

Political Origins of the Female Franchise

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The introduction lays out the historical landscape of suffrage, documenting the two distinctive "spells" of reform (just prior to 1920 and just after 1940), and suggests that these cases can be further broken down by whether women won the right to vote *as women*, or whether women became included as part of a universal franchise extension (for example, when a new constitution was implemented). The scope of the book's argument applies to women's separate enfranchisement, which is more than 3/4 of the cases that exist. After describing the scope conditions I give a brief summary of the argument (that the interaction between robust suffrage movements and heightened electoral competition produces reform) and detail the research design of the book (nested analyses, case studies of the US, UK, and France).

The theoretical chapter articulates the behavior of two types of actor -- suffragists and elected politicians -- theorizing the constraints and incentives placed on each party. Drawing on social movements theory and intersectionality, I argue that suffragists make calculated choices about whether and how to mobilize for reform. They decide which women to organize, and which politicians to align with. If suffragists perceive the vast majority of women to have different political preferences, they may decide not to mobilize broadly and thereby lower their chances of reform. On the other hand, if the downstream consequences of including women who are not like them are small, they will mobilize broadly. At their most effective, they form alliances of interest (rather than solely of conscience) with powerful political leaders which can raise the cost to the politicians of maintaining the status quo. On the other hand, politicians choose whether to support suffrage in voice or votes, and how far to take any given episode of reform. When politicians needed more votes in order to win, and believed that on average women's votes would fall in their favor, expanding the franchise to include women became a political possibility. The end of the theoretical chapter describes how the cases that I study -- the US, UK, and France -- fit within the context of the book's argument.