

Constraints and Choices: Electoral Participation in Historical Perspective*

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Abstract

Participation in electoral politics is not a fully voluntary act. Suffrage rules regulate who can participate, while different institutional arrangements shape the consequences of the voting act. The secular increase of electoral participation in the world during the past two centuries was largely due to increased eligibility rather than to increased turnout of those eligible; indeed, newly enfranchised voters tended to vote at lower rates than those previously eligible. The relation between voting and electing, as manifested in institutional arrangements, had a strong effect on individual decisions to vote. In the end, the voice of the people is inescapably filtered by the institutional framework that relates voting to electing.

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1 Introduction

Whether or not one votes is not just a matter of one's choice. Some political regimes do not give people a chance to vote at all. Other regimes force individuals to participate in what they call "elections" although no one is selected as their result. But even systems of representative government always restrict the prerogative to vote to some segments of the population, using property, income, literacy, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, national citizenship, and sometimes even political ideologies, to qualify those who could avail themselves of this right. Moreover, an entire panoply of institutional rules shapes the consequences and the meaning of one's vote, thus affecting incentives and disincentives to participate.

The realm of individual choice is thus delimited by barriers independent of one's will. These barriers are constructed by the politically powerful, whether these had usurped political power or were selected under the extant rules. The masses of potential voters can exercise the choice whether or not to participate only within these barriers.

My purpose is to distinguish structural from voluntary aspects of electoral participation. Clearly, the choice whether or not to vote can be exercised only by those who are given this choice. But even if those who vote are "participating," they are not doing the same under different political and institutional conditions. To "participate" is to take part in something that is prior to individual decisions. Voting is not the same as electing: the consequences of one's vote for the selection of one's rulers depend on the ideological, political, as well as ideational framework within which one votes. Hence, to understand how individuals exercise their choice to participate, one must know in what they are participating.

If we think in quantitative terms of electoral participation as the ratio of actual voters to the population,¹ with an important caveat spelled out in the Appendix, we can decompose it by the following tautology:

$$participation \equiv \frac{voters}{population} = \frac{eligible}{population} * \frac{voters}{eligible}, \quad (1)$$

where the entire tautology is conditional on an election occurring at all.

¹Using the total population as the base introduces a bias due to the ageing of the population. Data on age composition, however, are scarce.

”Participation” is then the ratio of voters to the population, ”eligibility” is the ratio of the number of people legally qualified to vote to the population, while ”turnout” is the ratio of actual to the eligible voters. In this language,

$$participation = eligibility * turnout. \quad (2)$$

This tautology underlies the organization of the paper. The data cover most, but by no means all, legislative elections that occurred in the world between 1788 and 2000.² Section 2 presents a brief history of suffrage qualifications and of long-term patterns of eligibility. Since the determinants of suffrage are studied elsewhere (Przeworski 2006), here these patterns are taken as given. Section 3 uses information about eligibility to decompose the growth of participation into its components, showing that throughout most of modern history increases in participation were due to extensions of suffrage, rather than to higher turnout among those qualified to vote. Section 4 asks what it is that individuals ”participated” in at different times in different countries, showing that even when individuals had a choice of voting or not voting, their participation reflected the function of this act as manifested in the institutional arrangements. Finally, Section 5 summarizes findings by other researchers concerning recent patterns of participation, highlighting the deviant case of the United States. A brief conclusion follows.

Before proceeding, a brief historical background is useful. Only Great Britain and some British North American and Caribbean colonies had elected lower houses of national legislatures before 1788, when the first Congress was elected in the newly formed United States of America. Revolutionary France and the short-lived Republic of Batavia (Netherlands) were the only countries to join this list before 1800. Spain experienced the first legislative election in 1813, Norway in 1814, Portugal in 1820, and the newly independent Greece in 1823. At least eight new Latin American countries joined this list between 1821 and 1830, while Belgium and Luxembourg followed in 1831. The revolutionary years of 1848-9 expanded this list by seven new entrants. With four Latin American countries holding first legislative elections in the meantime, by 1850

²One can never be certain that all elections are counted. While we consulted various collections of electoral data and read through histories of particular countries, we cannot be certain that some elections did not escape historians’ attention. Finding information about elections for nineteenth century Central America is particularly problematic. Moreover, data on participation are available for only 2,128 elections, on eligibility for 2,300 elections, and on turnout for 1,808 elections of the total of 3,404 legislative elections we know to have occurred. The numbers of observations in particular analyses vary according to the availability of other information.

at least thirty-two independent countries or dependent territories had an experience of voting in at least one legislative election.³ By 1900, this number was at least forty-eight. The countries that emerged from World War I all had elected legislatures at least during a part of the inter-war period, when several dependent territories also held their first elections. The African countries that emerged after 1957 experienced at least one election before or right after independence. Yet they held elections less frequently during the subsequent period, so that the proportion of countries that held legislative elections each year declined sharply in the 1960s and 1970s, only to rise again at the end of the past century. Figure 1 shows the trend of the (minimum) proportion of countries that held legislative elections in each year between 1800 and 2000.

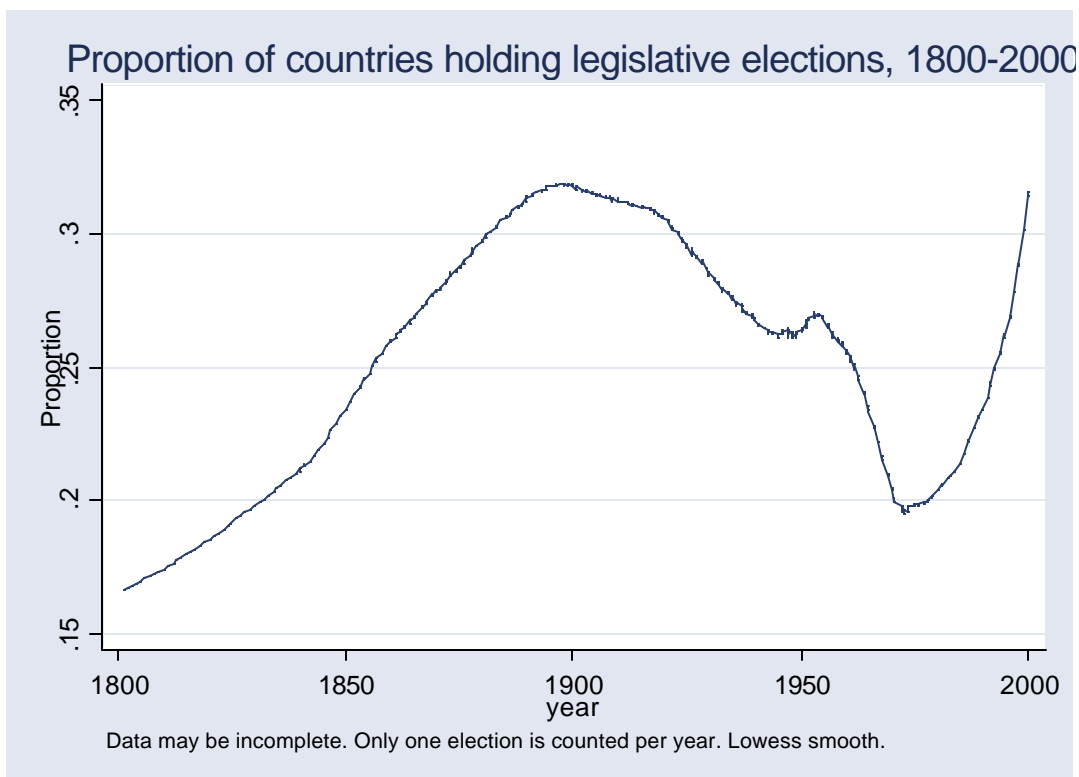


Figure 1

³The actual number is almost certainly larger. While we do not have a record for legislative elections in several Latin American countries, we know that they held presidential elections and that presidents were indirectly elected by legislatures. Ecuador held a presidential election in 1830 and Nicaragua 1825, but we have no record of legislative elections. In turn, legislative elections may have occurred before 1830 in El Salvador which held first presidential election in 1824 (we can date the first legislative election only to 1842), and Peru which had a presidential election in 1814 (but we have a record for legislative elections only as of 1845).

Figure 2, in turn, shows the trends of the proportion of the population that did vote ("participation"), the proportion that was allowed to vote (was "eligible"), and the proportion among those allowed who actually cast votes ("turnout") during these elections. Since the remainder of the paper is devoted to the analysis of these series, I leave them without a comment at this moment.

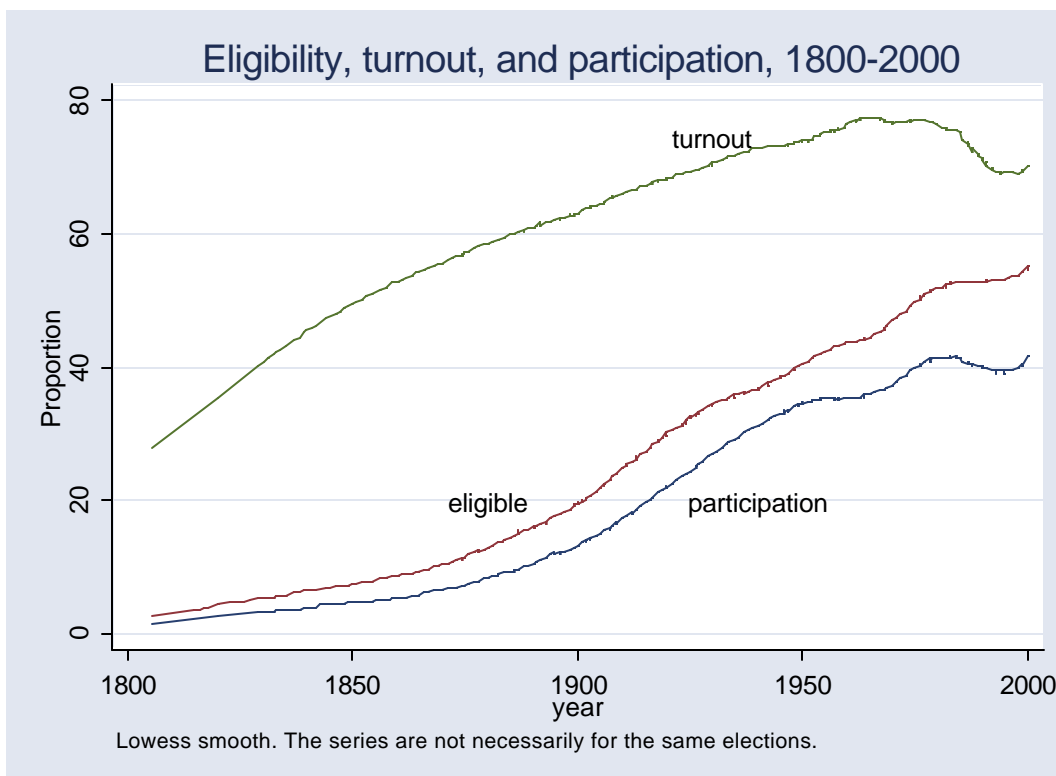


Figure 2

2 Suffrage qualifications and eligibility

While some early constitutions made male suffrage nearly universal, during most of the nineteenth century the right to vote was confined to adult men who owned property, earned some amount of income, paid some amount of taxes, and/or were literate. Two countries – Liberia in 1839 and Switzerland in 1848 – immediately extended the right to vote to all adult males.⁴ In other countries, first suffrage was conditioned

⁴The 1821 electoral law of Buenos Aires introduced universal suffrage but only for free males. About 12 percent of the population was not free. (Ternavasio 1995: 66-67)

either on property qualifications (*code* = 2), or some minimum income, tax payments, or exercise of some professions (*code* = 3), or income, tax, professions combined with literacy (*code* = 4), or literacy alone (*code* = 5), or on being "independent" (*code* = 6), or finally on being only a male above some age (*code* = 7). No women could vote before 1850, except for an ephemeral period in New Jersey.⁵

Figure 3 shows the timing of the first suffrage qualifications⁶ The categories include cases when women were included under the first suffrage provisions. The categories under which both sexes were included are coded by the qualifications pertaining to males (first digit), with the second digit equal to 1 if qualifications for women were more restrictive than for males (higher age, only widows of military could vote, etc.) and equal to 2 if women qualified at the same basis as men. Thus, Ireland was the only country to give the right to vote to all males but only some females in 1920 (*code* = 71), while Finland was the first to establish a modern parliament under universal male and female suffrage in 1907 (*code* = 72).⁷

⁵The 1790 Constitution of New Jersey, "through an error in wording," admitted as voters "all inhabitants" who held a certain amount of property. Many women did vote until 1807 when "male" was explicitly added as a qualification (Johnson 1913). A similar situation ensued in Chile, where the electoral law of 1874 failed to mention sex as a qualification for citizenship. Only when some women took this opportunity to register to vote, did the Congress pass in 1884 a law explicitly excluding females (Mata Valenzuela 1995). This was clearly an omission: as one Senator admitted, "it did not occur to anyone to concede such rights" ("*a nadie se le ha ocurrido concederle tales derechos*"). The assumption that women are not capable of exercising political rights was so self-evident that Kant (1881 [1793]: 38) refers to it as "natural."

⁶In all graphs of this type (graph box command in Stata), the horizontal line represents the mean, the thick box the observations between the 25th and 75th percentile, the whiskers the range between the 10th and the 90th percentile, and the isolated points are the outliers.

⁷The first country to extend suffrage to all women (from universal male) was New Zealand in 1893, followed by Australia two years later.

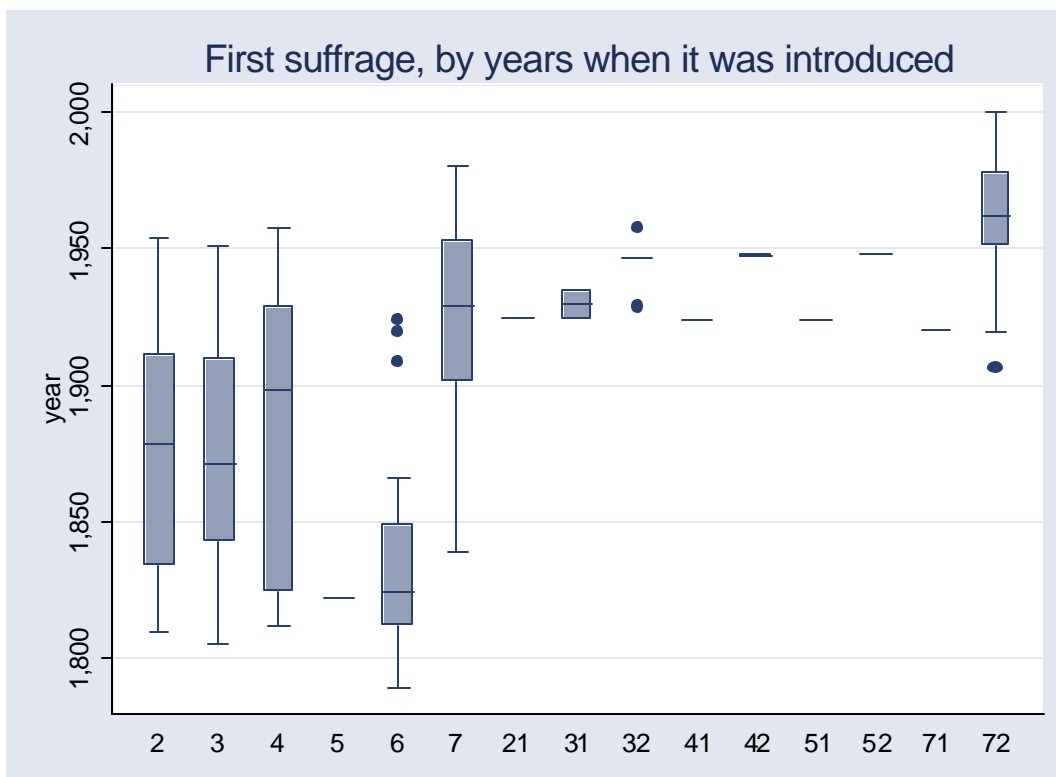


Figure 3

Coding of suffrage qualifications. For males: 2 property; 3 property, income, tax, or profession; 4 previous (3) and/or literacy; 5 literacy only; 6 "independent"; 7 universal. For females: first digit gives qualifications for males; second digit = 1 indicates that women had to satisfy stricter requirements; second digit = 2 indicates that they qualified on the same basis as males.

While Figure 3 may suggest that suffrage was quite extensive when it was first established – in sixteen countries the first suffrage rules gave the right to vote to all males who had any kind of regular sources of livelihood (*code* = 6) – thirteen among them soon rescinded these liberal qualifications, typically by restricting suffrage to literates. Moreover, Liberia introduced property qualifications in 1847. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, two-thirds of countries that had any suffrage rules required males to have some minimum income and/or to be literate in order to vote.

The original restrictions were either gradually or abruptly relaxed as time went on, but not without reversals. In several countries, "Conservatives," to use the Spanish terminology, repeatedly fought with "Liberals" over suffrage, with the result that franchise qualifications alternated according to their political power. France is the best known example of a

country that went from extensive male suffrage to income qualifications, to income and literacy restrictions, back to income, to universal male suffrage, back to income and back to universal male, only to make suffrage universal for both sexes in 1945. The history of Spanish suffrage was not any less convoluted, as was the history of several Latin American countries, notably Guatemala, which had nine different suffrage rules, plus periods without elections. Figure 4 shows the periods during which different suffrage rules were in effect.

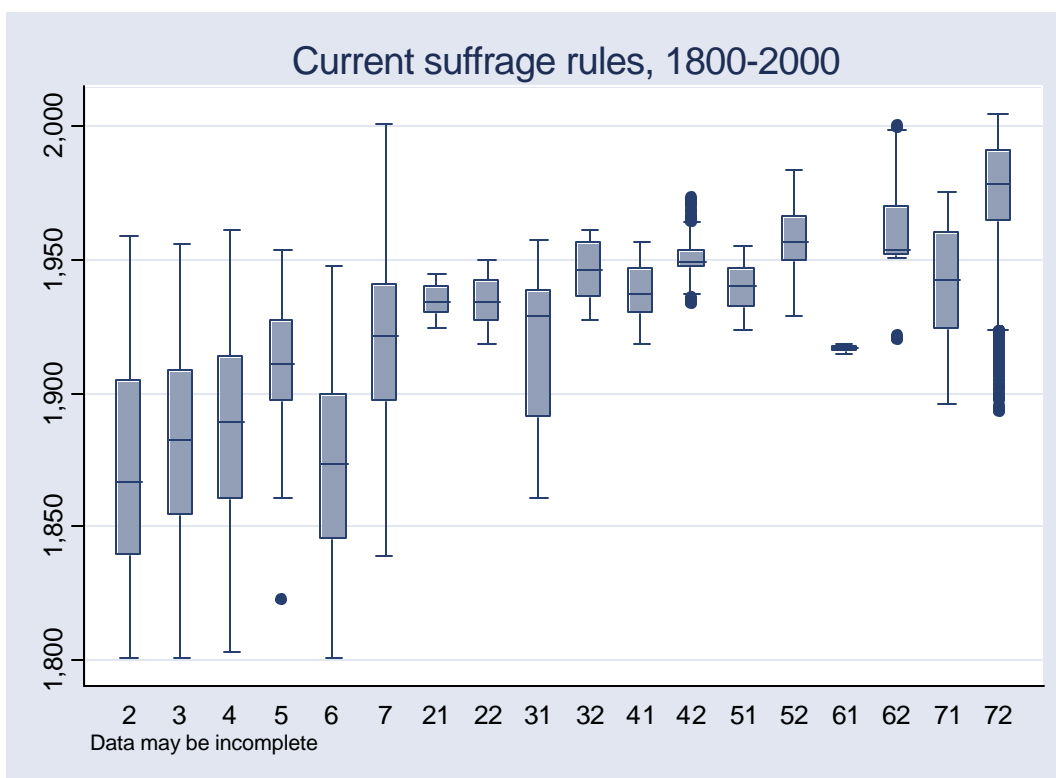


Figure 4

Coding of suffrage qualifications. For males: 2 property; 3 property, income, tax, or profession; 4 previous (3) and/or literacy; 5 literacy only; 6 "independent"; 7 universal. For females: first digit gives qualifications for males; second digit = 1 indicates that women had to satisfy stricter requirements; second digit = 2 indicates that they qualified on the same basis as males.

Suffrage qualifications obviously shaped the actual proportions of the population that was eligible to vote. Figure 5 shows the ranges of eligibility associated with each suffrage rule. Property, income, and literacy restrictions were very restrictive, but became less so over time as

incomes grew and people became literate.⁸ Since extensions of suffrage to females occurred much later, by the time literate women gained the right to vote more males were already literate, so that one should not read the difference between eligibility under the literacy criterion (*codes 4x and 5x*) between males only and both sexes as due exclusively to the incorporation of female voters. Finally, universal suffrage categories, both for males only and for both sexes, exhibit an enormous range. The low numbers are due either to registration procedures (see Appendix) or to politically based exclusion or to exacting citizenship requirements.⁹ Very large numbers reflect, in turn, the ageing of the population: indeed, according to the available data, in some countries as much as 80 percent of the total population was of the voting age of 18 by the end of the past century.

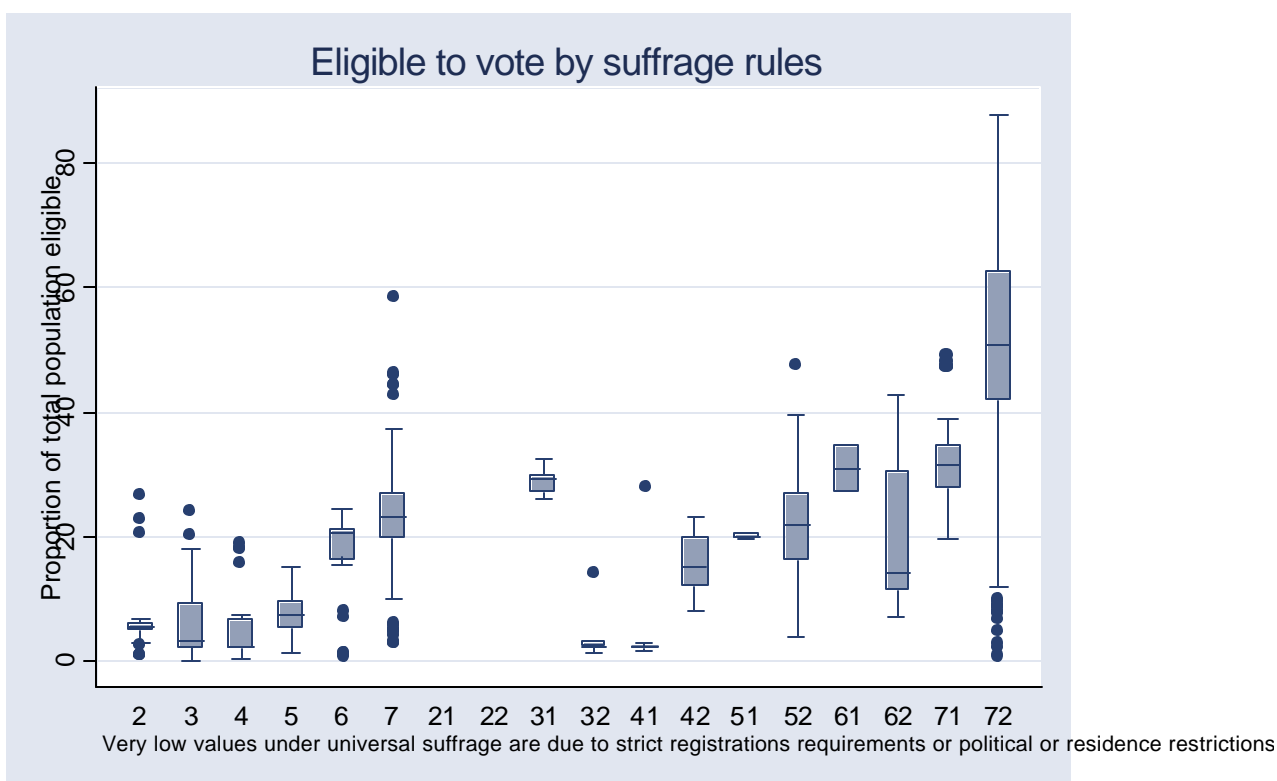


Figure 5

⁸Note that these data do not distinguish among numerical qualifications even within the same country. In several countries franchise was extended by lowering the income threshold. Yet the growth of real incomes, as well as inflation, also enfranchised people without a change of legal criteria.

⁹While suffrage was in principle universal in Laos, Bahrain, and Oman, only persons "nominated" by the government had the right to vote. In turn, in Kuwait male suffrage was universal but only for men whose ancestors lived in the country by 1920.

Coding of suffrage qualifications. For males: 2 property; 3 property, income, tax, or profession; 4 previous (3) and/or literacy; 5 literacy only; 6 "independent"; 7 universal. For females: first digit gives qualifications for males; second digit = 1 indicates that women had to satisfy stricter requirements; second digit = 2 indicates that they qualified on the same basis as males.

With all the twists and turns, however, the proportion of total population that could vote in an average country increased secularly over time. Figure 1, which we have already seen, shows that from a few percent around 1815, the proportion eligible reached more than one half by the end of the past century. Since this is the proportion of total population, these numbers imply that, at least in those countries that hold elections, almost all adults now have the right to vote.

3 Decomposing electoral participation: suffrage extensions and turnout

Since we know that the proportion of the population eligible to vote continued to increase over time, we can now decompose the changes in political participation into a part due to increases in eligibility given turnout and a part due to turnout given eligibility.¹⁰ The purpose of this accounting exercise, I remind, is to weigh those changes in participation that were voluntary, at least insofar as that individuals had the legal right to decide whether or not to vote, against those changes that resulted from extensions of political rights.

During the entire period, participation increased on the average by 1.44 between any two successive elections. Eligibility increased by 1.84, while the turnout of the eligible by only 0.29. Decomposing the change in participation shows that increases in eligibility contributed 1.33 to changes in participation, while changes in turnout only 0.02 (the remaining 0.09 is lost because of averaging). Moreover, as always with caveats about the scarcity of early data, one can distinguish three periods: until about 1860 the increase in participation was due mainly to increasing turnout, between 1860 and about 1970 participation grew mainly due to increases in eligibility but also because of increasing turnout, while during the last quarter of the past century participation increased due only to increased eligibility and in spite of declining turnout.

¹⁰Mathematically, let P stand for participation, E for eligibility, T for turnout, and Δ for change between two successive elections. Since,

$$P = E * T,$$

$$\Delta P = T * \Delta E + E * \Delta T.$$

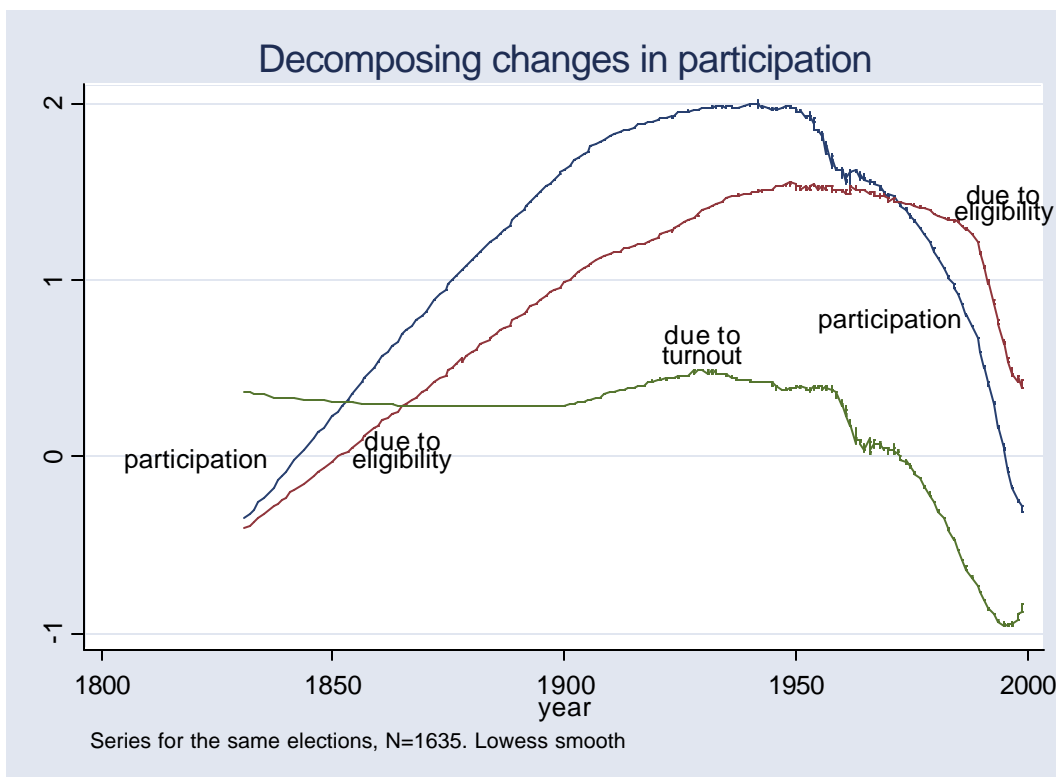


Figure 6

The conclusion is thus that legal provisions regulating the right to vote were much more important in determining whether participation increased than individual choices. Moreover, this conclusion is still understated, since this analysis did not distinguish participation that is either compulsory legally or enforced politically.

This decomposition was based on an implicit assumption that the proportion of those endowed with the right to vote who choose to exercise it does not depend on who and how many they are; in our language, that turnout does not depend on eligibility. Yet there are reasons to expect that the newly enfranchised voters turn out at different rate from those who had the right to vote before (Franklin 2004 cites some). The relation between eligibility and turnout speaks, albeit indirectly, to the following controversy. In one view, suffrage was extended to particular groups when these groups could become politically mobilized to demand it (Cortés and Przeworski 1976, Acemoglu and Robinson 2000). The elite – in singular – confronted the risk that unless these groups were granted credible concessions, they would rise in revolution. And the only concession that could be credible was extending to them the

right to participate (Jack and Lagunoff 2003).¹¹ An alternative view is that the elite (Lizzeri and Persico 2004) or competing elites in plural (Llavador and Oxoby 2005) extended suffrage out of its own economic self-interest, without pressure from below. While these arguments can be tested more directly by examining the historical circumstances under which suffrage was extended (Przeworski 2006), one can expect that if suffrage extensions resulted from antecedent political mobilization, the newly enfranchised groups should turn out at the polls at high rates, while if extensions resulted merely out of interest of the incumbent elite, some time should elapse before these groups would be mobilized to vote.

There are several ways of estimating the impact of eligibility on turnout, but they converge to the conclusion that increasing eligibility by one percent increased participation only by about one-half of one percent, indicating that the newly eligible voters were less likely to vote, at least in their first election.¹² Hence, at least this way of testing the rival hypotheses about the reasons for suffrage extensions speaks in favor of the view that they reflected interests of the elite or of competing elites, rather than an insurrectionary pressure from those who did not enjoy political rights.

Yet participation depends not only on eligibility: it matters what one is called to participate in. This is the topic to which we now turn.

4 Voting and electing

Few people voted in the middle of the eighteenth century. Even where they were formally supposed to be elected, public positions were routinely inherited or appointed. Nobles participated in estate bodies as a matter of inheritance; the clergy was represented by bishops; while towns deputized their officials. Peasants and burgers were elected to their respective chambers in Sweden; deputies to the national parliament were elected by the Polish (perhaps also Hungarian; I am not certain) gentry at local meetings; in some English boroughs – Palmer (1959: 45) cites Westminster – freemen elected their burgesses; some of the *Cabildo*

¹¹Specifically, a promise to make economic concessions is not credible in the Acemoglu and Robinson model if the insurrectionary threat is transitory.

¹²Analytically, if

$$P = E * T(E),$$

$$\Delta P = T * \Delta E + \frac{dT}{dE} * E * \Delta E,$$

which can be rewritten as

$$\frac{\Delta P}{\Delta E} = T * (\eta_{TE} + 1),$$

where η_{TE} is the elasticity of turnout with regard to eligibility. Without any controls, this elasticity is -0.48 (fixed effects estimate with ar1). Regressing in the same way participation on eligibility gives an estimate of -0.40 .

seats were elective in Latin America. Only the British North American colonies enjoyed elective institutions. This is about all.

As time went on, the number of people who in any year voted in legislative elections increased vertiginously. From about 1 million in 1820, their numbers increased to at least 2.5 million in 1850, to at least 21 million in 1900, to 125 million in 1950, and to 730 million in 1996. Thus, from a handful in 1750, the multitude of voters erupted to hundreds of millions. Even without information about many elections, the total number of people who had ever voted in legislative elections by 2000 adds up to 16.4 billion.

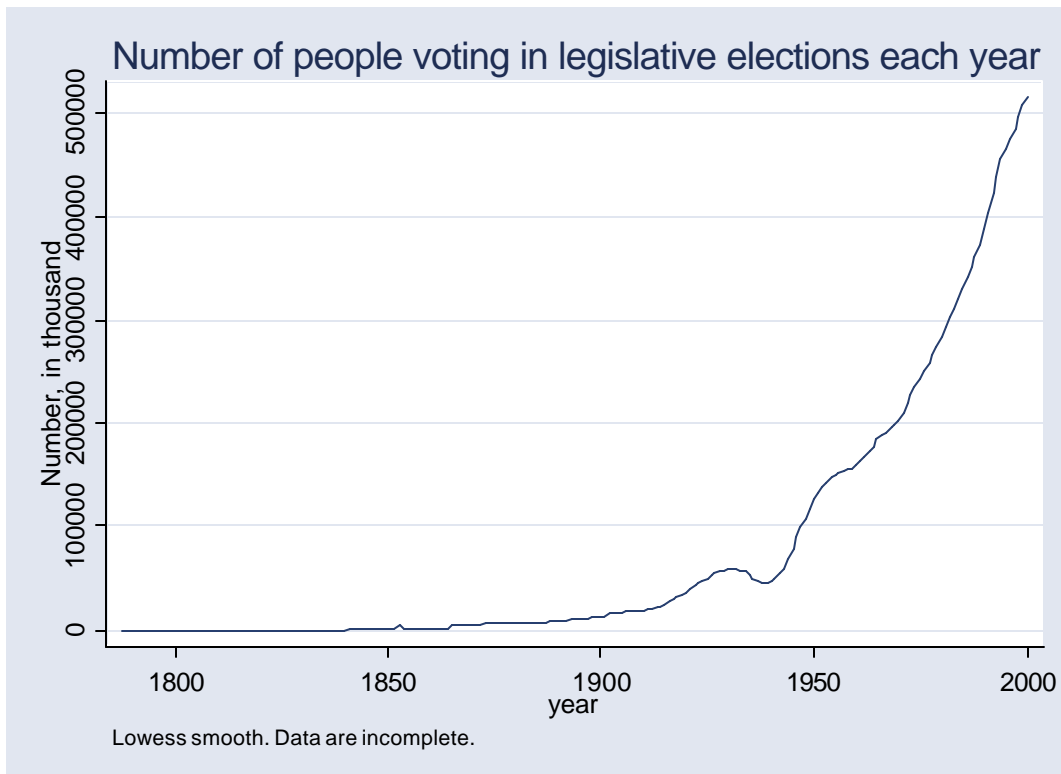


Figure 7

But what were they doing when they voted? To understand why people decide to participate or not, it does not hurt to know what it is that they are called to participate in. Even if the dogma of contemporary U.S. political science is that in elections people are offered a chance to express their individual preferences for policies or candidates bearing policies, this view is not only ahistorical, but perhaps inaccurate even about most U.S. voters.

What, then, did people do when they "participated"? What follows is not a chronology – different views of elections coincided at the same time and overlapped over time in particular countries – but only some conceptual distinctions.

(1) Elections were frequently seen as a way of consensually recognizing those best fit to govern in the best interest of all (Manin 1997).¹³ The role of voters was to acknowledge natural leaders. "The purpose of elections," said the Spanish Moderates around 1870, "is to identify social power and turn it into political power" (Garrido 1998: 214). The quality of leadership, of being "fit to govern,"¹⁴ was manifest and thus spontaneously recognizable as such. Candidatures were unnecessary since, according to Montesquieu (1995 [1748]: 99), "The people is admirable in its ability to choose those to whom it must entrust some part of authority. It has only to decide on the basis of things it cannot ignore and of facts that are self-evident." Condorcet (1986 [1788]: 293) thought that recognizing the natural ability to govern is so simple that even women (albeit only propertied among them) can do it. Madison believed that a large republic would permit such "a process of elections as will most certainly extract from the mass of the society the purest and noblest characters which it contains" (cited in Rakove 2002: 56).

This understanding meant that pretending to have this quality and being rebuked would be shaming; indeed, that the very public demonstration of this pretension would be demeaning. According to Kishlansky (1986), elections were not contested in England until the second part of the seventeenth century. They needed not be contested because the quality of being electable was natural and recognizable. Competing and losing would be a public denial of this quality, with the consequence of dishonor not just for the candidate but for his entire family, for it would have meant that the defeated candidate comes from a family that does not generate a public recognition of its social standing. In revolutionary France competing for election was prohibited during most of the period by law. Candidatures were to emerge spontaneously, "*par électricité morale*" in the language of the time, from the meetings of primary assemblies. To present oneself as a candidate would be to bless equality in taking oneself as better than others. "In our customs," Rosanvallon (2004: 73) cites a contemporaneous voice, "a man who advances the impropriety to the point of soliciting himself the votes of people renders himself unworthy by this very act." In Norway, the electoral law

¹³Manin argues that, as contrasted with selection by lot, elections are inherently an "aristocratic" method of selecting rulers. While I do not disagree, this view was more overt in some countries at some times than in other places at other times.

¹⁴Winston Churchill used this phrase still in 1924 to disqualify Labour government.

of 1826 forbade electioneering and, even when this law was abolished, "such activity was still thought to be hardly respectable" (Popperwell 1972: 130). It was seen as such in Sweden still in the 1860s (Andresson 1998: 359). George Washington simply refused to campaign, confessing that he "would have experienced chagrin," had he not won by "a pretty respectable vote" (Dunn 2004: 15). "It was scarcely possible that, with such a transcendent reputation he should have rivals," Massachusetts congressman Fisher Ames would say. And Washington was elected and reelected unanimously.

(2) Romanelli (1998: 24) emphasizes the persistence of the idea of corporate representation. "At every level in this endless game of social mapping of the nation, the principle of the rational constructions of constituencies on the basis of mere population distribution – which defines the constituency as a fragment of society, and hence not as a community – is opposed to more historical-traditional ones, which refer to the existing communities, to their social structures and hierarchies." In the corporatist conception, elections were seen as a process through which pre-existing communities of interest delegate their representatives to national assemblies where such interests were to be reconciled; in the competing view, elections were to serve as a method for selecting representatives of the entire nation. This conflict dominated constitutional debates in the German states after 1814: "according to the more traditionalist view, these representative bodies had the right to participate in the legislative process only because their members were representatives of autonomous corporations (*Körperschaften*).... By contrast, according to the liberal view, parliaments were assumed to represent the people (*Volk*) as a unitary whole..." (Paolucci 1998: 258). The conflict in Spain around 1840 concerned "the main object to be represented: 'social interests' for the Moderates and 'the true national opinion' for the Progressives." (Dardé and Estrada 1998: 145). A Spanish parliamentary report rejected in 1870 "personal representation, an atomistic and individual system that, based on an abstract idea of citizen ... abandons every essential and permanent relation that binds him to the social order." ((Dardé and Estrada 1998: 149).

The communities to be represented were often territorial, but sometimes functional. In the eighteenth century England, "the electoral franchise was thought of in terms of territories. Enfranchisement meant not the enfranchisement of individuals but the enfranchisement of places." (Hanham 1990: 120; also Romanelli 1998: 10) Annino (1998: 174) highlights the conflict between local autonomies and the national constituency in Latin America: "la nationalisation de la citoyenneté – et avec ceci le vote – signifie dans ces pays nationaliser les communes.

Ces dernières sont nées avant la république, se sont appropriées le territoire, ont dépossédé de ses pouvoirs l'Etat colonial à l'agonie jusqu'à se proclamer 'soveraines.' En conséquence, pourquoi aureint-elles renoncé à cette liberté et accepté une nouvelle souveraineté seulement parce que des élections nationales étaient organisées?" He emphasizes that "La représentation gaticane ou américaine n'eut jamais de fondements individualistes." (1998: 161)¹⁵

Several writers refer to the corporatist view as "traditional," identifying its roots in the systems of estate representation. But the medieval image of society as a body endowed with functional parts was revived in several countries in the guise of "organic democracy." As Romanelli (1998: 28) observed, with the rise of class conflict "a new demand arose for organic and 'physiological' forms of representation which did not insist of the cohesion of traditional communities or estates (Stände) within the nation, but pointed to new social cleavages that cut across contemporary national societies, and therefore to new ways of giving them representation." The corporatist ideology flourished in Europe between the wars independently of fascism, authoritarianism, or democracy (Linz 2004: 556). The Spanish electoral law of 1878 introduced representation of Special Associations (*Colegios Especiales*) (Garrido 1998: 215). Bismarck wanted to set up a corporatist assembly, *Volkswirtschaftsrat*, to dilute the power of the territorially based Diet (Ritter 1990: 55). Candidates to the Italian parliaments of 1929 and 1934 were designated by unions, corporations, cultural organizations, etc. and then approved in a plebiscitary fashion, until elections were abolished in 1939. (Ungari 1990: 132).

(3) Elections under communist and some other dictatorships (for example, Mussolini's Italy, Malagassy Republic between 1976 and 1990) in which voters were offered a single list of official candidates represent yet another case in which voters had no choice to exercise. It is puzzling why such regimes held "elections," in which no one was selected. While a standard interpretation of these rituals is that they simulated democracy in order to render these regimes legitimate in the eyes of the population and perhaps the international community, this interpretation was not credible either to those who organized such elections nor to those who were forced to participate in them. My view is that such elections were in fact an instrument of intimidation: their role was to show to each individual that the regime can make everyone do what it wants – force everyone to appear in a particular place on a particular

¹⁵"Gaticane" refers to the 1812 Constitution of Cadiz, which was influential during the 19th century in the Iberian peninsula as well as throughout Latin America. On the Cadiz Constitution, see Fernández Garcia (2002) and Moreno Alonso (2000).

days and perform the act of throwing a piece of paper into a designated box - thus making it manifest that no collective resistance was feasible. Indeed, the decline of the communist regimes became visible for the first time when electoral turnout failed to reach 60 percent in the Polish local elections of 1984.

One should not think, however, that the communist practices were an historical aberration. The idea of an official government list submitted to voters for a plebiscitary approval was present already in restoration France and was brought to perfection under Napoleon III (Zeldin 1958). The Spanish monarchy gained in this way such a complete control over voters that between 1876 and 1917 it was able to orchestrate a system in which governments alternated in every elections according to a pre-arranged agreement between parties: Garrido (1998: 218) reports that "The electorate did not elect Parliament, and it did not elect the government. The system worked 'from top to bottom': the king named his head of government, who convoked elections, which had, of necessity, to bestow a large majority on his party." In this view of elections, promoting government candidates was not a transgression but a duty of public officials: the French Prime Minister, de Vilèlle, issued in 1822 a circular according to which "All those who are members of my ministry must, to keep their jobs, contribute within the limits of their right to the election of M.P.s sincerely attached to the government" (cited in Zeldin 1958: 79). While his sincerity was not generally shared, lists of "government candidates" were a frequent device in Europe as well as Latin America. Following Chile after 1831 (about which see Valenzuela 1995),¹⁶ several Latin American countries established stable systems of succession in which incumbent presidents completed their terms, faithfully obeying term limits chose their successors, and used governmental power to assure their victory at the polls.¹⁷ The stability of such systems of oligarchical pluralism – Chile between 1831 and 1891 and again until 1924, Nicaragua between 1856 and 1890, Brazil between 1894 and 1930, Argentina between 1897 and 1916, Uruguay between 1898 and 1932, Mexico between 1934 and 2000 – was remarkable. Indeed, to my best knowledge, in the entire history of Latin America only two incumbent presidents who presented themselves for reelection ever lost,

¹⁶Collier and Sater (1996: 58) report that "Delivering the vote was a vital aspect of the Intendant's [equivalent of French *prefet*] work.... Yet Intendants could at times go too far When the young Intendant of Colchagua, Domingo Santa Maria [future president], interpreted the president's instructions to win the elections 'at all costs' a trifle too enthusiastically, this was seized by his enemies as the pretext for his dismissal."

¹⁷For a summary of devices by which these governments controlled results of elections, see Posada-Carbó (2000).

both recently.¹⁸ As Halperin-Donghi (1973: 116) observed, “Among the many ways of overthrowing the government practiced in postrevolutionary Spanish America, defeat at the polls was conspicuously absent.”

(4) The triumph of individualism was thus slow in coming. Choosing a candidate or a party that offers programs closest to the individual preferences may have always guided individual decisions; there is no way to know. But the idea of elections as a process in which each voter is free to choose his or her representative is, I insist, anachronistic when applied to different epochs. As Romanelli (1998: 4) observes, “Historians are fully aware that in nineteenth-century societies uniformity within the nation rarely existed; that social identities were constructed around a multiplicity of ‘corporate’ social subjects, ranging from the family, to the community, to the class; while the concept of the voter – an individual ... who deals directly with the great national issues of his time – is nothing more than an abstraction.” The very idea that the role of voting is to recognize the eminent quality of being able to govern in the common interest of all did not leave room either for individual interests or for choosing. This quality was given objectively and while some voters could err, allowing their passions to cloud their judgments, many seats were either not contested or the acclamation was overwhelming. Neither did the idea that voting consists of selecting delegates that would represent pre-existing communities of interest allow for an individual definition of these interests. These interests were “organic,” given to individuals according to their function in the society. Finally, when incumbent governments presented official lists and enforced their approval with their political muscle, voters had little choice even when these lists were not unique.

These changing conceptions of elections can be seen in their institutional design. Recognizing the manifest quality to govern was a public and to a large extent an informal process, in which elections took place by acclamation, often without candidatures, ballots, or counting of the votes. As a Pennsylvania state legislator, Rep. Mark B. Cohen once commented. “Open ballots are not truly free for those who preferences defy the structures of power or friendship.” (www: answers.com).

The idea of elections as a process of delegation by communities of interest was associated with indirect elections, in which voters recognized their immediate superiors, who then chose those who would represent the community in the national institutions. “Indirect voting systems,”

¹⁸There is also the case of the Costa Rican Braulio Carrillo, first elected in 1835 to complete the term of an incumbent who was forced to resign. Braulio Carrillo lost reelection in 1837 but one year later he overthrew the electoral winner and enacted a constitution that declared him president for life. He was deposed in turn in 1843.

Romanelli (1998: 16) comments, "suggest that the lower ranks are more concerned with local matters and capable of nominating their direct superiors, who are better equipped for wider, political issues at the national level..." Referring to Mexico, Annino (1998: 180) observes that "the persistence of indirect vote blocked the nationalization of citizenship in that country." Paolucci (1998: 289) comments that "Indirect elections and the census criterion were used interchangeably: both were instruments to keep the majority of the population from exerting a direct influence on the composition of parliaments." Bader-Zaar (1998: 297) reports that in Austria it was thought that "the diets would be more interested than voters in nominating 'worthy members'." Direct elections were opposed in 1868 with the argument that the *Reichsrat* "would not represent the kingdoms and their provinces as it should, it would merely represent individual classes of the population."

Early elections tended to be public and indirect. Over time they became legally secret, even though various ballot devices were continually invented to make voters choice transparent: as Bader-Zaar (1998: 325) observes, "The use of ballots, of course, did not necessarily mean that elections were secret." Most elections also became direct, but the idea of collective representation of territorial communities, functional groups (corporations), or electorates distinguished along the lines of income, ethnicity, or religions recurred until today.¹⁹ Figure 8 shows the trends of the proportions of legislative elections that used secret ballot and those that were direct.

¹⁹ Among the 3,048 legislatures for which we have this information, 328 distinguished voters according to estate or income or ethnicity or religion, 184 still after 1950.

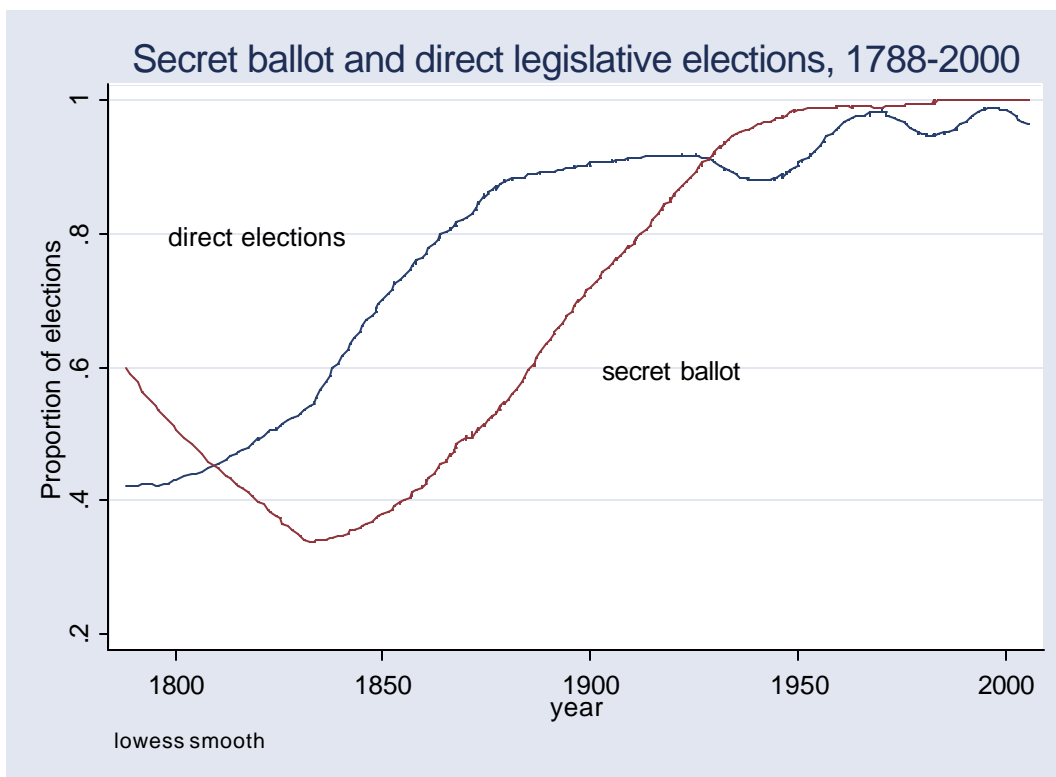


Figure 8

Note: Secret ballot was used in the Batavian Republic in 1796 and 1797 but after its fall voting was open in the Netherlands until 1849. According to our count, sixteen countries held first legislative elections between 1821 and 1849 and of those only Dominican Republic and Bolivia, both in 1844, used secret ballot. The decline around 1950 in the proportion of elections that were direct is due to votes under colonial rule.

Finally, the idea of voting as a plebiscite was expressed in lists of official candidates. "Elections" in which a unique list is presented to voters are a more recent invention. It seems that during the nineteenth century almost all governments that held elections allowed some opposition. While some presidential candidates run unopposed in the nineteenth-century Latin America, the idea of a single party was a technological innovation of V.I. Lenin and it became widespread only during the second half of the past century when almost one half of elections did not give voters any choice.

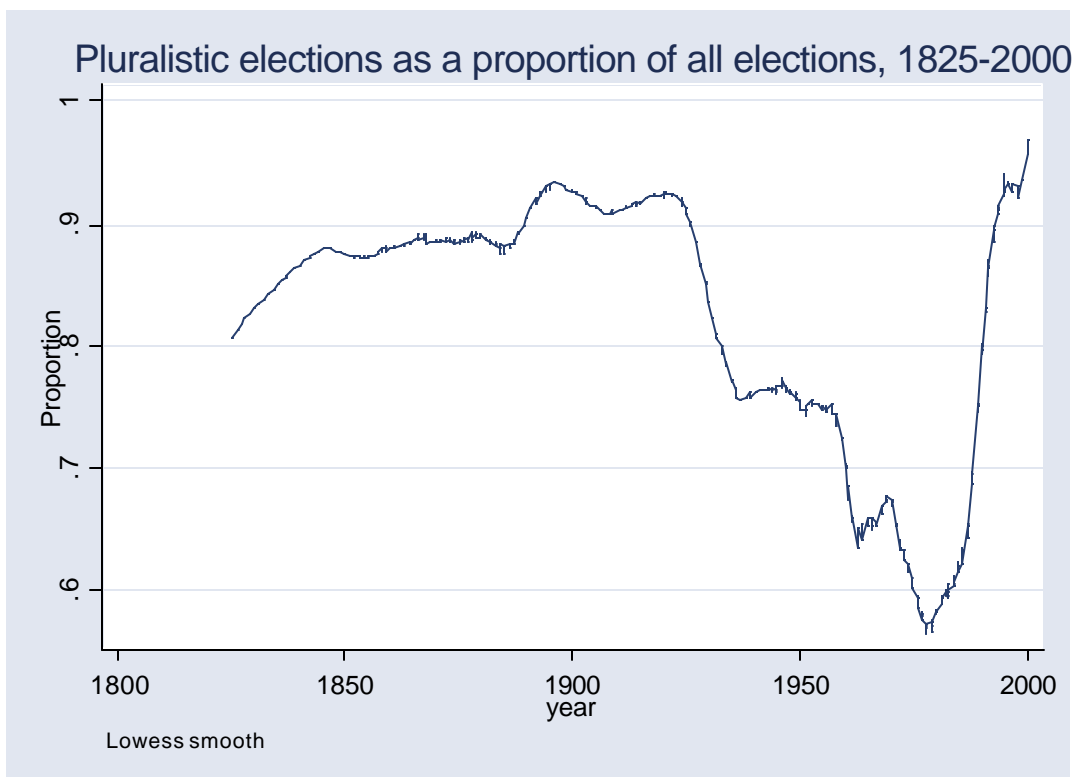


Figure 9

Obviously, one cannot tell how voters interpreted their actions at different periods in different countries. All we can do is to use these institutional manifestations to see if they affected the rate at which those who were eligible turned out at the polls. In what follows, turnout is studied as a function of the proportion eligible, secret or open ballot, direct or indirect elections, compulsory or voluntary voting, the presence or absence of opposition, and the presence of some non-elected seats in the legislature. Since looking at the data indicates that the effect of eligibility on turnout depends on the institutional features of elections, also included are interactions between secret ballot and eligibility as well as between direct elections and eligibility. The results of estimating a country fixed-effects model with first-order autocorrelation. are shown in Table 1.

*** Table 1 here ***

The institutional features play an important role in determining whether individuals who can do so turn at the polls. Given a fixed proportion qualified to vote, introduction of secret ballot increased turnout

by about 13 percent.²⁰ A shift from indirect to direct elections had almost no effect on turnout independently of eligibility.²¹ ²²Legal obligation to vote raises turnout by 7 percent.²³ ²⁴Non-pluralistic elections appear to be accompanied by a political pressure to vote, since turnout is lower by almost 6 percent when elections are pluralistic.²⁵ Finally, turnout is higher by 8 percent when the legislature is fully elected, rather than partially appointed.²⁶

*** Table 2 here ***

As shown in Table 2, the effect of increasing eligibility on turnout depends on these institutional features of elections. When elections were open and indirect or when they were secret and direct, eligibility had no effect on turnout. In turn, increasing eligibility raised turnout when elections were open and direct, perhaps because votes mattered for who would be elected while voting in public allowed the elites to exert pressure on the voters. Finally, turnout declined with increased eligibility when elections were secret but indirect, perhaps because decisions to select was not in the hands of the voters but electors.

²⁰Among the elections for which we have the information, in 2,260 voting was legally secret for everyone. In 402 elections, there was no secret ballot, while in eleven elections (mainly communist Poland) secrecy was optional and in thirty-eight elections (Austria 1870-1906, inter-war Hungary, New Zealand 1870-1936) voting was secret for some voters and open for others. In the statistical analysis, these two latter categories are coded as "open."

²¹In addition to 2,746 elections that were direct for everyone, there were 251 indirect elections, forty-eight elections (some African countries, pre-1906 Austria, pre-1917 Romania, British India) in which some individuals voted directly and some indirectly and twenty-nine elections (Morocco, post-1866 Sweden) in which some collectivities voted directly and some indirectly. Again, the last two categories are coded as indirect.

²²Note that in the Austrian part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, where elections were direct in some and indirect in other provinces at the end of the nineteenth century, turnout was higher under direct elections (Bader_Zaar 1998: 321-322).

²³Voting was optional in 1,983 elections and compulsory for everyone in 508 elections. In addition, in 106 elections (some Central American countries, Brazil, Ecuador, Austria, Switzerland) it was compulsory for some voters and optional for others. These latter cases were coded as compulsory.

²⁴Jackman (no date) reports that estimates of the effect of compulsory voting on turnout range between seven and sixteen percent.

²⁵For example, turnout fell sharply in Mali in 1992 and in Niger in 1993, when these countries shifted from one- to multi-party systems.

²⁶2,739 legislatures were fully elective, while 338 were partly appointed and partly elected.

In addition to these institutional features, in 212 out of 889 elections for which we have this information, some particular categories of potential voters were excluded by additional criteria. In some elections excluded were adherents of particular religions, members of particular ethnic groups, inhabitants of particular regions, military personnel, priests or nuns, or property owners (Mongolia, early USSR). In some cases, electoral laws excluded individuals sympathizing with some political parties or ideologies or not having the requisite “moral character.” We could not analyze the effect of these exclusions conditional on other variables contained in the regression because they are collinear with some other factors. It appears, however, that these exclusions had an impact on reducing turnout: the average difference in turnout between the 677 elections without these additional exclusions and the 212 elections with at least one exclusion is 4.08, which is statistically significant ($t = 2.74, p = 0.0065$).

Hence, individual decisions to participate depend on the institutional relation between voting and electing. Suffrage rules determine who can vote, but other institutional, and perhaps ideational, features of elections also influence individual behavior. Voting plays a different role when elections are indirect than when they are direct; incentives to appear at the polls are different when voting is open than when it is secret. When voting is a duty, voters have a legal obligation to cast a vote; when incumbent governments present official lists of candidates, potential voters are subject to intense political pressure to do so. Not only is the right to participate regulated by law, but the individual incentives to avail oneself of this right are shaped by the relation between voting and electing.

5 De la plutocracie en Amérique

Systems of representative government were born under a mortal fear of participation by the broad masses of the population, a large part of whom were poor and illiterate. Even if *suffrage censitaire* contradicted the democratic norm of suppressing all distinctions in society and was incompatible with the principle of political equality, the right to elect one’s representatives was limited almost everywhere to wealthy males. With only little malice, the problem of “founders,” pretty much everywhere, was how to construct representative government for the rich while protecting it from the poor. Since particular institutional features affect the rich and the poor differentially,²⁷ the strategic problem throughout

²⁷Anduiza (1999) offers the best discussion I read of the impact of interactions between institutions and individual characteristics on voting.

the history of representative government was to design institutions that would either simply keep the poor people out or to render their voice inaudible.

While the arguments were self-serving and convoluted, franchise restrictions were portrayed by their proponents as serving the common good of all. The French Declaration of Rights qualified its recognition of equality in the sentence that immediately followed: "Men are born equal and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be founded only upon the general good." The argument for restricting suffrage was spelled out in full already by Montesquieu (1995: 155), who parted from the principle that "All inequality under democracy should be derived from the nature of democracy and from the very principle of democracy". His example was that people who must continually work to live are not prepared for public office or would have to neglect to their functions. "In such cases," Montesquieu went on, "equality among citizens can be lifted in a democracy for the good of democracy. But it is only apparent equality which is lifted...." The generic argument, to be found in slightly different versions, was that: (1) Representation is acting in the best interest of all. (2) To determine the best interest of all one needs reason. (3) Reason has sociological determinants: not having to work for a living ("disinterest"), or not being employed or otherwise dependent on others ("independence"). As a Chilean statesman put it in 1865, to exercise political rights it is necessary "to have the intelligence to recognize the truth and the good, the will to want it, and the freedom to execute it." (A speech by Senador Abdón Cifuentes, cited in Maza Valenzuela 1995: 153). In turn, the claim that only apparent equality is being violated was built in three steps: (1) Acting in the best common interest considers everyone equally, so that everyone is equally represented. (2) The only quality that is being distinguished is the capacity to recognize the common good. (3) No one is barred from acquiring this quality, so that suffrage is potentially open to all.²⁸

²⁸Restrictions of political rights based on religion were also couched in a universalistic language, but the appeal was not to reason but to common values. From Rousseau and Kant to J.S. Mill, everyone believed that a representative government can function only if it is based on common interests, norms, or values. Emulating the Cádiz Constitution, in Latin America the cement holding societies together was to be Catholicism: of the 103 Latin American constitutions studied by Loveman (1993: 371), eighty-three proclaimed Catholicism as the official religion and fifty-five prohibited worship of other religions. While many arguments for restricting political rights to Catholics were openly directed against the principle of popular sovereignty – "it is not for people to change what God willed" – quite a few were pragmatic. For example, the Mexican constitutionalist Lucas Alamán maintained in 1853 that Catholic religion deserves support by the state, "even if we do not consider it as di-

Whatever one thinks of this logic, the outcome was that birth was replaced by wealth, aristocracy by oligarchy. Still only a select few were to rule in the best interest of all. "The right to make laws belongs to the most intelligent, to the aristocracy of knowledge, created by nature," a Peruvian constitutionalist, Bartolomé Herrera, would declare in 1846 (Sobrevilla 2002: 196). The society was still to be divided into "the rich, the few, the rulers" and "the poor, the many, the ruled": which a Connecticut representative, Samuel Dana, thought was quite proper (Dunn 2004: 23). Almost a century later, Bagehot (1963 [1867]: 277) would warn that "It must be remembered that a political combination of the lower classes, as such and for their own objects, is an evil of the first magnitude; that a permanent combination of them would make them (now that many of them have the suffrage) supreme in the country; and that their supremacy, in the state they now are, means the supremacy of ignorance over instruction and of numbers over knowledge."

The self-serving nature of these convoluted arguments for restricting suffrage to the propertied was apparent. A French conservative polemicist, J. Mallet du Pan, was perhaps first to insist in 1796 that legal equality must lead to equality of wealth: "Do you wish a republic of equals amid the inequalities which the public services, inheritances, marriage, industry and commerce have introduced into society? You will have to overthrow property" (cited by Palmer 1964: 230).²⁹ The Scottish philosopher James Mackintosh predicted in 1818 that if the "laborious classes" gain franchise, "a permanent animosity between opinion and property must be the consequence" (Cited in Collini, Winch and Burrow, 1983: 98). David Ricardo was prepared to extend suffrage only "to that part of them which cannot be supposed to have an interest in overturning the right to property" (In Collini, Winch and Burrow, 1983: 107). Thomas Macaulay (1900: 263) in the 1842 speech on the Chartists vividly summarized the danger presented by universal suffrage: "The essence of the Charter is universal suffrage. If you withhold that, it matters not very much what else you grant. If you grant that, it matters not at all what else you withhold. If you grant that, the country is lost.... My firm conviction is that, in our country, universal suffrage

vine," because it constitutes "the only common tie that connects all Mexicans, when all others are broken" (cited after Gargarella 2005: 93, who provides other examples).

²⁹Hamilton formulated something like this syllogism in his "Plan for the National Government" (in Ketcham 1986: 75), delivered at the Convention on June 18: "In every community where industry is encouraged, there will be a division of it into the few and the many. Hence separate interests will arise. There will be debtors and creditors, etc. Give all power to the many, they will oppress the few." Yet he thought, like Madison, that this effect can be prevented.

is incompatible, not only with this or that form of government, and with everything for the sake of which government exists; that it is incompatible with property and that it is consequently incompatible with civilization.”

The resistance against political participation by the poor was doggedly. Only twenty-five countries, one third of those that had any franchise, had male (including four with female) universal suffrage in 1914, 150 years after first modern representative institutions were established anywhere. Only the revolutionary threat following the world wars induced rulers to concede suffrage to everyone, including the poor. Figure 10 shows the trend of the proportion of countries that had at least male universal suffrage over time, including the countries where suffrage was subsequently curtailed or elections were abolished.

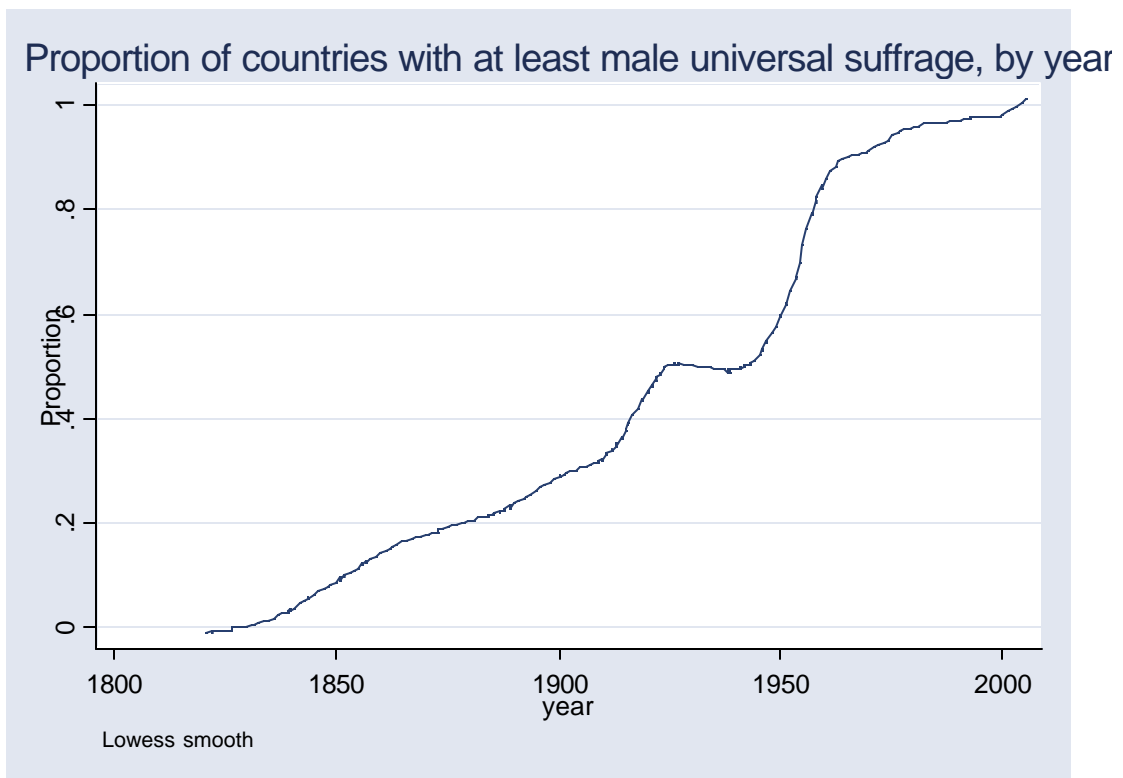


Figure 10

All the early attempts to introduce universal male suffrage, beginning with Liberia in 1839 and Greece in 1844, failed since either suffrage was subsequently restricted or elections were at least temporarily abolished. Of the twenty-five countries that allowed poor males to vote on the eve of World War I, universal suffrage survived uninterrupted until today only

in eight. Moreover, whenever the poor were allowed to vote, institutional devices counteracted its effect. As one speaker observed in the Spanish parliamentary debate about universal suffrage in 1889, "We are going to establish universal suffrage, and then what is going to happen in our national political history? Nothing ... the Congress of Deputies will continue working as it is doing now; the legislative power will be wielded by the Crown with the Cortes; the Crown will have ... all the guarantees and privileges given by the Constitution of 1876" (cited in Garrido 1998: 213).

As long as franchise was restricted, the poor simply could not vote. Combining the information about suffrage with data with regard to turnout, we can read Figure 11 as saying that when suffrage was conditioned on property (*code* = 2), voters were about one-half of male property owners and no one else. In turn, when suffrage was restricted to literate males (*code* = 5), voters were about 60 percent of literates and it did not include illiterates. Etc.

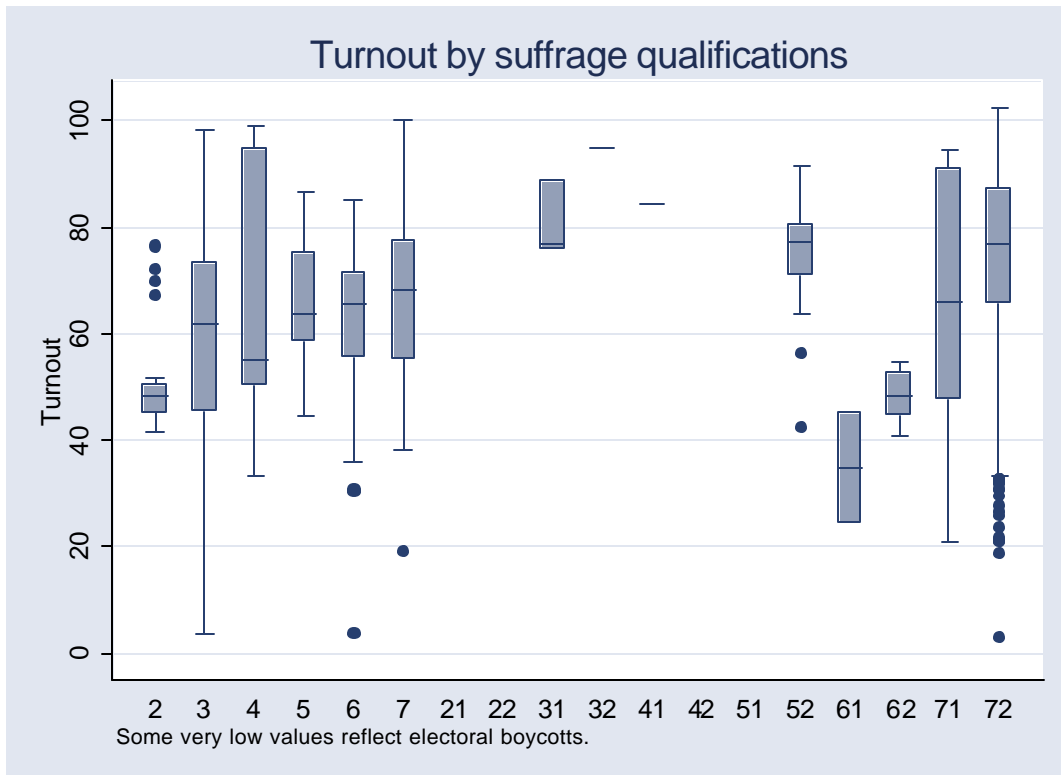


Figure 11

Coding of suffrage qualifications. For males: 2 property; 3 property, income, tax, or profession; 4 previous (3) and/or literacy; 5 literacy only; 6 "independent"; 7 universal. For females: first digit gives qualifications for

males; second digit = 1 indicates that women had to satisfy stricter requirements; second digit = 2 indicates that they qualified on the same basis as males.

Once suffrage became broad, however, it is not possible to tell who voted and who did not without information from micro-level data. At the aggregate level, contrary to some findings with limited samples and periods, there seems to be no relation between per capita income of a country and turnout. If turnout has been falling recently in several countries (which makes turnout curve under female franchise assume an inverted U-shape), it is not because of high income, but something else (Franklin 2004; Norris 2002).

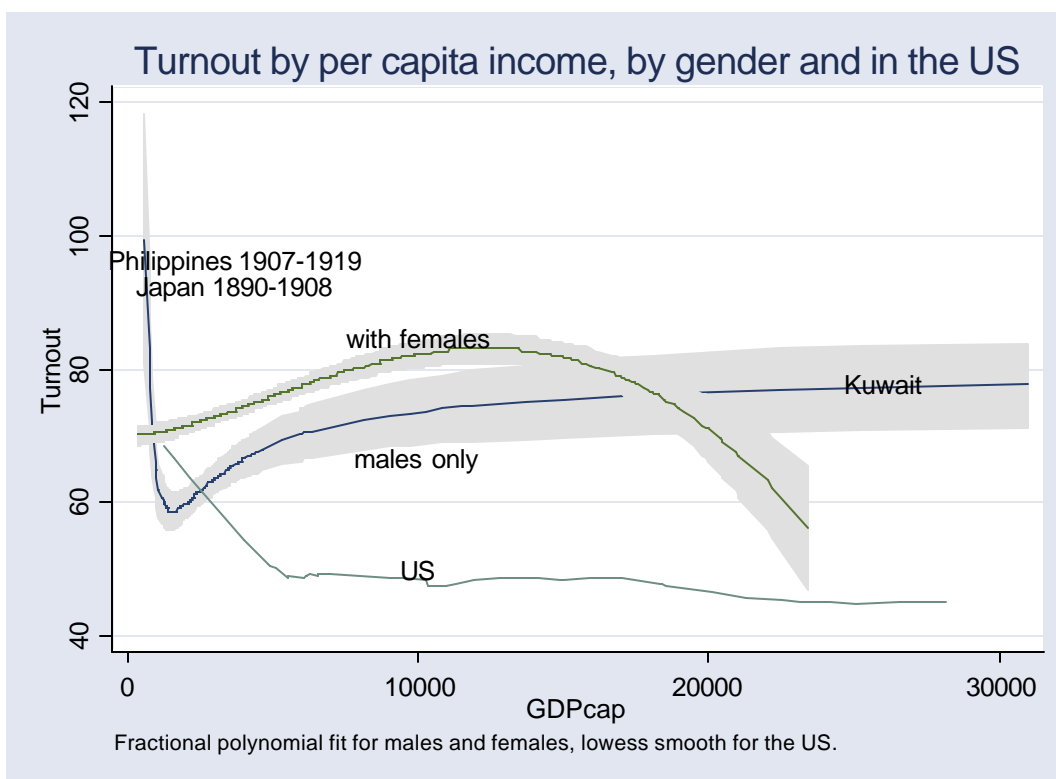


Figure 12

While not exactly the same, micro-level data are now available for a wide range of countries. This information clearly adds up to the conclusion that people who are relatively poorer, whether in terms of income or some other understanding of poverty, are not less likely to vote than those who are better off. Recalculating the data reported by Anduiza (1999: 102) for fourteen Western European countries shows that the

average difference between the turnout of the top and bottom income quartiles was only 6 percent. The largest difference, in France, was 16.4 percent. According to Norris's (2002: 93-94) analysis of pooled data from twenty-two countries, the difference in turnout between the highest and the lowest quintile was 9.6, but this sample includes the United States. Norris's (2004: 174) data for thirty-one countries in 1996, including again the United States, shows this difference to be 8 percent. Moving outside Europe and its offshoots to poorer countries, shows again that income has no impact on turnout. Yadav (2002) found that members of the scheduled casts and registered tribes voted at higher rates than people who were better off in India during the 1990s; a finding confirmed by Chu and Lagos (2005) and by Krishna (2006) within North Indian villages. Using data from Afrobarometer for fifteen African countries, Bratton (2006) found that the poor were somewhat more likely to vote than the non-poor. Booth and Seligson (2006) report that in a pooled analysis of six Central American countries plus Mexico and Colombia turnout was not related to income. But there is a clear outlier to these results: according to Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995: 190), while in the United States 86 percent of those with incomes of \$75,000 or over turn out at the polls, only one half of those with incomes under \$15,000 do.

The impact of education seems to vary more across countries. Bratton (2006) as well as Booth and Seligson (2006) find that educated people are somewhat more likely to vote in their respective regions. Norris (2002: 93-94) estimates the difference of turnout between college graduates and high school dropout to be 9.5 percent, while her sample of thirty-one countries in 1996 shows a difference of 14 percent (2004: 175). Yet Norris emphasizes that education has no effect on turnout in Western Europe. Anduiza's (1999: 99) data show the difference between the turnout of "high" and "low" education to be only 2.3 percent in fifteen European countries, with six countries in which people with low education turn out at higher rates than the most educated ones. The highest difference in favor of highly educated is in Switzerland, which is an outlier at 19.2 percent. Goodrich and Nagler (2006) data show the average difference between the top and bottom quartiles of education to be 8.3 percent in fifteen countries not including the United States, with Switzerland again the outlier at 22.7 percent. But they also show the difference for the United States: it is 39.6 percent.

To summarize these findings differently, about 85 percent of people in the bottom income quartile vote in Western Europe (Anduiza 1999: 102), about 75 percent of people in the bottom quintile voted in twenty-two countries in Norris's (2002) sample, which is almost the same as

in Norris's (2004) sample of thirty-one countries, both including the United States. About 88 percent of people with low education vote in Western Europe (Anduiza 1999: 99), about 77 percent in Norris sample of twenty-two countries, and about 68 percent in her sample of thirty-one countries, again including the United States. In the United States, about one half of people with low income or low education do not vote. Thus, general theories of voting based on the experience of the United States appear ludicrous in the cross-national context.

I will not venture into explanations. Placing the United States in a cross-national context immediately points to the fact that it is one of the few countries, along France, where registration is not automatic and before 1993 was quite difficult in most states. Delving into history shows that the introduction of various registration impediments at the end of the nineteenth century sharply reduced turnout, with a ballpark estimate of about one-third (Testi 1998). Yet registration requirements were relaxed and made uniform in 1993 with some effect on registration but almost no effect on turnout (for a summary literature on this topic, see Hill 2006). Moreover, different estimates converge to the effect that even if registration were automatic, turnout in the United States would increase by no more than 10 percent, which would still leave it well below the rate of other countries. Hence, something other than registration is at play. All I can conclude is that somehow in the United States the poor are successfully barred from electoral politics, in spite of universal suffrage, egalitarian ideology, and all the hoopla about democracy.

6 Some implications

All elections take place under some rules and in specific ideational contexts. And the rules, as well as the ideas, that organize voting affect who participates and with what consequences. Elections are always "manipulated":³⁰ since it is impossible to hold elections without some rules and since these rules affect behaviors, outcomes of elections are inevitably shaped by their rules. Elections are thus inescapably Madisonian: they "filter" the people's voice. Whether they also "refine" it or only deform it in the interest of the current rulers is a different question.

This is not an argument against "rational choice." One can easily suppose that rulers, however they become rulers, use their control over the rules under which people vote to their own advantage, to prevent los-

³⁰One should distinguish "manipulation" from "fraud." Since all elections are structured by some rules and procedures, they are inextricably "manipulated." "Fraud," in turn, means that the rules and procedures are not observed, whatever they are. On the difficulty of defining electoral fraud in the nineteenth century Latin America, see Annino (1995: 15-18).

ing. Sometimes the incumbents just do not hold elections. When they have to hold elections, for the fear they would be overthrown in some other way, incumbents invent innumerable devices to prevent the people from deciding. They regulate who can vote: this was our main theme. And when they cannot prevent undesirables from voting, they use other institutional devices. We have seen that it matters whether voting is secret and elections are direct, whether voting is compulsory legally or enforced politically. And the list of institutional devices extends far beyond those we could consider systematically: the inventiveness of rulers in modulating the peoples' voice seems to have no limits. Different forms (or even colors) of ballots makes voting visible even when it is legally secret. Malapportionment is but a less visible manner of weighted or plural voting. Electoral formulae, particular levels of effective thresholds, not only aggregate individual votes but also affect the incentives to participate. Reserving some part of the legislature for appointed seats is another precaution, used in 233 out of 2,524 lower houses of legislatures that were elected and allowed to meet.³¹ Dividing voters into separate constituencies along the lines of income, ethnicity, or religion is yet another instrument for manipulating representation, used in 120 elections of 2,291 fully elected legislatures. A single list is thus but an extreme of a whole spectrum of devices by which participation and its results are controlled. And if everything else fails, incumbents can still try to ignore the result of voting: forty-four legislatures were illegally closed by the end of year in which the election occurred and 118 more before their term had expired, so that about 1/14 legislatures (out 2,284 for which we have the requisite information) could not complete their terms.

One can also easily believe that individual voters behave rationally at the polls, that people use their right to vote to advance their objectives, whatever these may be, given the constraints. While the discussion of the individual decisions to vote has been hopelessly derailed by the assumption that individuals experience the act of voting as a cost, there are plausible arguments to the effect that people value choosing (Sen 1991, Przeworski 2003) as well as ample evidence that masses of people are willing to struggle and to bear sacrifices for the right to elect their rulers. Yet the right to vote is not the same as the right to elect. Institutional devices regulate the relation between voting and electing. They not only determine who can participate but what one participates in. Indeed, I hope to have shown that during most of the history of representative government these constraints have been so tight that little room was left for individual choice, however rational it would have been.

³¹The number of fully or partly appointed or hereditary upper houses is obviously much larger.

In the end, the voice of the people is modulated and orchestrated under the direction of a baton. Sometimes this baton is a vulgar truncheon, visible and painful. At other times it is wielded so adroitly that it becomes invisible: we then have "fair," "democratic" elections. But a "filtered" voice is always an orchestrated one.

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Table 1: Institutional determinants of turnout

```

FE (within) regression with AR(1) disturbances   Number of obs   =   1161
Group variable (i): country                     Number of groups =   101

R-sq:  within = 0.0340                          Obs per group: min =   1
        between = 0.1347                          avg =   11.5
        overall = 0.1472                          max =   61

corr(u_i, Xb) = -0.1040                          F(8,1052)       =   4.63
                                                Prob > F        =   0.0000
    
```

turnout	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
eligible	.1014402	.4149613	0.24	0.807	-.7128058	.9156861
secret ballot	13.35849	5.588163	2.39	0.017	2.393279	24.32371
secret*eligible	-.7265698	.2243265	-3.24	0.001	-1.166748	-.2863915
direct election	-3.341265	5.606366	-0.60	0.551	-14.3422	7.659667
direct*eligible	.7146528	.3536267	2.02	0.044	.0207587	1.408547
compulsory vote	7.165707	3.553247	2.02	0.044	.1934492	14.13797
opposition	-5.980383	1.855882	-3.22	0.001	-9.622034	-2.338732
fully elected	7.901394	4.558932	1.73	0.083	-1.044239	16.84703
constant	103.6346	.398768	259.89	0.000	102.8521	104.4171
rho_ar	.98035534					
sigma_u	12.961793					
sigma_e	6.9984866					
rho_fov	.77427754	(fraction of variance due to u_i)				

F test that all u_i=0: F(100,1052) = 0.32 Prob > F = 1.0000

Eligible: Proportion of population that has the right to vote.
 Secret ballot: Dummy variable = 1 if secret.
 Direct election: Dummy variable = 1 if direct.
 Compulsory vote: Dummy variable = 1 if voting is compulsory.
 Opposition: Dummy variable = 1 if voters are offered more than one list or partisan divisions can be discerned within the legislature.

Table 2: The effect on turnout of increasing eligibility by 1 percent ,
given institutional features of the election.

<i>elections</i>	<i>indirect</i>	<i>direct</i>
<i>open</i>	0.10 ($N = 116$)	0.81 ($N = 326$)
<i>secret</i>	-0.62 ($N = 127$)	0.08 ($N = 2, 234$)

Note: These numbers are obtained by summing the coefficients on eligible
and the relevant interaction terms.

8 Appendix: Registration and eligibility.

Whenever registration to vote in a particular election is not automatic for those who qualify under the formal criteria, it frequently introduces additional barriers. If we distinguish those who can actually cast a vote in a particular election from those who are qualified to do so by the legal criteria, tautology (1) becomes

$$\frac{voters}{population} = \frac{eligible}{population} * \frac{registered}{eligible} * \frac{voters}{registered}. \quad (3)$$

Unfortunately, with the exception of the US after 1960, we do not have separate data for the eligible and the registered series. All we can do is to distinguish (1) the series which Nohlan gives as the numbers of registered (which equal eligibles if registration is automatic), (2) data from Caramani for eligibles in Western Europe, from (3) the series that merges registered and eligibles that was used in the text. As Figure A1 shows, at least during the later period, when most data come from, the Western European eligible series exhibits higher proportions than Nohlan's number for registered voters in other parts of the world. We cannot tell to what extent this difference is due to the fact that the two series cover different regions, but one can suspect that some part of it is due to registration requirements.

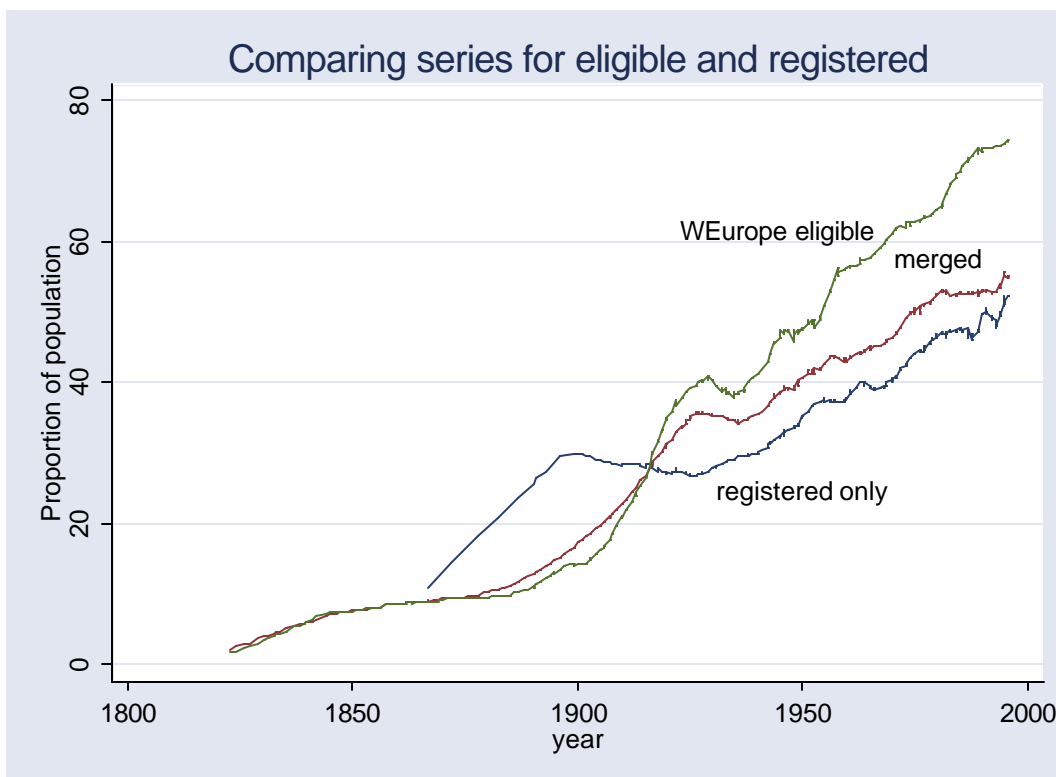


Figure A1

The difference between eligible and registered voters is pronounced in the United States,³² but we already know that it is a deviant case.

³²In the United States, particularly after 1870, when suffrage became restricted to citizens, strict residency requirements were applied at four levels (state, county, city, and precinct). By 1880 twenty-eight out of thirty-eight states had some form of registration in effect, while poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses made registration difficult for a large segment of the population. Testi (1998: 400) estimates that about one-third of formally eligible persons could not register to vote in the United States after 1900. Rusk's (2001) post-1960 data confirm this estimate, insofar as the registered are about 2/3 of the eligible.

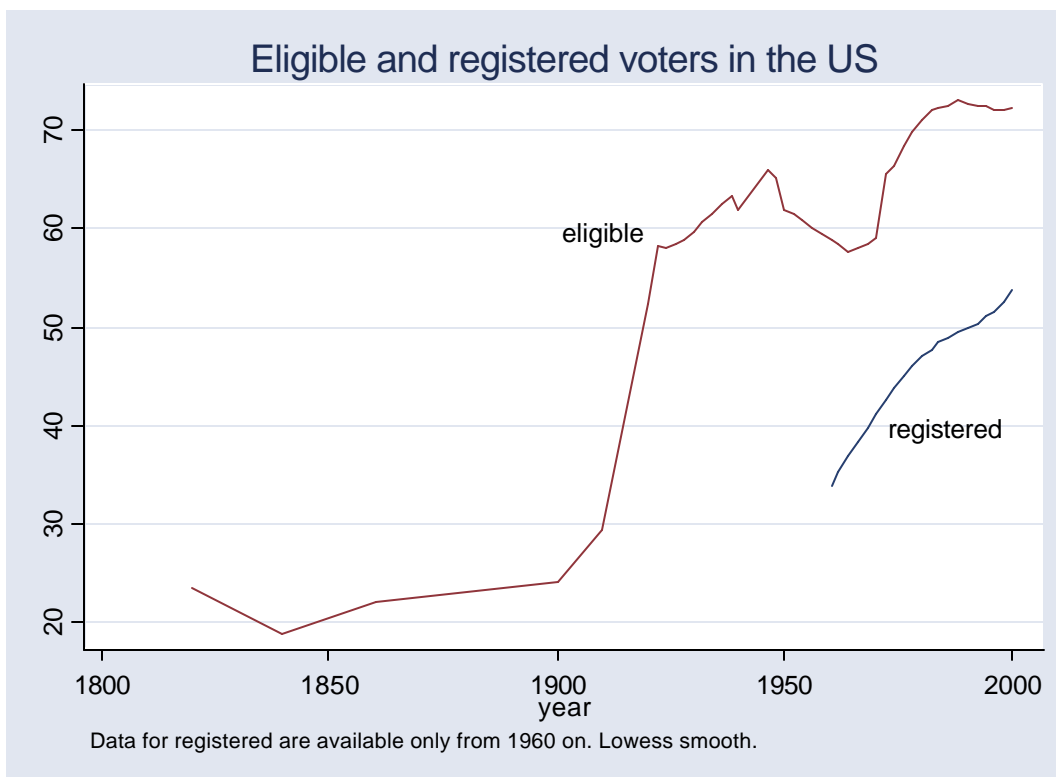


Figure A2