

**FROM SUFFRAGE TO REPRESENTATION:  
WOMEN, SUFFRAGISTS AND POLITICIANS AFTER ENFRANCHISEMENT IN  
UNITED STATES, NORWAY AND CHILE.**

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**Book Outline**

How did women achieve *de facto* representation of shared interests upon *de jure* entry to the electorate? Uncovering the complexities in the realization of women's representation after suffrage, this book documents how social movements facilitate political responsiveness to newly enfranchised groups in three distinct countries: U.S, Norway and Chile. Newly enfranchised women faced a plethora of logistic, social and political barriers to voting, and the socio-economic, racial and partisan heterogeneities within the group further impeded the development of women as a distinct political group. Yet a disengaged electorate with latently distinct preferences would hardly stand a chance of being represented by politicians. Through the analysis of original micro-level data on suffragists' character, strength and activities, women's voting behavior, party manifestos and politicians' legislative behavior, this book documents how newly enfranchised women overcame barriers to representation and become a distinct, politically salient group that politicians could not ignore. Providing ample qualitative and quantitative evidence, the book demonstrates how suffragists prompted the development of women as electorally salient group through defining women's agenda, raising women's consciousness and facilitating women's mobilization. Mapping the pathways from suffrage to representation, this book challenges dominant accounts in political science that assume a near 'automatic' link between suffrage and substantive representation and offers an explanation for why women's shared interests are sometimes not represented in legislatures or not sustained over time.

## Chapter Outline

### Chapter 1. Introducing the Puzzle.

In the first chapter, I present the key puzzle of the book: how did newly enfranchised women secure substantive representation [hereafter just representation] of shared interests after their enfranchisement? By presenting several examples of women’s limited influence in politics across time and space, I shed light on the difficulties in linking women’s formal inclusion in politics with an ‘automatic’ improvement in the representation of women’s interests. While scholars often emphasize the importance of voting rights for representation, and practitioners commonly call for the removal of voting barriers as a means to group empowerment, politicians often fail to represent women’s interests despite women’s equal access to the polls. Highlighting how socio-economic and political heterogeneity of newly enfranchised women, together with economic, social and the history of political marginalization of women provided de facto barriers to women’s representation after suffrage, the chapter demonstrates why suffrage does not always improve representation. The chapter then sets the agenda of the book as an enquiry into the conditions under which suffrage secures better representation of women in legislatures.

### Chapter 2. Theorizing the Roots of Women’s Representation After the Vote.

This chapter develops a theory for the role of organized interests in securing better representation of newly enfranchised groups. The key argument is that suffrage does not automatically secure representation of newly enfranchised groups: it provides necessary but not sufficient condition. In order to secure group representation after suffrage, newly enfranchised electorates need to become an electorally salient group. A group becomes electorally salient if it has a (i) salient shared identity and (ii) electoral strength (see Figure 1). A *salient shared identity* requires that a newly enfranchised group has clearly defined shared interests, that members of the newly enfranchised group adopt this identity and that politicians know about those shared interests. An *electoral strength* requires that newly enfranchised groups vote in sufficient numbers and that politicians need their votes to get elected.

Figure 1: From Suffrage to Representation



Organized interests have the capacity to secure group representation of newly enfranchised electorates by facilitating shared salient shared identity and electoral strength. Strong suffrage movements defined shared interests of newly enfranchised women, raised group consciousness on those

interests, informed both women and politicians about those interests and directly and indirectly mobilized women voters. This facilitated women's ability to secure group representation of shared interests after suffrage when and where politicians needed women's votes. In systems with single member districts (SMDs), politicians relied on women's votes in the most competitive districts. The extent of women's representation in SMDs was thus shaped by the proportion of competitive districts with strong suffrage movements. In proportional systems, politicians relied on women's votes in all districts, but parties with more local strongholds had a stronger incentive to do so. The extent of women's representation after suffrage is thus determined by suffrage movement strength and the presence of parties with locally concentrated electoral support.

### **Chapter 3. Uncovering the Roots of Suffragists' Presence and Strength.**

In the first empirical chapter, I document the wide range of activities of suffragists and show how the type of an electoral system shaped suffragists' strategies. Despite the nation-wide reach of suffrage organizations, local suffragists' machineries were often concentrated in fewer localities across the country. Suffragists' activities, such as canvassing for a suffrage petition or organizing a petition were typically concentrated into yet fewer localities. Using fine-grained data on suffragists' committee locations and public support, I explore the correlates of suffragists' presence and strength. In contrast to theories that suggest the importance of human, ideological and material resources, I show that while suffragists gathered greater support in ideologically aligned localities, suffragists' presence was mostly shaped by an electoral context. In systems with single member districts (SMDs), suffragists developed non-partisan strategies and concentrated their efforts into competitive districts. In proportional systems (PR), suffragists aligned with political parties and concentrated their presence into partisan strongholds.

### **Chapter 4. Forging Shared Identity: Suffragists and the Crystallization of Women's Issues.**

In the second empirical chapter, I document the role of suffragists in defining women's issues and the crystallization of women's issues upon women's enfranchisement, as shaped by electoral systems. Utilizing various archival sources, such as suffragists internal documents and distributing material, I identify the issues suffragists deemed to be of concern to women and highlight how racial and class composition of the suffrage movement in each country skewed the nature of women's issues towards women 'included' in the suffrage movement. I document how, despite the cultural, historical and institutional differences between the three cases, the nature of the 'first' women's issues identified by suffragists was starkly similar. In all three cases, women's 'first' issues were materialist in nature, and sought to improve women's economic independence through improvements in maternal welfare, children's welfare and women's equality. In the second half of the chapter, I document how women's issues identified by suffragists became crystallized within distinct electoral contexts. Given that politicians had little incentive to directly address women's concerns prior to suffrage, women's issues at the time of suffrage were mostly un-crystallized, in a sense of not being taken up

by parties and politicians. Utilizing original data from party manifestos and legislative votes (roll calls), I document how the process of issue crystallization reflected the electoral context. The first women's issues cut across the partisan spectrum in systems with SMDs, but were absorbed by some parties more than others in PR systems.

### **Chapter 5. Mobilizing Newly Enfranchised Women: Suffragists and Turnout.**

In the third empirical chapter, I explore the determinants of women's turnout after suffrage and provide evidence in support of the intersecting role of the electoral system and suffragists in women's mobilization. In the first part of this chapter, I demonstrate how suffragists' wide-range of activities facilitated the mobilization of newly enfranchised women. Engaging women voters on political matters, distributing political information as well as raising group consciousness of women as a group, the suffragists increased political resources available to newly enfranchised women that helped to reduce their cost of voting. Utilizing unique, fine-grained electoral data on turnout separated by sex, I then show that women's relative turnout to men is higher in localities with suffragists presence and strength. In the second half of this chapter, I demonstrate how electoral context shaped suffragists' ability to facilitate women's mobilization. While suffrage opened a window of opportunity for politicians to capitalize on the influx of new votes, they were not incentivized to engage new women voters to the same extent in every locality. In systems with single member districts (SMDs), politicians only needed women's votes in the most competitive districts. But even then, women's higher cost of voting rendered their mobilization more costly than that of men. Suffragists' engagement of women and politicians in competitive districts therefore reduced politician's cost of women's mobilization and facilitated women's mobilization in places where 'it mattered' the most. In proportional systems (PR), politicians needed women's votes in all electoral districts, but women's cost mobilization remained higher than that of men. Suffragists activities in partisan strongholds across the country, however, reduced politicians cost of mobilization especially for parties with locally concentrated support.

### **Chapter 6. Politicians and Suffragists: Who Responds to Women's Interests?**

In the fourth empirical chapter, I explore when politicians and parties adopt legislation that promotes women's shared interests, and provide evidence for how suffragists, operating in different electoral systems, helped to facilitate political responsiveness to women's interests. Building on 'Downsian' theories of responsiveness to women's interests, I demonstrate how electoral system affects who and when supports women's agenda. Utilizing data on voting records in legislatures and party manifestos, together with fine-grained election records, I show that politicians were more likely to support women's agenda if they were most in need of their votes. In systems with SMDs, politicians were most likely to vote in favor of women's bills in competitive districts. In PR systems, parties with more partisan strongholds were especially likely to support women's agenda. In the second half of the chapter, I then demonstrate how suffragists facilitated politician's responsiveness to women's agenda. Through robust activities that engaged both voters and politicians, suffragists

incentivized politicians to adopt women's agenda if they needed women's votes. In systems with SMDs, politicians in the most competitive districts with suffragist presence were especially likely to support women's agenda. In systems with PR, parties with locally concentrated support that were most ideologically aligned with suffragists were especially likely to support women's agenda.

### **Chapter 7. Discussion: From Past to Present.**

The final chapter presents the key contributions of the book in our understanding of how women achieved representation of group interests upon enfranchisement. Bringing together women's voting behavior, activities and character of suffragists, and politicians' strategic incentives, all operating in different electoral systems, I argue for a more refined understanding of the pathways towards representation. While enfranchisement is a necessary precursor to women's representation, democratization through suffrage enlargements alone may not be sufficient to secure political responsiveness to women's shared interests. In the second part of this chapter, I discuss how this book sheds light on broader questions of women's representation today. In doing so, I propose that, despite the obvious differences in contexts, the electoral incentives of politicians and organized interests should be shaped by similar factors, such as politicians' and organized interests' electoral incentives within given institutional frameworks. Consequently, the pathways towards women's representation upon enfranchisement illuminate the mechanisms under which politicians address women's issues today, and under which efforts to remove barriers to women's electoral participation are likely to foster women's agenda.