 1912. My translation from Ballini (2007), p. 176.

²⁰ Salvemini (1905), p. 371. My translation.

popular sovereignty” but “the franchise in itself is an instrument, and without a force that knows how to use it, it can damage precisely those that demand it”²¹.

5 The Gentiloni Pact

Here we document the precise conditions established by the Catholic Electoral Union (UECI) for selecting and supporting candidates in the 1913 elections.

The conditions for suspension of the *non expedit* were clarified by the Vatican Secretary of State Merry del Val with a letter to all Italian bishops: *“When it is necessary to allow Catholics to vote in order to prevent serious damage to the Church; when there is moral confidence of success; when the candidate favourite by the Catholics does not intend to present himself as a candidate of the Catholics and even less will try to create a Catholic parliamentary centre, which the Holy Father does not want in Italy. (...) According to the Pontifex dispositions, what is allowed to the Catholics with the dispensation of non expedit is only to support a conservative candidate, not their own candidate, which is positively forbidden. (...) It is clear that any candidate must fully subscribe the request of the Italian Catholic Electoral Union, not after the election but before, or otherwise the Catholics will not support him”.*

The Presidency of the Catholic Electoral Union, with the consent of the Vatican, sent this letter to its local branches: *“Dear Sir, to ensure that the electoral political movement proceeds in our camp according to well defined directives and uniform tactical criteria from one end to the other of Italy, the Catholic Electoral Union, called to direct the fierce battle that lies ahead of us, accomplishes its duty to communicate to you (...) the norms to follow in the choice and support of candidates: 1) The next electoral battle for the Catholics will be directed by the Catholic Electoral Union (...). 2) To support candidates that offer the highest guarantees to follow our religious and social ideas only in those districts where, because of our strength, or support of similar groups, we are certain of their election. 3) To support candidates that, believed to deserve our votes, declare formally in writing, or in their public manifesto, to accept the agreement attached hereby. 4) Local committees can signal to the Presidency of the Catholic Electoral Union those rare cases in which the support of Catholic voters is deemed advisable even in the absence of a formal acceptance of the aforementioned” (...).*

²¹Bonomi (1905), p.341. My translation.

The seven points in the “attached agreement” were the following: “1) *Defence of statutory institutions and of the guarantees offered by the constitutional rules to freedom of conscience and of association and therefore opposition to any proposal against religious organizations and that in any way may disturb the religious peace of the Nation.* 2) *Scholastic legislation following the criterion that, in spite of the increase in public schooling, there should be no restriction or diminution of private teaching, an important factor for the diffusion and elevation of national culture.* 3) *To avoid any uncertainty and arbitrariness, and to create practical legal guarantees, for the right of households’ heads to have serious religious teaching in communal public schools.* 4) *To resist any attempt to weaken the unity of family and therefore total opposition to divorce.* 5) *With respect to presentation in State Councils, to acknowledge the right of equality to economic and social organizations irrespectively of the social and religious principles by which they are inspired.* 6) *A gradual and constant reform of the tax and the legal systems in the direction of a better application of principles of justice in social relations.* 7) *To support a politics to preserve and reinforce the economic and moral strengths of the country, directing them to increase the Italian influence on the development of international civilization*”.²²

²²The original letters are reported in Marongiu Buonaiuti (1971). The translation is mine.

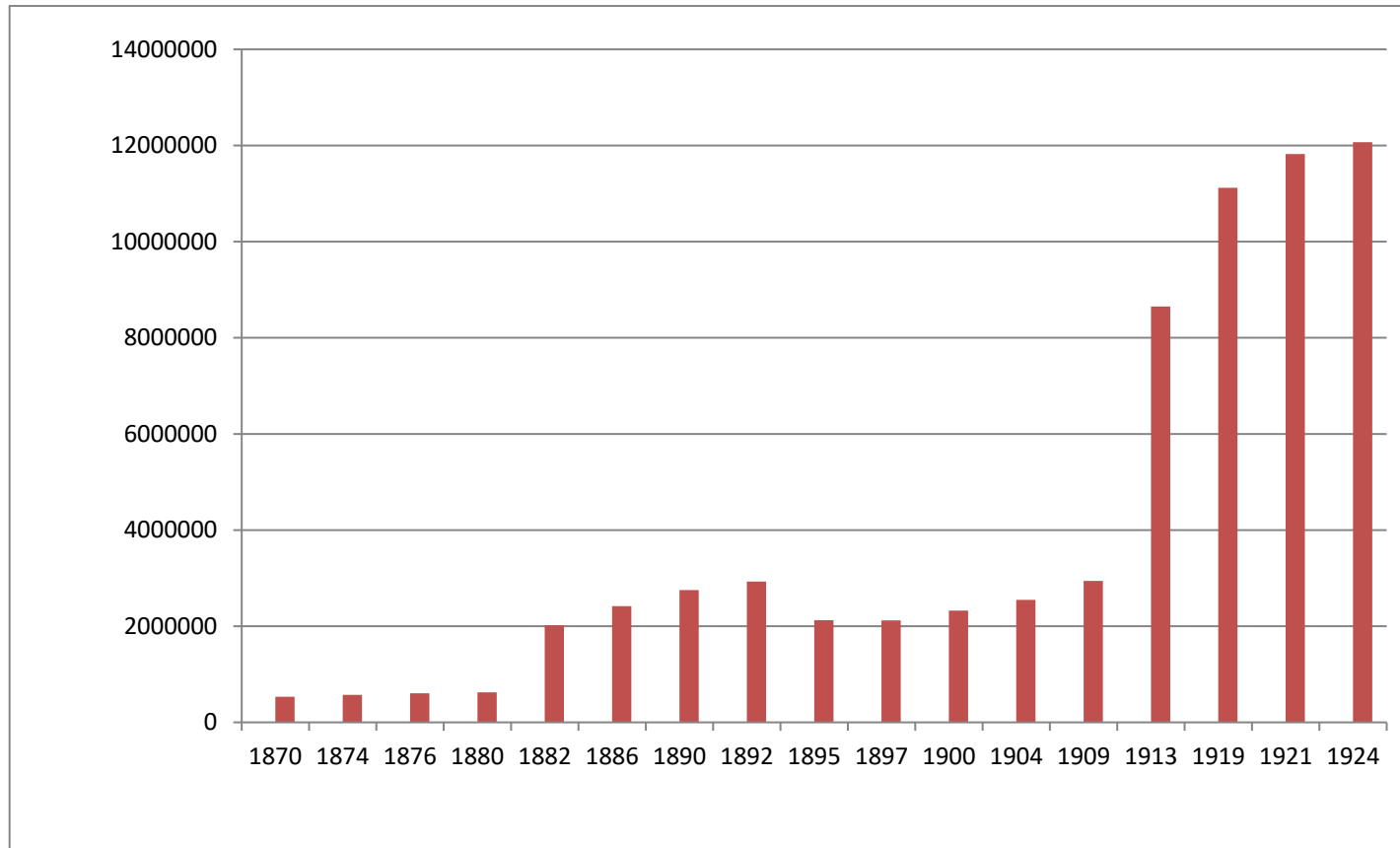


Figure A1: number of registered voters in Italy (1870-1924)

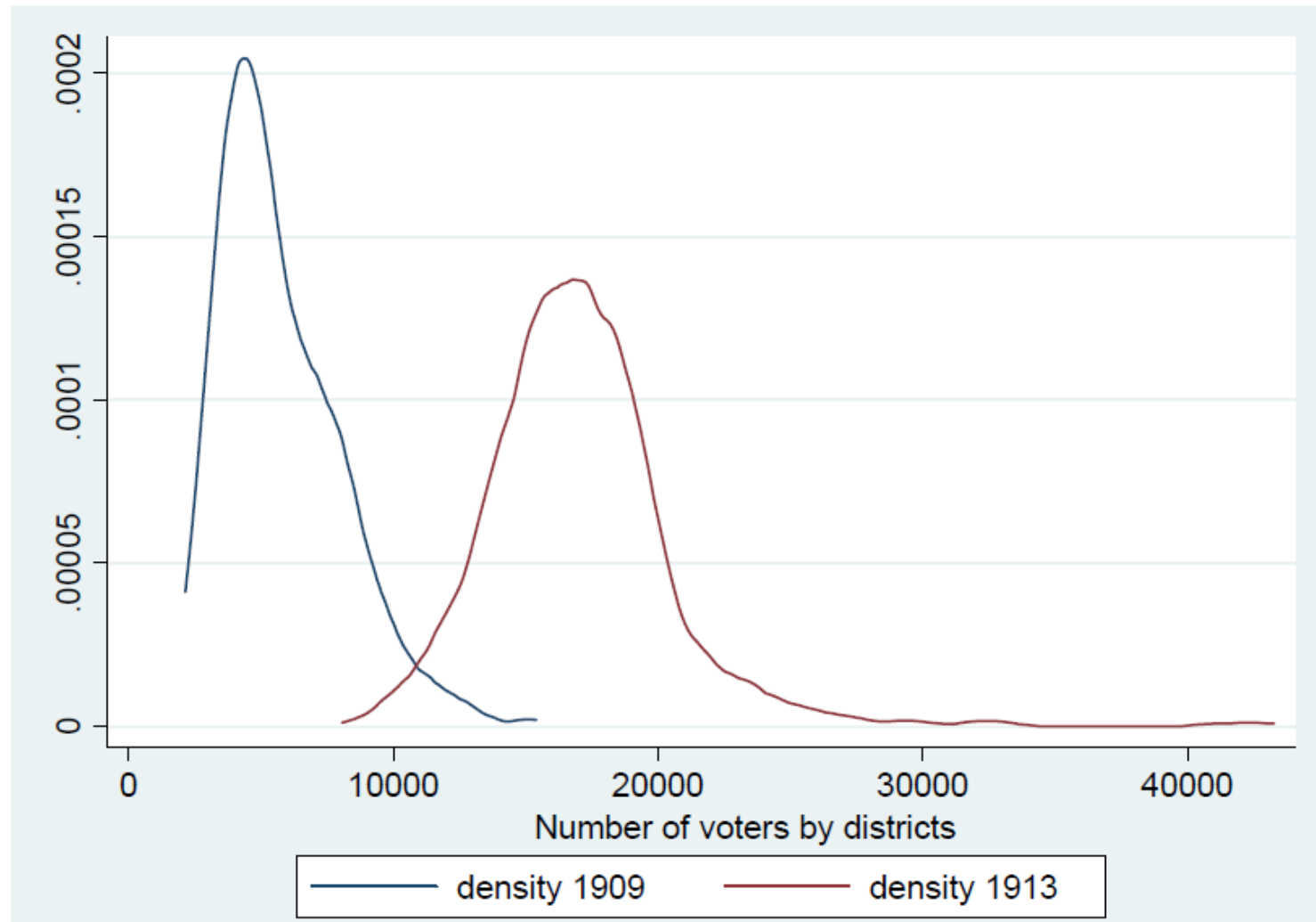


Figure A2. Registered voters by electoral district in 1909 and 1913

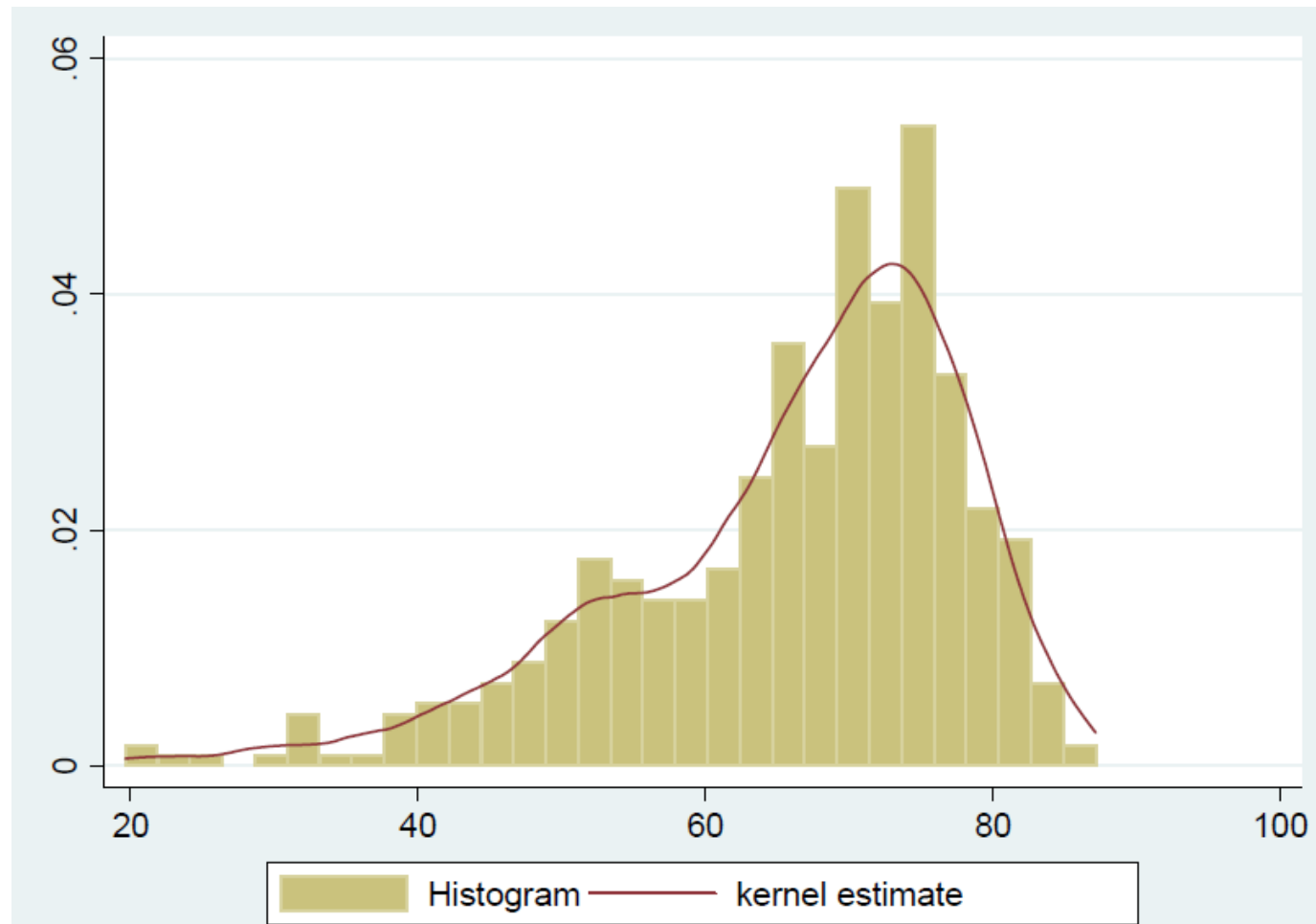


Figure A3. The distribution of ΔE across electoral districts

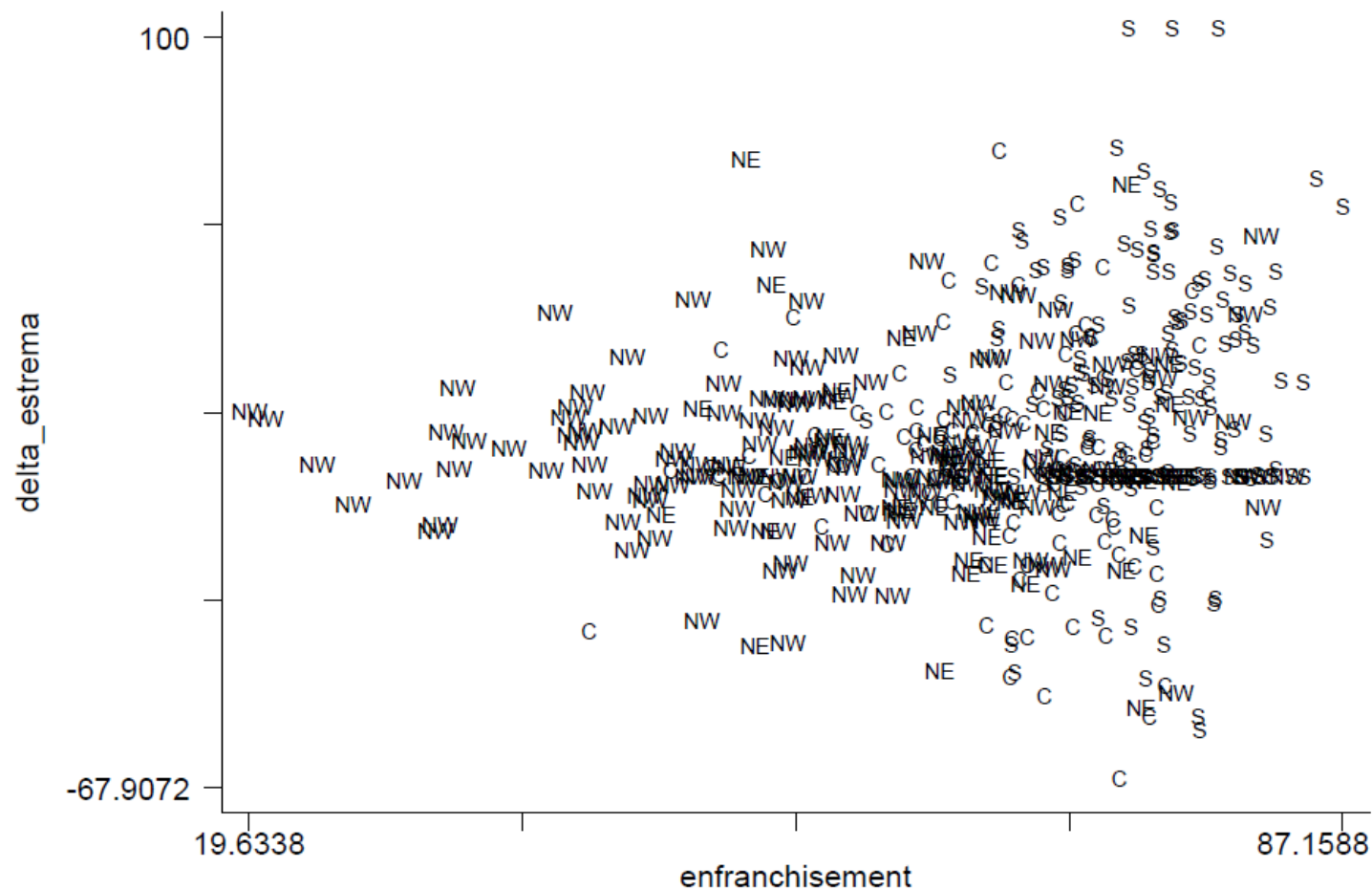


Figure A4. Enfranchisement and change in votes for candidates of the Estrema
(NW stands for North-West, NE for North-East, C for Centre and S for South)

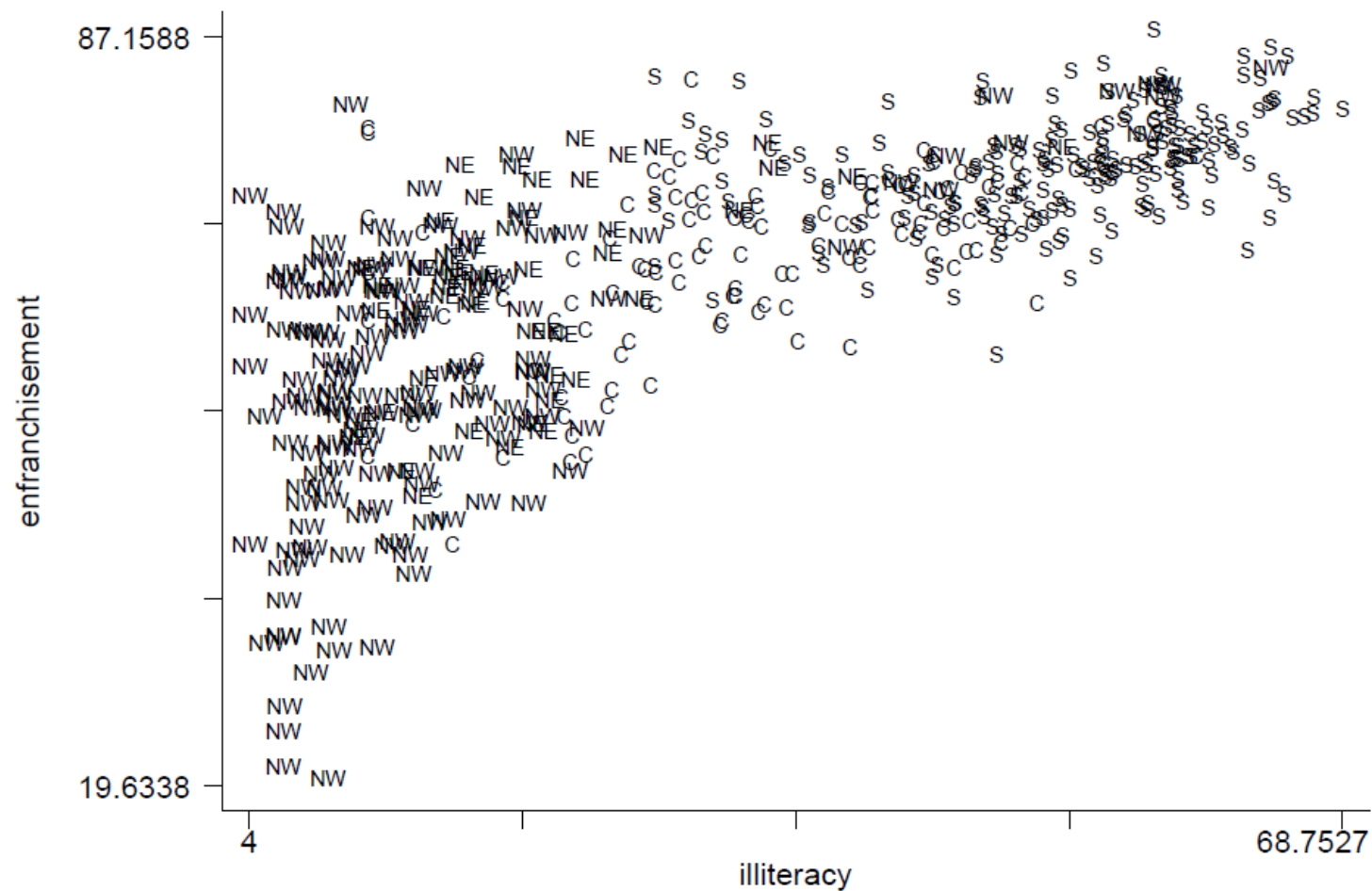
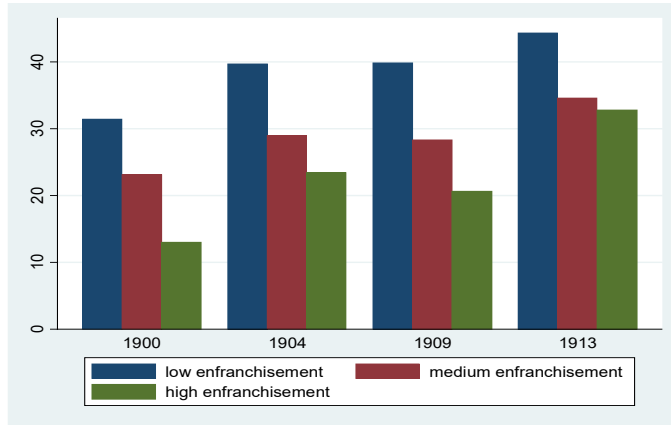
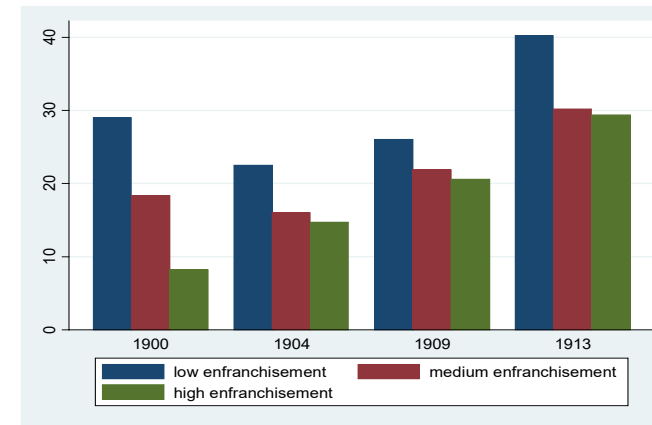


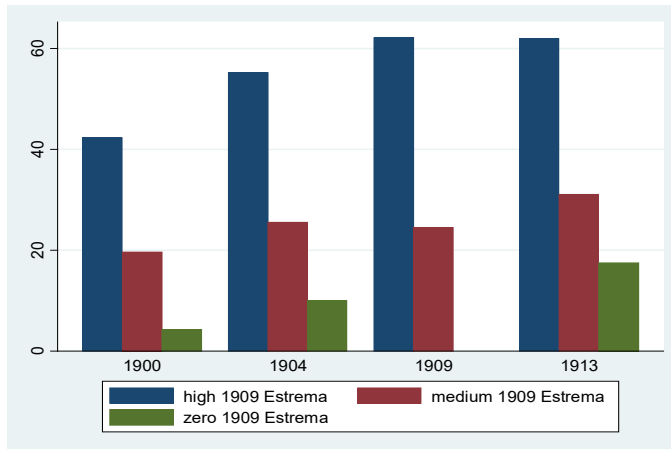
Figure A5. Enfranchisement and illiteracy rates across electoral districts



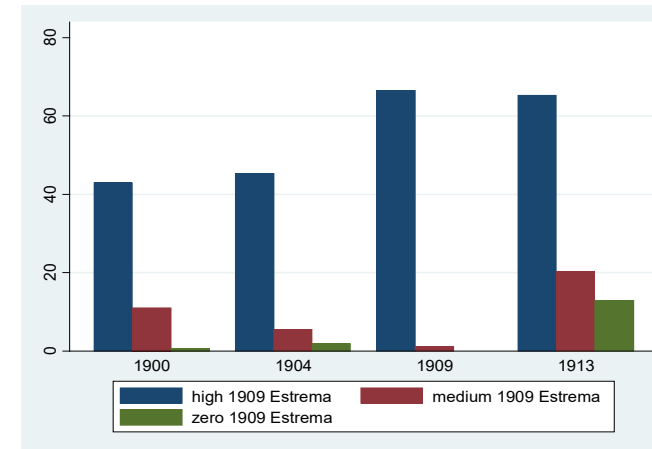
(a) Vote share of estrema for different tertiles of ΔE



(b) Seat share of Estrema for different tertiles of ΔE



(c) Vote share of Estrema by Estrema strength in 1909



(d) Seat share of Estrema by Estrema strength in 1909

Figure A6: Estrema vote and seat share at different tertiles of enfranchisement and Estrema strength

In figures (a) and (b) the districts are divided in three groups of equal size: low enfranchisement refers to the tertile with lowest ΔE , medium enfranchisement to the second tertile, high enfranchisement to the third tertile. In figures (c) and (d) the districts are divided according to their vote share in 1909: the bottom group (“zero 1909 Estrema”) consists of 156 districts (almost 1/3 of districts) in which the Estrema had 0 votes in 1909; “high 1909 Estrema” refers to the top tertile of Estrema vote share in 1909, “medium 1909 Estrema” to all remaining districts.

Table A1: The parties of the Estrema between 1900 and 1913

Party	Year	number of districts with at least one candidate	average vote per district (%)	total national vote (%)	seats
Socialists	1900	161	9.95	13.01	32
	1904	377	17.01	20.85	27
	1909	234	14.17	18.59	40
	1913	351	20.91	23.02	78
Republicans	1900	68	6.69	6	29
	1904	77	4.34	4.26	21
	1909	50	4.43	4.35	23
	1913	67	3.5	3.52	17
Radicals	1900	76	6.77	6.81	36
	1904	116	9.32	9.08	32
	1909	130	10.98	11.57	53
	1913	150	12.78	12.35	73

Table A2. Aristocrats and elites in the *Camera dei Deputati*

	1900	1904	1909	1913
Aristocrat	118	97	91	88
Landowners	29	27	23	27
Military	25	22	19	18
Diplomatic	15	10	6	8
Dynasty	51	54	44	36
Total traditional elites	163	146	134	127

Notes: data collected from Malatesta (1940). Some MPs belong to more than one group, hence the total does not correspond to the sum of members in each group.

Table A3: Summary statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Enfranchisement (1909-13)	66.134	11.929	19.634	87.159
Enfranchisement (1904-09)	12.991	7.334	-29.490	43.991
Vote percentage change of Estrema candidates (1909-1913)	7.632	23.142	-67.907	100
Vote percentage change of Estrema candidates (1904-1909)	-1.101	21.922	-99.458	90.258
Vote percentage change of Estrema candidates (1900-1904)	8.193	23.302	-61.840	100.000
Δ seats Estrema (1909-1913)	0.104	0.452	-1	1
Δ seats Estrema (1904-1909)	0.051	0.394	-1	1
Δ seats Estrema (1900-1904)	-0.008	0.371	-1	1
Estrema seat loss (N=115)	0.235	0.426	0	1
Estrema seat gain (N=393)	0.204	0.403	0	1
Δ candidacy Estrema (1904-1909)	0.120	0.465	-1	1
Δ candidacy Estrema (1904-1909)	-0.148	0.457	-1	1
Δ candidacy Estrema (1900-1904)	0.254	0.507	-1	1
Δ HHI (1909-1913)	-0.062	0.229	-0.755	0.630
Δ HHI (1904-1909)	0.021	0.208	-0.517	0.641
Δ HHI (1900-1904)	-0.072	0.221	-0.706	0.499
Δ aristocrat (1909-1913)	-0.006	0.341	-1	1
Δ aristocrat (1904-1909)	-0.012	0.349	-1	1
Δ aristocrat (1900-1904)	-0.041	0.327	-1	1
Δ elite (1909-1913)	-0.016	0.402	-1	1
Δ elite (1904-1909)	-0.020	0.407	-1	1
Δ elite (1900-1904)	-0.033	0.378	-1	1
Gentiloni candidates	0.703	0.458	0	1
swing district	0.335	0.472	0	1
Violence	0.220	0.415	0	1
Δ log(population)	0.076	0.081	-0.344	0.500
Δ illiteracy	-9.198	5.595	-28.421	16.093
Δ industrial workers	0.371	2.462	-9.283	12.095
Δ agricultural workers with own land	-3.034	3.587	-29.995	2.528
Δ agricultural workers without own land	-0.046	3.893	-8.525	25.760
Δ owners of real estate	-1.458	1.712	-8.021	4.495
log population 1911	11.157	0.231	10.434	12.291
male illiteracy rate 1911	33.613	18.791	4.000	68.753
industrial workers 1911	13.762	6.009	4.772	30.926
agricultural workers with own land 1911	5.425	5.212	0.399	29.733
agricultural workers without own 1911	21.841	7.750	2.013	41.133
owners of real estate 1911	11.620	6.228	1.649	36.960
urbanization 1911	25.040	23.437	0.000	93.376
North-West	0.293	0.456	0	1
North-East	0.098	0.298	0	1
Centre	0.236	0.425	0	1
South	0.372	0.484	0	1

The number of observations is 508 for all variables unless otherwise specified next to the variable name. Illiteracy, industrial workers, agricultural workers, owners of real estate and urbanization are expressed as percentage over total population in an electoral district. Unless otherwise specified, Δ refers to changes in variables between 1909 and 1913. North-West includes Sardegna, Piemonte, Lombardia, Liguria. North-East includes Veneto (which also included the current Friuli-Venezia Giulia); Centre includes all the remaining regions with the exception of the former Kingdom of Naples, which constitutes the South. All other variables are defined in the main text.

Tab. A4: Correlates of enfranchisement

Dep. variable	ΔE	ΔE	$\Delta E_{(t-1)}$	$\Delta E_{(t-1)}$	ΔE	ΔE	ΔE	ΔE	ΔE	ΔE
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
male illiteracy 1911	0.4696*** (0.0211)	0.4927*** (0.0273)	-0.0341** (0.0172)	-0.0119 (0.0262)						
Estrema 1909					-0.0991*** (0.0158)	-0.0626*** (0.0118)				
Estrema 1904							-0.0964*** (0.0162)	-0.0502*** (0.0121)		
Estrema 1900									-0.0897*** (0.0195)	-0.0481*** (0.0142)
industrial workers		-0.3406*** (0.1125)		0.0669 (0.0880)	-0.7027*** (0.1086)	-0.2999** (0.1472)	-0.9842*** (0.1299)	-0.4323** (0.1852)	-0.9386*** (0.1279)	-0.4286** (0.1851)
urbanized		-0.0563*** (0.0201)		0.0123 (0.0199)	0.0257 (0.0234)	-0.0750*** (0.0237)	0.0250 (0.0271)	-0.0813*** (0.0259)	0.0313 (0.0275)	-0.0750*** (0.0265)
agric. workers (own land)		-0.0973 (0.1229)		-0.0048 (0.1111)	-0.9981*** (0.1120)	-0.3661 (0.2700)	-1.2384*** (0.1355)	-0.3196 (0.3125)	-1.1441*** (0.1348)	-0.3025 (0.3168)
agric. workers (not own land)		-0.3138*** (0.0629)		0.0824 (0.0636)	0.1305* (0.0705)	0.2918** (0.1130)	0.0098 (0.0851)	0.2300* (0.1243)	-0.0048 (0.0859)	0.2204* (0.1285)
owners of real estate		-0.0934 (0.0933)		0.0518 (0.0897)	0.4928*** (0.1086)	-0.1929 (0.1612)	0.5383*** (0.1227)	-0.2831* (0.1708)	0.5021*** (0.1274)	-0.2939* (0.1713)
logarithm population 1911		4.5583* (2.3802)		3.0853 (2.0072)	10.2107*** (2.4891)	12.6074*** (2.3591)	5.5723** (2.4879)	9.9833*** (2.2768)	5.2793** (2.5198)	9.7030*** (2.3098)
log pop 1911 - log pop 1901		22.4079*** (7.5874)		17.4587*** (5.9459)	9.4654 (7.2184)	4.2078 (8.4696)	13.3898* (7.8097)	3.7828 (8.7122)	13.4263* (7.6802)	4.4940 (8.7506)
Controls (1901-1911 differences)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Province Fixed Effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-squared	0.5472	0.6207	0.0076	0.0719	0.4835	0.7947	0.4823	0.7900	0.4709	0.7883

All regressions include a constant and use data from 508 observations. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A5. Placebo treatment on 1904-1909 and 1900-1904 changes

Dependent variable	Estrema vote share	Estrema net seat gains	Aristocrats	Elites	Estrema candidates	Competition	Turnout
<i>Panel A (1904-1909)</i>							
ΔE (1909-1913)	-0.2014 (0.1645)	0.0018 (0.0032)	-0.0078** (0.0034)	-0.0114*** (0.0034)	-0.0011 (0.0030)	-0.0006 (0.0014)	0.1885** (0.0815)
R-squared	0.1727	0.2070	0.1652	0.2009	0.2077	0.1756	0.2724
<i>Panel B (1900-1904)</i>							
ΔE (1909-1913)	-0.1329 (0.1691)	0.0055 (0.0034)	-0.0025 (0.0027)	-0.0037 (0.0029)	-0.0011 (0.0035)	-0.0007 (0.0015)	0.1403 (0.09)
R-squared	0.2409	0.2231	0.1536	0.1351	0.1805	0.2098	0.2361

All regressions include a constant term, all control variables (both at their 1911 levels and 1901-1911 differences) as described in Table A3 and province fixed effects. Robust standard errors in brackets. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$. $N=508$ in all columns.

Table A6. Effect of enfranchisement on vote share: further robustness checks

Dep. Variable	Δ estrema (1913)	Δ estrema (1913)	Δ estrema (1913)	Δ estrema (1913)	Δ estrema (1913)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Enfranchisement (1913)	0.2643*	0.2898**	0.2473*	0.2496*	0.2038
	(0.1449)	(0.1432)	(0.1290)	(0.1230)	(0.1415)
Illiteracy rate 1911					0.4877
					(0.3072)
Controls and province specific shocks	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Sample	excluding top decile of Estrema09	excluding top quintile of Estrema09	Estrema13<100 and excluding top decile of Estrema09	Estrema13<100 and excluding top quintile of Estrema09	All
Observations	457	406	439	395	508
R-squared	0.2756	0.3192	0.3060	0.3422	0.2940

All regressions include a constant and control variables, both at their 1911 levels and in 1901-1911 differences (see note to Table A3). Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A7. The geographic distribution of the effects of enfranchisement

Dependent variable	Estrema vote percentage change	Estrema vote percentage change	Estrema net seat gain	Estrema net seat gain	aristocrat net seat gain	aristocrat net seat gain	elite net seat gain	elite net seat gain
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
ΔE	0.0203 (0.103)		-0.0067** (0.003)		0.0035 (0.002)		0.0047* (0.003)	
NW	-10.6636** (4.388)	8.8746 (28.771)	-0.1964** (0.083)	-0.3042 (0.522)	0.0387 (0.059)	-1.0005** (0.404)	0.0767 (0.070)	-0.904* (0.529)
NE	-15.5802** (5.419)	27.3665 (36.696)	-0.2291** (0.097)	0.0896 (0.687)	0.0869 (0.077)	-1.0229** (0.505)	0.1268 (0.086)	-0.7802 (0.582)
C	-14.7010*** (4.510)	28.3717 (32.224)	-0.1990** (0.081)	-0.0395 (0.565)	0.0303 (0.060)	-1.192*** (0.416)	0.0367 (0.066)	-0.9417* (0.556)
$\Delta E \times NW$		0.0928 (0.118)		-0.0053 (0.003)		0.0042 (0.003)		0.0060* (0.003)
$\Delta E \times NE$		-0.2891 (0.359)		-0.0122 (0.008)		0.0053 (0.006)		0.0048 (0.006)
$\Delta E \times C$		-0.2725 (0.260)		-0.0094** (0.005)		0.0069* (0.004)		0.0059 (0.004)
$\Delta E \times S$		0.3454 (0.387)		-0.0070 (0.007)		-0.0101** (0.005)		-0.0076 (0.007)
Constant	-45.7972 (55.604)	-72.8334 (62.864)	0.8935 (1.227)	0.8718 (1.354)	-0.2176 (0.987)	0.8005 (1.009)	-0.3346 (1.148)	0.5422 (1.269)
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.0786	0.0838	0.0878	0.0897	0.0168	0.0311	0.0168	0.0249

See Table A3 for a definition of geographic areas. Control variables include 1911 levels and 1911-1901 differences, as described in the note to Table A3. Columns (3) and (4) also include Estrema vote percentage in 1909 and its square. Robust standar errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A8. Enfranchisement and the 1919 election

Dependent variable	vote percentage change (1909-1919) of Estrema candidates				Estrema net seat gain (1909-1919)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Enfranchisement (1909-1919)	-0.601 (0.4)	-0.8952** (0.43)			-0.071 (0.064)	-0.0555 (0.078)		
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)			-0.7487* (0.41)	-1.0034** (0.461)			-0.0789 (0.064)	-0.0668 (0.075)
Enfranchisement (1913-1919)			-0.05 (0.786)	-0.3629 (0.837)			-0.0416 (0.104)	-0.0005 (0.136)
Constant	34.4117 (39.838)	69.2463 (44.1)	34.6668 (39.63)	68.3824 (44.603)	4.8046 (7.274)	4.4133 (8.159)	4.8183 (7.323)	4.3225 (8.225)
Control variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Area fixed effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54
R-squared	0.1722	0.2281	0.1837	0.2367	0.4476	0.4556	0.4489	0.4594

Notes: The definition of the three enfranchisement variables are given in the Section "The election of 1919" in the main text of the article. Area dummies are defined in the Note to Table A3. Summary statistics for all variables, including control variables (in 1911 levels and 1921-1911 differences) are reported in Table A9. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table A9: Summary statistics for variables used in Tab A8 (1919 regressions)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Enfranchisement (1919-1909)	74.42	8.43	50.22	85.93
Enfranchisement (1913-1909)	52.22	6.43	31.78	62.03
Enfranchisement (1919-1913)	22.2	3.91	14.31	32.88
Δ Vote Estrema candidates (1919-1909)	3.24	14.84	-45.85	50.03
Δ Seats Estrema candidates (1919-1909)	1.22	2.36	-4	9
Population density 1911	198.31	203.14	31	1443
Δ Density (1921-1911)	15.76	25.33	-6	174
Industrial workers 1911	12.26	4.29	6.33	26.21
Δ Industrial workers (1921-1911)	-0.07	1.73	-5.61	4.24
landowners 1911	10.86	4.52	2.63	18.86
Δ landowners (1921-1911)	-0.73	1.03	-4.43	0.91
agricultural workers with own land 1911	4.57	3.84	0.78	15.89
Δ agricultural workers with own land (1921-1911)	3.81	2.39	0.3	9.81
agricultural workers without own land 1911	21.44	6.02	6.94	33.56
Δ agricultural workers without own land (1921-1911)	-2.66	3.01	-10.13	3.9
Δ male illiteracy rate (1921-1911)	-7.78	3.12	-15.97	0

For all variables the number of observations is 54. Population density is equal to the district population per square km. Industrial workers, landowners, agricultural workers with and without land and illiteracy rate are reported as percentages of district population.

Table A10. Districts with reported episodes of political violence

(n = number of articles on Il corriere della Sera, Il Messaggero, l'Avanti!)

	1909	1913	Total districts
North	11	34	187
Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte, Veneto	(n=16)	(n=47)	
Centre	21	31	120
Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Marche e Umbria, Toscana	(n=39)	(n=93)	
South & Islands	32	74	201
Abruzzi, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Puglie, Sardegna, Sicilia	(n=66)	(n=198)	
Total	64 (121)	139 (338)	508

The regions refer to 1913 boundaries