Enfranchisement and Representation:
Italy 1909-1913

Valentino Larcinese[*]
London School of Economics and STICERD

The Suntory Centre
Suntory and Toyota International Centres for
Economics and Related Disciplines
London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street
London WC2A 2AE

EOPP/2011/32

Tel: (020) 7955 6674

Abstract

This paper presents evidence on the consequences of the 1912 introduction of "quasi-universal" male suffrage in Italy. The reform increased the electorate from slightly less than three million to 8,650,000 and left the electoral rules and the district boundaries unchanged. This allows us to exploit the heterogeneity in enfranchisement rates across electoral districts to identify the causal effects of franchise extension on a number of political outcomes. The reform caused an increase in the vote share of social reformers (Socialists, Republicans and Radicals), together referred to as the Estrema. One standard deviation in the share of newly enfranchised voters over the total number of registered 1913 voters caused an increase of around 2% in votes for Estrema candidates but had no impact on their parliamentary net seat gains. Enfranchisement had also no impact on the parliamentary representation of aristocracy and traditional elites. Other outcomes (the chances of having candidates from the Estrema and the Herfindel-Hirshman index of electoral competition) were also unaffected, with the exception of turnout, which decreased. These findings show that de jure political equalization did not cause major changes to political representation, although the voting choices of the formerly and newly enfranchised citizens differed on average. This apparent puzzle is the consequence of the heterogeneity of the effect across a number of both social and political dimensions. The paper documents elite's effort to minimize the political impact of the reform.

This series is published by the Economic Organisation and Public Policy Programme (EOPP) located within the Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines (STICERD) at the London School of Economics and Political Science. This new series is an amalgamation of the Development Economics Discussion Papers and the Political Economy and Public Policy Discussion Papers. The programme was established in October 1998 as a successor to the Development Economics Research Programme. The work of the programme is mainly in the fields of development economics, public economics and political economy. It is directed by Maitreesh Ghatak. Oriana Bandiera, Robin Burgess, and Andrea Prat serve as co-directors, and associated faculty consist of Timothy Besley, Jean-Paul Faguet, Henrik Kleven, Valentino Larcinese, Gerard Padro i Miquel, Torsten Persson, Nicholas Stern, and Daniel M. Sturm. Further details about the programme and its work can be viewed on our web site at http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/research/eopp.

Our Discussion Paper series is available to download at:
http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/_new/publications/series.asp?prog=EOPP

For any other information relating to this series please contact Leila Alberici on:

Telephone: UK+20 7955 6674
Fax: UK+20 7955 6951
Email: l.alberici @lse.ac.uk

"Everything must change so that everything can remain the same"
[Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa: The Leopard]

1 Introduction

The arrival of *de jure* political equality in most Western European countries during the late 19th and early 20th century was often followed by rapid changes in public policy. Lindert (1994, 2004), referring to what he defined *"the 1880-1930 laboratory"*, documents the historical proximity between franchise expansion and public provision of education, increased spending in social transfers, labour market reforms and the creation of income tax systems.[1] Correlations between the presence of democratic institutions and the type of policies that governments implement are generally well documented (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006a). Causal evidence on the consequences of democratization is more difficult to establish. Most empirical studies exploit the rich and relevant institutional variation that occurs across countries. In such settings, however, it is difficult to convincingly establish causality.[2] Natural experiments within a country have a better chance to identify causal relations, although both the institutional changes and the potential outcomes are necessarily more limited. Both cross-country and within-country studies also face another challenge: institutional reforms often come in "bundles", not allowing therefore to identify the effect of political equalization in itself. The British Second Reform Act of 1867, for example, almost doubled the size of the electorate but, at the same time, it modified the boundaries of a vast majority of electoral constituencies.[3]

This paper presents evidence on the consequences of the introduction of "quasi-universal" male suffrage in Italy in 1912. This reform almost trebled the size of the electorate from slightly less than three million to 8,650,000 and left disenfranchised only about half million adult males. Figure 1 shows the number of registered voters from 1870 (year of the annexation of Rome) until fascism, indicating with a vertical line the year of the reform. Unlike the 1882 and 1919 enfranchisements, the 1912 reform left the electoral law and the electoral district boundaries unchanged: as a consequence the 1909 and 1913 elections happened under exactly the same conditions, the only difference being the enfranchisement law. This is one of the most significant franchise extensions in Western Europe. In most other countries enfranchisement was more gradual.[4]

The natural experiment relies on the fact that enfranchisement levels varied substantially across the 508 single-member electoral districts. In the Sicilian district of Regalbuto, for example, the registered voters increased from 2,145 to 16,704, an almost eightfold increase which transformed

---

[1] See also the discussion in section IV.C of Acemoglu and Robinson (2000).

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

[3] For a study on the consequences of the Second Reform Act see Berlinski and Dewan (2012), which uses an approach similar to ours.

[4] 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 the Italian reform the percentage of enfranchised population aged twenty and above was 38.7 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 reform (Flora, 1983).

the previously enfranchised voters into a tiny minority. On the other side, district number two of Milan 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. By exploiting this variation we can identify the impact of franchise extension on a number of outcomes. Our main focus will be electoral results and legislative representation.

By using the prevailing theories of electoral competition, political outcomes can, in turn, be related to policy preferences and potential policy outcomes. We will focus on party affiliation and family background as indicators of policy preferences.

Our analysis is motivated by the economic theories of democratization that have been proposed in recent years. The common starting point of these hypotheses is an apparent historical puzzle. A movement towards political equality gives higher political weight to people with policy preferences which are likely to differ from the preferences of previously enfranchised voters. In the case of the Italian 1912 reform, for example, the suffrage was extended to illiterate and poor voters. This must have changed the identity and policy preferences of the pivotal voter, therefore moving public policy away from the preferences of the elite (Meltzer and Richard, 1981). This is a common pattern in the Western world during the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th. So why did the elite extend the franchise? According to Acemoglu and Robinson (2000, 2006a), the elite was forced to extend the franchise by revolutionary threats.[5] In some specific circumstances, often triggered by economic crises, a revolution against the rich and propertied becomes possible. In such cases redistribution to meet the economic demands of the population may not be sufficient to appease the masses: an extension of the franchise works, in such cases, as a commitment device to future redistribution. Revolutionary threats are more credible when the poor manage to overcome collective action problems and organized labour is strong, which would explain why democratization only happened during the 19th and 20th century, in spite of it being a feasible, and sometimes demanded, institutional arrangement for a long time.

An alternative possibility is that franchise extension was granted as a consequence of an internal conflict within the elite (Lizzeri and Persico, 2004; Oxoby and Llavador 2005). While the urban and industrial elites had an interest in the provision of public goods (particularly local public goods like sanitation), the rural landlords were generally opposed to it. Enlarging the electorate makes pork-barrel politics less attractive for politicians and public good provision a more effective way to gain votes. Hence, by enfranchising larger segments of the population, non-swing elite groups, and particularly the urban and industrial elites, were trying to move the equilibrium policy in the direction of more public good provision and less patronage. Such elite groups gained the upper hand gradually during the 19th century, which explains the gradual extension of the franchise that occurred during that period.

Related to these theories is also the idea that democratization arrives as a consequence of economic equality and capital mobility (Boix 2003), since both reduce the equilibrium tax rates and reduce the opposition of elites to democratizing. Although this theory does not explain what

---

[5]A similar idea can be found in Conley and Temimi (2001).

triggered democratization, it generates some clear predictions on the patterns that we should expect in different countries and in different periods.

A key feature of both the external-conflict and internal-conflict hypotheses, as well as of Boix's theory, is that the newly and formerly enfranchised voters should have, on average, different preferences.[6] It is this feature that generates revolutionary threats and the need for a commitment device (in the external-conflict approach), a policy change (in the internal-conflict approach), and the prominence of inequality and capital mobility.[7]

Consistently with economic theories of democratization, our empirical analysis shows that enfranchisement caused an increase in the vote share of social reformers. It is likely that this increase was due to a non-negligible difference between the voting choices of the formerly and newly enfranchised voters. One standard deviation in enfranchisement led to an average 2% increase in the vote for social reformers. At the same time, however, franchise extension had no effect (and possibly a negative effect) on the legislative representation of these same social reformers, on the competitiveness of elections and on the chances to observe a social reformer as a candidate. It is also quite remarkable that such a massive expansion in franchise had no impact on the legislative representation of aristocrats and other members of the traditional elites. Our analysis also shows that enfranchisement damaged social reformers in the more unequal districts, which is the opposite of what we would expect if voting mechanically reflected economic interests á la Meltzer and Richard.

One possible interpretation of these results is that when, for whatever reason, the elite decides to democratize, it still manages to exercise a substantial effort to minimize the political impact of the newly enfranchised. Acemoglu and Robinson (2006b), for example, discuss how "captured democracies" can emerge because the newly created institutions maintain an advantage for elite groups.[8] In particular, elites' efforts to neutralize democracy should be expected if democratization arrives as a consequence of an intra-elite conflict: it is reasonable for the part of the elite whose interests are threatened by democracy to use its *de facto* power to minimize the consequences of institutional reforms. Hence, there is no mechanical correspondence between *de jure* political equality and *de facto* empowerment of individuals.

The paper will document and analyse elites' efforts to minimize the consequences of the 1912 reform by providing evidence on the effects of a secret pact (the Gentiloni pact) and by documenting

---

[6]I refer to "preferences" here 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.

[7]The literature on the determinants of democratization is vast: here I only discuss the theories that are most closely related to the subsequent empirical investigation and that I call "economic theories of democratization". Another prominent hypothesis, which goes under the label of "modernization theory" (Lipset, 1959), posits that economic development and political development move in parallel since, for various reasons, markets have better chances to prosper under democratic regimes. This theory lacks microfoundations and, as stressed by Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992), it does not specify clear causality links. On empirical grounds, the modernization hypothesis has been criticized by Acemoglu et al. (2009).

[8]One example is the presence of a non-elected chamber, like in the UK or in Italy, or an extremely malapportioned one like in the USA.

4

how social reformers increased their vote shares where votes were less useful and were instead systematically defeated in key swing districts.

The interpretation of these results rests ultimately on which model of electoral competition we think is best at representing what happened. It is of key importance whether we believe candidates were able to commit to their platforms or not: the assumption that politicians can fully pre-commit to their announcend platforms plays a crucial role in models of electoral competition (Calvert 1985, Alesina 1988). In a Downsian context, policy change can be achieved without much political change. If the Italian elections of 1909 and 1913 happened in a Downsian world then it would not be surprising to find little impact of enfranchisement on political outcomes.

In theoretical terms, models that remove the full commitment assumption tend to stress the role of credibility and personal identity and, therefore, the importance of political selection.[9] In empirical terms, a number of recent papers show that parties and the personal identity of elected representatives generally matter for implemented policies.[10] This let us presume that the political affiliation and personal characteristics of elected representatives had some policy relevance at the time of the Italian democratization, suggesting that our findings can be related to both the political and policy consequences of enfranchisement.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 outlines the historical and institutional background, presents the main political actors and discusses the process and possible motivations that led to the franchise extension. Section 3 discusses the empirical strategy and the data. Section 4 presents our main empirical results and some robustness checks. Section 5 asks why the reform had so little impact on representation is spite of its effects on vote shares. Section 6 concludes discussing how our results relate to economic theories of democratization and to the findings of previous empirical research on enfranchisement.

2   Historical background

2.1   The political landscape

The years between 1901 and 1914 are politically dominated by Giovanni Giolitti, to the point that historians commonly refer to them as the "Giolitti era". He was the Prime Minister when the electoral reform was introduced. Moderately progressive and close to the emerging industrial elite, Giolitti rejected the repressive policies that had characterised the governments of the last years of the 19th century. By refusing to use the military and the police to repress organized labour during disputes with employers, one of his main purposes was to establish a modern system of industrial relations. Giolitti's years were characterised by a substantial increase in real wages, particularly

---

[9] These include the models of representative democracy (better known as citizen-candidate model) of Osborne and Slivinsky (1994) and Besley and Coate (1995).

[10] 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.

in the industrial sector, possibly as a consequence of the increased bargaining power of unions (Zamagni 1984; Gentile, 2003).

2.1.1 The *Estrema*

The main focus of our attention are the parties with a programme of radical social and institutional reform, since, according to economic theories of democratization, they should be the main beneficiaries of universal suffrage. These parties were the Radical, the Republican and the Socialist, often refereed to as the *"Estrema"*, because they were located at the extreme (although often moderate) left of the ideological spectrum. A first important distinction between these parties and the others was that, unlike other groups and factions, they were organized as parties in a modern sense. They held regular congresses, had a party organization, a party manifesto and an elected leadership.[11] Although coming from different histories and traditions, these parties advocated policies that, to a certain extent, were similar. They shared a demand for both economic[12] and democratic reforms.[13] Candidates of the *Estrema* often formed alliances for local elections, sometimes with good results. A remarkable case was the alliance in the municipal election of Rome, where the Radical Ernesto Nathan was elected mayor in 1907 with the support of the Republicans and the Socialists.

Nevertheless, parliamentary elections were always local affairs. There was never a formal national alliance between the parties of the *Estrema,* although they would sometimes support each other on a local basis. Alliances in run-off elections were also quite common although, again, not to be taken for granted.[14]

These parties remained mostly moderate and reformist during the Giolitti era. By 1904 the Radical Party had recognized the legitimacy of the Monarchy and had declared itself available for a government that would accept their democratic and progressive agenda. From 1906 most Radicals openly supported Giolitti, although this ambiguous and unstable relationship came to an end when Giolitti became closer to the Catholics.[15] Giolitti also tried, unsuccessfully, to attract in the government area the most moderate MPs of the Socialist party. The Italian Socialist party (PSI) was crossed by profound divisions between its reformist and revolutionary components. With the exception of the period 1904-06, the PSI remained a reformist party, willing to negotiate with the government and sometimes supporting its reforms. A radical change occurred in 1912, when the revolutionaries took control of the party and the most moderate members (not the entire

---

[11] *"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: Necessita' di una ricostituzione dei partiti politici, *Rassegna Nazionale*, 31-171, p.133. My translation from Piretti, 1990, p. 107).

[12] Demands of an improvement in the economic conditions of the working classes were particularly important for the Socialist Party and, to a certain extent, were shared by the other two.

[13] These included universal suffrage, an elected upper chamber (Senators were appointed by the government) and the replacement of Monarchy with Republic.

[14] Competition between parties of the *Estrema* was also not uncommon, especially in the first round. The district of Grosseto, for example, in the 1909 election had a three-horse race between a Socialist, a Republican and a Radical.

[15] Radicals always mantained a distinct anti-clerical position. Their candidates were often drawn from Freemasonry.

reformist group) were espelled. Hence, in the 1913 election we have an official Socialist Party (controlled by the revolutionaries) and a Reformist Socialist Party, as well as some independent Socialist candidates that did not belong to either.

2.1.2 The Constitutionals

As it was typical at the time, Giolitti managed to maintain a firm control of Parliament, but had neither a party nor a stable majority. As a matter of fact, there was no proper party organization in the dominant "Constitutional" camp. The vast majority of MPs elected to the *Camera dei Deputati,* were generally called "Liberals", but this was only a generic reference to their prevailing ideology: there was no Liberal party and no Liberal electoral manifesto.[16] There were instead factions, groups created around personal networks and the phenomenon of *"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] Parliamentary coalitions were, therefore, unstable and lacked a clear political identity.[18]

Constitutional (or liberal) MPs would generally be divided in "Ministerial" and "Opposition" on the basis of whether they supported the government or not. All Constitutionals, however, accepted the current institutional arrangements and recognized the authority of the Monarchy. Whether conservative or moderately progressive, they had a perception of themselves as the ruling elite, the only people that could possibly govern the country.

2.1.3 The Catholics

Most Constitutionals, including a large part of the most conservative factions, remained, still in the early 20th century, against any compromise with the clericals. Italy had been unified half a century earlier at the expenses 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. In the early 20th century, however, things began to change. Although the *non expedit* was mantained, local bishops could ask for a dispensation, usually on the ground that the Catholic vote was necessary to prevent the election of "subversive" candidates. The first few dispensations were granted in the region of Lombardy in 1904. There were a few dispensations again in 1909. Given that there was no official party affiliation for candidates or MPs, the presence of Catholic MPs in parliament did not embarass the Vatican, which remained against the creation of an official Catholic party, in spite of pressures coming from some influential activists. In the election on

---

[16]There is nothing in Italian political history that parallels the development of a liberal and a conservative party like in the UK, and "liberal" here includes both progressives and conservatives.

[17]Collier (1999), p. 70. To understand the pervasiveness of *trasformismo* in Italian politics it suffices to note that, during a brief period in which multimember districts and list voting were introduced (1882-1892), it was not unusual to find the same candidate in more than one list in the same district.

[18]The Liberal-constitutionals included conservatives like Sonnino and Salandra and moderate progressives like Giolitti. Positions, however, were always far from clear-cut and, considering their standing on a number of issues, it is difficult to draw clear lines within the constitutional camp.

1913 this process of unofficial entry of Catholics in Italian politics led to a secret alliance (known as *"Gentiloni pact"*) between the Catholic Electoral Association and Giolitti: *non expedit* was suspended in about half the electoral districts. The 228 candidates that signed the secret *Patto* were mostly Giolitti's men, who committed to a number of pro-Catholic policies (regarding family and moral values, schools, Catholic education etc.).

2.2 The electoral reform

On March 18, 1911, during a parliamentary debate on a timid proposal of electoral reform,[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 a 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 attitude 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 compared to what he had declared in Parliament only two years earlier: *"I believe that we need to have universal suffrage but by a different mean: by teaching to everybody how to write and read"*.[21] In the words of the socialist Gaetano Salvemini, Giolitti was 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, the central point in the programme of the fourth Giolitti government.

The reform, strongly wanted 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

---

[19]The proposal of Prime Minister Luzzatti 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]According to the 1882 law, only literate males aged at least 21 could be included in the electoral registers. In addition, they needed to satisfy at least another criterion from a given list. The most important criteria in the list were: (a) to have a minimum of formal education (a two-year certificate); (b) to pay at least 19.80 liras of income tax; (c) other criteria mainly consisting of owning or renting an 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%. The literacy criterion could be satisfied in two ways: either with a title of second year primary school (which was then sufficient to obtain the electorate) or by writing an application in front of a public official.

the capability criterion and therefore did not recognize voting as a citizenship right.[24] Historians refer to this reform as "quasi-universal" suffrage. 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 voting right was also granted to anyone above 21 that had served in the army. Since the tax payment threshold was already set at a rather low level, the main consequence of the reform was to extend the franchise to the illiterate.[26]

In spite of the many critiques received in parliament and outside (either because it was "*a jump in the dark*"[27] 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"*.[28] During the parliamentary debate Sonnino declared himself in favour of an even more radical reform, that could have included the women. He supported Giolitti's proposal on the ground that it was a move in the right direction. Not all conservatives agreed. A noteworthy exception was the MP and sociologist Gaetano Mosca, according to whom the inclusion of millions of illiterates could *"not increase the capacity of the electoral body to understand the big issues of national politics"*.[29]

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.

---

[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 ground that life experiences generate the capacity to evaluate political matters. When such experience was not sufficient (i.e. age was below 30), then this capacity had to be demostrated through literacy and census.

[26] The parliamentary committee in charge of the reform was firmly in the hands of Giolitti's "ministerials", but the proposal was passed not without 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 cannot read and 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. 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 had the possibility to bring a pre-written paper from home. This would then be inserted in an official envelope and sealed to guarantee secrecy.

[27] *"This is an enormous jump in the dark.(...). Thirthy-one out of sixty-nine provinces, containing 215 districts, will have a majority of illerate voters"*. Corriere della Sera, May 4, 1912. My translation.

[28] S. Sonnino, "Il partito liberale e il suffragio universale", *Nuova Antologia*, s. 5, vol. 239, pp. 305-314. My translation from Ballini (2007), p.164.

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

The public debate seemed to assume that the extremists would have benefited from the reform. Not all commentators agreed on this point: *"The prevailing opinion is that the reform will damage the consitutional 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 will be correct then the conservatives and reactionaries will prevail"* [30] 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. The PSI official newspaper *"L'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 intact their economic tyranny, while they concede more economic reforms in favour of the masses when they have a firm grip on the monopoly of political power"*[31] Floor debates show that MPs of the *Estrema* generally espressed 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"*.[32] Republican MP Mirabelli proposed an amendment to extend the voting rights to the women, which encountered the favour of most speakers of the *Estrema* (and of the conservative leader Sonnino), but was defeated by large majority (209 against, 48 in favour).

As the previous numbers show, attendance and voting during parliamentary debate was generally not high. The Socialists were particularly absent from the debate, 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 part could not impress any of our characteristics"*.[33] 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 a debate that had been going on inside the party for over a decade. For the dominant reformist faction *"universal suffrage is (...), like for any other democratic, the foundation of true popular sovereignity"* 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"*[34]. For advocates of universal suffrage, on the other side, *"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"*.[35] This debate

---

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

[31] L'Avanti!, May 9, 1912. My translation from Ballini (2007), p. 175.

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

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

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

[35] Salvemini (1905), p.371. My translation.

also reflected the fact that the moderate leadership was concentrated in the North, where blue collar workers were sometimes already enfranchised, and was generally suspicious about the real attitudes of the Southern disenfranchised.[36]

2.3 Why did Giolitti extend the franchise?

Universal suffrage arrived in Italy in a manner which was not different from the rest of Europe: as a concession from the elite. As for similar instances across Europe, historians have speculated for decades about the motivations that induced Giolitti to pass the reform. In this section I will make an attempt to link the hypotheses made by historians on this specific event to more general ideas about democratization.

One of the most influential theories on democratization is that it emerges from the struggle between elites and non-elites, when the last are in a position to make a credible revolutionary threat (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006). In the case of the Italian 1912 reform, a number of factors seem to indicate that revolutionary pressure was low, and certainly lower than in previous years. All the parties of the *Estrema* were controlled by relatively moderate leaderships and one party, the Radical, had three ministerial positions in the Giolitti government. Social conflict was relatively low if compared with previous years. Figure 2 shows the number of strikes and the number of recorded participants in strikes per year, both in industry and in agriculture. The red line corresponds to 1911, when Giolitti proposed the reform. The figure shows that social conflict was in line with, and possibly lower than, the physiological levels it had mantained since 1900. From an economic standpoint, Italy's estimated average annual GDP growth rate between 1907 and 1913 was 1.8%, smaller than the 3.4% of the period 1899-1907. 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.[37]

Some historians, however, believe that Giolitti was entirely conscious of the risks associated with a massive suffrage extension, but was convinced that it was inevitable. Hence, he considered that it would have been better for the liberals to guide the process rather than to be perceived as forced to concede it.[38] In this sense it might have been a pre-emptive move against the Socialists, whom sooner or later were expected to launch a campaign for universal suffrage. Also, by controlling the process of the franchise extension, Giolitti could make sure that quasi-universal suffrage

---

[36]Everyone in the PSI, instead, agreed on the need to move to proportional representation. The first, obvious reason, was that electoral boundaries had remained unchanged since 1892. At a time of rapid urban development, this had led to a situation where some districts could be several times larger than others. Typically, urban areas and rapidly industrializing areas were underrepresented and these were precisely the areas were the Socialists were stronger and growing faster. Second, the Socialists felt that proportional representation would move the focus of attention from individuals to programmes and that they could benefit from a more party-centered politics.

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

[38]Gentile (2003).

was implemented keeping everything else constant. Indeed, there were no revisions in the district boundaries and, more importantly, there was no concession in the direction of a more proportional representation: both would have given the *Estrema* a tangible increase in seats. This interpretation is compatible with the *party-competiton* hypothesis, according to which democratization was essentially driven by short term political considerations.[39] It is, however, also compatible with the idea, also advanced by Acemoglu and Robinson (2006b), that, when conceding voting rights, elites try to retain or introduce institutional features that minimize the impact of democratization and their loss of political influence.

With respect to the theory of Lizzeri and Persico (2004), discussed in the Introduction, some historians stress 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. He succeeded with most 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 and the Socialists were led by the reformist faction. This amounted, in Giolitti's view, to a strategic alliance aimed at modernizing the country between the most progressive components of the elite and the emerging organized working classes (Montaldo, 2001).

Recent theoretical developments also link democratization to the presence of war and the need for mass-mobilization.[40] 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.[41] *"With that concession, Giolitti wanted to secure the support of the reformist Socialists to the conquest of Libya"*,[42] 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).[43] As a matter of fact, some reformists and, for different reasons, even some revolutionaries in the Socialist Party supported the war. 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, which gave another argument to pass the law: *"they have conquered"* their right to vote *"in the Tripoli battlefields; no-one asked then Southern peasants whether they were illiterate or not"*.[44] This interpretation of the 1912 reform, however, appears to have lost credit among historians.[45]

Finally, according to the so-called *enlightenment hypothesis*, democratization was driven es-

---

[39] See the discussion of this approach contained in Acemoglu and Robinson (2000).

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

[41] Carocci (1961).

[42] Salvemini (1955). My translation.

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

[44] Sidney Sonnino, my translation from Ballini (2007).

[45] See Montaldo (2001).

sentially by the fact that the values of the elite were changing.[46] 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*[47] and this was just another step in a process of institutional modernization that Giolitti was confident to keep under his control.[48] Whether this was the consequence of changing values or, rather, of strategic considerations remains a moot point and hard to establish. It is useful peraphs to remember that Giolitti's opinion change on universal suffrage was quite sudden, as proven by parliamentary records[49], a fact which makes the enlightenment hypothesis less plausible.

To sum up, although it is certain that the reform was desired mainly by Giolitti and his supporters, the motives that induced such a sudden and unexpected turn remain 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 advanced by scholars in recent years. I will return again on the possible motives that led to democratization in the conclusions, where the issue will be reconsidered also on the basis of the evidence provided in this paper.

3   Research design and data

3.1   Empirical strategy

Our identification strategy is based on comparing the 1913 election (the first post-reform) with the 1909 (the last pre-reform) election. The intensity of the treatment for an electoral district is represented by the magnitude of newly enfranchised population compared to the formerly enfranchised. This tries to approximate an experiment in which we compare the actual outcomes of the 1913 election with the outcomes that would have occurred without the reform. To be more precise, if we indicate with S_i^{13} the *Estrema* share of vote (or any other outcome of interest) in district i in the 1913 election, we can write

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

where E_i^P and E_i^{13} are, respectively, the number of citizens in district i that would have been enfranchised in 1913 under the old electoral rule, while E_i^{13} is the actual number of enfranchised citizens in 1913. β_P and β_N then represent the propensity to vote *Estrema* among, respectively, the formerly and newly enfranchised citizens. α^{13} is an 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

---

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

[47] 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.

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

[49] He had publicly opposed universal suffrage only two years before proposing the reform.

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 (voters that met the capacity condition or moved in) in E_i^P balance each other.

If we assume that the average propensities β_P and β_N are constant (after taking into account the time-specific effects α^t), at least in the short time span we consider, then we can write a similar equation for the 1909 election:[50]

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

We are ignoring here possible differences in turnout rates across the two group 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). By subtracting (1) from (2) we can now write our estimable equation:

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

which can be written as

$$\Delta S_i = \widetilde{\alpha} + \widetilde{\beta}\frac{E_i^{13} - E_i^{09}}{E_i^{13}} + \eta_i \tag{4}$$

This specification allows us to recover the difference in the propensity to vote *Estrema* among the two group of voters. This is a differences-in-differences specification with a continuous treatment variable and it is equivalent to a fixed effects specification since by differencing we remove unobserved fixed characteristics of the electoral districts. Like for all natural experiments of this sort we need to worry about changing rather than fixed characteristics. To address these concerns we will use control variables, province specific shocks and previous changes in the dependent variables. Regressions using placebo treatments will help us to understand what is the impact of pre-existing trends on our results.

The assumption that $E_i^{09} = E_i^P$ represents a reasonable approximation since the time span considered is short. The variable E_i^P, however, is measured with an error that, even if randomly distributed, could bias our results downwards. Also, we cannot rule out the existence of a correlation between $(E_i^{09} - E_i^P)$ and $(e_i^{13} - e_i^{09})$. For example, districts with higher immigration could have better organized labour organizations and therefore experience larger increases in *Estrema* vote. One of the control variables employed, population change between 1901 and 1911, should at least partially deal with the possible bias that could result from this possibility. Controlling for changes in male literacy rates also helps us to better approximate what would have happened under the previous law that restricted the franchise mainly on literacy grounds.

---

[50]This assumption ignores the possibility of strategic voting and, more generally, possible reactions of the formerly enfranchised to the new political situation.

3.2 Data description

Between 1892 and 1913 Italy had 508 single-member electoral districts with a two-round majority system. District boundaries remained unchanged along the entire period and, since there was no Census in 1891, were based on 1881 population data. Registration data and electoral results for the elections occurred between 1904 and 1913 were collected from the Parliamentary Archive in Rome (*Archivio Storico della Camera dei Deputati*). Since candidacy was individual and there was no official affiliation with political parties, the Archive only contains the number of votes obtained by each candidate but does not provide information on political affiliations. The matching between names and political parties has been possible thanks to currently still unpublished information collected by Maria Serena Piretti from newspaper articles of the period. This information has allowed me to reconstruct the vote share by party and by electoral district in the 1904-1913 elections. Table 1 reports information on the number of candidates, votes (in the first round election) and seats for the three elections. We will use the vote percentage of *Estrema* candidates in the first round as one of our dependent variables.

Biographical information on members of parliament was collected from the three volumes of Malatesta (1940). This is a collection of short biographies of all Italian MPs from 1861 to 1924. We will use information regarding the social and economic background of the MPs: whether the MP is an aristocrat, a big landowner, a high-ranked military or a diplomat. These groups were generally very close to the Monarchy and represented the traditional (and often most conservative) elites. To this we also add information on whether the MP is a member of a political dynasty, which signals belonging to an established influential family. How good are these variables to capture the distinction between traditional as opposed to emerging elites? Aristocracy status can be determined with very high precision: the name reported by Malatesta (1940) gives nobility titles and is sufficient to identify whether the MP is an aristocrat or not. The other characteristics might have been underreported in the biographies, generating the possibility of false negatives in our dataset. Although measurement error cannot be ruled out, these characteristics have a strong positive association, which renders the number of false negatives probably quite small. Table 2 reports aggregate numbers of aristocrat and traditional elite members for the period 1904-1913.

Data on the socio-economic characteristics of electoral districts have been reconstructed using the 1901 and 1911 Censuses. I use both the 1901-1911 changes and 1911 levels of the following variables: total population in the districts, percentage (over the total population) of employees in industrial sectors, percentage of landless agricultural workers, percentage of agricultural workers cultivating their own land, percentage of the population which owns real estate, percentage of male classified as illiterate (over total male population aged six and above). For 1911 only I could also reconstruct the percentage of the population living in urban areas: this variable is thefore only introduced as a 1911 level.[51] Further details and information on other variables are provided in

---

[51]Population data are available at town level in both 1901 and 1911 and can therefore be easily aggregated at the electoral district level. Literacy is also available at town level in 1911. For all other variables, the most detailed territorial level for which they are available is the *circondario*. The Italian territory was divided into 206

the Sections where the variables are used.

3.3   Correlates of enfranchisement

Figure 3 reports the distributions of registered voters by electoral district in 1909 and 1913. Figure 4 reports the distribution of our main explanatory variable, $\frac{E_i^{13}-E_i^{09}}{E_i^{13}}$ (from now on ΔE). Figure 5 plots ΔE over male illiteracy rate in 1911. Not surprisingly we observe a strong positive correlation, since literacy was the most diffuse obstacle to registration before the reform. The correlation coefficient is 0.74. The graph also indicates whether the district was from the North-West (NW), North-East (NE), Center (C) or South (S), showing how illiteracy was strongly correlated with latitude.[52]

An OLS regression of ΔE over male illiteracy rates (column 1 in table 3) shows that 55% of the variation in enfranchisement can be explained by literacy alone. Figure 5 also shows that, while at high levels of illiteracy ΔE is always high, there is a substantial dispersion of ΔE at low levels of illiteracy. Literacy was a sufficient condition for enfranchisement only if accompanied by a formal certificate of two-year primary education. Hence, one possibility is that many literates, especially in the North-West, did not possess a formal certificate and did not satisfy other census criteria.[53] Another possibility is that, since illiteracy information refers to the overall population above six, the discrepancy could capture different trends in literacy across districts (since younger cohorts were probably more educated). We will return again on this issue at a later stage in the robustness checks section.

Column 2 in Table 3 provides other correlations. ΔE appears to have been smaller in urban districts and where the percentage of industrial workers was higher but also, controlling for other covariates, in areas with a higher share of agricultural workers that did not own their own land. ΔE is also higher in districts with a larger male population and in districts with higher population growth. Columns 3 and 4 use ΔE_{t-1} as dependent variable. They show that changes in enfranchisement between 1904 and 1909 (i.e. under the pre-reform law) were still positively correlated with the size of a district (overall population) and with population changes but not with any of the other district characteristics. Moreover, enfranchisement between 1904 and 1909 grew faster in districts with lower illiteracy rates, which is what we should expect given the rules. Table 3 suggests that the reform of 1912 represented a shock compared to previous trends in our main treatment variable and that franchise extension across the electoral districts was substantially different from

---

circondario for Census purposes (this was not an administrative unit). Of 508 electoral districts, 318 were entirely contained within a single *circondario* and the *circondario* variables have been used. 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 approximation is plausible since between *circondario* variation is almost certainly larger than within *circondario* variation. For illiteracy percentage, for example, which is available at the town level, the within *circondario* standar error is 7.9 while the corresponding between *circondario* measure is 17.9. This is, in any event, the only route to recover a number of social and economic indicators at the electoral district level. To my knowledge this is the first dataset that provides detailed socio-economic variables by electoral districts for that period.

[52]See Table A.1 for a definition of these variables.

[53]In this case, differentials in franchise extension in 1909 for given literacy rates could, at least in part, reflect different income levels, since a formal education certificate was not required if the citizen satisfied the census requirements.

16

what could have been expected to be under the previous law.

An important question is whether ΔE is correlated with the political orientations of the districts. Columns 5 and 6 of table 3 report regressions of ΔE over previous electoral vote shares of the *Estrema*. The results show that ΔE was higher in districts with historically weaker *Estrema*, as confirmed by columns 7-8 that replicate the same regressions using the 1904 *Estrema* electoral vote shares. These results persist, with slightly smaller magnitudes, if we control for male illiteracy rate in 1911 (not reported). These regressions show that franchise extension was not idiosyncratic with respect to the existing pre-reform strength of the *Estrema*. Although not surprising (the *Estrema* was stronger where a larger share of the working classes were already enfranchised), they suggest that simple OLS regressions would deliver biased coefficients. A differences-in-differences approach removes fixed characteristics of electoral districts (including previous *Estrema* electoral strength). Our results could be biased if districts with different pre-existing *Estrema* strength were trending differently, a concern that will be addressed in various ways during the empirical analysis.

Figure 6 correlates ΔE with changes in the vote share of *Estrema* candidates between 1909 and 1913. The graph suggests that districts that experienced a larger enfranchisement also witnessed a larger variation in the votes given to reformers. However this variation is not always positive and cases of increases as well as decreases of vote shares seem equally likely. Although it would be premature to jump to conclusions, this graph suggests that average effects on the share of votes for social reformers could hide a substantial heterogeneity. The graph also shows that there is no obvious correlation between gains/losses of Estrema and the location of a district in one of the four geographic areas.

4   The political impact of the 1912 reform

4.1   Baseline estimates

Vote share

Table 4 reports results when the dependent variable of equation 4 is the share of votes received by candidates of the *Estrema*. Column (1) is a simple OLS regression with no controls and shows a strong correlation between enfranchisement and the change in vote percentage of *Estrema* candidates. Although no other covariate is included, by focussing on differences this specification takes into account fixed unobserved characteristics of the electoral districts. The constant represents a fixed 1913 time effect and is therefore the (constant across districts) difference between 1913 and 1909. In column (2) I include the 1901-1911 differences in the control variables. This is equivalent to a fixed effects specification with control variables expressed in levels. Column (3) includes the 1911 levels in the set of control variables. The specification of column (4) includes province fixed effects.[54] To account for possible pre-existing trends, column (5) introduces lagged change in vote

---

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

for the *Estrema*, i.e. the percentage change between 1904 and 1909. In column (6) I also introduce an interaction term between lagged vote change and enfranchisement. From column (5) it is clear that the lagged dependent variable has a significant effect on the 1909-1913 vote change, signalling that the performance of *Estrema* candidates was trending differently across districts.

The point estimates appear to be stable. They decrease to a minimum of 0.167 when control variables are introduced and increase to a maximum of 0.294 when province fixed effects are also included. Controlling for a lagged dependent variable gives us a coefficient of about 0.25. Statistical significance of at least 10% is always achieved.

The coefficients are easy to interpret, since both the dependent and independent variable 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. A similar magnitude is implied by column (4), considering that within-province standard deviation is equal to 6.4. These magnitudes are non-negligible. They imply 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.

Elected MPs

Table 5 shows OLS estimates of the impact of enfranchisement on the net seat gains of *Estrema* candidates. Our dependent variable ΔS is equal to 1 if the *Estrema* gained the seat, -1 if they lost it and 0 otherwise, since each district only elects one member.[55]

The table displays negative ΔE coefficients across all specifications. Introducing province fixed effects makes the coefficient significant at the 5% level. Including or not a lagged dependent variable makes again little difference on our estimates, although the statistical significance of the coefficient signals the presence of pre-existing trends in the *Estrema* net seat gains.

Using column (6) we estimate that a 1% increase in ΔE reduces ΔS by 0.009% and a standard deviation increase in ΔE decreases ΔS by about 0.5%. Overall, it appears that, in spite of the gains in votes, net seat gains remained unaffected (or marginally adversely affected) by the enlargement of the franchise.

Candidacy

There was no official candidacy stage in Italian elections until the 1919 reform.[56] It is therefore difficult to define an officially uncontested seat. If we define as uncontested a district where the sum of votes of all candidates except the winner is less than 50 then we have 79 such districts in 1909 and 40 in 1913. If we use the more generous definition that a district is uncontested if one of the candidates obtains more than 90% of valid votes then we have 93 such districts in 1909

---

[55]Using maximum likelihood ordered probit (without the fixed effects) confirms the findings of table 5. Ordered probit models, however, cannot include fixed effects. Since the estimates are not substantively different, the opportunity to include province fixed effects appears to be a sufficient reason to prefer OLS estimates.

[56]Voters could write any name on a piece of paper, which is why official records usually display a number of "dispersed" votes (often just one or two votes) for various "candidates".

and 65 in 1913. In any event many districts, especially in the South, were contested by more than one constitutional candidate but not by a candidate of the *Estrema*. There were 217 seats with no candidate of the *Estrema* in 1900, 81 in 1904, 156 in 1909 and 95 in 1913. Observing a candidate of the *Estrema* in 1913 but not in 1909 (and viceversa) could signal that expectations about the performance of *Estrema* candidates in that districts have changed. 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 1904, for example, both the Radicals and the Socialists had candidates in a large number of districts that received a single-digit number of votes. The number of candidates in 1909 was reduced (see Table 1) in order to concentrate resources and to avoid sending negative signals. The result was an overall clear improvement in the seat per vote ratio. We witness again an increase in the number of *Estrema* candidates in 1913, and it is useful to see whether this can be linked to franchise extension.

Table 6 reports our results. The dependent variable ΔC is coded as 1 if there was no *Estrema* candidate in 1909 and there is a candidate in 1913, -1 if there was an *Estrema* candidate in 1909 but no candidate in 1913, and 0 otherwise. The estimated coefficients show that larger enfranchisement was associated on average to a positive ΔC. This effect becomes statistically insignificant when province fixed effects are included. The estimated magnitudes are small, indicating, using the specification with province fixed effects, that a 1% increase in franchise is associated with a 0.003% increase in ΔC.

Aristocrats and traditional elites

In 1909 and 1913, aristocrats represented almost one fifth of elected MPs (91 in the 1909 parliament and 88 in 1913). In 1913 there were 31 transitions of an electoral district from an aristocrat to a non-aristocrat and 28 on the other direction. Let us call ΔA a variable equal to 1 if a district transits from a non-aristocrat to an aristocrat, -1 if the transit happens in the other direction and 0 otherwise. Table 7 reports OLS coefficients where ΔA is used as dependent variable.

With no change in 449 out of 508 cases, the variation in the dependent variable is small. The coefficient of enfranchisement never achieves 10% significance level. More importantly, the estimated coefficients are never negative, indicating that a higher enfranchisement level is more likely to have caused an aristocrat to gain a seat rather than loosing it. One within-province standard deviation in enfranchisement gives us an increase in ΔA of around 2% (using the coefficient of column 4).

This analysis has then been replicated by using an analogously defined variable $\Delta elite$ which includes identifiable members of the traditional *elites*. $\Delta elite$ includes aristocrats and non-aristocratic landowners, military,[57] diplomats[58] and members of political dynasties.[59] Although there is a sub-

---

[57]High ranked militaries had to sworn their loyalty to the Crown and were usually recruited among aristocrats or other influential families trusted by the King.

[58]People in charge of foreign policy were usually very close to the Crown and were recruited among the most traditional and influential families.

[59]An MP has been classified as being 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

stantial overlap between these groups (for example, most high ranked militaries were aristocrats), the variable *elite* includes 134 MPs in 1913 and 127 in 1909 with 45 negative and 37 positive transitions in the 1909-1913 period. The results are very similar to those we found for aristocrats alone, with slightly larger coefficients. Using column (4) of Table 8 as benchmark, the 0.0044 coefficient implies a 3% increase in $\Delta elite$ as a result of an increase of one (within-province) standard deviation in enfranchisement. Both in table 7 and in table 8 the columns that include lagged dependent variables display smaller coefficients and larger standard errors.

Electoral district competitiveness

Regulated competition for power is a key characteristic of democracy. Did enfranchisement increase the overall level of electoral competition? This question has been addressed by using the Herfindahl-Hirshman index (HHI) of competition and using candidates rather than parties as units of observation (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 index ranges from 0 (a large number of candidates with negligible number of votes) to 1 (an unopposed candidate). The results (reported in table 9) show that enfranchisement caused a slight increase in electoral competition, although the coefficient is statistically significant only in the simple regression of column (1).

Turnout

The 1913 election saw a generalized decline in electoral participation, with overall turnout rate decreasing to 59% from 65.4% in 1909. Table 10 shows that this decline was caused by the increase in the number of registered voters, since the newly enfranchised had a lower propensity to participate compared to pre-reform voters. In table 10 the dependent variable is the change in turnout rates between the 1913 and the 1909 elections. Across all specifications we find a negative effect of ΔE on turnout. Using column 4 as benchmark, we have that a 1% increase in the share of newly enfranchised voters decresed turnout by 0.24%. Hence, the political impact of the reform was certainly mitigated by the lower participation rates of the newly enfranchised.

Summary

Our baseline results suggest that the 1912 enfranchisement caused, on average, an increase in the *Estrema* vote share of 1913 but had a negative effect, or at best no effect, on *Estrema* parliamentary representation. Enfranchisement also had no significant impact on the parliamentary representation of aristocrats and other traditional elites. Seat competitiveness and the entry of *Estrema* candidates improved only marginally, if at all.

These results are puzzling. Why were increased vote shares not translated into an increased parliamentary representation? And why were traditional elites not affected? These questions strike at the core of current debates about democratization. If universal suffrage and a massive input of new voters into the electoral body has no substantial implications for the distribution of legislative power then it is legitimate to ask how can democratization serve as a commitment device to future

Senate).

redistribution. At the same time, however, our results document that new voters did support *Estrema* candidates more than the previously enfranchised, hence voting patterns reflected, on average, what would emerge from economic conflict á la Meltzer & Richard.

We will return on these questions in Section 5, where we will explore some of the hurdles that might have prevented the *Estrema* from taking advantage of the reform.

4.2 Robustness checks

4.2.1 Placebo treatments

For each of the outcomes, regressions have been re-run using the corresponding 1904-1909 change as dependent variable. Since enfranchisement in 1913 does not have an impact on previous elections, non-null results in these regressions would signal that pre-existing trends in outcomes are correlated with the subsequent enfranchisement and could therefore bias its estimated impact. In the interest of space, for each outcome I only report the results from two specifications: one which includes all control variables (both the 1911 levels and 1901-1911 changes) and one which also includes province fixed effects. Results are reported in table 11. The vote share change of *Estrema* candidates in 1904-1909 appears to be negatively related to subsequent enfranchisement and is never significant at conventional levels (columns 1 and 2). These results, together with those obtained in columns (5) and (6) of table 4, make it unlikely that the change in the *Estrema* vote share between 1909 and 1913 is due to pre-existing voting trends.

Columns 3-14 present placebo treatment regressions for the remaining outcomes. Overall there appears to be no relationship between enfranchisement in 1913 and the other outcomes measured as 1904-1909 changes, with the notable exception of ΔA, $\Delta elite$ and $\Delta turnout$ (when province fixed effects are included). The chances to be elected of aristocrats and *elites* are decreasing in districts that display higher enfranchisement levels in 1913. The estimated coefficients are large and statistically significant: districts that experienced one standard deviation above the mean in ΔE saw a decrease in $\Delta elite$ between 1904 and 1909 ranging between 5% (using the coefficient of column 11 and the overall standard deviation which is almost 12) and 7% (using the coefficient of column 12 and the within province standard deviation of 6.4). The corresponding figures for an aristocrat are respectively 4.4% and 5%. Since self-selection into treatment was not an option, we cannot rule out that enfranchisement stopped the decline in representation of aristocrat and elite MPs. 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 unfortunately moot in the absence of further evidence.

4.2.2   Male illiteracy rates

Regressions so far do not include male illiteracy rate in the list of control variables. The reason is that, being the franchise 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 identifying a more appropriate counterfactual: franchise would have naturally expanded with literacy even without the reform.

Table 12 reports regressions that include the illiteracy rate of males aged 6 and above. The estimated impact of enfranchisement differs only marginally from our previous estimates, suggesting that whether franchise expansion was due to the removal of the literacy barrier or to the removal of other obstacles did not matter: literate and illiterate newly enfranchised voters did not behave differently on average.[60] The illiteracy coefficient is never significant, except in the equation referred to the aristocrat net seat gain. Ceteris paribus, aristocrats appear to have done worse in districts with high illiteracy rates.[61]

4.3   The geography of the effect

Italian regions differed in a number of characteristics. The North-West was the most industrialized and richer 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 organized labour force, stronger unions and political organizations. Hence, our first step in uncovering heterogeneous effects is simply 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 13, which focusses on vote shares of the *Estrema* and on net seat gains of, respectively, *Estrema*, aristocrats and elite. The benchmark specification now includes the area dummies instead of the provinces: columns 1,3,5,7 report the results and show that, although some differences occour, the sign and approximate magnitude of the ΔE coefficient are not substantively affected by replacing the province fixed effects with the area dummies. We then introduce the interaction terms.

Columns 2,4,6,8 provide an unexpected picture of the geography of the effect of enfranchisement. In terms of votes, although no interaction term is statistically significant, the magnitudes indicate that enfranchisement benefited the *Estrema* mainly 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 and it is 10% statistically significant for the Centre. In the Centre we also have a positive and significant effect on the net seat gains of aristocrats. The effect is positive but not significant in the North West and North East and is instead negative and significant in

---

[60]Since we observe an impact neither on the competitiveness of electoral districts nor on ΔC, we should also conclude that political actors did not expect literate and illiterate newly enfranchised voters to behave differently.

[61]I also run regressions that include an interaction term between illiteracy and ΔE. There is nothing relevant to report about those regressions (probably also because ΔE and illiteracy rates are highly correlated) with the exception of a positive interaction effect on ΔC.

the South. Column 8 confirms that, in the South, enfranchisement had negative consequences for legislators coming from the elite, although the effect is now smaller and statistically insignificant. 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 differently from what most politicians of the time expected,[62] there is nothing suggesting that newly enfranchised Southerners voted more conservatively than in other parts of the country, while the opposite appears more likely.[63]

4.4   Inequality

As discussed in previous sections, 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 1911 Census we can construct the following indicator:

$$Inequality = \frac{[\% \text{ agricultural workers who do not own land} + \% \text{ blue collar industrial workers}]}{\% \text{ owners of real estate property}}$$

The numerator represents the percentage of employees not owning their means of production, while the denominator approximates the diffusion of property. 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, since 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 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 1911, when only about 10% of the population owned real estate and salaries where not far from subsistence levels.

Table 14 reports regression coefficients where our inequality indicator, normalized to be between 0 and 1, is included both as a direct effect and interacted with ΔE. Results show that the direct effect of inequality is positive, indicating that the parties of the *Estrema* gained votes in more unequal districts. Where inequality was higher, however, enfranchisement reduced both the vote and the net seat gain for the *Estrema,* as can be seen from the interaction term. Although the standard errors are such that we cannot rule out the possibility of no effect, the sign of the

---

[62]A noteworthy exception, as we have seen, was Gaetano Salvemini.

[63]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.

interaction term is opposite to what expected. It is so also for the net seat gains of aristocrats and elite, although the standard errors are too large in this case to allow any meaningful inference.

4.5 The election of 1919

To study the long run consequences of the 1912 reform is difficult. Between the 1913 and the subsequent (1919) election, World War I brings dramatic social and political changes. In the early twenties the advent of fascism makes elections irrelevant and political parties (except the fascist) are eventually outlawed. For the purpose 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 univeral 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 results with the results obtained in 1909 and 1913 within the 1919 electoral districts boundaries. This task is facilitated by the fact that 1919 electoral districts follow province boundaries[64] and each pre-1919 electoral district is also entirely contained within a province. 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 15. 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. A 1% increase in ΔE is now associated with a 0.53% decrease in *Estrema* vote share. This negative effect raises to 0.84% and becomes statistically significant at the 10% level when area dummies are introduced.[65]

Columns (3) and (4) separate the effect of the 1912 enfranchisement from that of the 1919 enfranchisement. This 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 dependent variable. In this case enfranchisement effects are always negative but never statistically significant, showing that the impressive gains in seats of *Estrema* candidates

---

[64]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).

[65]These are the four geographic areas used in Section 4.3.

in the 1919 election (the Socialist party increased its MPs from 78 to 156) have no link with the two franchise extensions.

Although, for the many 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 benefit the *Estrema*. A slightly longer perspective suggests that the overall extension of the franchise, through the 1912 and the 1919 reforms, had negative implications for the *Estrema* in terms of vote shares and at best no implication in terms of legislative representation.

5   Why so little effect on representation?

Indipendently of the motives that may lead an elite to concede democracy, it is reasonable to expect that this same elite (or part of it) will engage in activities that minimize the pro-poor impact of institutional reforms (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006b). In the context of the 1913 election, historians have documented at least two types of such activities: 1) a secret alliance between Giolitti and the Catholics (who were officially not permitted by the Vatican to take part in any form of political activity); 2) political violence, often perpetrated in cooperation or under the protection of local police force. This Section will show that the *Estrema* gained its votes mostly where they were irrelevant and systematically lost votes were they could have made a difference in terms of legislative representation. This makes it very plausible that elite's influence and intensified collective action prevented more favourable outcomes for *Estrema* candidates.

5.1   Swing districts

It is puzzling to find that enfranchisement had a positive effect on *Estrema* vote shares but no effect (or even a negative effect) on *Estrema* net seat gains. This suggests that votes were gained where not needed and were instead lost where they mattered the most. That many votes end up making little or no difference is typical of majoritarian single-member districts.

To further investigate this possibility I contruct 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 viceversa 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 1909 was between 30% and 60%. The first two criteria are self-explanatory. The third allows a rather generous definition of marginality. In an election that represented a *"jump in the dark"*, 60% of votes in the previous election was still probably insufficient to define a seat as safe. On the other side, a candidate with 30% of the votes could hope to reach the run-off stage and possibly be elected. The three criteria identify 226 districts that are defined as "swing".[66]

---

[66]Our results are not particularly sensitive to small variations in the boundaries used in criterion 3.

The regressions reported in table 16 show that on average the *Estrema* lost votes in swing districts (columns 1 and 2). The interaction between swing and ΔE has a negative sign (columns 3 and 4) showing that enfranchisement had a negative impact on *Estrema* vote shares in swing districts. For each increase of 1% in ΔE the *Estrema* lost between 0.3% and 0.4% of the votes, depending on the specification. Since the baseline effect of the swing variable is positive, compared to non-swing districts the *Estrema* gained votes, on average, in swing districts when $\Delta E < 45$ and lost them otherwise. The impact of this vote loss on seats was, however, less clear, with the swing coefficient being negative and significant in column 5 but positive when province fixed effects are included (column 6). Columns 7 and 8 show that in swing districts with high ΔE the *Estrema* also lost seats, although the coefficient of the interaction term is statistically significant only if province fixed effects are not included.

5.2 The "Gentiloni pact"

Several candidates in the 1913 election signed a pact with the Catholic Electoral Association led by Conte Ottorino Gentiloni. While the Association was not allowed by the Vatican to have its own candidates, it could provide support to specific 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 open support to favoured candidates. The so-called Gentiloni pact was signed secretly and the direct involvement of Giolitti (or whether Giolitti himself signed the pact or not) is still a matter of historical controversy. A list of signatories was revealed just after the election[67] by a Radical anti-clerical publication. It has been proved that the list contained many inaccuracies, though most names had been correctly identified.[68]

A detailed reconstruction of the events and a list of the signatories, based on research conducted in the Vatican archives, can be found in Piretti (1994). By using Piretti's list of signatories it is possible to construct a dummy variable "Gentiloni" equal to one in districts where one candidate signed the pact (there was never more than one signatory per district). It is possible that the impact of enfranchisement was different in districts that saw an explict participation of Catholics and a suspension of the *non-expedit*. In this sense our previous estimates could hide a relevant and historically important heterogeneity.

Table 17 reports regression results on the impact of the Gentiloni pact. First, it is immediately clear that in Gentiloni districts the Estrema faced a massive vote share loss (columns 1 and 2) and seat loss (columns 5 and 6). Had the Gentiloni pact been signed at random, we could have concluded that its impact was huge. It is instead reasonable to assume (as confirmed by historical research) that the pact was signed where the marginal return of the Catholic vote was higher and therefore we lack a proper counterfactual to assess its impact.

Our next step is to explore whether the effect of the Gentiloni pact depends on enfranchisement levels. The negative interaction terms in columns 3 and 4 tell us that the negative impact of the

---

[67]"I candidati del Conte Gentiloni Vicario elettorale di Sua Santitá", *L'Idea democratica*, November 16, 1913.
[68]See Piretti (1994).

Gentiloni pact on *Estrema* vote shares was stronger in districts with high ΔE. Conversely we could say that the positive impact of ΔE on *Estrema* vote share is reduced when the pact was signed. Assuming that the vote choices of the formerly enfranchised did not change, we could conclude that the average propensity to vote for *Estrema* candidates was, in districts where one of the candidates signed the Gentiloni pact, lower among the newly enfranchised compared with pre-existing voters.

The same interaction term is instead positive and statistically indistinguishable from zero in the net seat gain regressions (columns 7 and 8). Our conclusion is that, although the pact massively reduced the gains of the Estrema in terms of votes, with a stronger effect in districts with many new voters, its overall effect in terms of seats, which is substantial, is the same that it would have obtained without the franchise extension.

5.3   Discussion

The importance of the Gentiloni pact should not be underestimated: it signs the unofficial entry of Catholics into Italian politics. It is probably for this reason that most historians have considered the pact a reaction of traditional elites to the dangers posed by a rapidly expanding *Estrema*. Gentiloni himself regarded the pact as a great success and, ultimately, as the device that preserved the established order. It is however useful to note that signing the Gentiloni pact and being in a swing discrict (according to our definition) are uncorrelated. The proportion of swing districts in which the Gentiloni pact was signed is 42%. This proportion actually increases to 46% in non-swing districts. This may reflect better information available to political actors at the time (our definition of swing is based on 1909 electoral returns) or the different strength of Catholic organizations in different areas.

The orthogonality between these two variables point to the existence of at least two forces that worked against the *Estrema*. In the case of the Gentiloni pact this is a democratic force, because it consisted in increasing the participation of self-excluded segments of the population. It shows that a substantial share of newly enfranchised voters were in fact conservative. For swing districts we know less about the mechanisms that penalized *Estrema* candidates. One factor which is recurrent in the newspapers of the time is political violence and intimidation. Articles from a reputable and moderate source like *Corriere della Sera* report numerous instances in which labour organizations were attacked and poor voters were confronted by violent groups that operated under the protection of local police forces.[69] In other terms, voters were not forced to vote for disliked candidates (the vote was, in principle, secret) bur rather "persuaded" to stay home. This means that the Gentiloni pact and political violence should be expected to have opposite effects on participation: the first should increase turnout by allowing Catholics to go to the polls, the second should decrease it by preventing *Estrema* supporters to do so. These hypotheses are testable by using turnout data.

In table 18 the dependent variable is the difference between the turnout rates in 1913 and 1909.

---

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

Columns (1) and (2) show that turnout was indeed lower in swing districts. Depending on whether we include province fixed effects or not (and always including all the other controls) being in a swing district decreased turnout by a percentage that ranges between 3.3 and 3.7. Columns (3) and (4), however, show that the interaction between the swing dummy and ΔE has a positive sign, suggesting that, in districts with high enfranchisement rates, the negative impact of being a swing district was reduced.[70]

Columns (5) and (6) show that the Gentiloni dummy is also correlated with a relative decline in turnout. The magnitude is smaller compared with the swing dummy. The interaction with ΔE is in this case statistically indistinguishable from zero (columns 7 and 8). These results suggest that, if there was an increase in turnout due to the Gentiloni pact, it must have been more than offset by other forces that made turnout lower where the pact was signed.

Our analysis seems to indicate that unobserved events that happened in key districts may have a played a role in reducing turnout and *Estrema* vote. In districts where a candidate signed the Gentiloni pact the *Estrema* performed worse than average but, surprisingly, the Catholic vote was not sufficient to boost turnout rates. Political violence and intimidation is abundantly documented and, decades later, led authors like Gaetano Salvemini to draw a parallel between those facts and the subsequent advent of fascism.

6   Final remarks

The 1912 Italian franchise extension constitutes an ideal setting to study the relationship between democratization and political change. Enfranchisement in Italy has been less gradual than in most other Western European countries. A laggard until then, Italy passed in 1912 a reform that made it suddenly one the countries with the most generous franchise regulations. By conceding the voting right to all males aged above thirty the 1912 reform enfranchised the poorest segments of the population, trebling the electorate and leaving electoral rules and district boundaries unchanged. The reform was passed at a time in which labour unions and democratic and socialist parties were well established political actors, pushing in the direction of radical economic and institutional reforms. Of all the electoral reforms passed in Western Europe before WWI, the Italian 1912 franchise extension offers a unique opportunity to study the consequences of democratization.

Our empirical study suggests that the political changes associated with the reform were minimal. Although the extreme left saw an increase in vote shares, patterns of legislative representation remained broadly unaffected. Enfranchisement did not increase the number of seats won by the left and did not cause a displacement of traditional and aristocratic elites from their parliamentary seats.

These findings can be related to various streams of theoretical and empirical research on democratization. In particular, they appear to be hard to fully reconcile with some of the most influential

---

[70]The coefficients are such that the effect of the swing dummy remains negative also in the district with the highest ΔE. In the district with the smallest (highest) ΔE, the impact of the swing dummy is -12% (-2%).

economic theories of democratization. These theories, discussed in the Introduction, are based on a one-dimensional representation of societal conflict which corresponds to the economic interests of different groups. When this conflict is channeled into democratic institutions and elites concede political equality, the consequence is a larger government and more redistribution (Acemoglu and Robinson) or more public good provision (Lizzeri and Persico). This should happen irrespectively of whether democracy is used by elites as a commitment device to future redistribution (Acemoglu and Robinson) or is the consequence of an intra-elite conflict (Lizzeri and Persico).

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). Husted and Kenny (1997) present evidence of a positive impact on welfare spending of removing literacy tests and poll taxes in the US states during the period 1950-1988. More generally, an emerging body of empirical literature provides sound evidence of instances in which democracy is good for the poor (Avelino *et al.* 2004; Stasavage, 2005; Kudamatsu, 2011): this implies that democratization can be used by elites as a committment device to future pro-poor outcomes.[71]

The Italian enfranchisement case does not appear to entirely fit this view. By documenting an impact of enfranchisement on the vote share of parties with a programme of social reforms, our results fit well the Meltzer and Richard approach and the theories of democratization of Acemoglu and Robinson (2000), Boix (2003) and Lizzeri and Persico (2004). If we assume that parties stand for different policies then our findings are compatible with the view that the new voters, mostly poor, would disproportionately support the left.[72] However, we also document that parliamentary representation and other political outcomes remained essentially unaffected by universal suffrage. Other findings also do not conform to the idea that economic conflict mechanically translates into political representation. Inequality, for example, should increase demand for redistribution according to Meltzer and Richard. We find instead that enfranchisement has a negative impact on the performance of social reformers, however measured, precisely in the most unequal districts, where demand for redistribution should be higher. This finding is more compatible with the view that inequality may have facilitated elite's "capture" of poor voters.

Our results indicate that there is no mechanical link between democratization and political change, conforming to the claim of Acemoglu and Robinson (2006b) that *"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"*. Following this intuition, we provide an analysis of the potential reasons that led the parties of the *Estrema* to benefit from universal suffrage in terms of votes but not in terms of representation. The secret "Gentiloni pact" between the Catholic Electoral Association and a number of conservative candidates, is a prime example of the efforts made by elites to neutralize the impact of democratization. It is quite possible that, rather than to generate a progressive policy change, democratization might have been used to

---

[71]Some studies, however, do not find relevant differences between democracies and non-democracies (Mulligan et al. 2004; Ross, 2006)

[72]In this respect, the 1912 Italian reform is different from the UK Second Reform Act, which generated little increased support for the Liberal party (Berlinsky and Dewan, 2011).

please some particular conservative groups (namely, the clericals): this would again suggest that economic conflict did not easily translate into political cleavages. From a policy perspective, MPs who had signed the Gentiloni pact committed themselves to a pro-Catholic agenda, which suggests that our findings concern both the political and the policy dimensions.

We show, however, that forces other than the Gentiloni pact must have played an important role in key swing districts, where turnout was substantially lower. It is generally well documented by newspapers of the time that the election of 1913 happened in a climate of unusual violence and intimidation. The purpose of intimidation was often to ensure that poor voters stayed at home and did not exercise their right to vote, which would explain the lower turnout rates in swing districts. Hence, our findings can be regarded as providing support for the claim of Acemoglu and Robinson (2008) that the consequences of institutional reforms depend on the interaction between *de jure* and de *facto political* power. Further investigation is necessary to assess more precisely what happened in the key swing districts, but the patterns we uncover are at least compatible with the idea that elite's anti-*Estrema* efforts (of whatever sort) were particularly strong in those districts.

Two other papers provide micro-level quantitative evidence on the consequences of enfranchisement in Western Europe. They both focus on comparatively smaller reforms implemented in the UK. 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 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. In this sense, while the Lizzeri and Persico franchise extension hypothesis is better reflected in the electoral reforms of 19th century Britain, the Acemoglu and Robinson hypothesis faces a more appropriate test with the 1912 Italian reform.

The list of intriguing questions surrounding the reform that remain to be addressed is too long to be discussed here. For what concerns specifically the present study, at least three issues deserve better investigation. First, we ignored possible behavioural changes that enfranchisement may have induced among the previously enfranchised. In one extreme case, these voters may have changed entirely their behaviour, for example because the fear of new voters may have induced more conservative choices. This is not necessarily a problem for our conclusions: the counterfactual to actual 1913 election outcomes is what would have happened in 1913 without universal suffrage. If a change of any sort in the voting behaviour of the formerly enfranchised was induced by universal suffrage, then the voting returns of 1909 remain a valid counterfactual. Nevertheless, this remains an interesting question, especially in a context of increasing popularity of nationalistic and anti-democratic ideas which began to spread among the elites in those years.

A second dimension which has been only partially analysed 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 more detailed study of turnout would help clarifying the underlying mechanisms that generated our results.

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. Our analysis of the 1919 election is only a small contribution in that direction. 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. Other contexts could be more favourable to explore this question with quantitative methods. This remains a very important issue to be addressed by future research.

References

[1] Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson (2000): Why Did the West Extend the Franchise? Growth, Inequality and Democracy in Historical Perspective, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 115, 1167-99.

[2] Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson (2006a): *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*, Cambridge University Press.

[3] Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson (2006b): De facto Political Power and Institutional Persistence, *American Economic Review (P&P)*, 96, 325-330.

[4] Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson (2008): Persistence of Power, Elites and Institutions, *American Economic Review*, 98(1), 267-293.

[5] Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, Pierre Yared and James A. Robinson (2009): Reevaluating the Modernization Hypothesis, *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 56(8), pp. 1043–1058.

[6] Aidt Toke S. and Peter S. Jensen (2009): Tax Structure, size of government, and the extension of the voting franchise in Western Europe, 1860-1938, *International Tax and Public Finance*, 16, 362-394.

[7] Aidt Toke S., Martin Daunton and Jayasri Dutta (2010): The Retrenchment Hypothesis and the Extension of the Franchise in England and Wales, *The Economic Journal*, 120, 990-1020.

[8] Alesina, Alberto (1988): Credibility and Policy Convergence in a Two-Party System with Rational Voters, *American Economic Review*, 78 (4), 796-805.

[9] Avelino, G., D. Brown and W. Hunter (2005): The Effects of Capital Mobility, Trade Openness, and Democracy on Social Spending in Latin America, 1980-1999, *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(3), 625-641.

[10] Ballini, Pier Luigi (2007): *La questione elettorale nella storia d'Italia*, Roma: Archivio Storico della Camera dei deputati.

[11] Berlinski, Samuel and Dewan, Torun (2011): The Political Consequences of Franchise Extension: Evidence from the Second Reform Act, mimeo London School of Economics.

[12] Besley, Timothy and Stephen Coate (1997): An economic model of representative democracy, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 108, 85-114.

[13] Besley, Timothy and Anne Case (2003): Political Institutions and Policy Choices: Evidence from the United States, *Journal of Economic Literature*, 41, 7–73.

[14] Boix, Carles (2001): Democracy, Development and the Public Sector, *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(1): 1-17.

[15] Boix, Carles (2003): *Democracy and Redistribution*, Cambridge University Press.

[16] Bonomi, Ivanoe (1905): La politica italiana e il suffragio universale, *Critica Sociale*, 15 (22-23), 340-341.

[17] Calvert, Randall L. (1985): Robustness of the multidimensional voting model: candidate motivations, uncertainty and convergence, *American Journal of Political Science*, 29, 69-95.

[18] Caramani, Daniele (1999): *Elections in Western Europe since 1815 : electoral results by constituencies*, London: Macmillan.

[19] Carocci, Giampiero (1961): *Giolitti e l'eta' giolittiana*, Torino: Einaudi.

[20] Chattopadhyay, Raghabendra and Esther Duflo (2004): Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India, *Econometrica*, 72, 1409-1443.

[21] Clots-Figueras, Irma (2010): Women in politics: Evidence from the Indian States, *Journal of Public Economics*, forthcoming.

[22] Collier, Ruth Berins (1999): *Paths Toward Democracy: The Working Class and Elites in Western Europe and South America*, Cambridge University Press.

[23] Conley, John P. and Akram Temimi (2001), Endogenous Enfranchisement when Group's Preferences Conflict, *Journal of Political Economy*, 109, 79-102.

[24] De Felice, Franco (ed.) (1980): *L'eta' giolittiana*, Torino: Loescher.

[25] Flora, Peter (1983): *State, economy, and society in Western Europe 1815-1975 : a data handbook in two volumes,* Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.

[26] Gentile, Emilio (2003): *Le origini dell'Italia contemporanea: l'eta' giolittiana*, Bari: Laterza.

[27] Husted, Thomas A. and Lawrence W. Kenny (1997): The Effect of the Expansion of the Voting Franchise on the Size and Scope of Government, *Journal of Political Economy*, 105-54-82.

[28] Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (1946): *Compendio delle statistiche elettorali italiane dal 1848 al 1934*, Roma: Tip. Failli.

[29] Kudamatsu, Masayuki (2011): Has Democratization Reduced Infant Mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa? Evidence from Micro Data, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, forthcoming.

[30] Lee, David S., Enrico Moretti and Matthew J. Butler (2004): Do Voters Affect or Elect Policies? Evidence from the U.S. House " (with D. Lee and M. Butler), *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119(3), 807-859.

[31] Lindert, Peter H. (1994): The Rise in Social Spending, 1880-1930, *Explorations in Economic History*, XXXI, 1-37.

[32] Lindert, Peter H. (1996): What limits social spending? *Explorations in Economic History*, XXXIII, 1-34.

[33] Lindert, Peter H. (2004): *Growing Public*, Cambridge University Press.

[34] Lipset, Seymour M. (1959): Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy, *American Political Science Review*, 53, 69-105.

[35] Lizzeri, Alessandro and Nicola Persico (2004): Why Did the Elites Extend the Suffrage? Democracy and the Scope of Government, with an Application to Britain's 'Age of Reform', *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 119, 707-65

[36] Llavador, Humberto and Robert J. Oxoby (2005): Partisan Competition, Growth and Franchise, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 120, 1155-1189.

[37] Malatesta Alberto (1940): *Ministri, Deputati, Senatori dal 1848 al 1922*, Milano: E.B.B.I.

[38] Meltzer, Alan H. and Scott F. Richard (1981): A Rational Theory of the Size of Government, Journal of Political Economy, 89, 914-927.

[39] Ministero dell'agricoltura, industria e commercio. Direzione generale della statistica (various years): *Statistica degli scioperi avvenuti nell'industria e nell'agricoltura* (various years). Roma: Bertero.

[40] Montaldo, Silvano (2001): Il Parlamento e la società di massa (1900-1919), in *Storia d'Italia, Annali (vol. 17), Il Parlamento,* (ed. Luciano Violante), pp. 197-251, Turin: Einaudi.

[41] Mulligan, C.B., R. Gil and X. Sala-i-Martin (2004): Do Democracies Have Different Public Policies than Non-Democracies?, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 18(1), 51-74.

[42] Osborne, Martin J. and Al Slivinski (1996): A model of political competition with citizen-candidates, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 111, 65-96.

[43] Pande, Rohini (2003): Can Mandated Political Representation Increase Policy Influence for Disadvantaged Minorities? Theory and Evidence from India, *American Economic Review*, 93, 1132-1151.

[44] Pande, Rohini and Christofer Udry (2006): Institutions and Development: a View from Below, in Blundell, Richard, Whitney K. Newey and Torsten Persson (eds.), *Advances in Economics and Econometrics*, vol II, chapter 14, Cambridge University Press.

[45] Pettersson-Lidbom, Per (2008): Do Parties Matter for Economic Outcomes: A Regression-Discontinuity Approach, *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 6 (5): 1037–1056.

[46] Piretti, Maria Serena (1990): *La giustizia dei numeri: il proporzionalismo in Italia (1870-1923)*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

[47] Piretti, Maria Serena (1995): Una vittoria di Pirro: la strategia politica di gentiloni e il fallimento dell'intransigentismo cattolico, *Ricerche di Storia Politica*, IX, 5-40.

[48] Piretti, Maria Serena (1995): *Le elezioni politiche in Italia dal 1848 ad oggi.* Bari: Laterza.

[49] Piretti, Maria Serena (1998): Le leggi elettorali e la loro incidenza sulla Camera dei Deputati, in Manca, Anna G. and Wilhelm Brauneder (eds.), *L'Istituzione parlamentare nel XIX secolo. Una prospettiva comparata.* Bologna: Il Mulino.

[50] Piretti, Maria Serena (2001): Sistemi elettorali e struttura del Parlamento, in *Storia d'Italia, Annali (vol. 17), Il Parlamento,* (ed. Luciano Violante), pp. 543-582, Turin: Einaudi.

[51] Ross, Michael (2006): Is Democracy Good for the Poor?, *American Journal of Political Science*, 50 (4), 860-876.

[52] Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, Evelyn Huber Stephens and John D. Stephens (1992): *Capitalist Development and Democracy*, Chicago University Press.

[53] Salvemini, Gaetano (1905): Per il suffragio universale: il nocciolo della questione, *Critica Sociale*, 15.

[54] Salvemini, Gaetano (1955): *Scritti sulla questione meridionale.* Torino: Einaudi.

[55] Scheve, Kenneth and David Stasavage (2010): The Conscription of Wealth: Mass Warfare and the Demand for Progressive Taxation. *International Organization*. 64: 529-561.

[56] Stasavage, D. (2005): Democracy and Education Spending in Africa, *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(2), 343-358.

[57] Tomasi di Lampedusa, Giuseppe (1991): *The Leopard* (translation by A. Colquhoun), Everyman.

[58] Toniolo, Gianni (1988): Storia economica dell'Italia liberale: 1850-1918. Bologna: Il Mulino.

[59] Ullrich, Hartmut (1979): *La classe politica nella crisi di partecipazione dell' Italia giolittiana: liberali e radicali alla Camera dei Deputati 1909-1913, vol. II,* Roma, Archivio Storico Camera dei Deputati.

[60] Vindigni, Andrea and Davide Ticchi (2008): War and Endogenous Democracy. *IZA Discussion Paper* No. 3397.

[61] Zamagni, Vera (1984): I salari giornalieri degli operai dell'industria nell'eta' giolittiana (1898-1913), *Rivista di Storia Economica*, I, 183-208.
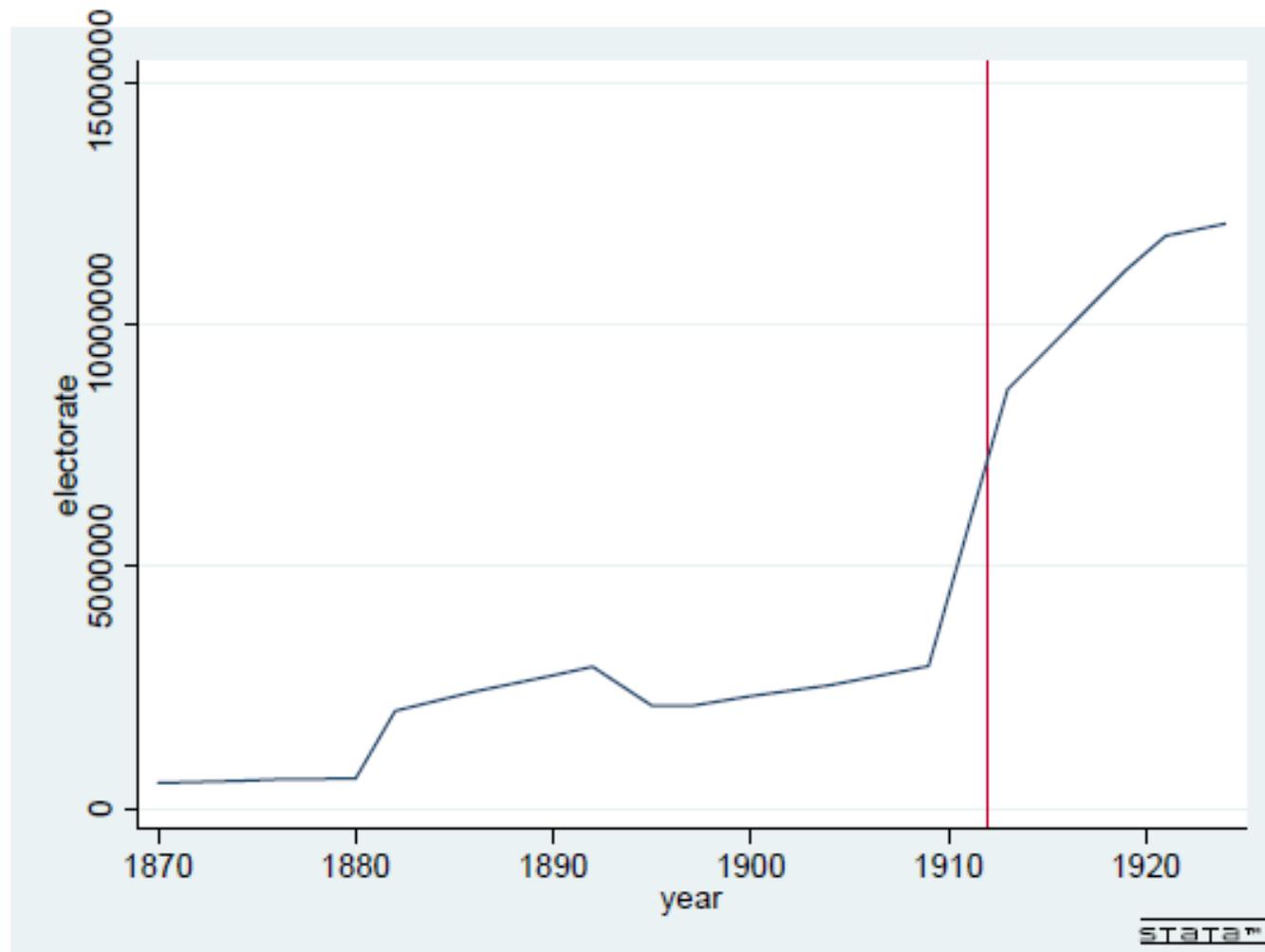
Figure 1. Number of registered voters in Italy (1870-1921)
(the red line indicates 1912)
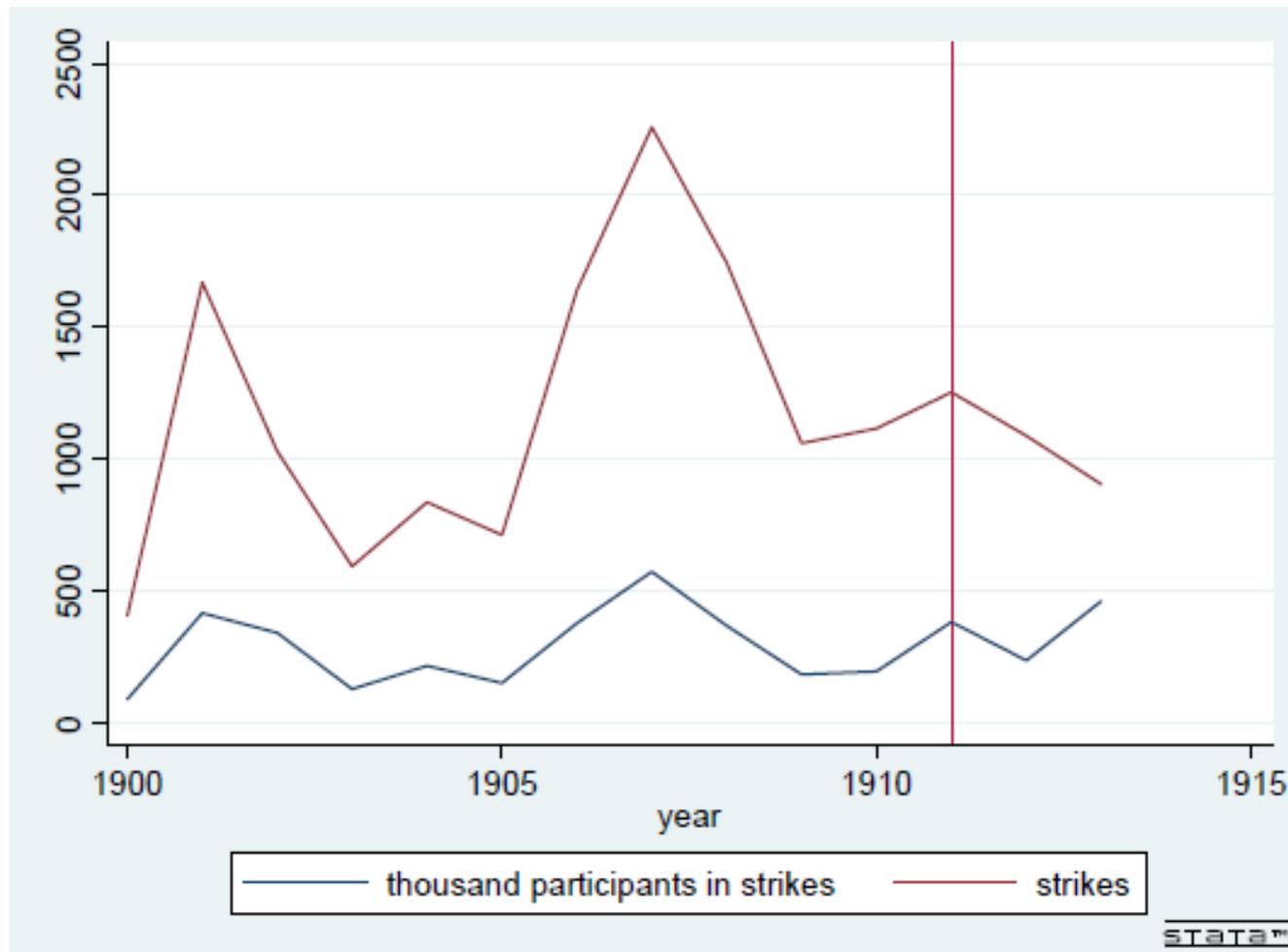
Figure 2. Number of strikes and participants in strikes (1900-1913) (the red line indicates 1911, when the electoral reform was proposed)
Source: Ministero dell'agricoltura, industria e commercio. Direzione generale della statistica: *Statistica degli scioperi avvenuti nell'industria e nell'agricoltura* (various years).
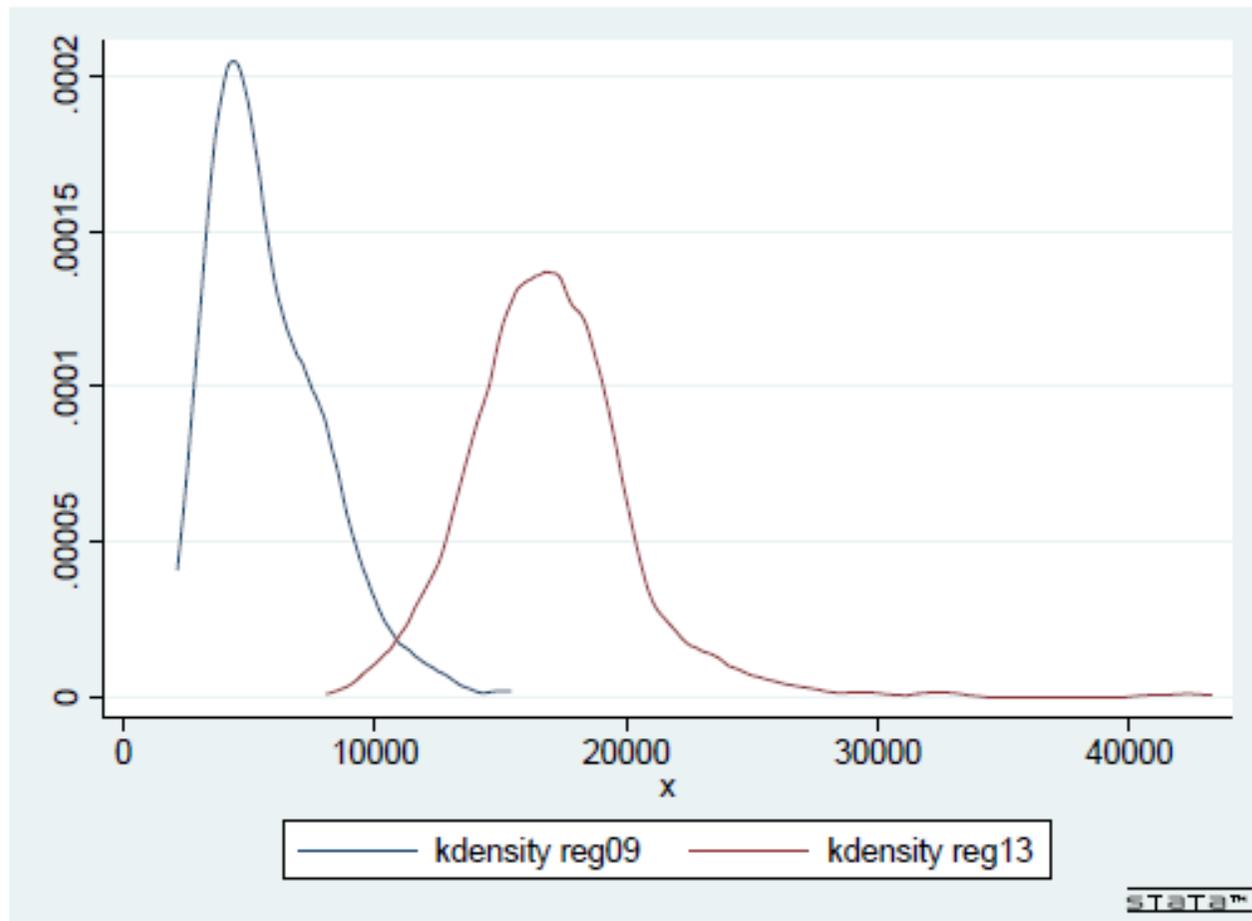
Figure 3. Registered voters by electoral district in 1909 and 1913
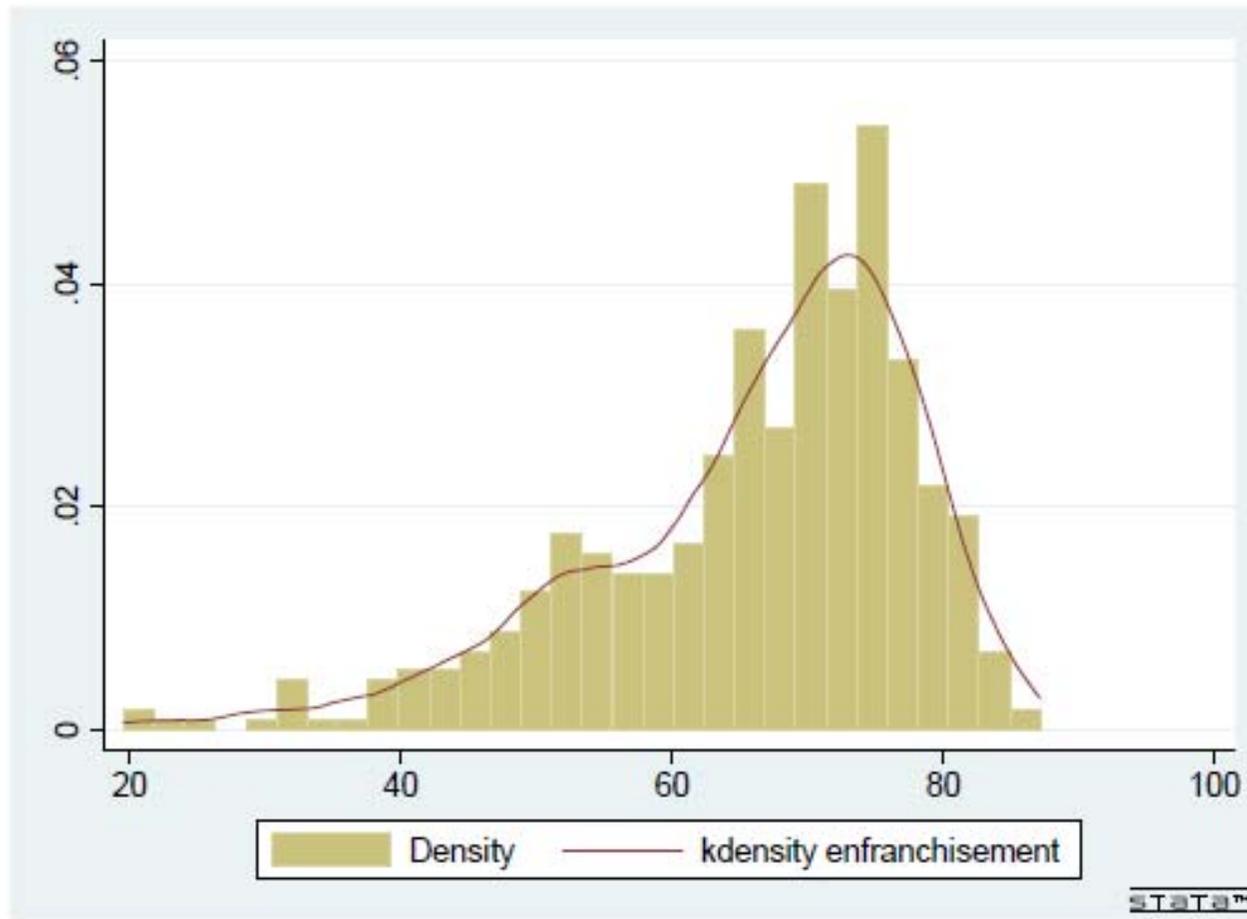
Figure 4. The distribution of ΔE across electoral districts
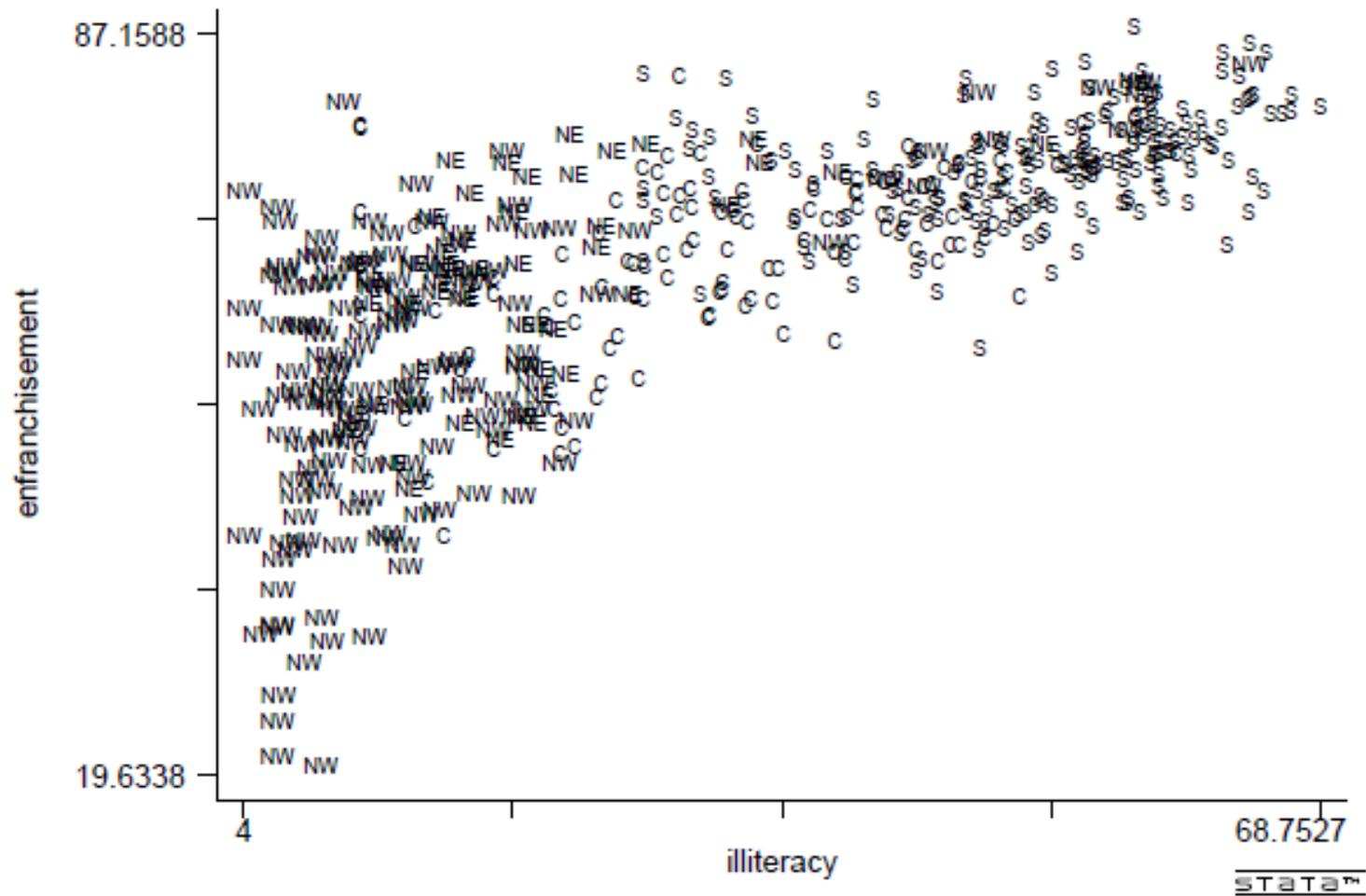
Figure 5. Enfranchisement and illiteracy rates across electoral districts
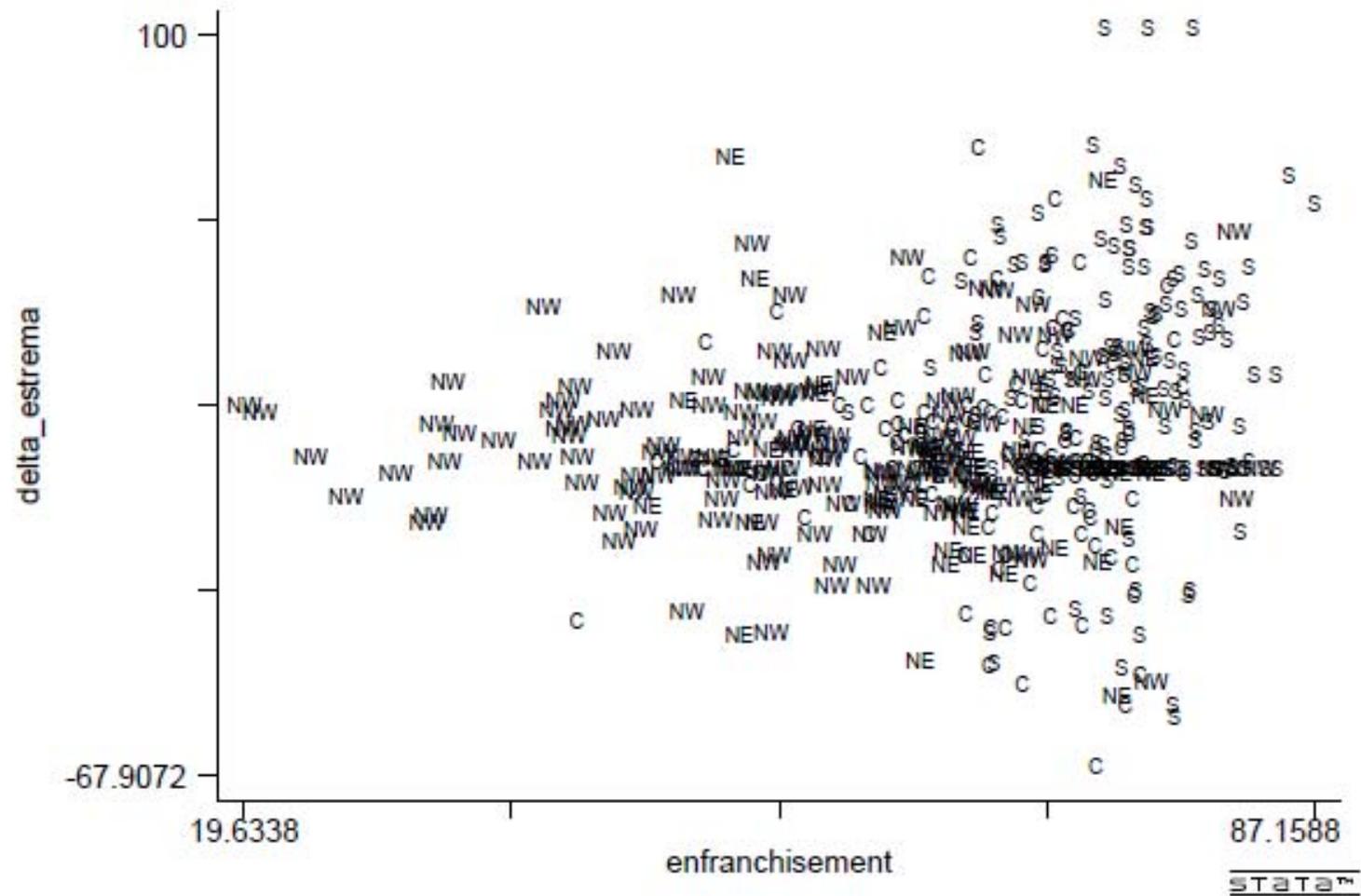
Figure 6. Enfranchisement and change in votes for candidates of the Estrema
(NW stands for North-West, NE for North-East, C for Centre and S for South)

Table 1: The parties of the Estrema between 1904 and 1913

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

Table 2. Aristocrats and elite in the _Camera dei Deputati_

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

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

Table 3: Correlates of enfranchisement

Dep. variable	ΔE	ΔE	ΔE$_{(t-1)}$	ΔE$_{(t-1)}$	ΔE	ΔE	ΔE	ΔE
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
male illiteracy 1911 (%)	0.4696***	0.4927***	-0.0341**	-0.0119				
	(0.0211)	(0.0273)	(0.0172)	(0.0262)				
vote percentage Estrema 1909					-0.0041***	-0.0024***		
					(0.0003)	(0.0003)		
vote percentage Estrema 1904							-0.0964***	-0.0502***
							(0.0162)	(0.0121)
vote percentage Estrema 1900								
industrial workers (% population) 1911		-0.3406***		0.0669	-0.7027***	-0.2999**	-0.9842***	-0.4323**
		(0.1125)		(0.0880)	(0.1086)	(0.1472)	(0.1299)	(0.1852)
urbanized (% population) 1911		-0.0563***		0.0123	0.0257	-0.0750***	0.0250	-0.0813***
		(0.0201)		(0.0199)	(0.0234)	(0.0237)	(0.0271)	(0.0259)
agricultural workers own land (% pop) 1911		-0.0973		-0.0048	-0.9981***	-0.3661	-1.2384***	-0.3196
		(0.1229)		(0.1111)	(0.1120)	(0.2700)	(0.1355)	(0.3125)
agr. workers not own land (% pop) 1911		-0.3138***		0.0824	0.1305*	0.2918**	0.0098	0.2300*
		(0.0629)		(0.0636)	(0.0705)	(0.1130)	(0.0851)	(0.1243)
property of real estate (% population) 1911		-0.0934		0.0518	0.4928***	-0.1929	0.5383***	-0.2831*
		(0.0933)		(0.0897)	(0.1086)	(0.1612)	(0.1227)	(0.1708)
logarithm population 1911		4.5583*		3.0853	10.2107***	12.6074***	5.5723**	9.9833***
		(2.3802)		(2.0072)	(2.4891)	(2.3591)	(2.4879)	(2.2768)
(log pop 1911 - log pop 1901)		22.4079***		17.4587***	9.4654	4.2078	13.3898*	3.7828
		(7.5874)		(5.9459)	(7.2184)	(8.4696)	(7.8097)	(8.7122)
Constant	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls (1901-1911 differences)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Province Fixed Effects	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.5472	0.6207	0.0076	0.0719	0.5788	0.8128	0.4823	0.7900

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Robust standard errors in parentheses

Table 4: 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

Notes. 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. Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Table 5: The effect of enfranchisement on the Estrema net gain of seats

	Dep. variable: Estrema net gain of seats					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	-0.0022	-0.0036*	-0.0036	-0.0089**	-0.0082**	-0.0082**
	(0.0018)	(0.0020)	(0.0024)	(0.0035)	(0.0033)	(0.0033)
Change in Estrema MPs (1904-1909)					-0.3769***	-0.5777**
					(0.0549)	(0.2907)
Change in MPs (1904-1909) x Enfranchisement (1909-1913)						0.0031
						(0.0045)
Constant	0.2486**	0.3094**	1.1541	-0.7227	-1.6623	-1.6235
	(0.1190)	(0.1513)	(1.2145)	(1.3324)	(1.3419)	(1.3369)
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	0.0033	0.0300	0.0417	0.2282	0.3137	0.3145

Notes. 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. Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Table 6: The effect of enfranchisement on the presence of Estrema candidates

	Dep. variable: ΔC					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	0.0063***	0.0057***	0.0028*	0.0026	0.0020	0.0029
	(0.0015)	(0.0015)	(0.0017)	(0.0028)	(0.0023)	(0.0023)
Estrema candidacy change (1904-1909)					-0.5175***	-1.4892***
					(0.0509)	(0.3118)
candidacy change (1904-1909) x Enfranchisement (1909-1913)						0.0139***
						(0.0045)
Constant	-0.2959***	-0.2454**	-1.2890	-0.5558	-0.6322	-0.9675
	(0.0936)	(0.1179)	(1.1940)	(1.3222)	(1.0593)	(1.0539)
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	0.0260	0.0389	0.0550	0.2306	0.4355	0.4475

Notes. 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. Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Table 7. Enfranchisement and the election of aristocratic MPs

Dependent variable	Dependent variable: net gain of seats by aristocrats					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	0.0019	0.0020	0.0028	0.0027	0.0018	0.0016
	(0.0015)	(0.0017)	(0.0020)	(0.0042)	(0.0040)	(0.0039)
Aristocrat net seat gain (1904-1909)					-0.1163**	-0.4084
					(0.0453)	(0.3319)
Arist. net seat gain (1904-1909) x Enfranchisement (1909-1913)						0.0043
						(0.0047)
Constant	-0.1310	-0.1274	-0.1301	-0.2149	-0.1148	-0.0626
	(0.1038)	(0.1234)	(0.9794)	(1.2294)	(1.2194)	(1.2195)
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	0.0044	0.0065	0.0143	0.1289	0.1408	0.1433

Notes. 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. Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Table 8. Did enfranchisement cause the displacement of traditional elites from parliament?

	Dependent variable: net seat gain by elite					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	0.0019	0.0027	0.0033	0.0044	0.0025	0.0022
	(0.0017)	(0.0019)	(0.0022)	(0.0044)	(0.0043)	(0.0042)
Elite net seat gain (1904-1909)					-0.1663***	-0.4214
					(0.0462)	(0.3039)
Elite net seat gain (1904-1909) x Enfranchisement (1909-1913)						0.0037
						(0.0043)
Constant	-0.1433	-0.2074	-0.2222	-0.6906	-0.3888	-0.4335
	(0.1140)	(0.1360)	(1.1340)	(1.3793)	(1.3473)	(1.3495)
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	0.0033	0.0083	0.0126	0.1227	0.1453	0.1469

Notes. 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. Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Table 9: The effect of enfranchisement on electoral competition

Dep variable	Herfindahl-Hirshman index of electoral competition (1909-1913 change)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	-0.0020***	-0.0012	0.0005	-0.0009	-0.0013	-0.0012
	(0.0008)	(0.0008)	(0.0009)	(0.0014)	(0.0012)	(0.0012)
HHI (1904-1909)					-0.5640***	-0.2628
					(0.0515)	(0.3362)
HHI (1904-1909) x Enfranchisement (1909-1913)						-0.0043
						(0.0048)
Constant	0.0719	0.0257	-0.7697	-0.7448	-0.8620	-0.8499
	(0.0474)	(0.0571)	(0.6785)	(0.7530)	(0.5939)	(0.6011)
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	0.0111	0.0304	0.0756	0.2173	0.4338	0.4352

Notes. 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. Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Table 10: Enfranchisement and turnout

	Dep. Variable: Change in turnout percentage (1909-1913)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	-0.3486***	-0.3066***	-0.3526***	-0.2438***	-0.1391*	-0.1416*
	(0.043)	(0.046)	(0.056)	(0.088)	(0.074)	(0.075)
Change in turnout(1904-1909)					-0.5554***	-0.4370
					(0.045)	(0.310)
Change in turnout (1904-1909) x Enfranchisement (1909-1913)						-0.0018
						(0.004)
Constant	18.1418***	18.1575***	9.7388	15.8938	51.2591	52.0785
	(2.941)	(3.376)	(33.616)	(40.312)	(32.166)	(32.204)
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	0.1104	0.1369	0.1681	0.3160	0.5265	0.5268

Notes. 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. Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Table 11. Placebo treatment on 1904-1909 changes

Dep. Variable	Votes	Votes	Seats	Seats	Cand.	Cand.	HHI	HHI	Arist.	Arist	Elite	Elite	Turnout	Turnout
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
ΔE	-0.0002	-0.2014	0.0003	0.0019	-0.0017	-0.0011	-0.0003	-0.0006	-0.0037**	-0.0078**	-0.0042**	-0.0114***	0.0456	0.1885**
	(0.0963)	(0.1645)	(0.0020)	(0.0032)	(0.0017)	(0.0030)	(0.0009)	(0.0014)	(0.0017)	(0.0034)	(0.0019)	(0.0034)	(0.0601)	(0.0815)
Constant	-44.6934	-45.9007	-2.2789*	-2.4927*	0.2282	-0.1477	-0.1583	-0.2077	0.7534	0.8607	1.7158	1.8147	48.9835	63.6803*
	(58.5097)	(63.9131)	(1.3315)	(1.4210)	(1.3224)	(1.4125)	(0.6592)	(0.7470)	(0.8258)	(1.0054)	(1.1512)	(1.3027)	(32.4385)	(37.4314)
Controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Province FE	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.0385	0.1727	0.0480	0.2083	0.0563	0.2077	0.0398	0.1756	0.0342	0.1652	0.0325	0.2009	0.0827	0.2724

Notes. The dependent variables in column 1-6 refers to the Estrema and it is, respectively, the Estrema 1904-1909 difference in percentage of votes (columns 1-2). the Estrema 1904-1909 net seat gain (columns 3-4), the Estrema 1904-1909 candidacy. The dependent variable in columns 7-8 is the Herfindhal-Hirshman index of electoral competition. Columns 9 and 10 refer to the net seat gain (1904-1909) of Aristocrats and columns 9-10 to the elite (1904-1909) net seat gain. Control variables include both 1911 levels and 1901-1911 differences as described in the Notes to Table 4. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Table 12: Introducing 1911 male illiteracy rate

Dep. variable	Votes	Votes	Seats	Seats	Candidates	Candidates	HHI	HHI	Aristocrat	Aristocrat	Elite	Elite	Turnout	Turnout
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
ΔE	0.2459*	0.2038	-0.0090**	-0.0090**	0.0009	0.0014	-0.0004	-0.0010	0.0037	0.0026	0.0049	0.0028	-0.2727***	-0.1429*
	(0.1479)	(0.1415)	(0.0036)	(0.0036)	(0.0027)	(0.0022)	(0.0014)	(0.0012)	(0.0043)	(0.0041)	(0.0046)	(0.0043)	(0.089)	(0.077)
Lagged dep. Variable		-0.5497		0.0000		-1.5098***		-0.2340		-0.4018		-0.4231		-0.4362
		(0.3421)		(0.0000)		(0.3110)		(0.3378)		(0.3166)		(0.2967)		(0.311)
Lagged dep. variable x ΔE		0.0049		0.0000		0.0142***		-0.0047		0.0042		0.0037		-0.0018
		(0.0050)		(0.0000)		(0.0045)		0.0048)		(0.0045)		(0.0042)		(0.004)
Illiteracy rate 1911	0.4776	0.4877	0.0012	0.0012	0.0170**	0.0146**	-0.0051	-0.0026	-0.0098*	-0.0101*	-0.0052	-0.0061	0.2849*	0.0124
	(0.3110)	(0.3072)	(0.0062)	(0.0062)	(0.0066)	(0.0059)	(0.0037)	(0.0028)	(0.0055)	(0.0054)	(0.0063)	(0.0061)	(0.173)	(0.148)
Constant	-79.9742	-88.5687	-0.7565	-0.7565	-1.0335	-1.3866	-0.6020	-0.7746	0.0604	0.2200	-0.5453	-0.2603	7.8932	51.7078
	(67.6834)	(68.0586)	(1.3558)	(1.3558)	(1.3225)	(1.0485)	(0.7644)	(0.6109)	(1.1886)	(1.1799)	(1.3661)	(1.3368)	(40.128)	(32.430)

Controls (differences 1901-1911), Controls (1911 levels) and province fixed effects always included

Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.2587	0.2940	0.2282	0.2282	0.2404	0.4548	0.2209	0.4362	0.1350	0.1497	0.1239	0.1486	0.3198	0.5268

Notes. Illiteracy rate is taken from the 1911 Census. It is represents the percentage of male population above 6 classified as illiterate. The dependent variables in column 1-6 refers to the Estrema and it is, respectively, the Estrema 1909-1913 difference in percentage of votes (columns 1-2). the Estrema 1909-1913 net seat gain (columns 3-4), the Estrema 1909-1913 candidacy. Columns 7 and 8 refers to the net seat gain (1909-1913) of Aristocrats and columns 9-10 to the elite (1909-1913) net seat gain. Lagged dependent variables refer to the respective outcomes calculated in 1904-1909 differences. Control variables and their differences are described in the Notes to Table 4. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

Table 13. The geographic distribution of enfranchisement effects

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)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	0.0203		-0.0064**		0.0035		0.0047*	
	(0.1034)		(0.0026)		(0.0022)		(0.0025)	
Enfranchisement (1909-1913) x North-West		0.0928		-0.0049		0.0042		0.0060*
		(0.1184)		(0.0034)		(0.0029)		(0.0032)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913) x North-east		-0.2891		-0.0098		0.0053		0.0048
		(0.3589)		(0.0077)		(0.0063)		(0.0059)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913) x Centre		-0.2725		-0.0087*		0.0069*		0.0059
		(0.2602)		(0.0047)		(0.0036)		(0.0043)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913) x South		0.3454		-0.0098		-0.0101**		-0.0076
		(0.3865)		(0.0068)		(0.0051)		(0.0068)
Control variables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Area dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
		(0.3866)		(0.0069)		(0.0051)		(0.0068)
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.0786	0.0838	0.0592	0.0608	0.0168	0.0311	0.0168	0.0249

*** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$. Robust standar errors in parentheses. See table A.1 for a definition of geographic areas. Control variables include all the level and differences controls as described in the notes to Table 4.

Table 14. 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	aristocrat net seat gain	aristocrat net seat gain
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)	0.2542*	0.4475*	-0.0000	-0.0044	0.0022	-0.0001	0.0018	0.0007
	(0.1342)	(0.2360)	(0.0032)	(0.0051)	(0.0026)	(0.0044)	(0.0029)	(0.0049)
inequality	23.4068*	25.0922	1.0964**	0.7092	-0.1795	-0.3932	-0.1912	-0.2841
	(13.2690)	(21.4721)	(0.4670)	(0.6135)	(0.7493)	(0.8811)	(0.7571)	(0.8974)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913) x inequality	-0.3119	-0.3395	-0.0124*	-0.0104	0.0018	0.0065	0.0060	0.0104
	(0.2435)	(0.2953)	(0.0072)	(0.0085)	(0.0111)	(0.0126)	(0.0114)	(0.0133)
Constant	-57.5301	-72.4084	0.5303	-0.9163	-0.0259	-0.0810	-0.1446	-0.3882
	(63.8313)	(67.8704)	(1.2144)	(1.3501)	(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	0.0554	0.2312	0.0150	0.1309	0.0153	0.1275

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%. Control variables include both 1911 levels and 1901-1911 differences as described in the notes to table 4. Inequality is defined in section 6.4

Table 15. 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 the text in Section 4.5. Area dummies are defined in the Notes to Table 13. 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. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Table 16. The effect of enfranchisement in swing districts

Dependent variable	Estrema vote percentage change				Estrema net seats gain			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
swing	-6.2907***	-6.3706***	19.8646*	13.9225	-0.0794*	0.0611	0.5232**	0.4049
	(2.2315)	(2.4723)	(10.8650)	(11.6363)	(0.0455)	(0.0529)	(0.2309)	(0.2607)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)			0.3312**	0.4108**			0.0015	-0.0048
			(0.1495)	(0.1961)			(0.0022)	(0.0036)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913) x swing			-0.3902**	-0.2990			-0.0069*	-0.0055
			(0.1756)	(0.1854)			(0.0037)	(0.0041)
Constant	-60.5081	-96.4625	-81.3890	-96.9368	-1.2856	-0.1847	1.0510	-0.7887
	(64.7150)	(68.5376)	(65.7795)	(68.9311)	(1.2394)	(1.3579)	(1.2530)	(1.3411)
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	0.0606	0.2631	0.0703	0.2698	0.0436	0.2191	0.0533	0.2331

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%. Control variables include both 1911 levels and 1901-1911 differences as described in the notes in table 4. Swing is defined in section 5.1

Table 17. Enfranchisement and the Gentiloni Pact

Dependent variable	vote percentage of Extrema candidates				net seat gain of Estrema			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Gentiloni	-10.0659***	-8.756***	-3.8520	4.5597	-0.3573***	-0.3564***	-0.4339**	-0.4847**
	(2.0428)	(2.2577)	(8.7963)	(9.8152)	(0.0371)	(0.0421)	(0.2142)	(0.2359)
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)			0.2369*	0.4014**			-0.0029	-0.0085**
			(0.1208)	(0.1642)			(0.0027)	(0.0035)
Gentiloni x Enfranchisement (1909-1913)			-0.0976	-0.2051			0.0012	0.0020
			(0.1437)	(0.1586)			(0.0032)	(0.0035)
Constant	-23.0428	-59.8493	-34.8873	-51.1760	1.4667	0.4108	1.6124	0.1328
	(62.1742)	(66.2587)	(62.4906)	(65.9349)	(1.1261)	(1.3096)	(1.1370)	(1.2960)
All controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Province fixed effects	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Observations	508	508	508	508	508	508	508	508
R-squared	0.0874	0.2769	0.0939	0.2851	0.1796	0.3306	0.1822	0.3402

Notes. Gentiloni is a dummy variable equal to 1 in electoral districts where one of the candidates signed the Gentiloni pact. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Other control variables are defined in the Notes in Table 4

Table 18: Turnout in swing and Gentiloni electoral districts

Dep. variable	Change in turnout percentage (1909-1913)							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
swing	-3.2667***	-3.7230***	-19.5945***	-15.3566**				
	(1.109)	(1.250)	(6.761)	(7.285)				
Enfranchisement (1909-1913)			-0.5491***	-0.4082***			-0.3348***	-0.2478**
			(0.096)	(0.124)			(0.067)	(0.098)
swing x enfranchisement			0.2195**	0.1649				
			(0.098)	(0.106)				
gentiloni					-1.2143	-2.5504**	1.7784	-4.5536
					(1.1346)	(1.1672)	(5.709)	(5.799)
gentiloni x enfranchisement							-0.0396	0.0325
							(0.085)	(0.086)
Constant	-19.4387	15.5300	3.4514	7.0832	-5.4009	31.4087	9.6631	22.2284
	(35.143)	(38.620)	(31.804)	(37.452)	(35.685)	(40.460)	(33.662)	(40.289)
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	0.1198	0.3190	0.2123	0.3406	0.1068	0.3119	0.1694	0.3230

Notes: Control variables include both 1911 levels and 1901-1911 differences as described in the notes to table 4. Swing is defined in Section 5.1. Gentiloni is a dummy variable equal to 1 in electoral districts where one of the candidates signed the Gentiloni pact. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$.

Table A1: Summary statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Enfranchisement (1909-13)	66.134	11.929	19.634	87.159
Enfranchisement (1904-09)	12.99133	7.334	-29.490	43.991
vote percentage change of Estrema candidates (1909-1913)	7.632	23.142	-67.907	100.000
vote percentage change of Estrema candidates (1904-1909)	-1.101	21.922	-99.458	90.258
Δseats Estrema (1909-1913)	0.104	0.452	-1.000	1.000
Δseats Estrema (1904-1909)	0.051	0.394	-1.000	1.000
Δcandidacy Estrema (1904-1909)	0.120	0.465	-1.000	1.000
Δcandidacy Estrema (1904-1909)	-0.148	0.457	-1.000	1.000
ΔHHI (1909-1913)	-0.062	0.229	-0.755	0.630
ΔHHI (1904-1909)	0.021	0.208	-0.517	0.641
Δaristocrat (1909-1913)	-0.006	0.341	-1.000	1.000
Δaristocrat (1904-1909)	-0.012	0.349	-1.000	1.000
Δelite (1909-1913)	-0.016	0.402	-1.000	1.000
Δelite (1904-1909)	-0.020	0.407	-1.000	1.000
gentiloni	0.441	0.497	0.000	1.000
inequality	0.199	0.166	0.042	1.000
male illiteracy rate 1911	33.613	18.791	4.000	68.753
swing district	0.445	0.497	0.000	1.000
North-West	0.293	0.456	0.000	1.000
North-East	0.098	0.298	0.000	1.000
Centre	0.236	0.425	0.000	1.000
South	0.372	0.484	0.000	1.000

Notes: The number of observations is 508 for all variables. North-West includes Sardegna, Piemonte, Lombardia, Liguria. North-East includes Veneto (which also incuded 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.