

The Democratization of Political Selection

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Abstract

Democracy requires universal suffrage, but it also requires universal access to political office. This paper describes a mechanism commonly used by traditional economic elites to extend the suffrage without redistributing political power, namely, candidate eligibility requirements. These often take the form of minimum property or wealth requirements for those who want to access political office. We provide a citizen-candidate model that relates suffrage and eligibility requirements with implemented policies, showing that the extension of the suffrage is inconsequential in regimes with strict economic qualifications for candidates. We evaluate the effects of removing property qualifications for both suffrage and office in the sample of the 13 original colonies of the United States of America during the period 1776-1900. We find that reforms to universal suffrage increased turnout but did not affect government spending or the composition of the political class. The elimination of economic qualifications for political office on the other hand, increased government spending, enriched political competition and increased the class heterogeneity of the legislature.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the political economy literature, democracy is generally understood as the competition of parties under universal suffrage (Downs, 1957). This association is historically appealing. The extension of the suffrage provides a clear-cut theoretical explanation, via the median voter theorem, to the large surge in government spending and redistribution observed over the past two centuries (Meltzer and Richard, 1981; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000). However, the empirical relation between the extension of the franchise and its potential consequences is, at the very least, inconclusive.¹ In many places, wealthy ruling elites persisted long after suffrage was made universal and prevented redistributive programs. This paper studies democratization in two dimensions: suffrage and candidate eligibility requirements.² A very recent example serves to illustrate the importance of the latter.

In 2014, China proposed an electoral reform to democratize Hong-Kong. The proposal includes elections with universal suffrage, but it also explicitly states that the Chief Executive shall be a person “who loves the country and loves Hong Kong”. In other words, not anyone can run and, more to the point, the Communist Party will decide who can. The street demonstrations that followed the announcement - the so-called umbrella revolution - suggest that citizens were well aware that democratization requires more than universal suffrage. Yet the 19th century episodes of democratization were not so different. At the beginning of the period, governments controlled the process of decision-making by imposing restrictions not only on voting but also on running for office. Qualifications for running were a widespread practice in United States (Miller, 1900), Europe (Cotta and Best, 2004) and Latin America³ (Annino, 1995; Posada-Carbo, 1996; Sábato, 1999). Figure 1 illustrates the process for the 13 original colonies in the United States. The first state constitutions put in place some form of property requirement for both suffrage and candidate eligibility. Typically property qualifications for office were much more strict. These restrictions were gradually eliminated during the nineteenth century as depicted in Figure 1

*** FIGURE 1 HERE ****

¹Peltzman (1980) found no effect for a cross-section of countries. Husted and Kenny (1997) show that extending the voting franchise in the U.S. led to a sharp increase in welfare spending but had no effect on other policy items. Aidt et al. (2006) on the other hand, found the opposite result in a cross-section of European countries. Falch et al. (2014) find null effects for Norwegian municipalities.

²Throughout the paper we use the following terms interchangeably: candidate eligibility requirements, qualifications for office, office restrictions and candidate restrictions.

³Ancient Greece provides another example. The Athenian lower classes, the *thetes*, were allowed to participate in the assembly, the *Ekklesia*, around 600 BC. This was the analog for the period of universal suffrage. However, it was not until a subsequent set of reforms, introduced by Pericles around 460BC, that the *thetes* were also allowed to hold office.

The top line describes the extension of the suffrage in the 13 US colonies. Voting enfranchisement exhibited a large momentum after the American Revolution. By the end of the 1820s almost 80 percent of the original states had implemented universal suffrage. The removal of restrictions for who could compete for political office, described by the bottom line, did not occur until after the Jackson administration in the early 1840s. As such, in all the original colonies the voting franchise was extended in the context of economic restrictions for office. The question that immediately follows is: how do restrictions for suffrage and candidate eligibility influence equilibrium policies?

This paper develops a simple theoretical model to better understand the above dynamics. We build on the citizen-candidate model ([Osborne and Slivinski, 1996](#); [Besley and Coate, 1997](#)) to derive the set of equilibria in the context of constitutional constraints. We employ the model to identify some relevant empirical questions and implications.

First, the model shows that suffrage and office restrictions can be used as substitutes, namely they can be reformed in opposite directions with no aggregate effect on policy. These are so called “seesaw reforms” following ([Acemoglu et al., 2008](#)). This raises the question: did nineteenth century elites use seesaw reforms to cede to popular demands for change while guaranteeing persistence in their economic and political ascendancy?

To answer this question, we provide detailed historical evidence of seesaw reforms in the Americas. We revise episodes of constitutional and electoral change in both the United States and Latin America, and show that in many cases, reforms moved in opposite directions on the two dimensions of interest: suffrage and candidate eligibility requirements. In particular, several US states extended the suffrage by reducing economic requirements for voting while at the same time putting in place more stringent property requirements for candidates. The opposite occurred in several countries in Latin America: restrictions over who could run for office were reduced while suffrage was curtailed. In both cases, seesaw reforms seem to have been used strategically by elites to retain control.

Second, the model shows that when reforms are sequential, starting with suffrage extensions followed by the elimination of candidate eligibility requirements, we should observe changes in both party competition and policy outcomes. Accordingly, we provide quantitative evidence on the effect of removing property restrictions for candidates using the original 13 colonies in the United States during the period 1788 to 1900. The original colonies are a unique case study, given variation in the timing of the reforms across states as well as data availability. Our results suggest a positive effect of eliminating candidate eligibility requirements on both government revenues and expenditures. Additionally, eliminating these requirements reduced the elite background of elected officials and had a sizable effect on turnout and party competition.

In the next section we describe the related literature. In section 3 we present the theory and in section four we derive the empirical implications of the model. In section 5 we provide historical evidence on seesaw reforms in the Americas. Sections 6 and 7 provide quantitative evidence on the effect of removing qualifications for office using panel data for the 13 U.S. colonies. Section 8 concludes.

2 RELATED LITERATURE

This paper aims to bridge the literatures on extension of the suffrage and access to political office (Besley, 2005). A prolific body of work has explored the determinants of the extension of the suffrage in the context of the Downsian paradigm (Meltzer and Richard, 1981; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000; Bourguignon and Verdier (2000), Llavador and Oxoby (2005) and Gradsterin (2007). Under this approach, electoral competition induces candidates to implement the median voter's preferred policy (Downs, 1957), even when candidates may themselves be policy-motivated (Wittman, 1977; Calvert, 1985). Other authors, including Lizzeri and Persico (2004) and Galor et al. (2009), use alternatives to the median voter model but their mechanisms do not speak to the role of restrictions for office. Indeed, most if not all the literature on suffrage democratization assumes that the identity of the politician is irrelevant.

A separate literature however has emphasized the role of candidate selection and, more specifically, the identity of the politician on policy implementation. For instance, McGuire and Ohsfeldt (1989) provide strong evidence that the delegates summoned during the drafting of the Constitution at the Federal Convention of 1787 voted according to their personal economic interests (See also Pande (2003), Chattopadhyah and Duflo (2004), and Besley et al. (2011)). As far as we can tell, our work is the first attempt at studying democratization not only of suffrage but also of access to political office.

Our paper also builds on and contributes to the literature on persistence and institutional change. It is generally acknowledged that nineteenth century elites persisted and reproduced their power even in the face of democratic reforms (DalBo et al., 2009; Querubin, 2012; Acemoglu et al., 2013). An explanation was provided by Acemoglu and Robinson (2008), who suggested that ruling elites may have extended de jure power via institutional reforms, but they managed to maintain control in practice as a result of their economic dominance. The more recent works of Dippel (2014) and Bertocchi and Arcangelo (2014) provide evidence in favor of this argument. In this paper we explore a complementary explanation. By leveraging institutions that regulated candidate eligibility, elites may have extended the suffrage without any real transfer of political power. Following the terminology in Acemoglu and Robinson

(2008), elites were able to fully offset a de jure reform using another de jure reform.

3 THEORY

We build on the “citizen-candidate” model in which the identity of the politicians is key to achieving policy credibility (Osborne and Slivinski, 1996; Besley and Coate, 1997). Our model builds in a constitution specifying suffrage restrictions and candidate eligibility requirements. We use the model to evaluate the theoretical consequences of removing these restrictions.

3.1 Preferences

The polity consists continuum of citizens of mass one endowed with heterogeneous income y , which is distributed over the interval $[0, 1]$ according to a distribution F . For analytical simplicity, we assume that F is continuous and strictly increasing. Hence, any truncated distribution with support in $[y, 1]$ has a unique median given by $m(y)$. We let μ denote the mean income of the population. The citizenry has to decide on a proportional income tax $\tau \in [-1, 1]$ in order to subsidize a redistributive transfer to individuals. We assume that redistribution entails a deadweight loss of $\mu\tau^2/2$.⁴ The resulting indirect utility function of an individual with pre-tax income y given tax τ is given by:

$$V(y, \tau) = y(1 - \tau) + \mu(\tau - \tau^2/2)$$

It follows that citizens’ preferences for tax rates are single-peaked, with bliss points given by:

$$\tau(y) = 1 - y/\mu$$

A tax $\tau > 0$ has a straightforward interpretation. An amount τy is raised from a citizen with income y in order to finance a lump-sum transfer of $\mu(\tau - \tau^2/2)$ to each and every citizen. If $\tau < 0$, then each citizen is taxed a lump-sum amount $\tau\mu$ that is used to issue a transfer $\tau y - \mu\tau^2/2$ to an individual with income y . Therefore, while positive taxation constitutes a transfer from the rich to the poor, negative taxes would correspond to the case in which the poor transfer resources to the rich. Hence, all citizens with income below the mean of

⁴We have chosen this particular specification for the deadweight loss for exposition purposes. All results hold for any increasing and convex function, as long as the deadweight loss for low levels of taxation is sufficiently small.

society prefer positive taxation, whereas richer individuals prefer a negative tax.⁵

3.2 The Constitution: suffrage and candidate eligibility

The polity chooses its representatives through elections. The constitution $\Omega = (y_S, y_O)$ specifies both *suffrage restrictions* y_S and *candidate eligibility restrictions* y_O . The constituency is formed by citizens with income $y \geq y_S$, that is, only individuals with income above y_S have the right to vote. Universal suffrage thus corresponds to $y_S = 0$. Similarly, the constitution establishes that only citizens with $y \geq y_O$ are eligible to run for office. These restrictions encompass a variety of scenarios. Historically however, constitutions have imposed stricter criteria on eligibility than on the vote. We thus restrict our attention to cases where a candidate must belong to the constituency of a society. Formally, we impose⁶:

$$0 \leq y_S \leq y_O \leq 1$$

3.3 Political Competition

The political process consists of two strategic stages and a payoff realization stage. At stage 1, individuals meeting the candidate threshold y_O may run for office. Entering the political race entails a cost $c > 0$ for the candidate. At stage 2, citizens with income $y \geq y_S$ cast their votes for one of the candidates running for office. Voting is costless and is assumed to be sincere whenever strategic choices of votes may be relevant. In case of indifference among a given number of candidates, we assume that an equal split of the indifferent voters cast their ballots for each candidate.

After elections have taken place, the candidate obtaining the highest number of votes is proclaimed the winner. In case of ties, a balanced die is rolled to determine the winner among the tying candidates. Finally, the winner implements a policy of her choice. As usual in citizen-candidate set-ups, policy promises are not binding. Consequently, any winning candidate implements her preferred tax rate. In addition, a candidate gets a payoff of $b \geq 0$ as spoils of office. At the end of this political competition game, each citizen enjoys their corresponding utility, given their income and the tax rate chosen by the elected candidate. An anarchical society, one in which no citizen runs, entails a payoff of $-\infty$ for each citizen. If the spoils of office were significantly larger than the cost of running, we would have several candidates with the same preferences running for election simultaneously. For instance, for

⁵The assumption that taxes may be negative is made for completeness. All qualitative results carry over to the case where τ is constrained to be non negative.

⁶For the sake of thoroughness we also evaluate the cases where $y_S > y_O$ and $y_S = y_O$. Note, universal suffrage and access to office, namely $y_S = y_O = 0$, is a particular case of the latter.

$b = nc$, for some integer n , and no suffrage restriction or eligibility qualifications, a number n of median-voter citizens running for office constitutes an equilibrium. In order to reduce the number of cases to consider and to simplify our exposition, we impose the following:⁷

Assumption 1.

$$b < 2c.$$

3.4 Equilibrium

In this section, we evaluate the scenario in which eligible candidates are the members of society with an income $y \geq y_O$. Each can choose whether to run for office or not. The payoff for a citizen with income y , when a candidate with ideal policy τ^* is elected, is given by $1_b \cdot b - 1_c \cdot c + V(y, \tau^*)$, where 1_c and 1_b are indicator functions taking on a value of 1, if the citizen runs for office and wins the election, respectively, and a value of 0 otherwise. We solve for the Nash equilibria of this game. Propositions 1 and 2 characterize the equilibria involving one and two candidates, respectively. There does not exist equilibria in which three or more candidates run for office.⁸ All the proofs are in the appendix.

Proposition 1. (One-candidate equilibria)

An equilibrium with a candidate y^* running for office exists. Define threshold $\delta_1 \equiv \frac{1}{2} (2\mu(c - b))^{\frac{1}{2}}$, income levels $y_L \equiv \max \{y_O, y_S - \delta_1\}$ and $y_R \equiv \max \{y_O + 2\delta_1, y_S + \delta_1\}$ and decisive voter $\hat{y} = \max \{y_O, m(y_S)\}$. Then: (i) If $c \leq b$, we have that $y^* = \hat{y}$. (ii) If $b < c$, then $y^* \in [y_L, y_R]$.

In order to get the intuition for Proposition 10 consider first the case in which $c \leq b$. In this case, the perks of office exceed the cost of running as a candidate. Hence, any citizen would be willing to run if he were guaranteed a victory. If $m(y_S) \geq y_O$, then the median voter could run and secure office. If, on the contrary, $m(y_S) < y_O$, the median voter cannot run for office. But then, a citizen with income y_O , the closest to the median within the pool of possible candidates, could run and defeat any opponent. Hence, the only citizen that could and would run is \hat{y} . Consider now the case where $b < c$, that is, when running entails a cost exceeding the benefits from office and suppose a citizen with income $y \geq y_O$ runs for office. Clearly, \hat{y} would win an election against any opponent. Also, leaving the race would

⁷For a detailed description of the equilibria for $b \geq 2c$ and no suffrage or eligibility restrictions, see Osborne and Slivinski (1995) and Besley and Coate (1996).

⁸The non existence of many candidates equilibria is a consequence of Assumption 1.

entail an infinite loss. Hence, \hat{y} belongs to the set of one-candidate equilibria. Now, consider a candidate $y \neq \hat{y}$. Then, a citizen with income \hat{y} could run and defeat him. But contesting a candidate with income y would only be beneficial if the benefits from holding office and implementing his preferred tax exceeded the cost of running, that is, if

$$V(\hat{y}, \tau(\hat{y})) - V(\hat{y}, \tau(y)) > c - b.$$

Hence, as long as a citizen is not too far away from \hat{y} , he could run for office as a sole candidate. We now turn into the question of whether there exist equilibria with more than one candidate, potentially having different preferred policies. The following proposition characterizes such equilibria.

Proposition 2 (Two-candidates equilibria).

Define thresholds $\rho(y_S) = 2(m(y_S) - F^{-1}(1/3))$ and $\delta_2 \equiv \frac{1}{2}(2\mu(2c - b))^{\frac{1}{2}}$ and let $\gamma \equiv \min\{\rho(y_S), m(y_S) - y_O\}$. Then, there exists a two-candidate equilibrium if and only if:

$$y_O \leq m(y_S) - \delta_2 \tag{1}$$

and

$$b \geq 2 \left(c - \frac{2\rho(y_S)^2}{\mu} \right).$$

For any $t \in [\delta_2, \gamma]$, citizens $y_l^* = m(y_S) - t$ and $y_r^* = m(y_S) + t$ running for office constitute an equilibrium.

Crucially, in contrast to the Downsian paradigm, two candidates with the same preferred tax rate would not run against each other, as the expected benefit from holding office is less than the cost of running, while there would not be any policy gain from defeating an opponent intending to implement the same policy as oneself. The same logic applies to citizens with very similar income levels. Hence, candidates should be sufficiently far away from each other. The threshold δ_2 guarantees that the expected policy gain from running against a certain candidate is large enough so as to justify the cost of running. Notice that, since $c > 0$, any citizen running as a candidate must have a positive probability of winning. Hence, any two candidates must be symmetrically located around the median of the constituency (we show in the appendix that these preferences are symmetric). There is however a bound to the distance between any two candidates. If candidates were further apart than $\rho(y_S)$ from the median of the constituency, the latter would have incentives to enter the race and implement his favorite policy. Moreover, when $y_O > m(y_S) - \rho(y_S)$, the constitutional qualifications for office y_O set an additional limit to the largest distance between any two candidates. The

poorer candidate that could run $-y_O$ - would be at a distance $m(y_S) - y_O$ from the median of the constituency.

It is important to highlight the role played by candidate eligibility requirements in the existence of two-candidate equilibria. In particular, condition (1) establishes that when candidates are required to be of a certain wealth, two-candidate elections are not possible.

4 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The model delivers several implications regarding the effects of extending the suffrage and relaxing candidate eligibility requirements. In this section we discuss the main implications. To aid our intuition, Figure 2 presents the space of constitutions as pairs $\Omega = (y_S, y_O)$ in the Euclidean rectangle determined by $0 \leq y_S \leq 1$ and $0 \leq y_O \leq 1$.

*** FIGURE 2 HERE ****

The constituency median-voter mapping, $m(y_S)$, is a strictly increasing function of y_S , with an intercept at m –the unrestricted median– and $m(1) = 1$.⁹ This mapping divides the constitutional space into two exhaustive and mutually exclusive sets.

We label the upper contour set of $m(y_S)$ the *eligibility-restriction set*. By construction, for any given constitution $\Omega' = (y'_S, y'_O)$ in the eligibility-restriction set, the decisive voter $\hat{y}' = \max\{y'_O, m(y'_S)\}$ is determined by the eligibility-restriction, that is, $\hat{y}' = y'_O$. Similarly, we label the lower contour set of $m(y_S)$ as the *suffrage-restriction set*. For any constitution $\Omega'' = (y''_S, y''_O)$ in the suffrage-restriction set, the decisive voter is determined by the suffrage restriction, namely $\hat{y}'' = m(y''_S)$.

We draw an *isod decisive line* as the loci of constitutions with the same decisive voter \hat{y} , with \hat{y} defined as in Proposition .¹⁰ In order to draw an isod decisive line one can start from any constitution $\Omega = (y_S, y_O)$ on the constituency median voter mapping $m(y_S)$. By construction, the decisive voter is given by $\hat{y} = y_O = m(y_S)$. On the one hand, the horizontal line on the eligibility-restriction set passing through Ω corresponds to the set of constitutions $\Omega' = (y'_S, y_O)$ with the same eligibility restriction y_O as Ω . Hence, all these constitutions have the same decisive voter $\hat{y} = y_O$ as Ω and are on the same isod decisive line. Conversely, any constitution on the eligibility-restriction set with $y'_O \neq y_O$ is such that the decisive voter

⁹The median of a restricted constituency formed by the richest citizen is this same citizen.

¹⁰In Proposition , the equilibrium is the decisive voter \hat{y} for which $c \leq b$, and it gravitates towards \hat{y} in the case that $b < c$. This decisive \hat{y} replaces the median voter in the standard citizen-candidate model and we use it to draw our main theoretical implications.

$\hat{y} = y'_O$ is different, so that it must belong to another isodecisive line. On the other hand, the vertical line on the suffrage-restriction set passing through Ω corresponds to the set of constitutions $\Omega'' = (y_S, y''_O)$ with the same suffrage restriction y_S as in Ω and therefore lie on the same isodecisive line. Clearly, any other constitution on the suffrage-restriction set belong to another isopolicy line. Hence, the isodecisive line map is given by inverted-L shaped lines intersected by the constituency median voter mapping.

4.1 Seesaw reforms

The nineteenth century was characterized by a substantial number of constitutional reforms that modified both the suffrage requirement and the eligibility restrictions. Whether one should expect a change in policies as a result of these changes can be addressed using our model. Of particular interest are reforms that changed requirements in opposite directions. In order to illustrate this idea, consider a constitution $\Omega'' = (y''_S, y''_O)$ in the suffrage-restriction set, as depicted in figure 2, so that the decisive voter is given by $\hat{y}'' = m(y''_S)$. Now, suppose that social pressure to lift suffrage restrictions makes a constitutional reform including universal enfranchisement desirable. The constitutional order may be changed to $\Omega''' = (y'''_S = 0, y'''_O = m(y''_S))$, enlarging the polity to the entire population yet leaving the decisive voter unchanged. Following Acemoglu *et al.* (2008), we dub “seesaw reforms” constitutional changes in which y_S and y_O move in opposite directions. Seesaw reforms provide institutional change and policy persistence at the same time. For instance, the enfranchisement of larger portions of the population may be accompanied by stricter requirements to run for office. Alternatively, the removal of eligibility restrictions could be entirely offset by a simultaneous curtailment of voting rights. Did nineteenth century elites use seesaw reforms to accede to institutional reform without threatening their political and economic ascendancy? We turn to this question in the next section.

4.2 Sequential elimination of suffrage and eligibility requirements

While seesaw reforms may have retarded full democratization, most restrictions on political enfranchisement were ultimately lifted by the end of the 19th century as illustrated in Figure 1. That said, the sequencing of these reforms may have mattered. Constitutional reforms were typically sequential, typically beginning with extensions of the franchise and only later following up with the elimination of eligibility requirements.¹¹

Returning to Figure 2, observe that any constitution in the eligibility-restriction set is

¹¹For instance, in the U.S., 11 out of 13 states abolished suffrage and eligibility restrictions sequentially, while only 2 of them did so simultaneously.

such that these restrictions are binding, such that relaxing these would result in a less wealthy decisive voter. On the other hand, extending the suffrage would be inconsequential, for median voter policies would be precluded from being implemented by restrictions on who can run. A result of our model given a sequential implementation of reforms is that removing suffrage restrictions is irrelevant for policy, while relaxing eligibility requirements should lead to more redistributive policies through the emergence of less wealthy politicians.

*** FIGURE 3 HERE ***

To illustrate this, consider a sequential reform of the constitution $\Omega^0 = (y_S^0, y_O^0)$ depicted on the eligibility-restriction set in Figure 3. We assume that Ω^0 is located within the eligibility-restriction set because the majority of 19th century U.S. state constitutions put much stricter restrictions on who could run for office than on who could vote.

In the first stage, a constitutional reform would consist of a complete removal of restrictions for suffrage, that is, $\Omega^1 = (y_S^1 = 0, y_O^1 = y_O^0)$. Eligibility restrictions would then be lifted in the second stage, so that $\Omega^2 = (y_S^2 = 0, y_O^2 = 0)$. While the second stage reform changes the constituency median from $m(y_S)$ to m , the move from Ω^0 to Ω^1 , which lie on the same isodecisive line, leaves the decisive voter $\hat{y}^1 = \hat{y}^0 = y_O^0$ unchanged. Only when restrictions on eligibility are lifted does the median voter of the society as a whole become the decisive voter.

4.3 Electoral competition: number of candidates

Our model also has implications for the extent of electoral competition. A two-candidate equilibrium only arises when eligibility restrictions are not binding. Hence, one should expect that relaxing qualifications for office may have led to a lower number of elections being decided by acclamation of a single candidate. Moreover, one would also expect greater polarization of the candidates. As long as qualifications for office are binding, we expect candidate $y^* = y_O$ to run as the sole candidate. Eliminating these restrictions opens the door for a contested election between two candidates $\{y_l^*, y_r^*\}$, to the left and right of the former, as described in proposition 2.

5 HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Polities in the Americas, including all the states in the United States, implemented a variety of qualifications for both office and suffrage after independence. The restrictions

included property, income, residence, race, religion, education and gender. We focus here on property and wealth requirements for white adult males.

5.1 Seesaw Reforms in the United States

From 1691 onwards, every colony provided property requirements for both suffrage and office.¹² At first, the requirement for both suffrage and eligibility was a simple freehold. Then, the amount and location of the freehold was prescribed. The most common restriction in the late seventeenth century was a freehold valued at £40 or yielding an income of 40 shillings per year.¹³ Only three colonies had a marked difference in the amounts required to run for office with respect to the ones for suffrage. South Carolina and New Jersey required £1,000 for members of the assembly while New Hampshire required £300.¹⁴ These provisions were upheld in all of the colonies until the Revolution.

The American Revolution brought a modest improvement in the right to vote, although in more than a third of the states, colonial restrictions on suffrage remained in force. Overall, the proportion of adult white men who could vote in 1787 was surely higher than it had been in 1767.¹⁵ On the other hand, qualifications for office became more stringent. The first state constitutions, adopted between 1776 and 1790, specified candidate eligibility restrictions in considerable detail. Property requirements were typically increased and extended to other public offices that had not been restricted under colonial rule.¹⁶

The first American constitutions can therefore be seen as examples of so-called seesaw reforms, modifying suffrage and eligibility restrictions in opposite directions. The birth of the nation was a moment of great uncertainty, and it seems reasonable for the elite, in spite of their democratic aspirations, to maintain some strategic control of political power. According to Charles Beard, “special qualifications, laid down in several constitutions, for governors, senators, and representatives, indicated that the revolutionary leaders were not prepared for any radical experiments in democracy”.¹⁷ J.R. Pole writes that the ruling class was “prepared to extend the suffrage when it suited their interest to do so, in the 1760’s, but refused to take the same step when it would have opened the question of political power, a generation later”.¹⁸

¹²The more complete description of suffrage rules is from [Keyssar \(2000\)](#). Other relevant works include [Porter \(1918\)](#), [McGovney \(1949\)](#) and [Williamson \(1960\)](#). The main source of information on candidate eligibility requirements is [Miller \(1900\)](#).

¹³[Miller \(1900\)](#) pp97.

¹⁴[Miller \(1900\)](#) pp96.

¹⁵[Keyssar \(2000\)](#)

¹⁶[Miller \(1900\)](#) pp105.

¹⁷[Beard and Beard \(1921\)](#) pp.110

¹⁸[Pole \(1962\)](#) pp.637

The three leading states in doing away with property requirements for the franchise in the late eighteenth century - New Hampshire, Delaware and Georgia ? serve to better illustrate the workings of seesaw reforms. In 1776, New Hampshire's first constitution imposed a freehold requirement for both suffrage and legislative offices (Senator and Representative). In 1784 New Hampshire revised its original constitution, which had only been an outline, and changed restrictions in a seesaw fashion. The rather high property requirement for suffrage was abolished and replaced by a poll tax requirement. At the same time, property requirements were imposed for Senators and Representatives, with a minimum of £200 and £100, respectively. A higher property of £500 was required for Governors, Delegates to the Congress and Counselors. In 1792 New Hampshire did away with the poll tax but property restrictions for representatives prevailed until the middle of the next century. Delaware, in 1776, required a freehold of 50 acres of land for suffrage and legislative offices. Delaware revised its original constitution in 1792. The property requirement for suffrage was abolished while the property qualification for Senators was increased to 500 acres or £1,000. For Representatives, the requirement remained as before.

In 1777, Georgia's first constitution indicates that suffrage rights are reserved to every citizen that "possessed in his own right of 10 pounds value, and liable to pay tax in this State, or being of any mechanic trade",¹⁹ while citizens running for Representative required 250 acres or £250 in wealth. In 1789, Georgia revised its constitution. First, property requirements for suffrage were abolished and replaced by a poll tax that remained in place until 1798. Second, the new constitution imposed eligibility restrictions for Governor, equal to 500 acres and £1,000, and for Senator, equal to 250 acres or £250.

Were these restrictions binding? We can provide a gross estimate for all the colonies. The percentage of people voting was about 50 per cent of the adult white male population²⁰ Hence eligibility restrictions needed to exclude everyone except the 25 percent of the richer adult male population in order to be binding. Data on the distribution of property after independence indicate that 30 per cent of the white male population had £500 or more.²¹ Given that the typical requirement for Senators and Governors was higher than that,²² we can infer that eligibility restrictions were indeed binding such that access to these offices was limited to the very rich. For Representatives, on the contrary, it seems that qualifications were not so stringent.

¹⁹Keyssar (2000), pp306

²⁰According to Keyssar (2000), in 1790 about 60 or 70 percent of the adult white males had the right to vote, but this calculation includes the frontier states which had higher rates. Engerman and Sokoloff (2005) compute an average of 60 percent for the most concurred election before 1824, see Table 2.

²¹Main (1965)

²²We present data for all states in the next section.

As to the consequences of these restrictions, we observe that post-revolution reforms had a varying impact on the average wealth of those in office. Before the revolution, representatives were fairly rich. About 80 percent of the Representatives had significant wealth (above £2,000) and indeed half of these, 40 percent of the total, were considered very rich (above £5,000)²³. The revolution reduced these percentages, to 55 and 20 percent, respectively. As such, we can say the revolution democratized access to office, at least at the level of Representatives. This was not necessarily the case for higher offices such as Senators. For some states, most notably Maryland and South Carolina, the Senate was completely in the hands of the rich.²⁴ Nevertheless, overall it seems the imposition of candidate eligibility requirements were a preemptive strategy with a limited disenfranchisement effect.

5.2 Seesaw Reforms in Latin America

In Latin America, in contrast to the United States, democratization was a nonlinear process of incorporation and exclusion.²⁵ Immediately after independence, most countries extended the right to vote to all free, non-dependent, adult males, including those who belonged to the Indian population.²⁶ The first national constitutions in Latin America provided few restrictions to the male franchise, and these few were not based on property or literacy requirements. These restrictions were gradually toughened over the next decades, as elites attributed the difficulties faced in consolidating a stable political order to the liberal extension of suffrage after independence.

Yet relative to other regions, universal suffrage was implemented early in Latin America. Argentina approved universal male suffrage in 1853, Colombia in 1853, Mexico in 1847 and Venezuela in 1858. In 1900, seventeen countries in the world had enfranchised all males; of these, eight were Latin American countries.²⁷ Moreover, participation was very broad during some periods, with several major countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Perú, holding elections in the nineteenth century with almost universal electorates.²⁸

²³These figures are for 6 states: New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina. [Main \(1966\)](#), table I, pp405

²⁴[Main \(1967\)](#)

²⁵See the several essays in [Amino \(1995\)](#), [Posada-Carbo \(1996\)](#) and [Sábato \(1999\)](#).

²⁶[Sabato \(2001\)](#).

²⁷[Przeworski \(2009\)](#); our calculation using Przeworski's data set.

²⁸[Ternavasio \(1995\)](#) documents massive elections in Buenos Aires following independence; [Graham \(1999\)](#) indicates that Brazil had a turnout of one million in the 1870s, a figure that represented 10 percent of the total population and 50 percent of the enfranchised population; in Colombia, the presidential election of 1856 mobilized more than half of the male population according to [Bushnell \(1971\)](#); in Mexico, about one million voters turned out for the 1851 Congressional Election, representing about half of the adult male population [Carmagnani and Hernandez \(1999\)](#); [Paniagua \(2003\)](#) described suffrage in Peru during the liberal period as almost universal.

Yet in general, electorates were relatively reduced. The overall average for turnout was around 2 percent and nearly always below 5 percent of the total population.²⁹ Voting rights were extended, but elections were tightly controlled by the elites, such that participation seemed superfluous.³⁰ For instance, political participation in Argentina is not associated with universal suffrage in 1853 but rather with the Ley Sáenz Peña, from 1912, which put an end to fraud and vote-buying by introducing the secret ballot. As such, we agree with [Engerman and Sokoloff \(2005\)](#) that Latin American electoral processes were far from being representative in the nineteenth century, but must stress that the mechanism that curtailed participation was not the restriction of the franchise.

Latin American elites exerted de facto power over the political arena, either through the use of violence and electoral disruption or via fraud and vote buying.³¹ Yet more relevant to the issue at hand is the de jure mechanism that elites used in order to regulate who could run for office: the hierarchical indirect system. According to this system, the electorate voted for electors, which in turn selected politicians or voted for higher degree electors. The higher the degree of the elector, the more stringent the economic qualifications required to run. Typically, second and third degree electors had strict property requirements, while extended suffrage was granted only to those who were entitled to vote in the first grade elections. In practice, “the voting public of elite and popular-sector men participated in primaries to select candidates, after which the rules called for the elites to sit with their peers and make the real decisions about public representation”.³²

Electors selected from the richest. They were a way of legitimizing both the political order and the hierarchical order. This institutional device that combined massive suffrage with strict control on access to office was a creation of the French Revolution. According to the drafters of the 1791 Constitution, the idea was to coordinate “the numbers” (large electorate) with “the reason” (candidate restrictions).³³ The idea was imported by the liberal Spaniards who drafted the very influential Cadiz Constitution of 1812, which was the blueprint for the first wave of constitution-making in Latin America.³⁴ The Cadiz Constitution introduced (almost) universal male suffrage, with only domestic servants excluded, while illiterates were to be excluded beginning in 1830. Yet elections were indirect in four degrees. Each level of election increased the number of total constituents represented.³⁵ The

²⁹[Sábato \(1999\)](#), p1302.

³⁰[Sábato \(1999\)](#), p1303.

³¹[Posada-Carbó \(2000\)](#).

³²[Peloso \(1996\)](#), pp11.

³³Incidentally, the distinction between active citizens which had political rights and passive citizens which only had voting rights, was intolerable for the radical deputies such as Robespierre.

³⁴Not only Spanish American countries were influenced; Portugal adopted the Cadiz Constitution in 1820 and thus it also exerted influence over the Imperial Constitution of 1824 in Brazil.

³⁵The four degrees were parroquias (parishes), partidos (districts), provincias (provinces) and diputados

indirect system allowed for an increasing restriction on candidate eligibility: universal suffrage was granted only for the first degree election, with each posterior phase requiring more stringent qualifications, in terms of property and income, for the candidates. Article 92 of the Constitution regulated income requirements to become Deputy.

Hence, the first Latin American constitutions imposed restrictions to office under extended suffrage. As our main concern in this section is to look for seesaw reforms in the American continent, we enquire whether the indirect system was reformed at the same time that the electorate was reduced.

The end of the Cadiz Constitution provides a first approximation to our answer. In Spain, the Royal Statute of 1834 and the Constitution of 1837 approved the direct election of Deputies but at the same time imposed several qualifications for suffrage, such that the fraction of the population voting was significantly reduced. Examples of seesaw reforms in the Americas include the abolition of the indirect system in Peru and Brazil.

In Brazil, the 1824 Constitution and the subsequent 1846 Electoral Law specified a small yearly rent required for voting. No other restrictions, such as literacy or education, were imposed. Due to inflation the income requirement gradually became negligible such that by mid-century suffrage was almost universal.³⁶ In 1872 for example the electorate consisted of over 1 million adult males, representing about 50 percent of the adult male population. The extended franchise however was combined with an indirect system of representation that stipulated property or literacy qualifications in the second and third stages of voting.³⁷

The Brazilian electoral law of 1881 changed the electoral process in two opposing directions. While it introduced direct elections, it also established literacy qualifications that greatly limited the franchise. After the passing of the law, the number of eligible voters dropped to almost one tenth of the previously eligible, to 100,000 or 0.8 percent of the total population.

These figures did not experience any significant increase with the establishment of a republican government in 1889 nor with the approval of the 1891 electoral bill.³⁸

In Peru, the 1823 Constitution indicated that only tax-payers could vote, but as taxes were mandatory, suffrage was quite extended. The same constitution imposed a literary requirement, but it was postponed until 1840 and it was ultimately not enforced. Indirect elections were justified arguing that representatives cannot be the result of “pure instinct?”.³⁹

(deputies).

³⁶Graham (1999)

³⁷In particular, the Constitution required electors to have twice as much income as that required for voters and they needed to have “recognized?? occupations (Graham (1990); pp113)

³⁸Sabato (2001).

³⁹Paniagua (2003).

The 1828 Constitution imposed property requirements on electors of second or higher degrees while deputies were required to be literate, pay taxes and have a considerable property.

The system was one characterized by indirect elections, (almost) universal suffrage and control of the electoral institutions on the part of the notables. The Electoral Law of 1896 is another example of a seesaw reform. On the one hand, it abolished the indirect system and replaced it with direct elections with less severe qualifications for office. On the other, it granted the right to vote to all literate and tax-paying Peruvian males over 21. The literacy requirement excluded most of the indigenous population as well as many of the non-indigenous poor. Once more we observe that the price paid for direct election, with fewer candidate eligibility restrictions, was the reduction of the electorate.

6 EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

In this section we present the data and our empirical strategy to test the theoretical implications of our model. We focus on the sample of the 13 original colonies of the United States of America during the period 1776-1900. We chose this period for several reasons. First, at the beginning of the period all 13 colonies, with the exception of Pennsylvania, had in place some form of property requirements both for the right to vote and the right to run for office. Over this period these requirements were abolished at different points in time by the different colonies, giving us both cross-sectional and time-series variation to estimate the effect of eliminating these requirements on political and economic outcomes.

Second, we have access to data on various economic and political outcomes. While other countries also experienced electoral reforms during this period, the within country variation and data availability make the U.S. a unique setting to study questions concerning the sequential introduction of democratization reforms.

6.1 Data

Our main explanatory variables are suffrage and eligibility requirements. We code the presence of property requirements for the right to vote and the right to run for office in each state at different points in time. To do this we rely on multiple sources, in particular [Keyssar \(2000\)](#) for suffrage and [Miller \(1900\)](#) for office, to identify not only the magnitude of these requirements, but most importantly to identify the specific years in which different states eliminated them.

*** TABLE 1 HERE ***

Table 1 describes voting and office qualifications, for state senators, state legislators and governors, as stated in the original constitutions.⁴⁰ The table also indicates the year when such qualifications, or other property restrictions were modified or abolished. Note all states eliminated property requirements for voting simultaneously or prior to eliminating property requirements for office.⁴¹ This implies that we cannot estimate the effect of eliminating eligibility requirements holding constant constraints on suffrage. However, we can estimate the marginal effect of eliminating requirements for suffrage given restrictions on office as well as the marginal effect of eliminating restrictions on office given no restrictions on suffrage.

We observe that there is substantial variation across states not only in the year in which suffrage requirements were eliminated but also in the lag with which qualifications for office were eliminated. For example, Delaware was the first state to eliminate property requirements for voting in 1792, but only eliminated requirements for office more than a century later in 1897. Rhode Island on the other hand only eliminated property requirements for voters in 1888 but eliminated qualifications for office in that same year.

Our outcome variables can be divided into three groups. First, we consider economic policy variables. These include state revenues and expenditures at the aggregate level and including some sub-items. We use ICPSR’s “Sources and uses of funds in state and local governments, 1790-1915”,⁴² which contains information pertaining to the financial records of state governments, for different categories of revenues and expenditures. We use *total state’s revenues and expenditures per capita*, which are available for a much larger sample, as our main dependent variables. Our resulting panel is unbalanced since data is available for different sub-periods for different states. In a similar estimation than ours, but focused on the extension of suffrage, [Husted and Kenny \(1997\)](#) and [Falch et al. \(2014\)](#) found effects not on the total expenditure but on its composition. Data for specific subcategories tends to be available for a smaller subset of years, but still we have enough information to perform our analysis at a disaggregated level. We provide separate estimations for the following items: education, social welfare, government administration and public safety.

Our second group of outcome variables focuses on the socio-economic background of legislators. We use ICPSR’s “Biographical characteristics of members of the United States

⁴⁰All the colonies enacted constitutions in the years following 1776, with the exception of Connecticut and Rhode Island where colonial Charters remained in force.

⁴¹The states with no restrictions for governors are an exception to this rule. But in all those states governors were indirectly elected by the legislature and thus in practice were as constrained as legislators.

⁴²Sylla, Richard E., John B. Legler, and John Wallis. *Sources and Uses of Funds in State and Local Governments, 1790-1915*: [UNITED STATES] [PARTS 1-64] [Computer file]. New York, NY: Richard E. Sylla, New York University/Athens, GA: John B. Legler, University of Georgia/College Park, MD: John Wallis, University of Maryland [producers], 1991. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university for Political and Social Research [distributor], 1993.

Congress, 1789-1978”⁴³, which compiles biographical information on the members of Congress (who attended and when).

While the members of the US Congress are not our main interest given they were not elected according to each state’s electoral rules, we expect that democratization at the state level also affected national-level representation.⁴⁴ Moreover, we have information on whether a given U.S. Congressman was previously in the local legislature, although the exact date of his tenure at the state level is not available in our data. We provide tests on the identity of these congressmen under different assumptions regarding the number of years between their tenure in the state legislature and their being elected to the U.S. Congress.

In order to measure the extent to which congressmen come from a wealthy elite, we construct dummy variables for whether the congressman has a college title, or whether the congressman attended a private high school. This allows us to compute for every year, the fraction of congressmen from a given state that attended a private high school or went to college.⁴⁵ Table 2 describes the education level for the two chambers of the U.S. Congress. We observe that the Senate, which is generally considered the wealthier chamber, had a significantly larger fraction of members with college education or that attended private schools. This gives us confidence that these measures are useful proxies for the elite background of politicians.

*** TABLE 2 HERE ***

Our last group of outcome variables look at political participation and political competition. The ”Candidate and Constituency Statistics of Elections in US” database compiled by the ICPSR⁴⁶, provides information on nearly every election for the U.S. Congress, President and State Governors in the United States from 1788 to 1990.

We focus on Gubernatorial elections, since elections for the U.S. Congress and for the Presidency were not regulated by local legislation but rather by the U.S. Constitution.⁴⁷ Gubernatorial elections were very frequent and term length was between one and three years. From Table 1, we observe that candidates for governor were also restricted in terms

⁴³McKibbin, Carroll L. *Biographical Characteristics of Members of the United States Congress, 1789-1978* [Computer file]. Compiled by Carroll L. McKibbin, University of Nebraska. 3rd ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1979.

⁴⁴Senators for the US Congress, for instance, were appointed by the local legislatures.

⁴⁵See for example, Querubin and Snyder (2013) for a brief description of congressional careers during this period.

⁴⁶Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. *Candidate and Constituency Statistics of Elections in the United States, 1788-1990* [Computer file]. 5th ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 1995.

⁴⁷Unfortunately we do not have access to systematic data on elections for state senators and state legislators.

of property. Moreover, the elimination of these restrictions varied across time and states. In almost all states, property qualifications for governors were abolished simultaneously with qualifications for legislators, Georgia being the exception.

We also observe that wealth restrictions for candidates for governor were typically much higher than for the legislature. In several states the first Gubernatorial elections were indirect and decided by the legislature, but our dataset only includes direct elections. The data contains the number of votes cast for every candidate in every race. The theoretical implications of the model suggest that abolishing office qualification may have led to a lower number of elections being decided by acclamation of a single candidate.

To test this prediction, we could use as our dependent variable the number of candidates in each election. However, this is a very noisy measure of competition, since races in our dataset often have irrelevant candidates that get a negligible number of votes. There are 105 out of 591 Gubernatorial elections with more than 5 candidates, and in a large fraction of them all candidates except the winner and the runner-up have a negligible number of votes. To circumvent this issue, we construct a measure on the *effective number of candidates*, in which candidates are weighted by their shares of votes. We follow the index of effective number of parties as used by Golosov (2010) to define:

$$N = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{s_i}{s_i + s_1^2 - s_i^2}$$

Where s_i is the share of votes of party i , and s_1 is the share of votes of the candidate with the largest number of votes. This measure corrects the high scores generated by the inverse of the Herfindahl Index (Laakso and Taagepera, 1979) when the largest parties exceed 50 percent, which is usually the case for Gubernatorial elections in the U.S.

We also construct measures for political competition and turnout. Regarding the first, we compute the *margin of victory* in every race as the difference in the vote share of the winner, s_1 , and the runner-up, s_2 :⁴⁸

$$M = |s_1 - s_2|$$

To measure *political participation*, we compute for every race the total number of individuals who voted. Since we do not know the number of registered voters in every state/congressional district during this period, we normalize this by an estimate of the number of adult males

⁴⁸For uncontested races this measure takes a value of 100.

of voting age, in order to construct a measure of turnout.⁴⁹

6.2 Empirical Strategy

Since we are interested in estimating the effect of *removing* property requirements, our independent variables capture the extent to which a given state has already eliminated these requirements at any point in time. Thus, S_{it} , is a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 if state i has eliminated requirements for suffrage prior to year t and zero otherwise. Similarly, O_{it} is a dummy variable that equals 1 if state i in year t has removed candidate eligibility restrictions prior to year t and zero otherwise. Take Connecticut for example: for both legislators and governors, S_{it} takes a value of 1 for every year after 1818 and zero otherwise, while O_{it} takes a value of one for every year after 1845 and zero otherwise. To estimate the effect of removing property requirements for voting or running for office, we use the following specification:

$$y_{it} = \sum_{j=1}^T \alpha_j y_{it-j} + \beta_1 S_{it} + \beta_2 O_{it} + \delta_i + \mu t + \nu d_{cw} + \epsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

Where y_{it} corresponds to the outcome variable in state i in year t , S_{it} and O_{it} are our main explanatory variables of interest, δ_i is a full set of state fixed effects, t is a linear trend and d_{cw} is a dummy for the civil war to account for the fact that economic outcomes as measured by expenditures exploded in that period. The sample is yearly data, if available, from 1776 to 1900, for the 13 original U.S. states. Accordingly, the data is cross-sectional time-series, or a long panel.⁵⁰ The general specification is a dynamic panel with several lagged dependent variables. This is the appropriate equation in cases where the dependent variable has a high degree of serial correlation, as is the case with our economic policy outcomes. As for a long dynamic panel, the standard assumption is that the error term is first order autoregressive: $\epsilon_{it} = \rho \epsilon_{it-1} + z_{it}$, where $|\rho| < 1$ and z_{it} is i.i.d. with mean zero.⁵¹

The specification also encompasses cases in which the dependent variable does not have a high degree of serial correlation, as is the case with several political outcomes. In these

⁴⁹We use US census data reported by the National Historical Geographic Information System (NHGIS), from the University of Minnesota, in order to obtain estimates of the male population of voting age in every state at different points in time. Ideally, we would like to have a panel of male population older than 21 for each state and every census. However the information reported in the censuses varies slightly from one census to another. From 1790 to 1840 we use the total free white male population older than 16 as the denominator of our turnout variable. For the 1850 and 1860 censuses, we use the total free male population older than 16, independent of race. Finally, from 1870 to 1900 we use the total male population older than 21. While this makes it difficult to compare turnout measures across time, all our regressions account for time trends that will absorb any aggregate trends across decades driven by differences in our denominator.

⁵⁰We use a trend to avoid the proliferation of time dummies, which creates an incidental parameter bias of the main coefficients. See Lancaster (2000).

⁵¹See Baltagi and Wu (1999).

cases, we assume that $\alpha_1 = \dots = \alpha_T = 0$ and the panel is static. We further assume that the error is clustered across states.

Since every state eliminated restrictions on the suffrage earlier, or at the same time, as restrictions on running for office, the coefficient β_1 measures the independent effect of removing restrictions on the suffrage, while β_2 measures the effect of removing restrictions on office, conditional on having eliminated restrictions for voting. The effect of eliminating restrictions on both voting and running for office is then equal to $\beta_1 + \beta_2$.

7 RESULTS

7.1 Economics Outcomes

We first focus on state revenues and expenditures. As these economic outcomes exhibit high serial correlation, we estimate the dynamic panel (2) reporting different numbers of lags. The results for log revenues per capita are displayed in table 3.

*** TABLE 3 HERE ***

The first three columns in table 3 report results for suffrage using different numbers of lags; the next three report the coefficients for office. We observe that in all estimations, except for column 2, the coefficients for both suffrage and eligibility are positive and significant. In the last three columns, we include both suffrage and eligibility dummies in the same estimation. We observe that for one and five lags, the coefficient of eligibility is significant. For three lags, this coefficient falls slightly under 10% significance, but $\beta_1 + \beta_2$ is still significant at that level. On the contrary, the suffrage dummy has no effect when eligibility is included. The average magnitude is about 0.2, which implies a 20% increase in government revenues once office qualifications are eliminated.

Now we move to state expenditures. Table 4 summarizes the results using the same estimation strategy as before, but we only report the results using one lag. We consider different measures of expenditure. The first three columns are data on total expenditure, measured as log expenditure per capita. The next four columns capture the composition of that expenditure, measured as the percentage of total expenditure used for each item.

*** TABLE 4 HERE ***

The results for total expenditure are reassuring: both suffrage and eligibility are separately positive and significant, but only eligibility remains significant when we include both variables in the estimation. The magnitude of the coefficient is similar to the one for revenues. These

results are hardly surprising, since revenues and expenditures are strongly correlated. More interesting is to study the composition. We observe that the two redistributive components of state expenditures, namely education and social welfare, are uncorrelated with suffrage but depend positive and significantly on eligibility. Their increase in the total budget is about 3% and 2% for education and welfare respectively. On the contrary, spending on government administration increased with suffrage and decreased with eligibility, having an overall negative effect. The coefficients are both negative in the case of public safety, with that on suffrage being significant.

Overall, our results are consistent with the theoretical implications of our model. We find that simply removing restrictions on voting has no significant effect on the size of government (as measured both by revenues and expenditures). However, once requirements for office are also eliminated there is evidence of a noticeable effect on both government revenues and expenditures per capita. Moreover, we observe similar results for the composition of expenditure. Changes in policy variables do not result simply from a change in the identity or socio-economic background of the median voter. Extending access to office to individuals from more diverse (and perhaps poorer, less elite) backgrounds seems a necessary condition for the preferences of a newly enfranchised poor majority to be reflected in government policies.

7.2 Identity of the Politicians

Regarding the presence of elite members in Congress, table ?? presents the results for the share of Congressmen from the state with private education or college as outcome variables.

As explained above, we have data on whether a Congressman had previously served in the local legislature but not the date. As a practical solution, we assume that they were members of the local legislature 5 (and 10) years prior to being in Congress. As such we need to lag five years the removal of qualifications in order to estimate the effect on Congressmen 5 years on.

Table 5 provides results for 5 and 10 year lags, for three samples of politicians: all U.S. Congressmen, the sub-sample of those that had previously served in their state legislature and the sub-sample of those that had not.

*** TABLE 5 HERE ***

The coefficient of -0.110 in column 1 indicates that 5 years after the extension of the suffrage in a particular state, the fraction of representatives of that state in the U.S. Congress with private school education decreased by 11%. The coefficient is no longer significant

when we consider the sub-set of representatives that had not previously served in their local legislature, as reported in column 2. For those who had served in their state legislature, on the other hand, the coefficient doubles in magnitude to 25% (column 3). The results are consistent for both private school and college when the lag is of 5 years. For a 10-year lag we obtain weaker results, still significant in columns 1 and 3, and slightly below the 10% level of significance in columns 4 and 6. In general, we find our results consistent with the idea that eliminating property requirements for office decreases the fraction of Congressmen from private high schools or colleges: it makes congress less “elite”. Estimates of the effect of removing requirements for voting are ambiguous.

7.3 Elections: number of candidates and competition

Now we move on to the study of competition. We conjectured that removing restrictions for candidates would increase the number of parties and lead to more competition. Table 6 exhibits estimations for both the effective number of parties N and the margin of victory M :

*** TABLE 6 HERE ***

Columns 2 and 3 in table 6 show that the removal of eligibility qualifications for office indeed had an impact on the effective number of parties, with a coefficient of 0.20. Given a mean number of parties of 1.83 with standard deviation 0.37, the magnitude of the coefficient is not irrelevant. Columns 5 and 6 show similar results for margin of victory.

Abolishing requirements for both the vote and on candidate eligibility, decreases the margin of victory by about 10%. The effect of removing suffrage restrictions is ambiguous. Finally, we also test the effects of removing suffrage and eligibility qualifications on turnout.

Table 7 exhibits our results.

*** TABLE 7 HERE ***

In table 7, columns 1 and 2 show the effect on turnout of moving towards universal suffrage. As expected, turnout increases by 8%. More interesting, the magnitude remains the same even after controlling for a measure of competition such as the margin of victory. The results for eligibility qualifications are different. Abolishing eligibility qualifications has an effect on turnout, but the effect disappears when once we control for margin of victory. This suggests abolishing eligibility qualifications increases turnout through the channel of greater competition. Column 5 includes both suffrage and eligibility qualifications. Only suffrage exhibits a significant and positive correlation with turnout in this case.

APPENDIX

For the following proofs, the following Lemma is useful. **Lemma** Define $U(y, y') = V(y, \tau(y'))$. Then the following properties are satisfied for any y and y' (i) $U(y, y + y') = U(y, y - y')$

(ii) $U(y, y) - U(y, y') = (1/2\mu)(y - y')^2$ The lemma follows from the definition of $V(y, \tau)$. The function $U(y, y')$ is the utility of a citizen with income y given that a candidate with income y' was chosen. The first property indicates that $U(y, y')$ is symmetric on y' with respect to y . The second is the difference in utilities for a citizen with income y between his preferred policy and the one preferred by a citizen with income y' . **Proof Proposition**

1 We notice that a candidate with income $\text{Max}[y_O, m(y_s)]$ defeats any other candidate with different income in a pairwise competition. If $b \leq 2c$ then there exists an equilibrium in which a single citizen with exactly that income enters, since any entrant with a different income loses, withdrawal of the single candidate yields her $-\infty$ and the condition $b \leq 2c$ assures that no other citizen with the same income wishes to enter. **Proof Proposition**

2 The second part of the proposition is direct. As $b \geq c$ it is profitable to run, and then a citizen with income $\text{Max}[y_O, m(y_s)]$, who defeats any candidate with a different income, is the equilibrium and the equilibrium income is unique. The first part of the proposition indicates that individuals close to the winner are also an equilibrium for $b < c$, since to run is costly and the winner decides not to run if the policy of the candidate is sufficiently close to hers. To determine the set of equilibria, suppose that a citizen with $m(y_s) - \delta \geq y_O$ is an equilibrium. Then no candidate would win against him and would like to compete at the same time. Given Lemma (i), the higher income that ties with him is $m(y_s) + \delta$. To have incentives to run, according to Lemma (ii), he must satisfy $(1/2\mu)(2\delta)^2 \geq (c - b)$. In the case that $y_O > m(y_s) - \delta$, y_O is the minimum possible income of a candidate. Using Lemma (ii), we find that $y_O + 2\delta$ is the highest income that prevents a citizen with income y_O from running and winning. **Proof Proposition 3** If two candidates with different incomes are running in

equilibrium, Lemma 1 implies that their incomes are symmetric around the median. Assume that the candidates' positions are $m(y_s) - \Delta y$ and $m(y_s) + \Delta y$. We define $\rho(y_s)$ as the higher value of Δy such that no other candidate with income between them competes and wins. As preferences are symmetric, it is sufficient to test this relation for the median. If the median runs, he needs one third of the votes in order to win. Accordingly, the citizen with income $F^{-1}(1/3)$ should be indifferent between the candidate located at $m(y_s) - \rho(y_s)$ and the median. That is $U(F^{-1}(1/3), m(y_s) - \rho(y_s)) = U(F^{-1}(1/3), m(y_s))$. From Lemma (i),

$\rho(y_S) = 2(m(y_S) - F^{-1}(1/3))$. A necessary condition for the existence of an equilibrium is that, at least, the individual located at $m(y_S) - \rho(y_S)$ runs. The condition for that is $(1/2)[U(m(y_S) - \rho(y_S), m(y_S) - \rho(y_S)) + b] - c \geq (1/2)[U(m(y_S) - \rho(y_S), m(y_S) + \rho(y_S))]$. Using Lemma (ii) this inequality can be rewritten as $b \geq 2(c - 2\rho(y_S)^2/\mu)$. This is the first condition in part (i) of the proposition. While Δy is bounded above for $\rho(y_S)$, it is also bounded below because if candidates are too close they may prefer not to compete. Define δ' as the minimum distance to the median $m(y_S)$ with an equilibrium, which is computed as δ in proposition 2 but considering that the probability of winning is one half. Hence $\delta' = (1/2)(2\mu(2c - b))^{1/2}$. Notice that $\delta' \leq \rho(y_S)$ given the first condition in (i). As a consequence, the individual located at $m(y_S) - \delta'$ has the higher income to the left of the median at the equilibrium. In order for an equilibrium to exist, y_O has to be lower than said income, which is the second condition in the part (i) of the proposition. Finally, if $y_O < m(y_S) - \rho(y_S)$, any Δy in the interval $[\delta', \rho(y_S)]$ is an equilibrium. If not, the interval is $[\delta', m(y_S) - y_O]$ since the minimum income for any candidate is y_O . These intervals are summarized in part (ii) of the proposition.

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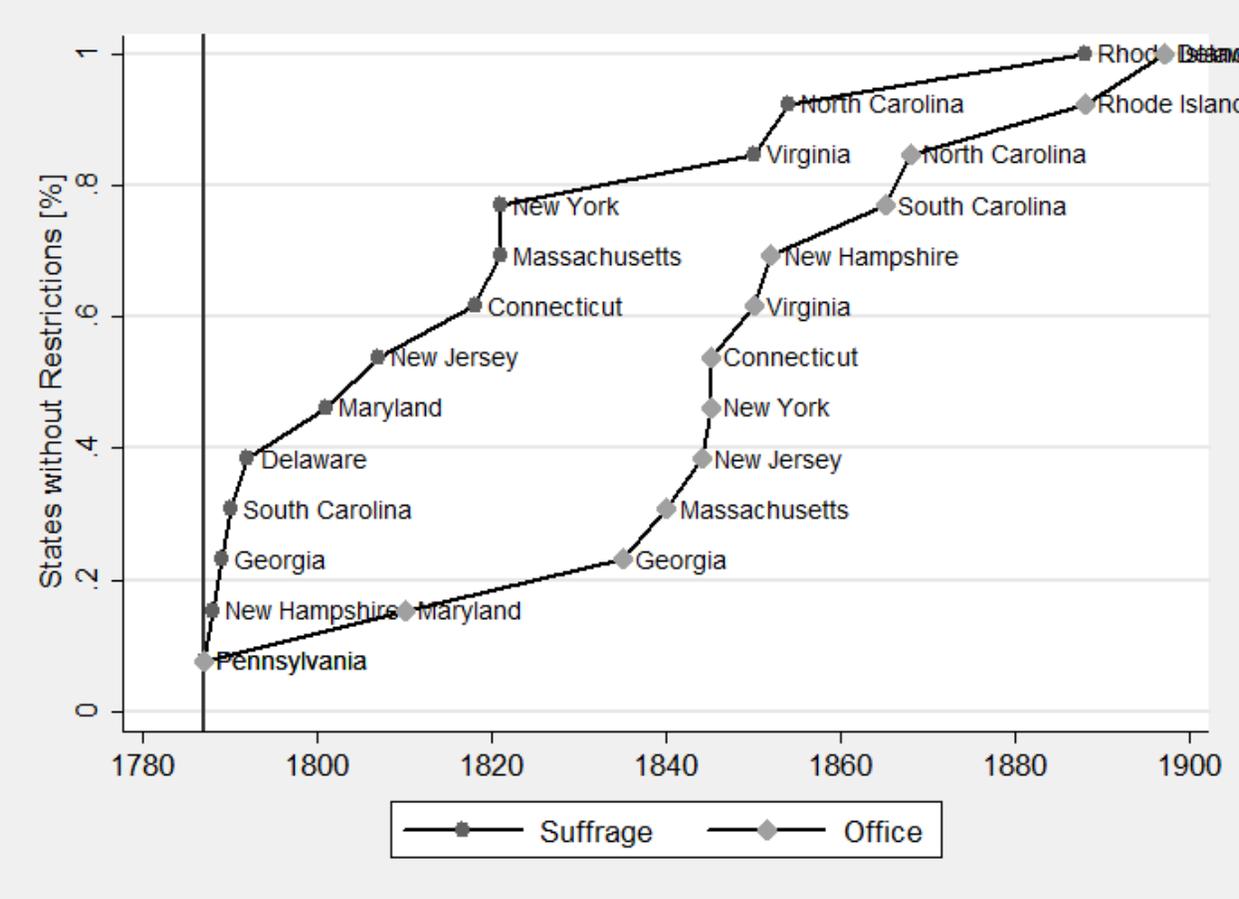


Figure 1: States without Restrictions for Suffrage and Office

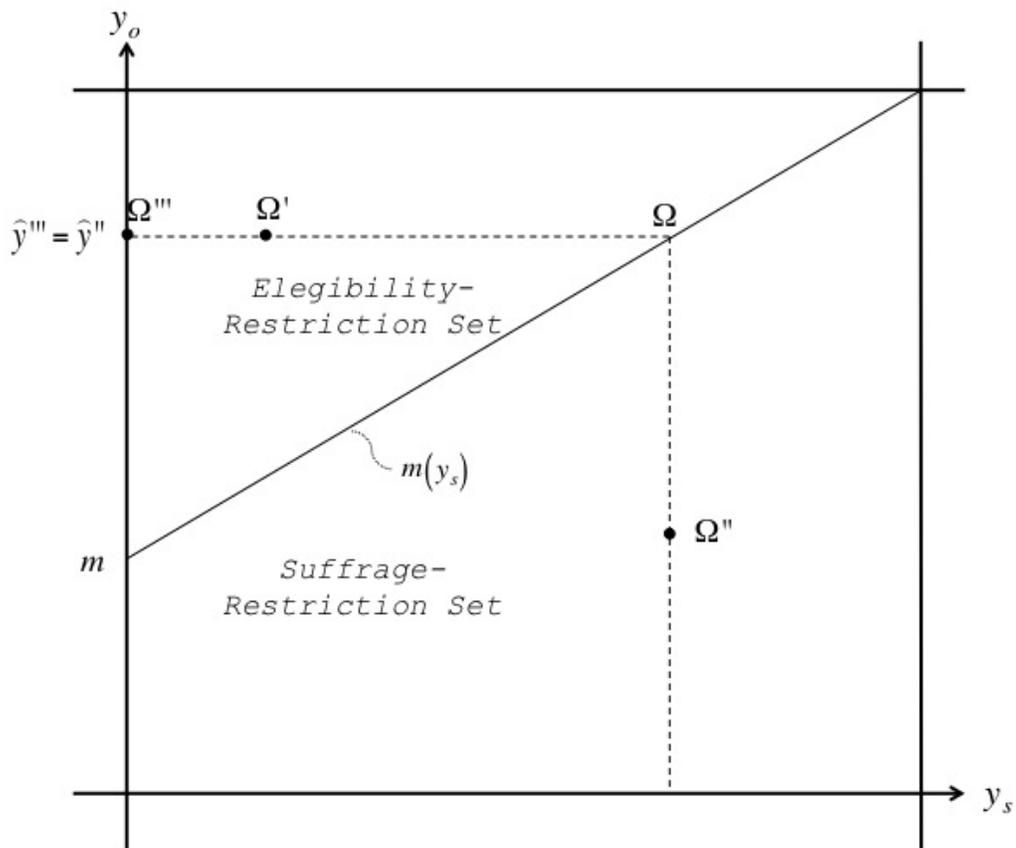


Figure 2: Isopolities in the Constitutional Space

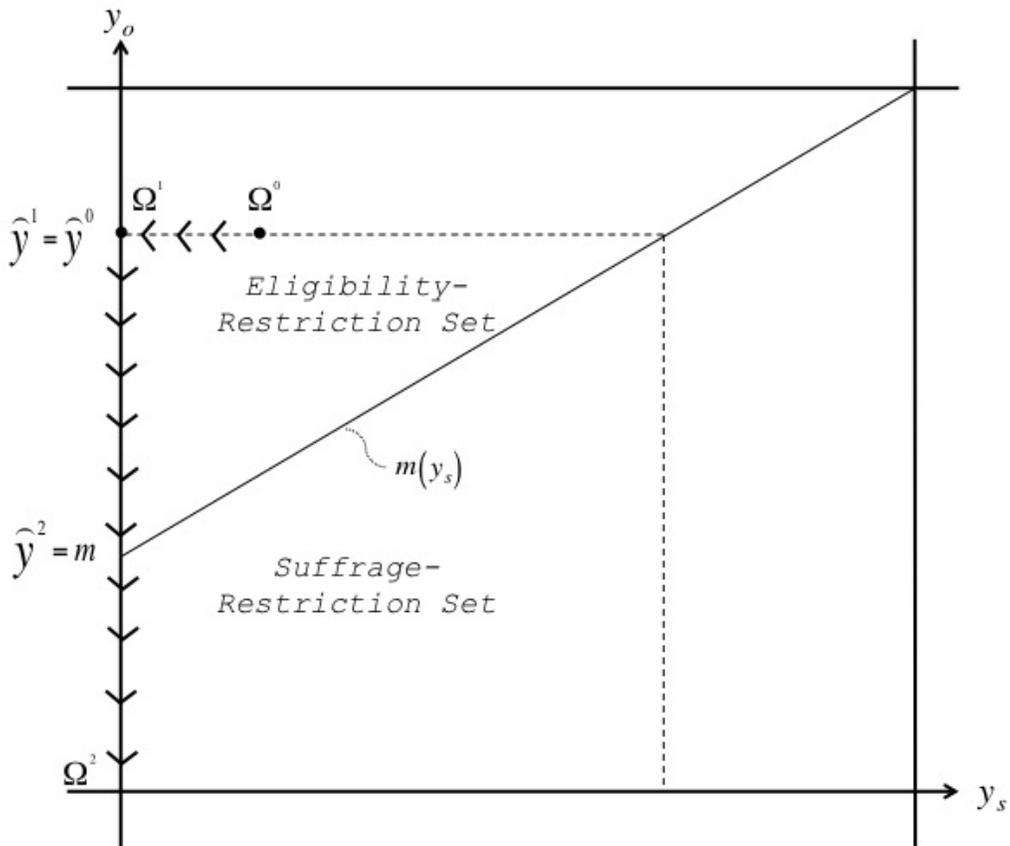


Figure 3: Sequential extensions of suffrage and office qualifications

Table 1: Suffrage and Eligibility Restrictions for the Original 13 Colonies

State	Year	Document	Suffrage	Senator	Representative	Governor
Connecticut	1818	Constitution	None	FH	FH	FH
Connecticut	1845	Amendment	None	None	None	None
Delaware	1776	Constitution	FH: 50A	FH	FH	FH; Leg.
Delaware	1792	Constitution	None	FH: 200A-1,000L	FH	None
Delaware	1831	Constitution	None	FH: 200A-1,000L	None	None
Delaware	1897	Constitution	None	None	None	None
Georgia	1777	Constitution	10L	FH:250A-250L	-	None; Leg.
Georgia	1789	Constitution	None	FH:250A-250L	FH:200A-150L	FH:500A-1,000L; Leg.
Georgia	1798	Constitution	None	FH:500D-1,000D	FH:250D-500D	FH:500A-4,000D; Leg.
Georgia	1824	Amendment	None	FH:500D-1,000D	FH:250D-500D	FH:500A-4,000D
Georgia	1835	Amendment	None	None	None	FH:500A-4,000D
Georgia	1847	Amendment	None	None	None	None
Maryland	1776	Constitution	FH:50A-30L	1,000L	FH:500L	FH:1,000L; Leg.
Maryland	1802	Amendment	None	1,000L	FH:500L	FH:1,000L; Leg.
Maryland	1810	Amendment	None	None	None	None; Leg.
Maryland	1838	Amendment	None	None	None	None
Massachusetts	1780	Constitution	FH	FH:300L-600L	FH:100L-200L	1,000L
Massachusetts	1821	Amendment	None	FH:300L-600L	FH:100L-200L	1,000L
Massachusetts	1840	Amendment	None	None	None	None
New Hampshire	1776	Constitution	FH	FH: 200L	FH: 100L	FH: 500L
New Hampshire	1784	Constitution	None	FH: 200L	FH: 100L	FH: 500L
New Hampshire	1792	Constitution	None	FH: 200L	FH: 100L	FH: 500L
New Hampshire	1852	Amendment	None	None	None	None
New Jersey	1776	Constitution	50L	1,000L	500L	None; Leg.
New Jersey	1807	Amendment	None	1,000L	500L	None; Leg.
New Jersey	1844	Constitution	None	None	None	None
New York	1777	Constitution	FH: 20L	100L	None	FH
New York	1821	Constitution	None	FH	None	FH
New York	1845	Amendment	None	None	None	None
North Carolina	1776	Constitution	FH: 50A	300A	100A	1,000L; Leg.
North Carolina	1835	Amendment	FH: 50A	300A	None	None
North Carolina	1856	Amendment	None	300A	None	None
North Carolina	1868	Constitution	None	None	None	None
Pennsylvania	1776	Constitution	None	None	None	None
Rhode Island	1776	Charter	FH: 40L	Elector	Elector	Elector
Rhode Island	1843	Constitution	FH: 134D	Elector	Elector	Elector
Rhode Island	1888	Amendment	None	None	None	None
South Carolina	1778	Constitution	None	2,000L	Elector	10,000L; Leg.
South Carolina	1790	Constitution	None	300L	500A-150L	1,500L; Leg.
South Carolina	1861	Constitution	None	300L	500A-150L	1,500L; Leg.
South Carolina	1865	Constitution	None	None	None	None
Virginia	1776	Constitution	FH: 50A	FH	FH	None; Leg.
Virginia	1830	Constitution	FH: 50A	FH	FH	None; Leg.
Virginia	1851	Constitution	None	None	None	None

Notes: Sources are [Keyssar \(2000\)](#) for Suffrage and [Miller \(1900\)](#) for Senator, Representative and Governor. FH is for Freehold; A, L and D are Acres, Pounds and Dollars, respectively. For Governor, Leg. means that the election was indirect and depended on the Legislature.

Table 2: Education Level by Congress Branch

	All Congress		Senate		House	
	Total	Perc.	Total	Perc.	Total	Perc.
Private School	1,405	37.7%	136	48.9%	2,177	36.8%
Public School	2,319	62.3%	142	51.1%	1,269	63.2%
College	1,848	49.6%	176	63.1%	1,672	48.5%
No College	1,879	50.4%	103	36.9%	1,776	51.5%

Notes: Source is [McKibbin \(1967\)](#). Data includes U.S. Congressmen in the period 1776 to 1900 (1st to 57th Congress).

Table 3: State Revenues Per Capita: Long Panel

	<i>Dependent variables is (log) State Revenues percapita</i>								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Rev.(t-1)	0.724*** (0.022)	0.296*** (0.033)	0.186*** (0.034)	0.699*** (0.023)	0.295*** (0.033)	0.180*** (0.034)	0.699*** (0.023)	0.293*** (0.033)	0.180*** (0.034)
Rev.(t-2)		0.399*** (0.032)	0.331*** (0.034)		0.393*** (0.032)	0.327*** (0.034)		0.394*** (0.032)	0.327*** (0.034)
Rev.(t-3)		0.164*** (0.033)	0.167*** (0.035)		0.159*** (0.033)	0.164*** (0.035)		0.160*** (0.033)	0.164*** (0.035)
Rev.(t-4)			0.101*** (0.033)			0.095*** (0.033)			0.095*** (0.033)
Rev.(t-5)			0.079** (0.033)			0.074** (0.032)			0.074** (0.033)
Suffrage	0.208*** (0.069)	0.083 (0.064)	0.140* (0.076)				0.038 (0.081)	0.019 (0.076)	0.031 (0.089)
Eligibility				0.277*** (0.055)	0.109** (0.053)	0.186*** (0.062)	0.260*** (0.065)	0.102 (0.063)	0.173** (0.073)
Time	0.375 (0.249)	0.796*** (0.228)	-0.225 (0.176)	0.257 (0.246)	0.749*** (0.231)	-0.254 (0.173)	0.24 (0.249)	0.736*** (0.231)	-0.265 (0.176)
Civil War	0.372*** (0.092)	0.436*** (0.085)	0.503*** (0.091)	0.378*** (0.091)	0.438*** (0.084)	0.507*** (0.091)	0.377*** (0.091)	0.438*** (0.085)	0.506*** (0.091)
Obs.	946	874	814	946	874	814	946	874	814
States	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13

Notes: All regressions assume that the error is first order autoregressive. State effects are included but not reported. *, **, ***, significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% level, respectively.

Table 4: State Expenditure Per Capita

	<i>Total Expenditure</i>			<i>Composition of the Expenditure</i>			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	<i>Education</i>	<i>Social Welfare</i>	<i>Government Adm.</i>	<i>Public Safety</i>
Dep.Var.(t-1)	0.811*** (0.018)	0.787*** (0.019)	0.788*** (0.019)	0.667*** (0.027)	0.695*** (0.027)	0.548*** (0.027)	-0.023 (0.033)
Suffrage	0.096* (0.058)		-0.053 (0.069)	-0.972 (1.396)	0.166 (0.710)	3.921* (2.167)	-5.306* (3.036)
Eligibility		0.200*** (0.048)	0.223*** (0.057)	2.928** (1.190)	2.110*** (0.564)	-10.484*** (1.774)	1.61 (2.381)
Time	0.843*** (0.318)	0.544* (0.317)	0.586* (0.323)	5.622** (2.812)	1.04 (3.829)	6.455 (6.143)	10.322*** (3.210)
Civil War	0.469*** (0.076)	0.474*** (0.076)	0.475*** (0.076)	-3.179*** (1.204)	-0.204 (0.706)	-8.574*** (2.282)	19.940*** (2.094)
Obs.	943	943	943	730	748	914	839
States	13	13	13	12	12	12	12

Notes: Total expenditure in log of expenditure per capita. Composition of expenditures are percentages. All regressions assume that the error is first order autoregressive. State effects are included but not reported. *, **, ***, significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% level, respectively.

Table 5: Education Level of Congressmen

Previous State Office	<i>Private School</i>			<i>College</i>		
	All (1)	No (2)	Yes (3)	All (4)	No (5)	Yes (6)
Lagged suffrage (t-5)	0.0934 (0.059)	-0.018 (0.139)	0.0999 (0.099)	-0.0787 (0.089)	-0.178** (0.087)	0.235** (0.110)
Lagged eligibility (t-5)	-0.110** (0.050)	-0.184 (0.151)	-0.250** (0.127)	-0.100* (0.060)	0.00997 (0.135)	-0.182*** (0.070)
Obs. State	1,390 13	1,154 13	1,199 13	1,389 13	990 13	1,028 13
Lagged suffrage (t-10)	0.0576 (0.050)	0.034 (0.123)	0.0635 (0.070)	-0.0853 (0.077)	-0.224*** (0.082)	0.237** (0.102)
Lagged eligibility (t-10)	-0.107* (0.056)	-0.193 (0.147)	-0.207* (0.105)	-0.0915 (0.057)	-0.052 (0.104)	-0.157 (0.097)
Obs. State	1,323 13	1,082 13	1,134 13	1,323 13	932 13	980 13

Notes: Private schools and College are shares between 0 and 1 in each state and year. Errors are clustered by state. State fixed effects are included but not reported. *, **, ***, significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% level, respectively.

Table 6: Number of Parties and Margin of Victory in State's Governor Elections

	<i>Effective Number of Parties</i>			<i>Margin of Victory</i>		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Suffrage	0.138*		0.086	0.326		4.286
	(0.068)		(0.074)	(5.511)		(5.203)
Eligibility		0.198**	0.180**		-13.431**	-14.282**
		(0.067)	(0.079)		(4.939)	(5.346)
Time	1.625	0.181	-0.058	-191.123	-39.388	-51.86
	(1.223)	(1.271)	(1.398)	(110.499)	(89.977)	(94.851)
Civil War	-0.152*	-0.167**	-0.168**	3.882	5.151	5.116
	(0.071)	(0.068)	(0.069)	(5.437)	(4.496)	(4.488)
Obs.	591	591	591	583	583	583
States	13	13	13	13	13	13
R-squared	0.164	0.180	0.182	0.205	0.226	0.228

Notes: Effective number of parties from [Goloso \(2010\)](#). Margin of Victory is a percentage. Errors are clustered by state. State fixed effects are included but not reported. *, **, ***, significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% level, respectively.

Table 7: Turnout in State's Governor Elections

	<i>Dep. Var. is Turnout</i>				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Suffrage	8.639*	8.743**			7.835*
	(4.394)	(3.334)			(4.288)
Eligibility			9.021**	4.868	3.265
			(3.476)	(3.805)	(3.797)
Time	0.245***	0.184***	0.188**	0.176**	0.153**
	(0.080)	(0.057)	(0.069)	(0.076)	(0.063)
Civil War	-13.780***	-12.540***	-14.396***	-12.803***	-12.848***
	(3.286)	(3.285)	(2.915)	(2.901)	(3.277)
Margin of Victory		-0.319***		-0.309***	-0.313***
		(0.060)		(0.063)	(0.062)
Observations	583	583	583	583	583
States	13	13	13	13	13
R-squared	0.542	0.69	0.548	0.683	0.692

Notes: Turnout is computed for the adult male population; it is a percentage. Errors are clustered by state. State fixed effects are included but not reported. *, **, ***, significance at the 10%, 5% and 1% level, respectively.