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

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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 reform in Italy, 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 and intimidation as well as in districts where conservative candidates had signed a secret pact (the so-called Gentiloni pact) with the Catholic Electoral Union. We discuss the implications of our findings for distributive conflict theories of democratization.

Keywords: democratisation, franchise extension, swing districts, *de facto* and *de jure* power, Vatican, political violence

JEL classification: D72

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"Everything must change so that everything can remain the same"

[Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa: The Leopard]

1 Introduction

Does changing the body of democratically empowered citizens affect the identity of those called to represent them? This is a central question in political economy since modern democracy is based on representation and empirical research consistently suggests that the personal characteristics and party affiliation of elected representatives are strongly related to the type of policies they advocate.[1] Correlations between implemented policies and the extent of political rights are also well documented both across contemporary states and historically.[2] Lindert (1994, 2004), for example, shows how the arrival of *de jure* political equality in Western European countries during the late 19th and early 20th century was generally followed by rapid public policy changes. Referring to what he defined *"the 1880-1930 laboratory"*, he 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.

Causal evidence on the consequences of enfranchisement is more difficult to establish. Most empirical studies exploit institutional variation that occurs across countries. In such settings, however, it is difficult to convincingly establish causality.[3] Natural experiments within a country have a better chance of identifying causal relations, although both institutional changes and potential outcomes are necessarily more limited than in a cross-country setting. Both cross-country and within-country studies also face another challenge: institutional reforms often come in "bundles", therefore not allowing the identification of the effect of political equalization in itself.[4]

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. First, this is one of the most signif-

[1] Among others, Besley and Case (2003), Lee et al. (2004), Petterson-Libdom (2008) provide evidence of a partisan impact on public policy (Ferreira and Gyourko, 2009, however, find no impact in the case of US municipalities). Pande (2003), Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004), Clots-Figueras (2010) provide evidence on the policy impact of the personal identity of elected representatives. Jones and Olken (2005) show that the identity of leaders has an impact on economic growth.

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

[3] For a discussion of the limits of cross-country analysis for the study of institutions see Pande and Udry (2006) and Capoccia and Ziblatt (2010).

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

icant franchise extensions in Western Europe. The reform almost trebled the size of the electorate from slightly less than three million to 8,650,000 (see Figure 1) and left only about half a million adult males disenfranchised.[5] 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 been more modest. This heterogeneity can help to 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, our analysis is motivated by recent theories that stress the role of economic conflict in democratization processes: I will refer to them as *"distributive conflict theories of democratization"*.[6] A common starting point of these theories is an apparent historical puzzle: a movement towards political equality increases the power of people with policy preferences which are likely to differ from those of previously enfranchised voters.[7] Applying the simple logic of the median voter theorem, enfranchisement should move public policy away from the preferences of the elite (Meltzer and Richard, 1981). So why did the elite extend the franchise?

[5] Historians refer to this reform as the introduction of "quasi-universal" manhood suffrage. Figure 1 shows the number of registered voters in the Italian Kingdom from the annexation of Rome to the advent of fascism.

[6] In an important recent contribution Ansell and Samuels (2014) refer to them as *"redistributivist theories"* of democratization.

[7] Here and in the rest of the paper I refer to "preferences" not in the sense of a primitive of an economic model. Different policy preferences can be derived from the same primitive preferences but different endowments, in which case they indicate an economic conflict rather than different intrinsic predispositions.

According to Acemoglu and Robinson (2000, 2006a), elites were forced to extend the franchise by credible revolutionary threats. By extending the franchise elites could appease the masses by committing not only to current but also to future redistribution because any reallocation of *de jure* power is costly.[8] 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).

Following a different logic, but also based on the Meltzer and Richard model, Boix (2003) argues that democratisation has been historically promoted by economic equality and capital mobility: less inequality reduces the redistributive demands of the median voter and higher capital mobility increases the efficiency costs of redistribution, hence both reduce the equilibrium tax rates[9] and therefore the opposition of the elite to democracy.[10]

An alternative possibility is that regime change was the consequence of an internal conflict within the elite. For Lizzeri and Persico (2004) the urban and industrial elites pressed for franchise extension in order to move the equilibrium policy towards more public goods provision and less patronage.[11] Such elite groups gained the upper hand gradually during the 19th century which would explain the gradual extension of the franchise that occurred during that period.[12] Ansell and Samuels (2014) also criticise the Acemoglu and Robinson approach by arguing that, rather than being in conflict with property, democracy served the purpose of protecting the rights of an emerging propertied class. The relevant cleavage would then oppose the landed (and politically empowered) elite to a wealthy but underrepresented bourgeoisie.

Theories of democratization based on distributive conflict mantain that the newly and the formerly enfranchised should have, on average, different preferences. Consistent with this hypothesis, our empirical analysis shows that enfranchisement caused an increase in the vote share of social reformers. We also find, however, that franchise extension had negative

[8] See also Conley and Temimi (2001).

[9] On this point see also Freeman and Quinn (2012).

[10] The literature on the determinants of democratisation is vast: here I only discuss the theories most closely related to the subsequent empirical investigation. Another prominent hypothesis, modernisation theory (Lipset, 1959), posits that, for various reasons, democracy follows economic development. This theory has been criticised by Rueschemeyer *et al.* (1992) on theoretical grounds and by Przeworski and Limongi (1997) and Acemoglu et al. (2009) on empirical grounds. Boix and Stokes (2003) and Boix (2011) provide evidence that economic development both increases the likelihood of transition to democracy and, once established, makes democracy more likely to survive. For an enlightening account and long run analysis of the determinants of enfranchisement see Przeworski (2009).

[11] The reason is that enlarging the electorate makes the provision of public goods a more effective way to gain votes compared to pork-barrel politics.

[12] See also Oxoby and Llavador (2005).

effects on the legislative representation of these same social reformers, and no effect on their probability to run for office, or on the competitiveness of elections. It also had no impact on the legislative representation of aristocrats and other members of the traditional conservative elites.

We show that the political impact of the 1912 reform was minimal mainly for two reasons: 1) disadvantaged voters supported the social reformers more than the elite[13] but the difference is not overwhelming; 2) a concerted effort of conservative elites managed to minimize the consequences of the reform. We document and analyze these efforts by providing evidence on the effects of political violence in marginal districts and of a secret pact (the Gentiloni pact) between the conservatives and the Vatican to mobilize Catholic voters. We show that, although social reformers increased their vote share on average as a consequence of enfranchisement, this increase is concentrated in electoral districts where they made no difference. Social reformers were instead systematically defeated in key swing districts.

Our findings can be directly related to the theories discussed above. First of all, as opposed to the assumption often encountered in voting models, there is no mechanical correspondence between *de jure* political equality and *de facto* empowerment of individuals. When elites decide to democratize, they still manage to retain sufficient *de facto* power to minimize the representation of the interests of the newly enfranchised.[14] This leaves us with two possibilities: either democracy cannot be used by elites as a commitment device (not in the short run at least) or non-elite groups do not fully understand what is happening. On the other side, elites' efforts to neutralise democracy should be expected if democratisation arrives as a consequence of an intra-elite conflict, since the part of the elite whose interests are threatened by democracy can still use its *de facto* power to reduce the effects of democratisation.

Second, 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 in ways that previous research has been unable to account for. In a sense, this can be regarded as yet another dimension of intra-elite competition whereby, in our specific setting,

[13] Some studies have found that disadvantaged groups often vote disproportionately for candidates representing the interests of wealthier voters (see for example De La O and Rodden 2008 and Gelman et al. 2008). This is not the case here.

[14] Acemoglu and Robinson (2008) discuss how "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 Italy, or an extremely malapportioned one like in the USA. We show that the advantages retained by the elites in Italy were both institutional (maintaining the existing electoral district boundaries in spite of different population dynamics in the cities and in the countryside) and strategic (the ability to strike a secret pact with the Vatican).

enfranchisement appears to have offered to a powerful clerical elite new opportunities to influence Italian politics. Models á la Meltzer and Richard, based on unidimensional distributive conflict and redistributive policy appear unable to capture this complexity and the muldimensionality of institutional change.

2 Historical background

2.1 The political landscape

2.1.1 The *Estrema*

According to distributive conflict theories of democratization, parties with a programme of social and institutional reform should be the main beneficiaries of an extension of the franchise. In Italy 1912 these parties were the Radicals, the Republicans and the Socialists. They were together refered to as the *"Estrema"*. Although coming from different histories and traditions, these parties advocated similar policies, sharing demands for both economic and democratic reforms.[15] They were moderate and reformist when the electoral reform was passed.

2.1.2 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.[16] 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"*.[17] 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

[15] The parties of the Estrema shared proposals for important economic reforms (like abolishing import tariffs on grain and reducing military spending), as well as ambitious programmes of social reform that ranged from the tax system to schooling and labor regulations. Proposals for institutional reforms included universal suffrage, an elected upper chamber (Senators were appointed by the government) and the replacement of Monarchy with Republic.

[16] *"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).

[17] Collier (1999), p. 70.

Constitutionals, however, accepted current institutional arrangements and recognized the authority of the Monarchy. Whether conservative or moderately progressive, they regarded themselves as the ruling elite, the only people that could possibly govern the country.

2.1.3 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 participate in public 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 prohibition of theVatican, 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 Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti. 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).

2.2 The electoral law and the 1912 reform

The electoral reform was proposed by Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti in June 1911.[18] The existing franchise law, in place since 1882, granted voting rights on the basis of literacy and census criteria. According to the existing electoral law 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 number of 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, it was not difficult for an average industrial worker regularly paying taxes

[18] Giovanni Giolitti, a moderately progressive Constitutional close to the northern industrial elite, was the dominant political figure from 1901 to 1914. Historians commonly refer to this period as the "Giolitti era".

to satisfy condition (b). The literacy condition could be satisfied in two ways: 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 official (in this case the applicant needed to meet another requirement).

The new law granted universal suffrage to all males over 30, only keeping the pre-existing restrictions for males between 21 and 30. The voting right was also granted to any adult male who had served in the army.

Giolitti's proposal was not greeted with favor by the Estrema. Socialist Gaetano Salvemini, the most 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 favor of the masses when they have a firm grip on the monopoly of political power".*[19]

The Socialists were also remarkably absent from the parliamentary debates that followed the proposal, to the point that their leader Filippo Turati, explicitly felt the need to defend their lack of 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".*[20] This could have been just a tactic to avoid conceding any merit to Giolitti for the reform. More likely, however, it reflected a real dilemma and an ongoing debate inside the Socialist party between advocates of universal suffrage[21] and the moderate leadership, which only paid lip service to the cause of enfranchisement.[22] This debate also reflected the fact that the moderate leadership was concentrated in urban areas in the North (where blue collar workers were often already enfranchised) and was generally suspicious about the real attitudes of disenfranchised peasants.[23]

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[19] L'Avanti!, May 9, 1912. My translation.

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

[21] In 1905 Salvemini already had a rather "Downsian" view 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".* Salvemini (1905), p. 371. My translation.

[22] For the dominant reformist faction *"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"* (Bonomi,1905, p. 341. My translation).

[23] Further details on the debate surrounding the reform are provided in Appendix A4.

2.3 Was enfranchisement due to revolutionary threats?

As in the rest of Europe, suffrage extensions arrived in Italy as a concession from the elite and, similarly to other cases, historians have speculated for decades about its real motivations. In Appendix A3 I will make an attempt to link the hypotheses advanced by historians to more general ideas about democratisation. For the moment, however, it is important to establish that, differently from what posited in redistributivist theories, the reform was unlikely to be the consequence of a revolutionary threat.[24]

A number of factors seem to indicate that revolutionary pressure was low, and certainly lower than in previous years. In 1911, when Giolitti proposed the reform, all the parties of the Estrema were controlled by relatively moderate leaders and one party, the Radical party, had three ministerial positions in the Giolitti government. Compared with previous years social conflict was low, as shown in Figure 2 by the relatively low number of strikes and the number of participants in strikes.[25] 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). In brief, it appears unlikely that the reform was triggered either by an economic crisis or by the threat of a revolution.[26]

3 Research design and data

3.1 Empirical strategy

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

[24] See Acemoglu and Robinson (2006a). Convincing evidence that the Great Reform Act of 1832 was passed because of a revolutionary threat has been provided by Aidt and Franck (2015). The contrast with our case illustrates why complex phenomena like democratization cannot be easily interpreted by using monocausation.

[25] One of Giolitti's main achievements was to establish 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 were characterized by 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).

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

$$S_i^{13} = \alpha^{13} + \beta_P \frac{E_i^P}{E_i^{13}} + \beta_N \frac{E_i^{13} - E_i^P}{E_i^{13}} + e_i^{13} \tag{1}$$

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, which is common to all electoral districts in 1913, 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 (voters that died or moved elsewhere) and entry (new voters that met the capacity condition or moved into the district) compensate each other.[27]

If we assume β_P and β_N to be constant (after taking into account the time-specific effect α^t), at least in the short time span we consider, then we can write a similar equation for 1909:[28]

$$S_i^{09} = \alpha^{09} + \beta_P + e_i^{09} \tag{2}$$

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

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

This specification allows us to recover the difference in the propensity to vote *Estrema* among the two groups of voters. This is a differences-in-differences 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 will use control variables, province specific shocks and previous changes in dependent variables. Regressions using placebo treatments will help us to understand what the impact of pre-existing trends on our results is. Using insights from Altonji et al. (2005) and Oster (2016), we will also provide an assessment of the omitted variable bias affecting our estimates under the assumption that selection on unobservables is proportional to selection on observable variables.

[27] We will discuss this assumption in Section 3.3.

[28] This assumption ignores the possibility of strategic voting and, more generally, possible reactions of the formerly enfranchised to the new political situation. We are also ignoring possible differences in turnout rates across the two groups of voters: β_P and β_N bypass that stage and represent the overall reduced-form propensity to vote Estrema (where the alternatives are both voting for other parties and not voting). As it will be argued later in the article, 1909 outcomes remain a valid counterfactual even in the presence of these limitations.

3.2 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*). One of our key dependent variables is the vote percentage of Estrema candidates in the first election round.

Biographical information on MPs has been collected from Malatesta (1940). We use information regarding their family and social background: whether the MP is an aristocrat, a big landowner, a high-ranked military officer or a diplomat (see Table 1). These groups were generally close to the Monarchy and represented the traditional (and often most conservative) elites. We also collected information on whether the MP belongs to a political dynasty, which also signals being part of an established influential family.

Data on the socioeconomic characteristics of electoral districts have been reconstructed using the 1901 and 1911 Censuses. 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, of landless agricultural workers, of agricultural workers cultivating their own land, of real estate owners, of 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.[29] Further details on these variables are provided in the Appendix. Information on other variables is provided in the Sections where they are used.

3.3 Correlates of enfranchisement

Our main explanatory variable, $\frac{E_i^{13}-E_i^{09}}{E_i^{13}}$ (from now on ΔE) varies substantially across electoral districts.[30] This variation can be related to a large extent to heterogeneity in illiteracy.[31] An OLS regression of ΔE over male illiteracy rates (column 1 in Table 2) shows that 55% of the variation in enfranchisement can be explained by literacy alone. Column 2 in Table 2 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

[29] Literacy, urbanization and the share of industrial workers are obviously linked with the modernization theory. For the importance of land ownership and inequality see Ziblatt (2008).

[30] See Figures A1-A3 in the Online Appendix and the discussion therein.

[31] Figure A4 in the Online Appendix plots ΔE over male illiteracy rates in 1911 showing, not surprisingly, a strong positive correlation. The correlation coefficient is 0.74.

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 a substantial 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 orientations of the districts. Columns 5 to 10 of Table 2 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) but would deliver biased coefficients in the Estrema was trending differently in districts with high and low enfranchisement.

4 The political impact of the 1912 reform

4.1 A graphical inspection of the data

Figure 3 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.[32]

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 districts and particularly in those with low ΔE. At first sight the reason might be that a smaller vote change may nevertheless be sufficient to gain a seat if starting from a higher share (see panel a). Conversely, in districts with high ΔE the *E*strema might have experienced higher gains, but not sufficient to win the seat. 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

[32]Blue 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 districts were instead less homogeneous after the reform.

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 and intermediate (pre-reform) Estrema.

4.2 Baseline estimates

Estrema vote share. We start our regression analysis reporting results when the dependent variable of equation (3) is the vote percentage of Estrema candidates. Starting with a simple regression in Table 3 we progressively include control variables and province specific shocks.[33] To account for possible pre-existing trends we then introduce the percentage change in Estrema vote between 1904 and 1909 (alone in column 5 and interacted with ΔE in column 6). Point estimates are positive, statistically significant and rather stable. They range between a minimum of 0.167 and a maximum of 0.294. Statistical significance of at least 10% is always achieved. The coefficients are easy to interpret, since both the dependent and independent variables are expressed as percentages. Taking column (6) as a benchmark, a 1% increase in ΔE caused a 0.25% 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.[34] 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.

Estrema MPs. Table 4 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.[35] Following our discussion of Figure 3, we include a non-linear control for pre-existing Estrema vote share, since the impact of marginal votes on the probability of victory is different depending on pre-existing vote shares. The coefficient of ΔE remains negative across all specifications and becomes statistically significant when we introduce control variables. In spite of the gains in votes, Estrema candidates on average appear to have been disadvantaged by the reform in terms of their chances of victory. In

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

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

[35] Using maximum likelihood ordered probit confirms the findings of Table 4. Ordered probit models, however, cannot include fixed effects. We prefer to report OLS estimates because these can include province specific shocks.

columns (6) and (7) we distinguish between the probability of gaining a seat (in districts where the incumbent MP was not from the Estrema) from the probability 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.

Aristocrats and traditional elites. In 1909 and 1913, aristocrats represented almost one fifth of elected MPs.[36] Let us call ΔA a variable equal to 1 if a district changes from a non-aristocrat MP to an aristocrat MP, -1 if the transition happens in the other direction and 0 otherwise. The first 3 columns of Table 5 use ΔA as the dependent variable. The coefficient of enfranchisement never achieves 10% significance level and, perhaps more importantly, is never negative, indicating that higher enfranchisement rates are more likely to have caused an aristocrat to gain a seat rather than losing it.

This analysis has been replicated by using a less narrow definition of traditional elites. $\Delta elite$ includes aristocrats and non-aristocratic landowners, military officers, diplomats and members of political dynasties.[37] The results are similar to those we found for aristocrats alone, with slightly larger coefficients but far from any acceptable statistical significance.

Candidacy. There were 156 districts with no Estrema candidate in 1909, 95 in 1913.[38] Observing an Estrema candidate in 1913 in a district where there was none in 1909 (or viceversa) could signal a change in expectations about the performance of Estrema candidates in that district. Even not winning a seat, a good performance could set the stage for future progress and send a signal to voters that Estrema candidates were viable. In Table 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

[36] See Table 1 for details.

[37] High ranked military officers were usually recruited among aristocrats or other influential families trusted by the King. People in charge of foreign policy were also close to the Crown and recruited among the most traditional and influential families. For what concerns dynasties, an MP has been classified as a member of a political dynasty when it has been possible to establish a family link with at least one other MP from the same or previous Italian parliaments (including the non-elected Senate). There is a substantial overlap between these groups (for example, most high ranked military officers were aristocrats).

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

question has been addressed by using the Herfindahl-Hirshman index (HHI) of competition among candidates (i.e. ignoring the candidates' party affiliation). 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 6, columns 4-6) 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 6 (columns 7-9) 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 compared to pre-reform voters. Across all specifications we find a negative effect of ΔE on turnout. Using column 8 as the benchmark, a 1% increase in the share of newly enfranchised voters decreased turnout by 0.24%. Hence, the political impact of the reform was mitigated by lower participation rates among the newly enfranchised.

4.3 Robustness checks

4.3.1 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 pre-existing 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.[39] Results are reported in Table 7. 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 3 is due to pre-existing 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.This means we can rule out that our results are only capturing pre-existing trends. Although in our setting there cannot be self-selection into treatment, these

[39] In the interest of space, I only report the results from the specification with all controls and province-specific shocks included.

findings might induce other types of concerns about mean reversion, . For $\Delta turnout$, a well established literature on the differential propensity to vote of individuals from different socio-economic background allows us to rule out with some confidence that all the effect found in Table 6 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 traditional elites.[40]

4.3.2 Using selection on observables to assess the bias from unobservables

While our estimates of the impact of enfranchisement may suffer of omitted variable bias, it is possible to estimate the size of the bias 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 we will follow Oster (2016) who shows that if the selection on unobservables is perfectly proportional to the selection on observables then the bias of an OLS estimate of a coefficient β is equal to $(\beta^0 - \widehat{\beta})\frac{(R_{Max}-\widehat{R})}{(\widehat{R}-R^0)}$, where $\widehat{\beta}$ is the OLS estimate with all control variables included, $\widehat{R}$ is the R-squared corresponding to this specification, β^0 is the simple OLS estimate without controls and R^0 the corresponding R-squared. R_{Max} is the maximum value that can be achieved by the R-squared and we will set it equal to 1.

For the effect of ΔE on Estrema vote shares, using the estimates of Table 3 (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 would imply that the "true" coefficient could be more negative than our estimated $-.01$ (Table 4, column 4). If we focus on the probability that the Estrema lost a seat (Table 4, 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 (results in Tables 5 and 6), the size of the bias is larger than that of the estimated coefficient, which implies that our estimates, which are anyway mostly statistically insignificant, are probably not entirely reliable. In the case of turnout, which

[40] These 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 the traditional establishment 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 our interpretation of the results but remains moot in the absence of further evidence.

delivers 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 central results concerning Estrema vote shares and net seat gains. We are left, however, with less confidence about other results.

4.3.3 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 we restrict the sample by removing districts with a high percentage of Estrema votes in 1909. Regression results are reported in Table 8 (columns 1 and 2), showing only minor changes to the estimated coefficient of enfranchisement, both in magnitude and statistical significance. In columns 3 and 4 we also remove those few districts where the Estrema reached 100% of the vote in 1913, again obtaining little variation in our estimates.

Column 5 in Table 8 shows that our results are also robust to including male illiteracy rate in 1911 among the control variables, 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]

5 Why so little effect on representation?

5.1 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 possibility 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

[41] We have chosen to exclude this variable from our main regressions because, since franchise was restricted on literacy grounds, illiteracy rates would absorb part of the causal effect that we are trying to estimate. The 1901-1911 difference in illiteracy rate has instead always been included since this helps to identify a more appropriate counterfactual: franchise would have naturally expanded with literacy even without the reform.

election was between 40% and 60%. The three criteria identify 170 swing districts.[42]

Table 9 shows that, on average, the Estrema did not perform well in swing districts (columns 1 and 2). Moreover, the interaction between swing and ΔE is negative (columns 3 and 4): in swing districts ΔE has a negative impact on Estrema votes. In terms of parliamentary seats, although on average the Estrema did not do worse in swing districts than in the others (columns 5 and 6), the negative and statistically significant interaction term with ΔE (columns 7 and 8) shows again that enfranchisement adversely affected the Estrema in swing districts.

So why did the Estrema performed poorly in swing districts? We will now document how the conservative elites engaged in activities to countervail the effects of the new franchise rules and how these activities were strategically focussed on swing districts.

5.2 Political violence and intimidation

In the early XX century political violence and intimidation was not uncommon during electoral campaigns and particularly on the election day. Violence consisted sometimes in clashes between supporters of different candidates and could involve the beating of campaigners, the riding 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 in which offices of labour unions were attacked and supporters of Estema candidates (particularly Socialists) were confronted by violent groups that often operated under the implicit protection of local police forces.[43]

We document a surge in news of episodes of political violence in Italian newspapers during the 1913 electoral campaign. We have collected such news during the thirthy days preceding (and including) the first round election date from three newspapers, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *Il Messaggero* and *l'Avanti*.[44] Table 10 shows how the total number of news articles reporting episodes of political violence surges from 121 in the thirthy days before

[42] Estimates have been repeated using different ranges for criterion 3. We obtained similar results.

[43] See for example the article "Ricordi di una domenica di passione" by Ugo Ojetti, that appeared on *Corriere delle Sera* (November 6, 1913), providing a detailed account of violence and intimidation in the southern district of Molfetta.

[44] Il Corriere and Il Messaggero have been selected because they were the most important newspapers of the time, the first based in Milan and the second in Rome. Both were moderate and supporting the Constitutional establishment. L'Avanti was the official newspaper of the Socialist Party and has been selected because it might have been more likely to report political violence against Estrema candidates. The correlation coefficient between the number of articles documenting political violence in 1913 on Corriere and on Messaggero is 0.44. L'Avanti has a correlation of 0.58 with Il Corriere and of 0.31 with Il Messaggero. In 1909 the correlation between Corriere and Messaggero was 0.62, between Avanti and Corriere 0.31, between Avanti and Messaggero it was 0.22.

the 1909 election (and including the election day) to 338 in 1913. The districts reporting episodes of violence are 139 in 1913 versus 64 in 1909. The surge in political violence 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 selected groups of voters from exercising their voting right. The premises of union organizations were rided and sometimes destroyed and voters who were likely not to vote for the local mainstream candidate were threatened and kept away from the voting premises. Often these episodes were ignored by the local police: Giolitti was famously accused of indirectly supporting violence againts Estrema candidates in Southern districts.[45]

Using the newspaper articles we construct an indicator, $\Delta violence$, equal to 1 if an electoral district had violence reported in 1913 but no violence in 1909, equal to -1 if violence had been reported in 1909 but no violence reported in 1913, and zero otherwise. Although political violence was non happening at random and therefore we cannot give a causal interpretation to the coefficients reported in Table 11, our regressions suggest that violence and intimidation are likeley to have had electoral consequences. In particular, a rise in political violence from 1909 to 1913 in marginal (swing) districts is correlated with a performance of Estrema candidates which is almost 8% below average. Consistently with the hypothesis that intimidation often served the purpose to keep away voters from the ballot box, we also document that violence is associated with a decrease in turnout in swing districts (column 2 in Table 11).

5.3 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 it could provide support to 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.[46]

A detailed reconstruction of the events and a list of elected MPs who had signed the pact can be found in Piretti (1994 and 1999). This list is based on research conducted in the Secret Vatican Archives. In a detailed report to the Pope, Gentiloni provides a list of all elected MPs who had signed the pact. 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 amendements to this original

[45] See Salvemini (2007).

[46] More detailed on the exact conditions of the Pact are provided in Appendix A5.

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 or anyway to have benefited from a suspension of the *non expedit*: we will refer to their electoral districts as "Gentiloni districts".[47] Of these 357 signatories of the pact, 228 were elected and mentioned in the letter of Gentiloni to the Pope.

Where was the non expedit suspended? Regressions in Table 12 suggest 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 incumbent from the Estrema. Constitutional opposition candidates were also targeted but the coefficient is smaller and only significant at the 10% level. In other terms, Gentiloni crafted a very clear targeting of Estrema and other anti-clerical incumbents in the districts where they were more vulnerable.

At this point we need to check whether the impact of enfranchisement was indeed different in districts where the *non expedit* was suspended and Catholic voters were explicitly encouraged to participate. Column 1 of Table 13 shows that in Gentiloni districts the Estrema performed substantially below average. Column 2 shows that this negative correlation is stronger in swing districts. In column 3 we include both the Gentiloni and violence variables. We find that both violence and the suspension of the *non expedit* played a role in swing districts, as shown by the negative interaction terms. The magnitude of the two coefficients is similar, although it is only statistically significant for violence.

In columns 4-6 of Table 13 the dependent variable is electoral 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: since the vote was secret (and secrecy was sufficiently guaranteed), Estrema supporters could not be forced to vote for other candidates but they could be "persuaded" to stay at home on the day of the election. Column 4 shows that $\Delta turnout$ was almost 4% higher in districts where the *non expedit* had been suspended. In this case, however, we cannot detect any substantial difference between swing and non-swing districts. The negative effect of political violence on turnout is instead stronger in swing districts. This confirms our findings of Table11 even controlling for the effect of the Gentiloni pact. Overall, our results are compatible with a mobilizing effect of the Gentiloni pact and a de-mobilizing effect (particularly in swing districts) of political violence.

Finally, columns (7) and (8) show that the targeting of marginal districts with an incumbent of the Estrema was a successfull strategy. While there was no impact of the suspension

[47] There was never more than one signatory per district.

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* had been 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"*.

Table 14 provides information on the identity of the 228 elected MPs who had signed the pact (the "Gentilonizzati"). Almost every signatory was a constitutional, precisely 222. A majority of the Gentilonizzati were incumbents seeking re-election rather than newly elected MPs. It seems clear that the strategy of the UECI consisted in approaching incumbent MPs rather than taking risks with challengers. Many Gentilonizzati 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 social background of the Gentilonizzati contributes to reveal the conservative nature of the pact.

6 Final remarks

The introduction of quasi-universal suffrage in Italy constitutes an ideal setting to study the relationship between democratization and political change. A laggard until then, in 1912 Italy passed a reform Act that suddenly made it one the countries with the most generous franchise regulations. The reform was passed at a time in which labor unions and democratic and socialist parties were well established political forces, pushing in the direction of radical economic and institutional reforms.

Our study suggests that the political changes associated with the reform were minimal. Although social reformers saw an increase in their share of the votes, patterns of 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.

Differently from what is often assumed in political economy models, our findings suggest that outcomes do not mechanically respond to changes in the rules of the game and that *de jure* extensions of democratic rights are only partial steps towards the *de facto* empowerment of ordinary citizens. Our results are hard to reconcile with distributive conflict theories of democratization. These theories are based on a one-dimensional representation of societal conflict which corresponds to the economic interests of different groups. A substantial body of evidence is compatible with this view. Some of this evidence is based on historical cross-

country analysis, like Lindert (1994, 1996, 2004), Boix (2001) and Aidt and Jensen (2009). More generally, an emerging body of empirical literature provides evidence of instances in which democracy is good for the poor (Husted and Kenny, 1997; Avelino *et al.*, 2004; Stasavage, 2005a and 2005b; Fujiwara, 2015; Kudamatsu, 2011; Harding and Stasavage, 2014, Kroth et al., 2016): these findings appear to suggest that democratization can be used by elites as a commitment device to future pro-poor outcomes.[48]

Our case does not fit this view. On one hand we document a positive impact of enfranchisement on the vote share of parties with a programme of social reforms. This is compatible with the view that the new voters, mostly poor, would disproportionately support the left. All other findings, however, do not conform to the idea that *de jure* political equality mechanically translates economic conflict into political representation. As stressed by 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".* We provide direct evidence of such influence in the context of the introduction of quasi-universal suffrage in Italy. The patterns we uncover are compatible with the idea that elite's anti-Estrema efforts (of whatever sort) were particularly strong in key swing districts and that the ultimate consequences of this institutional reform depended on *de facto* as well as on *de jure* political power.

De facto power was exercised in the form of unpunished violence and by exploiting superior capabilities to form alliances. We show that political violence and intimidation reduced turnout and damaged social reformers and that this effect was particularly strong in key swing districts. Even more importantly, the alliance between the conservative elites and the Vatican (Gentiloni pact) that followed the franchise extension represents a prime example of the efforts made by elites to minimize the impact of enfranchisement. The fact that the clericals accepted some form of active involvement in Italian politics precisely when quasi-universal suffrage was introduced is probably not a coincidence. One possibility is that democratization was used to please clerical and conservative groups rather than to generate a progressive policy change: this would again suggest that economic conflict did not easily translate into political cleavages. Moreover, by signing the Gentiloni pact, candidates in the 1913 election committed themselves to a pro-Catholic agenda. This suggests that unidimensional models of electoral competition based on distributive conflict and redistributive politics may be inadequate to capture the complexity of democratization processes.[49]

[48] Some studies, however, do not find relevant differences between democracies and non-democracies (Mulligan et al. 2004; Ross, 2006). Scheve and Stasavage (2012) also find little evidence that suffrage extension affected inheritance taxes.

[49] On this point see also Capoccia and Ziblatt (2010).

Two other papers provide micro-level quantitative evidence on the consequences of enfranchisement in Western Europe. Aidt et. al (2010) study the expansion of the voting franchise in English and Welsh municipalities between 1868 and 1886 and conclude that franchise extension had a retrenchment effect, since demand for local public goods came from the urban elite and not from the middle classes. Berlinsky and Dewan (2011) study the UK Second Reform Act and find that franchise extension had no impact on electoral support for the Liberal party. Both papers focus on British reforms that enfranchised only a fraction of the male population. After the Second Reform Act, which enfranchised mainly the urban working classes, only about one third of adult males had the right to vote in Britain. Moreover, and differently from Italy in 1912, at the time of the British Second Reform Act workers' organizations were small and weak: the Trade Unions were legalized in 1871 and the Labour Party was only founded in 1900.

To support distributive conflict theories it remains still possible to point out that in Meltzer and Richard, as typical in models based on the median voter theorem, the identity and party affiliation of elected representatives do not matter for public policy. In a standard Downsian model a change in the identity of the median voter implies that the equilibrium policy shifts from the old to the new median. This, however, has no consequence on the relative strength of existing parties since these will simply shift their platforms accordingly. Hence, following enfranchisement, a policy change can then be achieved without much political change Crucially, this possibility relies on the assumption that existing legislators are able to fully pre-commit to implement the policies demanded by the new median. Removing the full commitment assumption implies that voters will also evaluate the credibility of candidates and therefore that more emphasis will be given to party affiliation and other personal characteristics.[50] In recent years an increasing body of well identified empirical evidence consistently shows that parties and the personal identity of elected representatives generally matter for implemented policies.[51] This evidence shows how hard it is to convincingly use the representation-irrelevance argument in defence of the Meltzer-Richard approach. Moreover it also points to yet another weakness of the Meltzer-Richard approach: its inability to account for the role of political parties and personal characteristics in democratisation processes.

The list of intriguing questions surrounding the reform that remain to be addressed is too long to be discussed here. For what concerns the present study, at least three issues deserve better investigation. First, we ignored possible behavioral changes that enfranchisement

[50] See for example Osborne and Slivinsky (1994) and Besley and Coate (1995).
[51] See footnote 1.

may have induced among the previously enfranchised. In one extreme case, these voters may have entirely changed their behavior, for example because the fear of new voters may have induced more conservative choices. This is not necessarily a problem for our conclusions: if a change of any sort in the voting behavior of the formerly enfranchised was induced by the franchise extension, then the voting returns of 1909 remain a valid counterfactual. Nevertheless our estimates would not capture the different propensities to vote Estrema among the newly and formerly enfranchised.

A second dimension which has been only partially analyzed is turnout. Our coefficients establish a direct link between registration and outcomes, bypassing the turnout stage. Turnout, however, was different for the formerly and newly enfranchised, with the latter less likely to vote. 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.

A third issue concerns the long term consequences of the reform. Although the impact of *de jure* political equalization on representation could be small in the short run, it may nevertheless trigger a change that manifests its effects only after some time, and in particular when the newly enfranchised voters are sufficiently mobilized and informed. We provide an analysis of the 1919 election in the Appendix. The context is unfortunately not favorable to the study of long run consequences, first because the electoral system changed and then because Italy became a dictatorship only ten years after the reform we study. This remains an important issue to be addressed by future research and other contexts could be more favorable to explore this question with quantitative methods.

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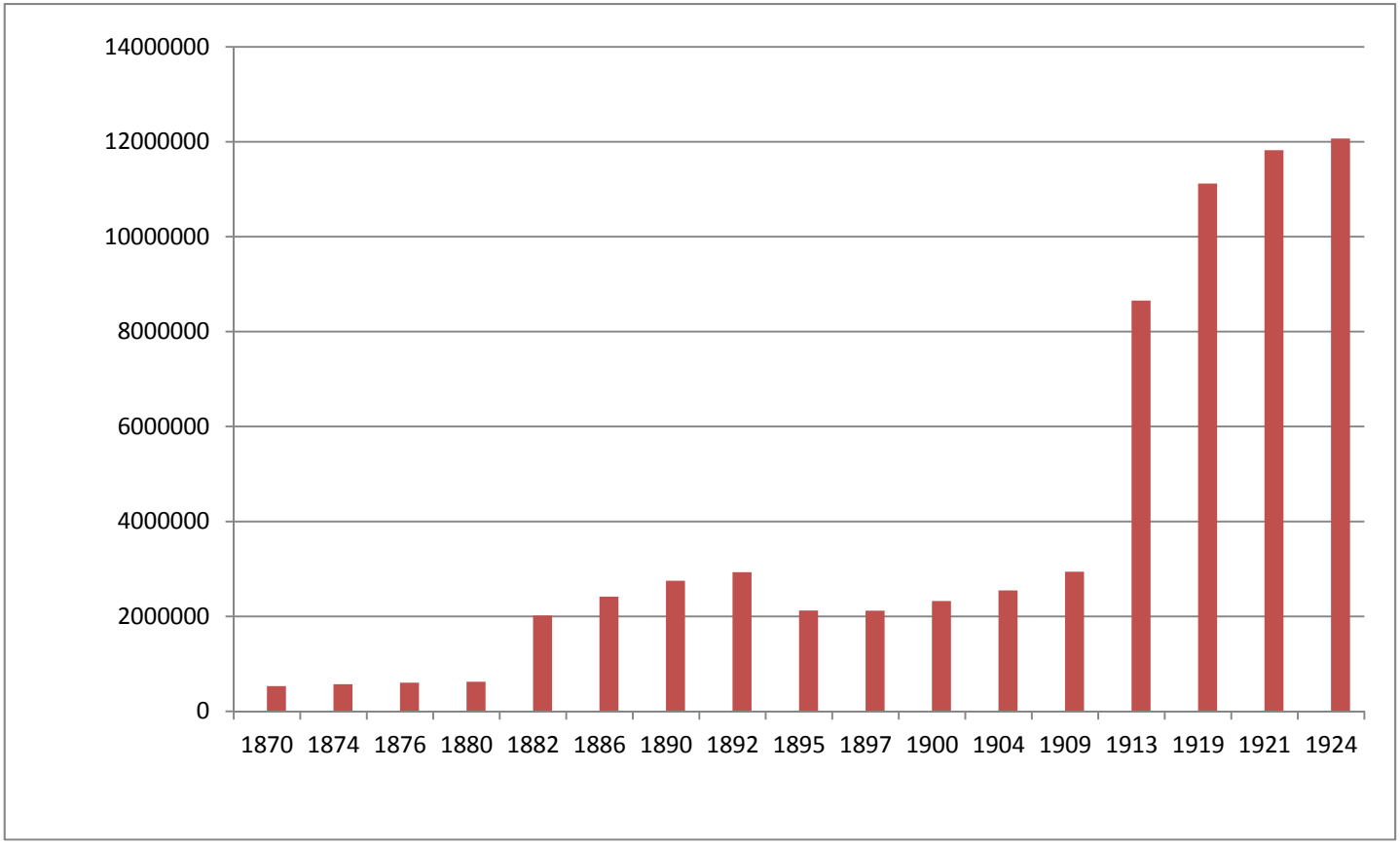


Figure 1: number of registered voters in Italy (1870-1924)

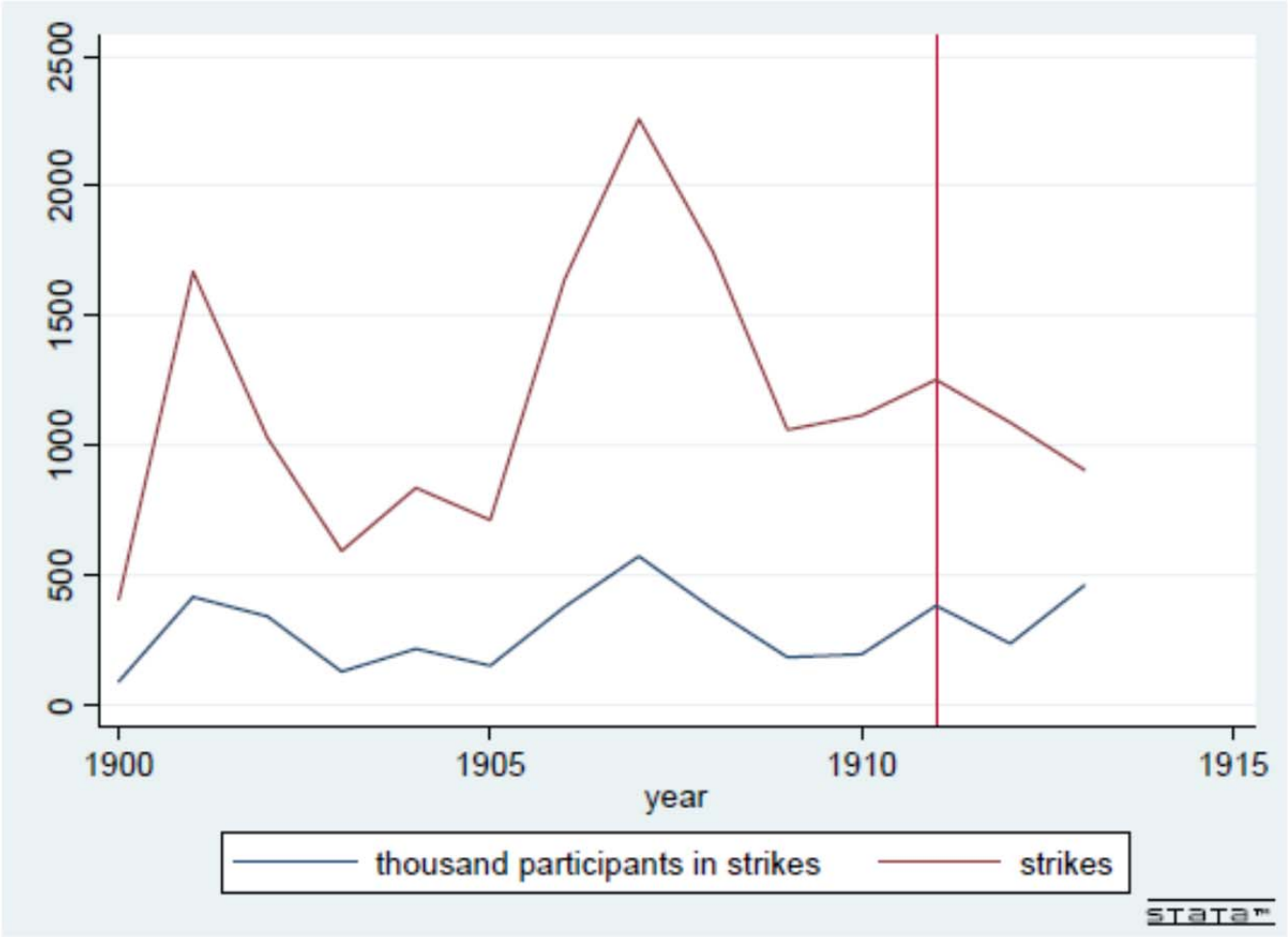
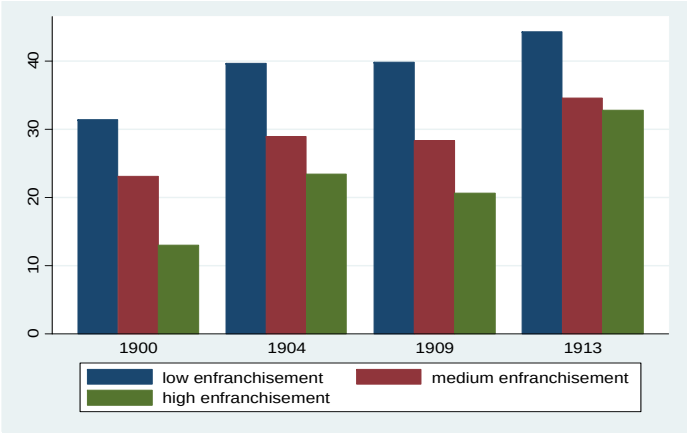
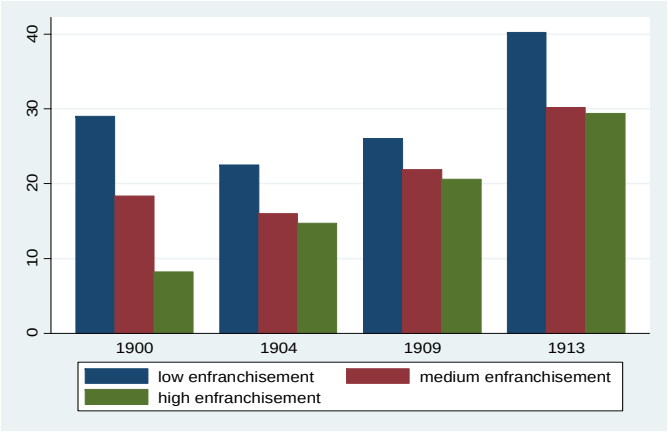


Figure 2. Number of strikes and participants in strikes (1900-1913)

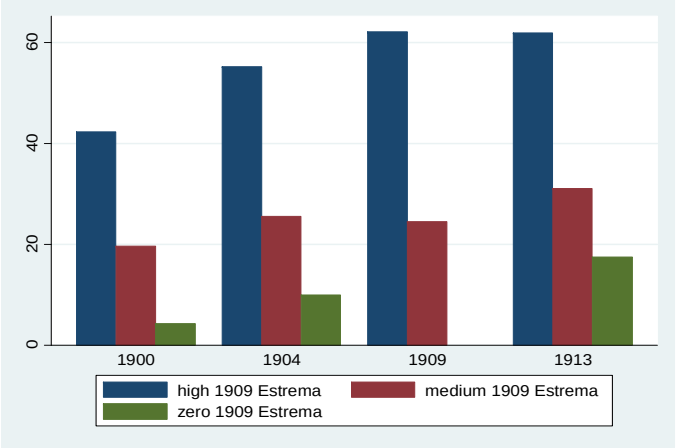
Source: Ministero dell'agricoltura, industria e commercio. Direzione generale della statistica: *Statistica degli scioperi avvenuti nell'industria e nell'agricoltura* (various years). *The red line indicates 1911, when the electoral reform was proposed.*



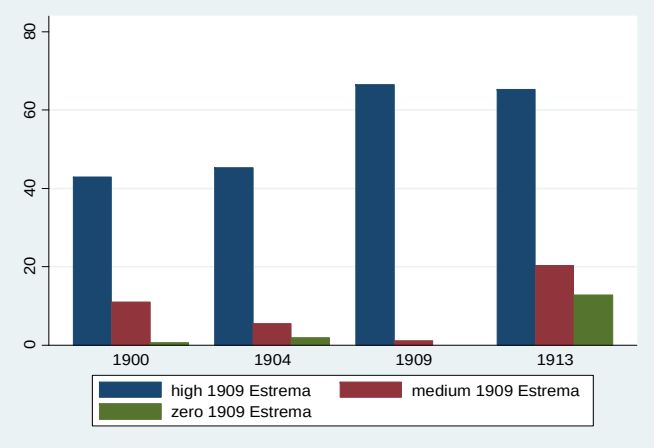
(a) Estrema vote share for different tertiles of ΔE



(b) Estrema seat share for different tertiles of ΔE



(c) Estrema vote share by Estrema strength in 1909



(d) Estrema seat share by Estrema strength in 1909

Figure 3: 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" is the tertile with the lowest ΔE, "medium enfranchisemenent" is the second tertile, "high enfrancisement" is the third tertile. In figures (c) and (d) the districts are divided according to their vote share in 1909: the bottom group is given by 156 districts (almost 1/3 of districts) in which the Estrema had zero votes in 1909, "high 1909 Estrema" refers to the top tertile, "medium 1909 Estrema" to districts in between.

Table 1. 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.

Tab. 2: 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***	0.4927***	-0.0341**	-0.0119						
	(0.0211)	(0.0273)	(0.0172)	(0.0262)						
Estrema 1909					-0.0041***	-0.0024***				
					(0.0003)	(0.0003)				
Estrema 1904							-0.0964***	-0.0502***		
							(0.0162)	(0.0121)		
Estrema 1900									-0.0897***	-0.0481***
									(0.0195)	(0.0142)
industrial workers		-0.3406***		0.0669	-0.7027***	-0.2999**	-0.9842***	-0.4323**	-0.9386***	-0.4286**
		(0.1125)		(0.0880)	(0.1086)	(0.1472)	(0.1299)	(0.1852)	(0.1279)	(0.1851)
urbanized		-0.0563***		0.0123	0.0257	-0.0750***	0.0250	-0.0813***	0.0313	-0.0750***
		(0.0201)		(0.0199)	(0.0234)	(0.0237)	(0.0271)	(0.0259)	(0.0275)	(0.0265)
agric. workers (own land)		-0.0973		-0.0048	-0.9981***	-0.3661	-1.2384***	-0.3196	-1.1441***	-0.3025
		(0.1229)		(0.1111)	(0.1120)	(0.2700)	(0.1355)	(0.3125)	(0.1348)	(0.3168)
agric. workers (not own land)		-0.3138***		0.0824	0.1305*	0.2918**	0.0098	0.2300*	-0.0048	0.2204*
		(0.0629)		(0.0636)	(0.0705)	(0.1130)	(0.0851)	(0.1243)	(0.0859)	(0.1285)
owners of real estate		-0.0934		0.0518	0.4928***	-0.1929	0.5383***	-0.2831*	0.5021***	-0.2939*
		(0.0933)		(0.0897)	(0.1086)	(0.1612)	(0.1227)	(0.1708)	(0.1274)	(0.1713)
logarithm population 1911		4.5583*		3.0853	10.2107***	12.6074***	5.5723**	9.9833***	5.2793**	9.7030***
		(2.3802)		(2.0072)	(2.4891)	(2.3591)	(2.4879)	(2.2768)	(2.5198)	(2.3098)
log pop 1911 - log pop 1901		22.4079***		17.4587***	9.4654	4.2078	13.3898*	3.7828	13.4263*	4.4940
		(7.5874)		(5.9459)	(7.2184)	(8.4696)	(7.8097)	(8.7122)	(7.6802)	(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	0.5788	0.8128	0.4823	0.7900	0.4709	0.7883

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Robust standard errors in parentheses. All regressions include a constant and use data from 508 observations. Male illiteracy is expressed as percentage of total male population. Estrema votes are expressed as percentage of total votes in that election. Industrial workers, urbanized, agricultural workers (both owning land and not owning land) and owners of real estate are expressed as percentage of total population.

Table 3: 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***	0.1771**	0.1672*	0.2943**	0.2515*	0.2533*
	(0.0756)	(0.0818)	(0.1004)	(0.1478)	(0.1437)	(0.1423)
Vote percentage change of Estrema candidates (1904-1909)					-0.2126***	-0.5456
					(0.0547)	(0.3381)
Vote change (1904-1909) x Enfranchisement (1909-1913)						0.0048
						(0.0050)
Constant	-8.9633*	-4.8679	-44.5906	-66.5627	-76.3220	-74.8758
	(4.7169)	(6.1427)	(62.5930)	(66.4891)	(67.1687)	(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 population employed in industry, percentage of agricultaral 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 exept 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 4. 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	-0.0029	-0.0044*	-0.0100***	-0.0080**	0.0007	0.0070*
	(0.0018)	(0.0020)	(0.0025)	(0.0036)	(0.0035)	(0.0028)	(0.0036)
Estrema % in 1909		0.0016	0.0025	0.0004	0.0024	0.0002	-0.0044*
		(0.0020)	(0.0021)	(0.0024)	(0.0024)	(0.0040)	(0.0253)
Estrema % in 1909 (squared)		-0.0001**	-0.0001***	-0.0000	-0.0000	0.0001	-0.0002
		(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0000)	(0.0001)	(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 3 for the list of control variables. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 5. Did enfranchisement cause the displacement of traditional elites from parliament?

Dependent variable	Aristocratic elite only			All traditional elites		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	0.0020	0.0027	0.0016	0.0027	0.0044	0.0022
	(0.0017)	(0.0042)	(0.0039)	(0.0019)	(0.0044)	(0.0042)
Elite net seat gain (1904-1909)			-0.4084			-0.4214
			(0.3319)			(0.3039)
Elite net seat gain (1904-1909) x Enfranchisement (1909-1913)			0.0043			0.0037
			(0.0047)			(0.0043)
Constant	-0.1274	-0.2149	-0.0626	-0.2074	-0.6906	-0.4335
	(0.1234)	(1.2294)	(1.2195)	(0.1360)	(1.3793)	(1.3495)
Controls (differences 1901-1911)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Controls (1911 levels)	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Province fixed effects	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.0065	0.1289	0.1433	0.0083	0.1227	0.1469

See the note to Table 3 for the list of control variables. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 6: The effect of enfranchisement on Estrema candidacies, on electoral competition and on turnout

Dependent variable	Estrema candidacy			Herfindhal-Hirshman index			Turnout		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	0.0057***	0.0026	0.0029	-0.0012	-0.0009	-0.0012	-0.3066***	-0.2438***	-0.1416***
	(0.0015)	(0.0028)	(0.0023)	(0.0008)	(0.0014)	(0.0012)	(0.046)	(0.088)	(0.075)
Controls (differences 1901-1911)	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Controls (1911 levels)	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Province fixed effects	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
1904-1909 change in the dep. var.and its interaction with enfranchisement (1909-1913)	no	no	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	yes
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.0389	0.2306	0.4475	0.0304	0.2173	0.4352	0.1369	0.3160	0.5268

All regressions include a constant term. See the note to Table 3 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 7. Placebo treatment on 1904-1909 and 1900-1904 changes

Dependent variable	Estrema vote share	Estrema net seat gains	Aristocrats	Elites	Estrema candidates	Competition	Turnout
Panel A (1904-1909)							
ΔE (1909-1913)	-0.2014	0.0019	-0.0078**	-0.0114***	-0.0011	-0.0006	0.1885**
	(0.1645)	(0.0032)	(0.0034)	(0.0034)	(0.0030)	(0.0014)	(0.0815)
R-squared	0.1727	0.2083	0.1652	0.2009	0.2077	0.1756	0.2724
Panel B (1900-1904)							
ΔE (1909-1913)	-0.1329	0.0055	-0.0025	-0.0037	-0.0011	-0.0007	0.1403
	(0.1691)	(0.0034)	(0.0027)	(0.0029)	(0.0035)	(0.0015)	(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 3 and province fixed effects (for example the first column corresponds to the specification in Table 3 column 4). Robust standard errors in brackets. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.*** p<0.01. N=508 in all columns.

Table 8. Effect of enfranchisement on vote share: further robustness checks

Dep. Variable	Δestrema (1913)	Δestrema (1913)	Δestrema (1913)	Δestrema (1913)	Δestrema (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 1911 levels and 1901-1911 differences as described in the Note to Table 3. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.*** p<0.01

Table 9. 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)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Swing	-5.4429**	-4.7824*	18.3736*	12.582	0.0035	-0.0169	0.6307**	0.5194*
	(2.413)	(2.601)	(10.621)	(11.127)	(0.054)	(0.058)	(0.284)	(0.305)
Enfranchisement			0.2846**	0.3713**			0.0009	-0.0053
			(0.128)	(0.172)			(0.002)	(0.004)
Enfranchisement x Swing			-0.3610**	-0.2614			-0.0099**	-0.0086*
			(0.179)	(0.187)			(0.004)	(0.005)
Control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Province fixed effects	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.0553	0.2573	0.0646	0.264	0.0367	0.2163	0.0561	0.2383

All regressions include a constant term. See the note to Table 3 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 10. Districts with reported episodes of political violence
(n = number of articles on Il corriere della Sera, Il Mesaggero, l'Avanti!)

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

The regions refer to 1913 boundaries

Table 11. The electoral consequences of political violence

Dep var	Δestrema	Δturnout
	(1)	(2)
Swing	-1.987	-2.149**
	(2.619)	(1.015)
Δviolence	5.361**	3.833**
	(2.63)	(1.622)
Swing x Δviolence	-7.89*	-2.92**
	(4.166)	(1.727)
Enfranchisement	0.207	-0.175**
	(0.147)	(0.076)
Lagged dep variable	yes	yes
Control variables	yes	yes
Province fixed effects	yes	yes
R-Squared	0.269	0.365
N	508	508

All regressions include a constant term. See the note to Table 3 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 12. Where was the non expedit suspended?

	(1)	(2)
Enfranchisement	-0.006*	-0.007**
	(0.003)	(0.003)
swing x Estrema incumbent	0.357***	
	(0.108)	
swing	0.018	
	(0.058)	
Estrema incumbent	-0.415***	
	(0.084)	
swing x Ministerial incumbent		-0.042
		(0.066)
swing x Catholic incumbent		-0.243
		(0.128)*
swing x Constitutional opposition incumbent		0.242
		(0.138)*
swing x Radical incumbent		0.367
		(0.147)**
swing x Republican incumbent		0.356
		(0.181)**
swing x Socialist incumbent		0.331
		(0.135)**
Catholic incumbent		0.185
		(0.81)**
Constitutional opposition incumbent		-0.064
		(0.78)
Radical incumbent		-0.431
		(0.125)***
Republican incumbent		-0.402
		(0.134)***
Socialist incumbent		-0.420
		(0.135)***
Control variables	yes	yes
Province fixed effects	yes	yes
Observations	508	508
R-squared	0.292	0.30

All regressions include a constant term. See the note to Table 3 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 13. The electoral consequences of the Gentiloni pact

	Dep variable	Δestrema	Δestrema	Δestrema	Δturnout	Δturnout	Δturnout	P(Estrema gain)	P(Estrema loss)
Gentiloni		-7.657***	-5.531	-5.144*	3.472***	3.902***	3.486***	0.064	0.365***
		(2.666)	(3.063)	(3.076)	(1.141)	(1.332)	(1.314)	(0.046)	(0.067)
swing			3.838	4.666		-1.915	-1.709		
			(5.547)	(5.485)		(2.064)	(2.097)		
Gentiloni x swing			-9.214	-8.768		-1.058	-0.818		
			(6.057)	(6.033)		(2.390)	(2.389)		
Δviolence				6.025**			3.445***		
				(2.657)			(1.003)		
Δviolence x swing				-8.271**			-2.66*		
				(4.210)			(1.597)		
Enfranchisement		0.213	0.143	0.127	-0.127*	-0.162**	-0.180**	0.006**	0.008*
		(0.144)	(0.149)	(0.151)	(0.074)	(0.077)	(0.077)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Lagged dep var. (1904-1909)		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no
Control variables		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Province fixed effects		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no
R-squared		0.3079	0.3155	0.325	0.538	0.545	0.554	0.084	0.323
N		508	508	508	508	508	508	393	115

All regressions include a constant term. See the note to Table 3 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 14. Elected MPs who signed the Gentiloni pact

	Signed	Did not sign
Liberals	177	83
Catholics	33	1
Nationalists	5	0
Partito Democratico Costituzionale	7	33
Radicals	4	69
Republicans	1	16
Socialists	1	77
Aristocrat	65	23
Non-Aristocrat	163	257
Non Aristocratic traditional elites	20	20
Incumbent	144	152
Non Incumbent	84	128

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

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Appendix: Supplementary Information For Online Publication

A1. Data description

We have described the data in Section 3.2 of the paper. This section provides further details, summary statistics (tables A1 and A2) and further descriptive graphs (Figures A1 and A2).

Our regression analysis is based on electoral district level data. All electoral (and biographical) information was collected at the district 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 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 socio-economic 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 Census and 1901 Census capture instead the trends in those variables.

The control variables included in the regressions try to gauge the socio-economic 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 their observable characteristics (while placebo regressions try to take into account unobservables). 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 behavior[1]. 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 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 otherwise an administrative unit). Of the 508 electoral districts, 318 were entirely contained within a single *circondario* and the *circondario* variables have been used

[1]For 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.

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. To my knowledge this is one of the first datasets (of any country) to provide detailed socio-economic 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.

The resulting variables are summarised in Tables A1 and A2 (as well as in Table 1 in the article). Figure A1 reports the distribution of registered voters by electoral districts in 1909 and 1913, showing how heterogeneous the Italian districts were for what concerns enfranchisement rates. This heterogeneity is then reflected in the histogram of ΔE reported in Figure A2. Figure A3 displays the high correlation between literacy rates and ΔE. As shown in the main text of the article, the correlation coefficient is 0.74 and regression analysis shows that literacy alone explains 55% of the variation in 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), Center (C) or South (S).[2] This graph illustrates the positive correlation between enfranchisement and the change (positive or negative) in Estrema vote share.

[2]See Table A.2 for a precise definition of these geographic areas.

A.2 Further results

2.1 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 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, a first 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 A3, which focuses on the vote share of the Estrema and on 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 substantively 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. Results provide yet another unexpected picture of what happened in the 1913 election. 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.[3]

2.2 Inequality

Inequality is a key variable for theories of democratization. Larger inequality should amplify the consequences of enfranchisement by increasing the redistributive demands of the pivotal voter.

Measuring wealth or income inequality in the electoral districts of 1909-1913 is difficult, since data on income and wealth distribution is not available. There is, however, information that can be used to imperfectly approximate inequality. By using data from the 1911 Census we construct the following indicator:

$$\begin{aligned} Inequality &= \left[\frac{A+B}{RE}\right] / \max\left[\frac{A+B}{RE}\right] \\ \text{where } A &= \text{agricultural workers who do not own land (\%)} \\ B &= \text{blue collar industrial workers (\%)} \\ RE &= \text{owners of real estate property (\%)} \end{aligned}$$

$A + B$ represents the percentage of employees not owning their means of production, while RE approximates the diffusion of property. We then normalize our indicator so that it is equal to 1 in the most unequal district. As the percentage of real estate owners increases we assume property is more diffused and inequality goes down. When instead larger shares of the population are employed in unskilled jobs and do not own their means of production we assume inequality goes up. Both assumptions could clearly be wrong for many reasons: for example because there is no upper bound to how much the richest could earn or own and our index contains no information about that. Although this indicator would be inappropriate to capture inequality in a developed society, where property is diffused and employees' salaries absorb a consistent share of the output, it is probably less so for Italy at the beginning of the XX century, when only about 10% of the population owned real estate and salaries where not far from subsistence levels.

Table A4 reports regression coefficients where our inequality indicator is included both as a direct effect and interacted with ΔE. Results show that the parties of the *Estrema*

[3]There 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.

gained votes in more unequal districts. The interaction between inequality and enfranchisement, however, is negative, both for *Estrema* votes and seats. Although the standard errors are such that we cannot rule out the possibility of no effect, the sign of the interaction term is opposite to what the Meltzer and Richard model would predict. These finding are instead more compatible with the view that inequality may have facilitated elite's "capture" of poor voters. In regressions using ΔA and $\Delta elite$ as dependent variables, inequality is statistically insignificant and does not interact with enfranchisement.

2.2 The election of 1919

To study the long run consequences of the 1912 reform is difficult. Between 1913 and the subsequent (1919) election, World War I brought dramatic social and political change. In the early twenties the advent of fascism makes elections irrelevant and political parties (except the Fascist Party) are eventually outlawed. For the purposes of our exercise an important obstacle to long run comparisons is a new reform, passed in 1919, that introduces proportional representation and re-draws district boundaries reducing them from 508 to 54. The 1919 reform also introduces full universal manhood suffrage, extending the franchise to those adults aged 21-30 and still subject to literacy and census restrictions. This reform makes the 1919 election not directly comparable with previous ones.

In this section, with all the necessary caveats, we use the 1919 electoral districts as observation units and compare 1919 outcomes with the outcomes obtained in 1909 and 1913 within the 1919 electoral districts boundaries. This is possible since the 1919 electoral districts follow province boundaries[4] and each pre-1919 electoral district is also entirely contained within a province: hence pre-1919 electoral districts are nested within the 1919 districts. The comparison is therefore based on real and not notional data, although the process that generates the data is now different.

Results are presented in Table A5. In the first two columns the dependent variable is the 1909-1919 difference in Estrema vote share and the main explanatory variable is ΔE_+ calculated as $\frac{E_i^{19}-E_i^{09}}{E_i^{19}}$. In other terms, we study the overall effect of the 1913 and the 1919 reforms. All regressions include the same controls used previously, this time calculated using the 1911 and 1921 Censuses. Results show an overall anti-Estrema effect of enfranchisement.

Columns (3) and (4) separate the effect of the 1912 reform from that of 1919. This

[4]The 69 provinces were aggregated into 54 districts by including more than one province in some districts, but never by cutting province boundaries. Data on electoral results of the 1919 elections are taken from Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (1946) and Caramani (1999).

is done by using two explanatory variables, $\Delta E_1 = \frac{E_i^{13} - E_i^{09}}{E_i^{19}}$ and $\Delta E_2 = \frac{E_i^{19} - E_i^{13}}{E_i^{19}}$. 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 1919. 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 the net seat gains of Estrema candidates in the 1919 electoral districts as the dependent variable. In this case enfranchisement effects are never statistically significant, suggesting that the Estrema seat gains in the 1919 election (in particular the Socialist party increased its MPs from 78 to 156) have no direct link with the two franchise extensions.

Although, for reasons discussed above, these estimates should be taken with caution, they appear to suggest that, in spite of the prevailing account given in most history books, enfranchisement did not play a crucial role for the success of Estrema candidates. A slightly longer perspective suggests that the overall extension of the franchise, through the 1912 and the 1919 reforms, had at best no implication in terms of legislative representation. The switch to a proportional system, as well as a general upward trend independent of enfranchisement, are likely to be responsible for the large gains of Estrema in the 1919 parliament.

A3. Why did Giolitti extend the franchise?

As shown in Section 2.3, the electoral reform of 1912 is unlikely to be the consequence of a revolutionary threat. What are, then, the reasons that induced Giolitti to extend the franchise? Historians have debated this question for decades, not differently from other instances of elite-led democratization. In this section I try to establish some links between historical evidence and the prevalent theories of democratisation. The purpose is neither to assess causality links nor to provide any final verdict on the validity of these theories. More modestly I will try to establish which theories are more or less compatible with the available historical evidence in this specific case.

Starting with *modernization theory*, it is fair to claim that 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) it is possible to claim that the events described in this paper are at least compatible with the modernization hypothesis, although it is important to stress that our findings have no direct implications for modernization theory.

Some historians believe that Giolitti was conscious of the risks associated with a massive suffrage extension, but was convinced that it was inevitable. Hence, it was better for the Constitutionals to guide the process rather than being forced to concede it.[5] This might have been a preemptive move against the Socialists. Also, by controlling the process of franchise extension, Giolitti could make sure that it was implemented in a way which was advantageous for the Constitutionals.[6] This interpretation is compatible with the *party-competition hypothesis*, according to which democratization cannot be explained if short term strategic political considerations (by actors who are not mere representatives of economic interests) are ignored.[7] 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.[8]

With respect to the *intra-elite conflict hypothesis* (see Section 1 of the article), some

[5] Gentile (2003).

[6] There were no revisions in the district boundaries and no concessions in the direction of a more proportional representation. Both would have given the Estrema a tangible benefit, 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 (2015).

[7] Schattschneider (1942).

[8] See Acemoglu and Robinson (2008) and Ahmed (2013).

historians suggest that the reform could have emerged from Giolitti's desire to stabilize his majority by enlarging it to the left. 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 have, therefore, represented an attempt to stabilize his majority to the left, in a context in which the Estrema was sufficiently moderate.[9]

Recent theoretical developments also link democratization to the presence of war and the need for mass-mobilization.[10] This hypothesis fits well with immediate speculations made at the time about a possible link between the electoral reform and the war for the colonization of Libya.[11] *"With that concession, Giolitti wanted to secure the support of the reformist Socialists to the conquest of Libya"*,[12] or at least to appease the anti-militarists in the Estrema (while the war in Libya could be regarded as a concession to the nationalists and the Catholics).[13] This interpretation of the 1912 reform, however, appears to have lost credit among historians.[14]

Finally, according to the so-called *enlightenment hypothesis*, democratization was driven essentially by the fact that the values of the elite were changing.[15] Historical evidence shows that Giolitti genuinely believed in a stronger and more representative parliament; he had passed other reforms that had reinforced the *Deputy Chamber*[16] and this could have been another step in a process of institutional modernization that Giolitti was

[9] According 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.

[10] Scheve and Stasavage (2010), Ticchi and Vindigni (2008).

[11] See for example Carocci (1961). The Libyan war was declared in September 1911, a few months after Giolitti's electoral reform proposal and, although Libya's annexation to the Italian Kingdom was declared in November 1911, the war was officially concluded only in October 1912. Hence, when the proposal was debated and voted in parliament, Italy was still at war with Turkey over Libya. 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).

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

[13] The Vatican had important economic interests in Libya that felt were not adequately protected by the Turkish government.

[14] Giolitti had probably not yet planned to invade Libya when he proposed the reform. See Montaldo (2001).

[15] See the discussion of this hypothesis in Acemoglu and Robinson (2000).

[16] He had increased the discretion of parliament in regulating its internal organization and had instituted the explicit vote of confidence at the beginning of a new government. Until then, there was presumption of confidence unless a confidence vote was called and lost by the executive.

confident he could keep under his control.[17] Whether this was the consequence of changing values or, rather, of strategic considerations remains a moot point. Parliamentary records show that Giolitti's change of opinion on universal suffrage was rather sudden, a fact which makes the enlightenment hypothesis less plausible.[18]

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 hypotheses on democratization. Perhaps historians and theorists face the same difficulties, which ultimately lie in insufficient evidence to discriminate between different hypotheses. One purpose of this paper is precisely to provide this sort of evidence for what concerns in particular redistributivist theories.

[17] See Ullrich (1979) and De Felice (1980).

[18] He 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).

A4. The Parliamentary debate on the reform

On March 18, 1911, during a parliamentary debate on an electoral reform proposed by Prime Minister Luttazzi,[19] 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 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"*.[20] 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"*.[21] 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.[22] 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.[23] Giolitti's proposal maintained the capability criterion and therefore did not recognize voting as a citizenship right.[24] In practice, it granted universal male suffrage to the over 30s, while keeping the 1882 restrictions only for the population between 21 and 30.[25] The right to vote was also granted to anyone above 21 that had served in the

[19] Luttazzi'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.

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

[21] My translation from Piretti (2001), p. 552.

[22] *"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).

[23] See footnote 20 in the article.

[24] *"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).

[25] 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.

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 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*"[26] 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, whose life-time members were appointed by the government, approved the law with 131 votes in favour and 40 against.

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".*[27] 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

[26] *"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.

[27] 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.

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".*[28]

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 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"* [29] 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.[30] 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".*[31] 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.[32] For the dominant reformist faction *"universal suffrage is (...), like*

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

[29] "Suffragio universale e analfabetismo", *Nuova Antologia*, 46, 237, p. 335. My translation from Piretti (1990), 114-115.

[30] See discussion in Section 2.2. of the article.

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

[32] See Section 2.2 in the article, and particularly footnotes 23 and 24.

for any other democratic institution, the foundation of true 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"*[33].

[33]Bonomi (1905), p.341. My translation.

A5. 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"* (...).

The seven points in the "attached agreement" were the following: *"1) Defence of statuary 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".[34]

[34]The original letters are reported in Marongiu Buonaiuti (1971). The translation is mine.

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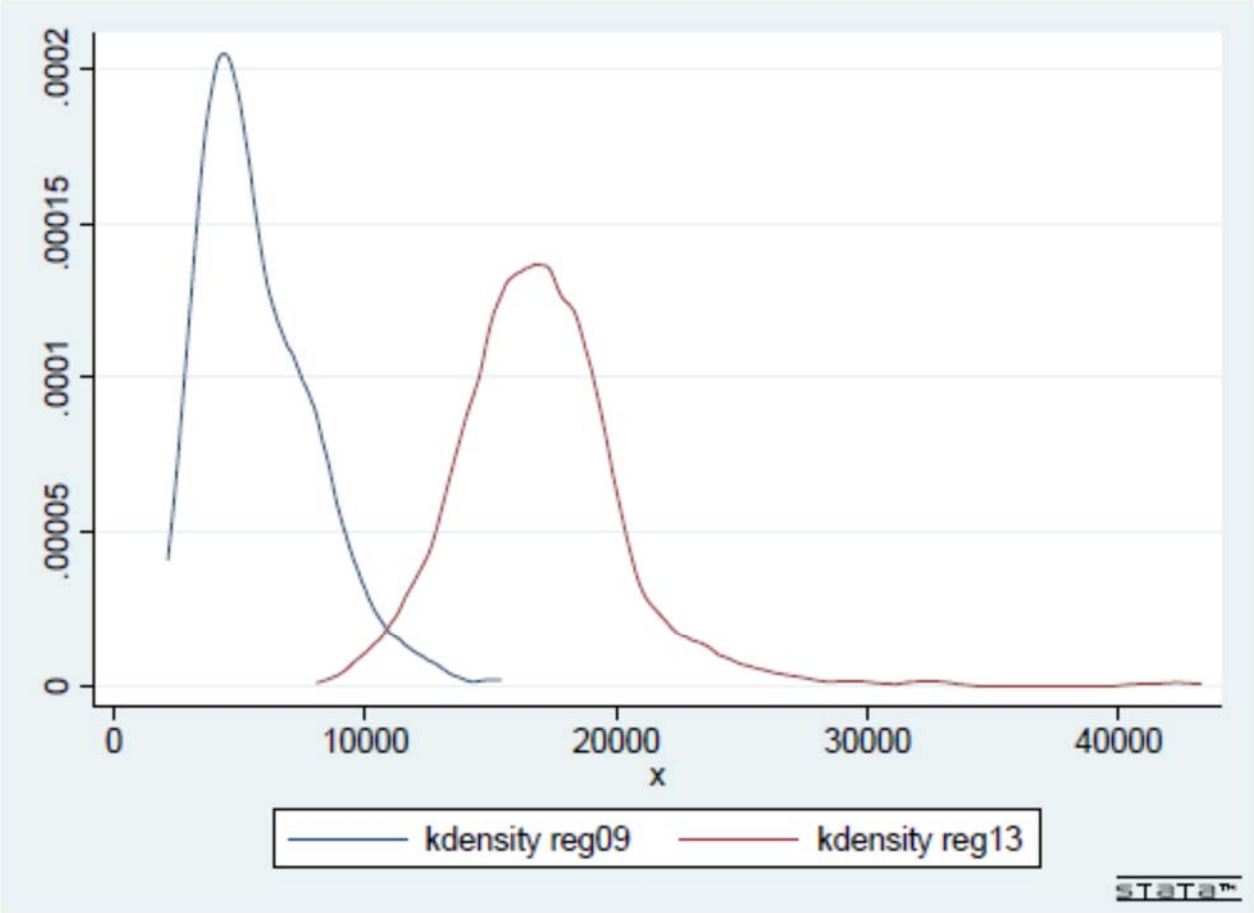

Figure A1. Registered voters by electoral district in 1909 and 1913

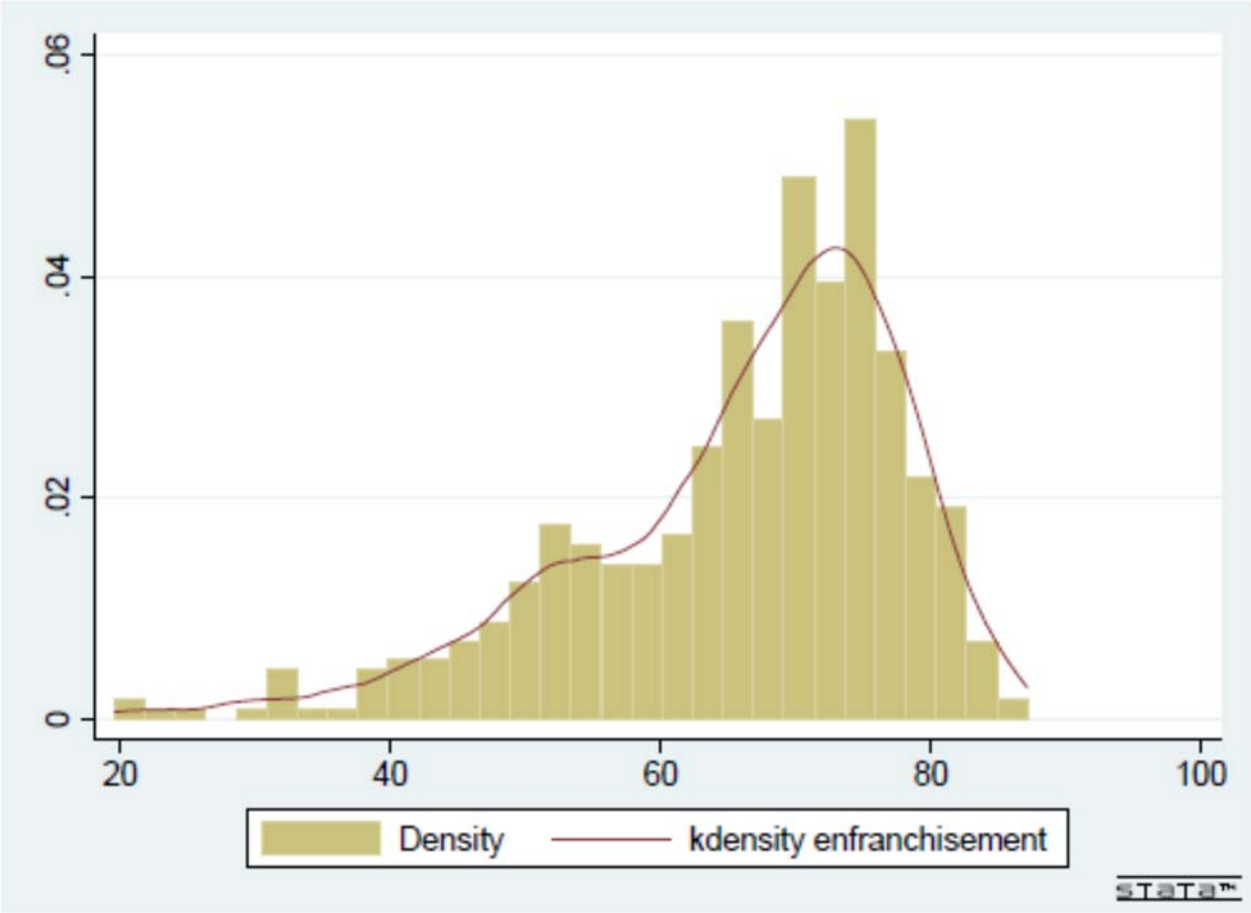

Figure A2. The distribution of ΔE across electoral districts

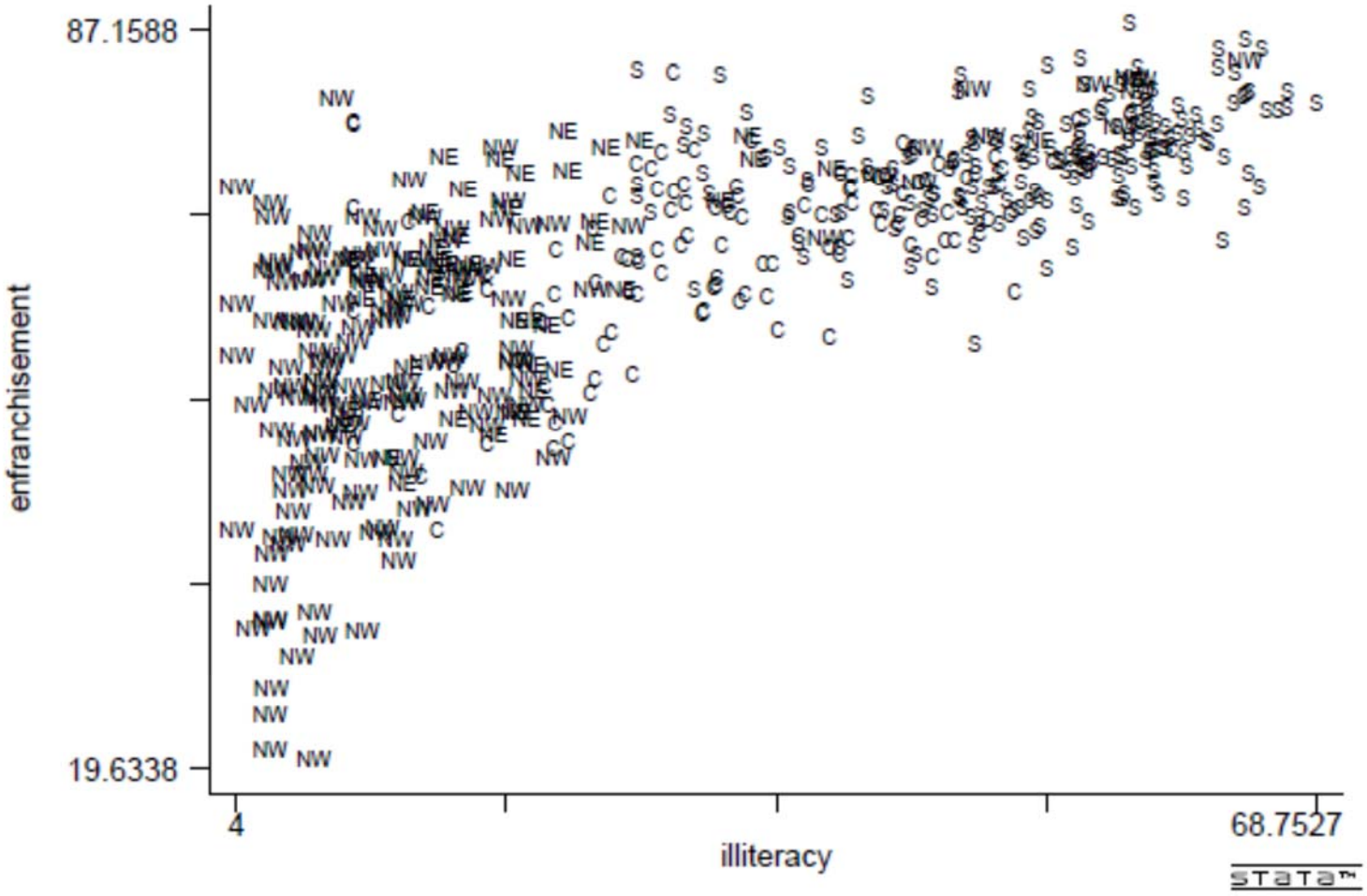

Figure A3. Enfranchisement and illiteracy rates across electoral districts

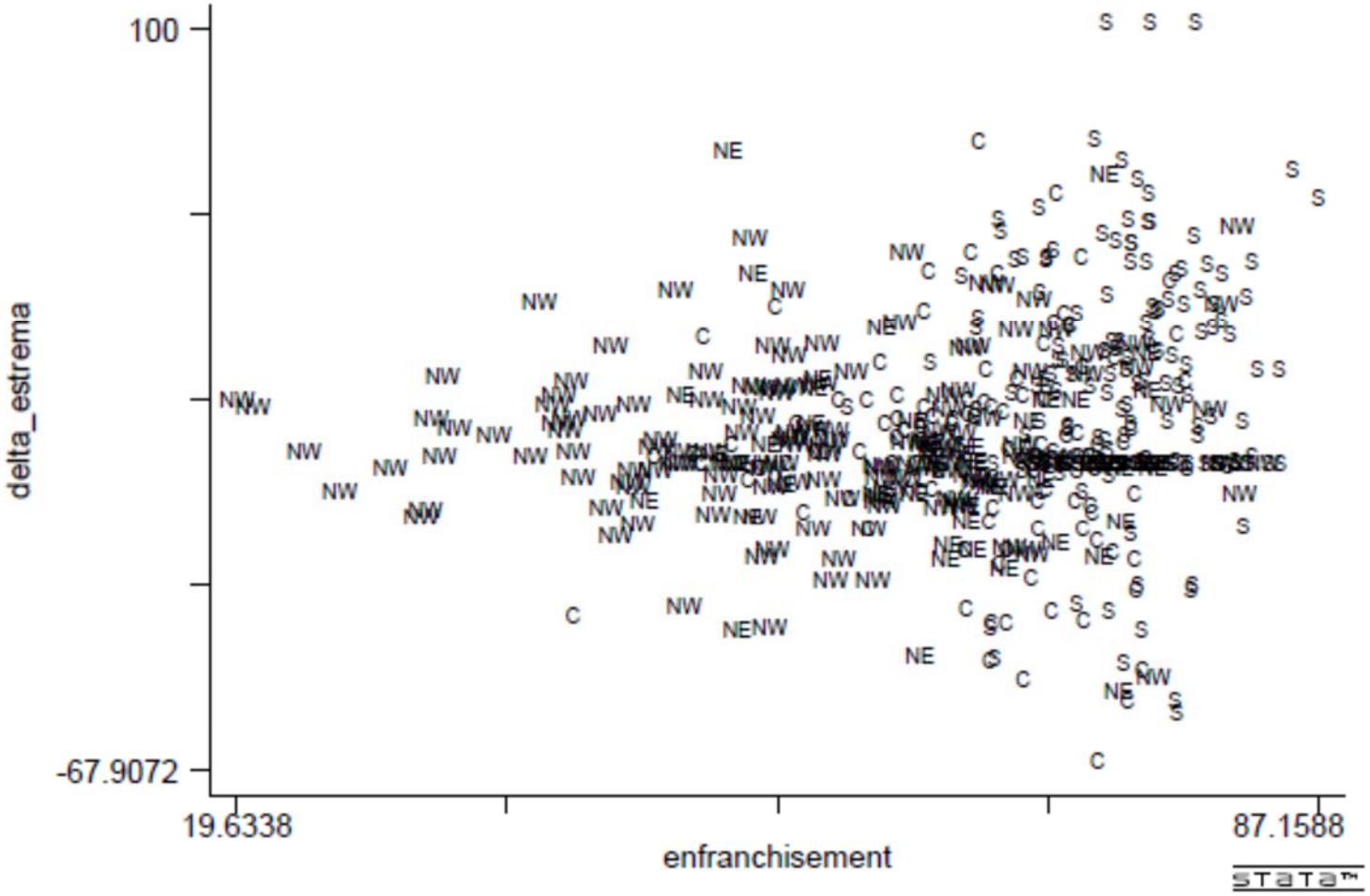

Figure A4. Enfranchisement and change in votes for candidates of the Estrema

(NW stands for North-West, NE for North-East, C for Centre and S for South)

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: 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
Δseats Estrema (1909-1913)	0.104	0.452	-1	1
Δseats Estrema (1904-1909)	0.051	0.394	-1	1
Δseats 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
Δcandidacy Estrema (1904-1909)	0.120	0.465	-1	1
Δcandidacy Estrema (1904-1909)	-0.148	0.457	-1	1
Δcandidacy Estrema (1900-1904)	0.254	0.507	-1	1
ΔHHI (1909-1913)	-0.062	0.229	-0.755	0.630
ΔHHI (1904-1909)	0.021	0.208	-0.517	0.641
ΔHHI (1900-1904)	-0.072	0.221	-0.706	0.499
Δaristocrat (1909-1913)	-0.006	0.341	-1	1
Δaristocrat (1904-1909)	-0.012	0.349	-1	1
Δaristocrat (1900-1904)	-0.041	0.327	-1	1
Δelite (1909-1913)	-0.016	0.402	-1	1
Δelite (1904-1909)	-0.020	0.407	-1	1
Δelite (1900-1904)	-0.033	0.378	-1	1
Gentiloni candidates	0.703	0.458	0	1
Gentiloni MPs	0.449	0.498	0	1
swing district	0.335	0.472	0	1
Δviolence	0.148	0.522	-1	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 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.

Table A3. 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		-0.0067		0.0035		0.0047	
	(0.103)		(0.003)		(0.002)		(0.003)	
NW	-10.6636	8.8746	-0.1964	-0.3042	0.0387	-1.0005	0.0767	-0.904
	(4.388)	(28.771)	(0.083)	(0.522)	(0.059)	(0.404)	(0.070)	(0.529)
NE	-15.5802	27.3665	-0.2291	0.0896	0.0869	-1.0229	0.1268	-0.7802
	(5.419)	(36.696)	(0.097)	(0.687)	(0.077)	(0.505)	(0.086)	(0.582)
C	-14.7010	28.3717	-0.1990	-0.0395	0.0303	-1.192	0.0367	-0.9417
	(4.510)	(32.224)	(0.081)	(0.565)	(0.060)	(0.416)	(0.066)	(0.556)
ΔE x NW		0.0928		-0.0053		0.0042		0.0060*
		(0.118)		(0.003)		(0.003)		(0.003)
ΔE x NE		-0.2891		-0.0122		0.0053		0.0048
		(0.359)		(0.008)		(0.006)		(0.006)
ΔE x C		-0.2725		-0.0094		0.0069		0.0059
		(0.260)		(0.005)		(0.004)		(0.004)
ΔE x S		0.3454		-0.0070		-0.0101		-0.0076
		(0.387)		(0.007)		(0.005)		(0.007)
Constant	-45.7972	-72.8334	0.8935	0.8718	-0.2176	0.8005	-0.3346	0.5422
	(55.604)	(62.864)	(1.227)	(1.354)	(0.987)	(1.009)	(1.148)	(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

Robust standar errors in parentheses. See Table A3 for a definition of geographic areas. Control variables include all the level and differences controls as described in the note to Table 3. Columns (3) and (4) also include Estrema vote percentage in 1909 and its square.

Table A4. The effect of enfranchisement at different levels of inequality

Dependent variable	Estrema vote percentage change	Estrema vote percentage change	Estrema net seats gain	Estrema net seats 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	0.2542	0.4475	-0.0010	-0.0059	0.0022	-0.0001	0.0018	0.0007
	(0.1342)	(0.2360)	(0.0033)	(0.0052)	(0.0026)	(0.0044)	(0.0029)	(0.0049)
inequality	23.4068	25.0922	1.0449	0.6152	-0.1795	-0.3932	-0.1912	-0.2841
	(13.2690)	(21.4721)	(0.4567)	(0.6068)	(0.7493)	(0.8811)	(0.7571)	(0.8974)
ΔE x inequality	-0.3119	-0.3395	-0.0117	-0.0093	0.0018	0.0065	0.0060	0.0104
	(0.2435)	(0.2953)	(0.0070)	(0.0084)	(0.0111)	(0.0126)	(0.0114)	(0.0133)
Constant	-57.5301	-72.4084	0.0886	-1.2805	-0.0259	-0.0810	-0.1446	-0.3882
	(63.8313)	(67.8704)	(1.2341)	(1.3878)	(0.9659)	(1.2199)	(1.1392)	(1.3843)
Control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Province fixed effects	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.0504	0.2569	0.0855	0.2468	0.0150	0.1309	0.0153	0.1275

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Control variables include both 1911 levels and 1901-1911 differences as described in the notes to Table 3. Inequality is defined in Section 2.2 of the Appendix. Columns (3) and (4) also include Estrema vote percentage in 1909 and its square.

Table A5. 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)	-0.5282	-0.8375			-0.0725	-0.0603		
	(0.402)	(0.428)			(0.060)	(0.073)		
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)			-0.7828	-0.9932			-0.0937	-0.0755
			(0.394)	(0.459)			(0.059)	(0.070)
Enfranchisement (1913-1919)			0.1777	-0.2255			-0.0140	-0.0006
			(0.810)	(0.917)			(0.102)	(0.132)
Constant	42.9038	75.6047	44.2961	75.0065	7.4609	6.5540	7.5763	6.4956
	(44.259)	(48.293)	(42.880)	(48.847)	(7.125)	(7.831)	(7.043)	(7.879)
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	0.1822	0.2492	0.2061	0.2623	0.4779	0.4891	0.4844	0.4941

Notes: The definition of the three enfranchisement variables are given in Section 2.3 of the Appendix. Area dummies are defined in the Note to Table A2. Control variables are the same included in other regressions, both in 1921-1911 differences and in 1911 levels. In this case, instead of the percentage of urban population for 1911 we have the population density both in differences and in its 1911 level. Robust standard errors in parentheses.