

# Elite Responses to Suffrage Expansion: The Rise of State and Local Elections in the U.S., 1776-1900

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## Abstract

Circa 1787, Americans elected very few state and local officials. Yet, by the 20th century they elected far more politicians than any other country. This feature is at the heart of our modern political system, but we know little about its origins and development. In this dissertation, I present original data and a theoretical framework for thinking about “electoralization” – the process by which state governments proliferated elected offices at the state and county levels – in the century after Independence. First, I present a model of a bargaining problem, faced by all governments, in which leaders must simultaneously fill public offices and fully fund the government’s budget. Applying the model to the early American states, I argue that the growth of elective offices stemmed from political elites’ fears that suffrage expansion would threaten their control of unitary executive power. To marshal evidence for my theory, I pair a novel dataset on electoralization from 1776 to 1900 with a difference-in-difference approach, taking advantage of the states’ asynchronous timing of suffrage expansion to estimate the effect of Universal Male Suffrage on the number of elected offices.

Keywords: Suffrage Expansion, Democratization, Direct Elections, State and Local Elections, American Political Development

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## Chapter one:

### The puzzle of American electoral exceptionalism

Government in the United States is notable for the total number of public offices filled by elections rather than appointment or civil service recruitment. At the end of the 20th century, American voters elected over half a million officials to serve in roughly 85,000 state and local governments (U.S. Census 1992, Lawless 2012). There is a long tradition of studying state and municipal elections, but few scholars investigate elections at other levels of government such as counties, townships, and special districts. These governments accounted for more than half (55%) of all elected officials in the United States in 1992, but little is known about how they came to numerically dominate the American landscape.

The large number of elected officials in the U.S. is notable in an international context, especially compared to countries with similar political cultures, such as Canada and Australia. Almost all local services in Canada and Australia are provided by provincial and municipal governments. In contrast, a typical American community elects not just state and city officials but also several additional officers that provide different or overlapping services. For example, in 2018 voters in California's Santa Clara County elected a tax assessor, sheriff, prosecutor, and representatives to special districts for health care, water management, and public parks, services that are typically handled by unelected bureaucrats in other countries.

Cumulatively, the differences between the U.S., on the one hand, and Canada and Australia, on the other, are dramatic. For example, the total number of governments in Australia is roughly 600, compared to the U.S.'s 90,000, giving Americans over ten times more governments per capita than the Australians. Canada has only half as many governments per capita as the U.S., with roughly 5,000 in total. Moreover, comparisons between the U.S., the United Kingdom, and New Zealand yield similar findings, as seen in Figure 1.<sup>1</sup>

The discrepancy in numbers of elective officials is even greater. Whereas only mayors,

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<sup>1</sup>Figure A1 in the appendix shows the number of governments per 10,000 people in the United States compared to selected European democracies.

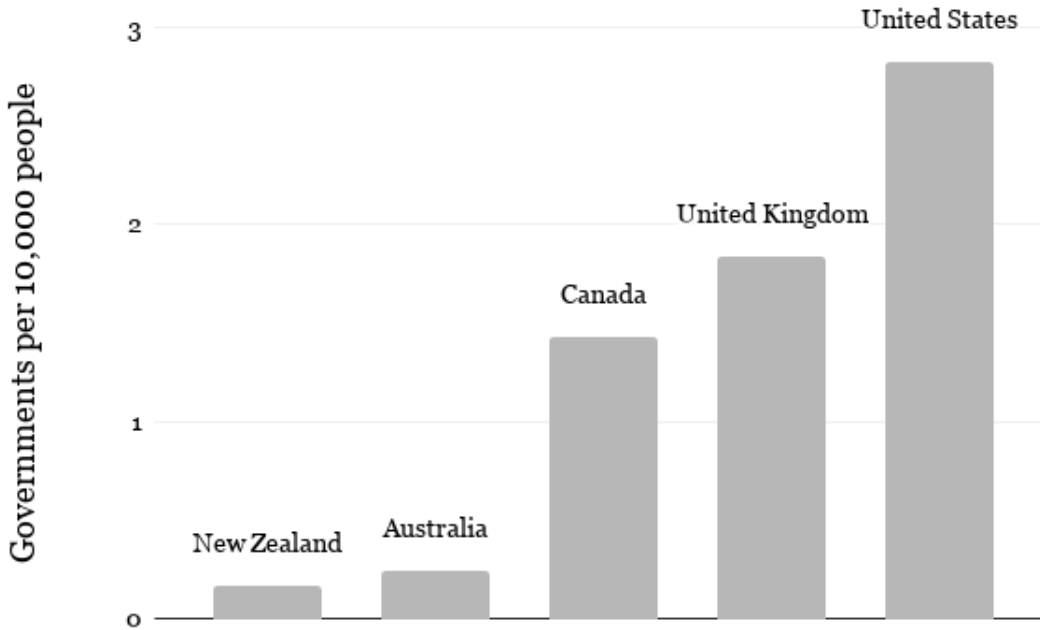


Figure 1: Governments per capita in English-speaking democracies. Note: Governments per capita calculated by the author. Data from OECD/UCLG (2016).

town councils, and some school boards are locally elected in most modern democracies, the United States' system includes governing units such as special districts, counties, and judgeships. For example, circa 2000 the number of local elected officials per 1,000 residents in the U.S. was 1.77, versus 0.28 in Japan.<sup>2</sup>

State and local democracy is not a recent development in the United States, but neither was the nation born with its multitude of elective offices. To illustrate the sharp rise in elected state offices, consider just three data points from 1800, 1957, and 1992. The data from 1957 and 1992 are from the U.S. Census Bureau's first and last estimates, respectively, of the number of elected *state executive officers*.<sup>3</sup> The data for 1800 is an average of the number of elected statewide officers in the sixteen states admitted to the Union by that year.<sup>4</sup> In 1800, Americans elected an average of 0.88 statewide executive officers. Americans were electing 6.3 such offices by the middle of the 20th century, with only a small decline by

<sup>2</sup>Thank you to Daniel Smith for data on elected officials in Japan.

<sup>3</sup>"Census of Governments" (U.S. Census 1957, U.S. Census 1992).

<sup>4</sup>Collected by the author from state constitutions.

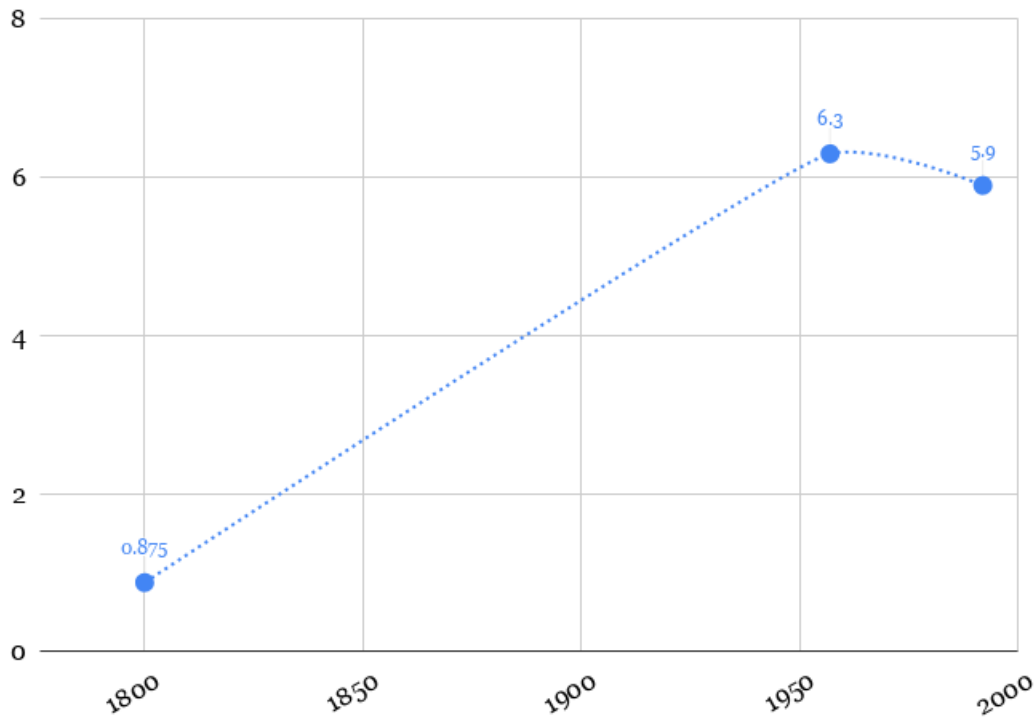


Figure 2: Average number of directly elected state officers in 1800, 1957, and 1992

1992 (5.9 elected statewide executive offices, on average). Although this revolution coincided with the advent of other democratic reforms associated with the so-called Age of Jackson (roughly 1828 to 1850), it is unclear how the introduction of local elections was related to this movement.

Why do American voters elect not just more but vastly more public officials than any other country? Why did the United States transform from a republic with relatively few elective posts in 1788 to a democracy with the most numerous body of elected officials in the world by the 20th century? In this manuscript, I offer an answer to both of these questions which comprise what I refer to as the puzzle of American electoral exceptionalism. In order to distinguish the number of elected offices from other features of democracy, such as the breadth of suffrage, I will introduce a new term: electoralization. This new term can be used to describe the process of making an office elective, such as by subjecting an office that was previously filled by appointment to direct elections. Electoralization may also take the form

of the state government creating a new office that will be filled by the voters at the next election. In the rest of this chapter, I present my theory of electoralization and a research strategy to evaluate this theory against competing explanations.

## Existing ideas about electoralization

Although several scholars have noted the United States' unusually high number of elective offices, attention has focused on the consequences of electing so many officials (e.g., Lijphart 1997; Cox 1999, Berry & Gersen 2009). A number of scholars have suggested that an extreme number of elective offices depresses voter turnout (e.g. Cox 1999; Lijphart 1997). Relatedly, several recent studies have argued that local elections are relatively easy for special interests to hijack, especially when elites can strategically set the timing of elections (Anzia 2011, Anzia 2012, Anzia 2013, Sances 2016). Some scholars have cast doubt on America's continued reliance on elections more broadly (Achen and Bartels 2017).

Given these concerns about elective offices, it is important to understand the history of electoral democracy in the U.S. and the factors that contributed to its development and persistence. As far as I know, no comparative literature explores variations across countries in the number of governmental units or the number of elective officials (cf. Auffhammer & Carson 2009). As regards the U.S. in particular, there is neither a consensual explanation of the origins of America's electoral exceptionalism nor an on-going debate between competing theories.<sup>5</sup> Nor are there studies of variation in the number of elective offices across the American states. That said, five prominent theories of American history and political economy shed light on the origins of America's expansive state and local democracy.

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<sup>5</sup>The notable exception is the literature on the rise of elective judges, and to a lesser extent, prosecutors (Harvey 2015, Shugerman 2010, Nelson 1993, Ellis 2011). This research has largely been carried out by historians and legal scholars, with scant attention from political scientists.

## Hartz's Whig Interpretation

In Louis Hartz's (1955) Whig interpretation of early American history, the rise in the number of directly elected local offices was an inevitable outcome.<sup>6</sup> Nineteenth century Americans' demand for greater democracy was insatiable and led naturally to reforms such as expansion of the franchise and "electoralization" of state and county offices.

The Whig interpretation does not explain why other advanced democracies did not electoralize once they caught up to the Americans in terms of white male suffrage. Aside from the rise of elective legislatures and, in some places, directly elected executives (unified or plural), there was not a similar push in Europe to open up local executive offices to direct election. The Whig interpretation also falls short in explaining the many suffrage exclusions that persisted at the local level, not to mention the racial exclusions at the national level. If Americans are moving along an inevitable path toward democracy, it is neither clear that the path is linear nor who is driving our movement along it.

## Populist Democracy

Another common view of the rise of state and local democracy is that Jacksonian Democrats wanted to improve their ability to control multiple public offices and distribute access to those offices as patronage to party members. In this account, offices proliferated as party leaders sought to satisfy a populist wave that demanded greater access to government spoils for the masses of white, male laborers.

This interpretation does not always fit the facts. In a few cases, Jacksonians did seek direct local elections but in others cases the party leadership simply sought control over the few extant state and local offices that already held appointment power. Creating multiple elected offices was unnecessary if the waves of new voters could deliver control of the existing

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<sup>6</sup> "[I]f we assert that the quick emergence of [democracy] was inherent in the American liberal community, we advance a proposition that comparative analysis cannot destroy. Indeed the inflexible European behavior of American Whiggery gives this proposition the kind of support that one might almost expect to get from a laboratory experiment" Hartz 1955, p. 95-96). Contrary to Hartz's assertion, we can learn something about the advent of local democracy through a comparative analysis of U.S. states, rather than European ones.

appointive apparatus to their party leaders. Moreover, Democrats could target patronage more efficiently through central appointment. Thus, when that option existed, party leaders did not push for local electoralization.

In states where local offices were not filled by central appointment, the institutional arrangements already placed appointment power in the hands of local elites, such as justices of the peace, county commissioners, and (especially in the Southern and Border states) county courts.<sup>7</sup> If they could capture these offices, the Jacksonians did not push for electoralization at the local level, either.

## Turner's Frontier Thesis

A third explanation originates with Frederick Jackson Turner, who famously argues that frontier states adopted democratic measures—such as local elections, women's suffrage, and reduced class barriers to voting—in order to attract laborers with the promise of participation in political life. After the frontier states innovated these democratic practices, Turner believes the Eastern states followed suit, in an attempt to hold on to labor.

While the need for labor might explain the adoption of state and local democracy in frontier states<sup>8</sup>, it is unclear to what extent that practice was a real threat to Eastern states. Indeed, many Eastern and Southern states developed new techniques to keep formerly enslaved blacks and poor whites tied to the land (Alston & Ferrie 1993), which obviated the need to expanded democratic rights. In any event, I shall consider empirically whether the timing that Turner suggests for the rise of statewide elections accords with the data I collect.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>The courts were more often than not run as personal fiefdoms by and for the landed elite in a given area (Ratcliffe 2013).

<sup>8</sup>Teele (2018) casts doubt on Turner's thesis and shows that Western politicians had electoral incentives to expand women's suffrage in states with competitive elections and strong suffragist movements.

<sup>9</sup>Other recent research has begun to put Turner's Frontier Thesis to the empirical test: see Bazzi et al 2017, Garcia-Jimeno & Robinson 2011

## **Scorched-earth Federalists**

Another popular account finds the origins of multiplicitous elections in the death throes of the so-called First Party System (Wood 2009). In this view, the factions that arose after Washington's presidency (1789-1797), the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, sought ways to gain an edge in closely contested national, state, and local elections. Early partisans fought over the administration of elections, especially the rules about counting ballots (Foley 2015), and in some states pushed reforms to take away the governor's appointment powers and/or create newly elected state offices. According to Wood (2009), by electoralizing key offices both factions sought to deny the other the opportunity to control newly-formed state governments.

There is some evidence that electoralization took place during the mid to late First Party System. By the dawn of the 19th century, many states had opted to directly elect the governor and lieutenant governor, and the balance of power between the executive and legislature over appointments was a hotly contested issue in constitutional conventions. However, as I will show later, the reforms in this period account for just a small portion of the overall increase in the number of statewide and locally elected offices in the United States.

I will argue that the conflicts characterizing the First Party System reflected a bargaining problem inherent to any representative government with separation of powers. My argument fills in the gaps and extends the scope of the scorched-earth theory by making it clear why elite-driven parties (by themselves or in coalitions) supported electoralizing: they were afraid that new parties would appoint officials who would adopt and enforce unfavorable policies, such as wealth appropriation.

## **Matching Taxpayers to Public Services and Policies**

The final alternative theory that I consider is found in economic history. Wallis (2000) presents a matching theory that suggests polities try to match their level of public service provision with the resident taxpayers' willingness to pay for such services (i.e. pay taxes



to the local government). According to Wallis, the proliferation of local governments in the early-to-mid 20th century “reduced the political costs of property taxation” (p. 70). Insofar as creating multiple jurisdictions allowed taxpayers to find better matches for their preferences, the proliferation of local governments was advantageous. This logic is paralleled in the history of general incorporation laws for businesses (Lamoreaux 2016).

As will be seen, my argument is similar to Wallis’ in some respects. To the extent that the incentive to decentralize services, so that local taxes pay for local services, is to evade a commitment problem that would arise if the central state undertook to provide all services, his argument corresponds well to one of mine.

The logic of matching is also present in Berry and Gersen’s (2008) theory of unbundling executive power. The Founding Fathers debated whether the United States should have unified or plural executive power, and Berry and Gersen (2008) lay out the various benefits that an “unbundled executive” might provide to voters, including greater accountability through improved monitoring (Besley and Coate 2003).<sup>10</sup>

Unbundling is consistent with my argument, but the nature of the electorate differs in important ways between the model and the historical record. The movement toward direct elections was not driven by regular voters and mass political parties, but rather by the small class of incumbent elites who feared the rising tide of democracy at their front door. As I will argue in the next section, it was the expanding franchise that made incumbent elites nervous about their ability to hold onto the unified central executive (the governor) or central appointive councils. Democrats and suffrage reformers sought control of the central appointment apparatus, whereas the incumbent elites, the Federalists and later the Whigs, had the incentive and desire to focus on specific offices - namely, the offices in their home counties.

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<sup>10</sup>Berry and Gersen (2008) note that although the Founders settled on a unified presidential system, nearly all of the states now feature multiple executive officers (e.g. governor, attorney general, secretary of state) that are directly elected. The benefits of unbundling are similar to the logic of individual ministerial responsibility in Georgian England, wherein the elites in Parliament attempted to constrain the executive branch’s malfeasance by targeting individual ministers and holding them to account in specific policy areas (Cox 2011, Cox 2018).

## A précis of my argument

The literature abounds with theories of institutional change that are rooted in elite fear of democracy. Foremost in this literature is the debate over suffrage expansion (Acemoglu & Robinson 2000, Acemoglu & Robinson 2008, Engerman & Sokoloff 2005, Lizzeri & Persico 2004, Przeworski 2009, Aidt et al 2010, Aidt & Jensen 2013, Aidt et al 2006, Berlinski et al 2014). Key to these models is that elites feared economic redistribution under a regime with an expansive franchise (Meltzer & Richard 1981, Acemoglu & Robinson 2000). Previous studies have found mixed evidence for the effect of suffrage expansion on the size of government and public policy more generally (Aidt et al 2010, Aidt & Jensen 2013, Aidt et al 2006, Berlinski et al 2014, Acemoglu & Robinson 2000, Acemoglu & Robinson 2008). A growing literature thus considers what factors might have mitigated the effects of suffrage expansion on the size of government (Corvalan et al 2016, Acemoglu & Robinson 2008, Carvalho and Dippel 2016). Some scholars even question the extent to which “redistribution” was on the agenda in the 19th century (Ansolabehere et al 2018).

The central claim in this manuscript is that the expansion of statewide suffrage rights during the early 19th century might have posed a threat to local elites. Under restricted suffrage, such elites could trust that the size and scope of government would accord with their preferences; and that public offices would be filled largely by members of the elite. As suffrage rights expanded, and as the Jacksonian determination to seize the spoils of office became more evident, local elites might have worried they would lose control over key existing officials such as sheriffs; lose control over the creation of new offices; and lose their privileged access to all offices. One natural response would be to insist on the creation of more statewide offices (funded by separate budgets) and more locally elected offices (funded by local taxes). The old elites, who represented what Hartz called “American Whiggery”, thus strove to (i) split executive power at the state level, (ii) decentralize power to the local level; and (iii) make many of the newly created offices elective. In this way, they could preserve more of their influence. Complementing the decentralization part of their strategy,

local suffrage rights remained (or were made) more restrictive than they were at the state level, facilitating the continuation (or establishment) of elite influence over local offices.

In the American context, ruling elites did take measures to mitigate the effects of suffrage expansion and secure their influence over politics. For example, there were restrictions on candidacy for office. Corvalan et al (2016) find that many states had laws that required candidates for state and local offices to meet a taxpaying or property requirement, so that elites could still constrain the pool of public officers to one of their own. New York, for example, had higher qualifications to serve as governor or state senator relative to serving as a member of the lower house (Engerman & Sokoloff 2005, fn. 12). Other methods of candidate selection took the form of nominating conventions and county courts, wherein a tight circle of elites chose the candidates that would appear on the ballot, from which the masses could select one.

I argue that elites were willing and able to fundamentally change the structure of executive power (e.g. unbundle state and county offices), along with the institutions that framed their bargaining over access to those executive offices (e.g. local election rather than central appointment), in order to preserve some control in the face of suffrage expansion. My argument thus resonates with a line of thinking about the reasons that old elites in Europe introduced proportional representation simultaneously with suffrage expansion (Boix 1999).

Explaining the size of the state in terms of revenues and expenditures has long been a concern of economic historians, fiscal sociologists, and political scientists (e.g. Tilly 1992; Kiser and Linton 2001; Dincecco 2011; Cox 2016). The same literature often explores the creation and expansion of state bureaucracies (e.g., Tilly 1992, Brewer 1989, Cox 2018). My study resonates with this last line of historical studies, although my focus is less on the sheer number of public offices and more on the portion of them that are separately elected.

My research also compliments the literature on democratization, notably the research on the process by which Western countries expanded suffrage to include all white men. The democratization literature has largely neglected another aspect of democracy - the set of

offices that are to be filled by direct election. In a similar vein, much attention has been given to legislative and executive elections at the national level, and to a lesser extent in sub-national governments (Main 1966, Berry & Gersen 2008, Auffhammer & Carson 2009), but little attention has been given to the process by which elites decided whether to fill public offices by appointment or direct election. I hope this manuscript will be considered a first step in filling some of these gaps in the literature.

In the next section, I explain the commitment problem that arises under separation-of-power systems in general. I then briefly comment on how this problem played out in the early American states, describe the data I have compiled, and sketch the research strategy I shall pursue to identify the impact of suffrage expansion on the electoralization of the American states.

## **Theory: The Fundamental Problem of Public Office**

In this section, I begin with an example of what I call the fundamental problem of public office. Consider a polity in which the occupants of all public officials are appointed by the chief executive (e.g., the monarch, president, or governor) and serve at the executive's pleasure. Approximately these rules applied for central government officials in ancien régime Europe; and the same rules extended to local officials in some cases.

Suppose next that a national or state assembly has the power to determine the number and salary of offices in the central government. For simplicity, suppose the assembly budgets a total amount,  $S$ , to pay salaries. Once the assembly has acted, the chief executive appoints officers and instructs them to pursue policies  $x$ . I ignore all agency problems: the officers do what they are told.

I assume that the status quo policy is 0; the assembly favors a policy of 1; and the chief executive favors a policy of 5. The final policy outcome, given budget  $S$  and instructions  $x$ , will be  $p(S;x) = \frac{S}{7}x$ . The notion is that an amount  $T$  is needed to ensure the central

government functions effectively. If the assembly provides half what is needed, then policy will move half way from the status quo (0) to the executive's policy goal (x).

What budget will the assembly authorize? In this example, the assembly will set  $S = 0$ . This ensures the administration does nothing, thereby preserving the status quo. Although both the assembly and the executive would prefer a policy outcome at 1, if the assembly authorizes a positive budget, the executive can respond with an extreme enough instruction to move policy to 5. For example, if  $S = .1T$ , then  $x = 50$ . Since the assembly prefers 0 to 5, it keeps the purse shut.

This simple example illustrates a commitment problem inherent in creating and funding executive offices in states where the legislature sets taxes and the executive appoints officials. The basic problem survives in more sophisticated models, such as Cox's (2016; 2018) analysis of historical English budgets or McCarty's (2004) analysis of contemporary U.S. budgets. I call this the fundamental problem of public office: legislators will not want to create and fund public offices, if they think the officials subsequently filling those offices will pursue bad policies.

These problems can be illustrated by considering a state in which most offices are appointed by a directly elected governor, and state legislators represent elite interests.<sup>11</sup> Any promise that the governor makes to state legislators about the future use of his appointment power will lack credibility because by hypothesis the governor has full legal authority to appoint and the legislators cannot remove him from office for using that power in an unfavorable way. If the legislators retain power over the budget, their main recourse will be to reduce the state budget. "Given these constitutional arrangements, both branches are left to defend themselves through their institutional prerogatives rather than set policy cooperatively" (McCarty 2004, p. 413). The result is a standoff in which the government is underfunded.

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<sup>11</sup>Throughout this manuscript, I characterize members of the propertied and taxpaying electorate in the 18th and 19th centuries as "the elites", although the term can refer to different political and economic groups in different states and over time.

Theoretically, there are two basic solutions to the fundamental problem. One option is to remove the executive's power to instruct public officials; or to remove the executive's ability to act against the assembly's wishes. Reducing the executive's power to instruct can be accomplished by reducing his influence over hiring (e.g., requiring senate confirmation of all nominees; requiring nominees to pass civil service exams; or making offices elective rather than appointive) and firing (e.g., mandating that officers serve "during good behavior" rather than "at pleasure;" or setting up civil service protections). Removing the executive's ability to act in the teeth of assembly opposition can be accomplished by allowing the latter to remove the former by a vote of no confidence.

Among democracies, the most common solution to the fundamental problem is parliamentarism. Because it can remove the chief executive at will, the assembly can create and fund offices with relatively little worry that state officials will subsequently be instructed to undertake actions of which the assembly majority disapproves. If this were to happen, the offending ministers could be removed. Thus, the need to curb executive powers is removed, leading to a single chain of command (Strøm 2000; Moe and Caldwell 1994).

The second basic solution is to remove the assembly's power to block funding for public offices; or to remove the assembly's ability to act against the executive's wishes. The assembly's budgetary power can be reduced in various ways. In the Caribbean, white elites dismantled their parliaments rather than allow themselves to be removed from government by the rising political power of formerly enslaved blacks (Carvalho and Dippel 2016). In ancien régime Europe, absolutist monarchs opted to suspend parliament. Short of dismantlement, the assembly's independence can be eroded by allowing the executive to appoint legislators or to nominate them in a one-party system. Another option involves changing budgetary rules to lessen the assembly's grip on the purse (Cox 2016).

The U.S. is virtually the only country that has survived over an extended period with a system that is both non-parliamentary and in which Congress retains the power to shut the government down. The American states have also pursued this separation of powers in which

the legislature controls taxing and spending but an independently elected executive controls appointments. America's unusual separation of powers has meant that the "cleanest" solutions to the fundamental problem—total victory for the legislature (parliamentarism) and total victory for the executive (either a fiscally impotent or a non-independent assembly)—have been avoided in the U.S. for over two hundred years running.

American electoral exceptionalism is thus explained by its peculiar "middle way" in fiscal politics. I argue that given the U.S.'s avoidance of both parliamentarism and executive fiscal dominance, its politicians had to resort to a relatively short list of ameliorative tactics — power-sharing, civil service reforms, and elections - to deal with the fundamental problem of public office.

First, the U.S. Constitution reduced the executive's control over public office by requiring senate confirmation of some nominees (Article II, Section 2); and mandating service "during good behavior" for Supreme Court Justices (Article III, Section 1). This still left open the possibility that public office would be used as "spoils" by parties able to secure unified control of government. And indeed the "spoils" system was a prominent feature of U.S. politics by mid-century (Shefter 1978).

Second, the civil service system (beginning with the Pendleton Act 1883) required public officials to pass civil service exams; and regulated their dismissal. This eventually spread to the state and local levels as well (Folke, Hirano, and Snyder 2011).

Third, by making state and local offices elective rather than appointive, Americans could hope to put such offices beyond the reach of both executive tyrants and spoils-hungry parties. This is the solution upon which I focus most of my attention.

## **The Fundamental Problem in the U.S.**

Although the U.S. federal government avoided both parliamentarism and executive dominance, the same was not true at the state level. In eight early states, the governor was not directly elected but instead chosen by the state assembly (in part or whole). It was not until

1818 that Connecticut began directly electing governors, followed by Georgia (1824), North Carolina (1836), Maryland (1838), Rhode Island (1842), New Jersey (1844), Virginia (1851), and South Carolina (1865). These states operated as quasi-parliamentary democracies where legislators were assured a say in appointments since they could elect the governor who made appointments.<sup>12</sup>

This early experimentation with quasi-parliamentarism at the state level did not remove incentives to try other tactics to control public office. To see why, note that, when they became independent, most American states combined two features: (1) narrow electorates that excluded the poor; and (2) institutional constraints on governors that ensured state legislators had a say in the appointments process. The institutional constraints took two forms: gubernatorial appointment by the legislature and power-sharing arrangements such as appointment boards.<sup>13</sup> In states that combined small electorates with constraints on gubernatorial appointment power, elites had a clear path to controlling public office. They could elect state legislators who in turn could influence and bargain over appointments.

Suffrage expansion, however, threatened elite control over public office. If new political parties emerged to represent spoils-hungry voters, the existing institutions would no longer protect elite interests. The new party could simply take over the existing institutions and use them to distribute spoils. How could the elites fight back? One solution was to adopt candidacy requirements that restricted the eligible pool of candidates for office to those propertied or taxpaying individuals that elites could trust.<sup>14</sup> Next, elites pushed for electoralization, first at the state level, and then locally, to ensure their influence over public offices after

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<sup>12</sup>The foundations for the separation of powers in the early states can be traced back to colonial institutions that limited the Crown's appointment power vis-a-vis colonial assemblies (Gailmard 2017).

<sup>13</sup>Nomination lists were a popular form of legislative constraint on executive appointment power in the colonial period. In states as varied as Pennsylvania and North Carolina, for example, colonists were dismayed at the financial abuses done by the Crown's sheriffs (the tax collector *du jour*) and ultimately won the ability to nominate their own candidates to the royal governor (Boyd 1928, Watson 1976). Another popular device was the appointment board, which made all appointments and to which the legislature could appoint some number of members.

<sup>14</sup>Similar requirements for holding office had existed in some colonies dating back to medieval English laws that held Crown agents, namely sheriffs, personally liable for the taxes they collected by limiting such officers to wealthy, landed gentlemen.



they lost control of the central executive. Chapters two and three of this manuscript explore these electoralization strategies at the state and local levels.

## Research Strategy

If my explanation of the U.S.’s hyper-abundance of elective offices holds water, then we should find that the number of elective offices increased when (a) the state was growing; and (b) bargaining over control of public offices became more fraught. Governments in the U.S. were generally growing—in terms of revenues and staff—throughout the 19th century. Who bargained over the division of the resulting pie of office? In chapter two, I consider bargaining between the executive and the legislature. In this case, the variable causing bargaining to become more difficult was divided partisan control of the executive and legislative branches. In chapter three, I consider bargaining between local elites and the central government. The variable causing bargaining failure in this case is the expansion of the statewide suffrage.

My research strategy includes using multiple methods to test the plausibility of my theory. Drawing on a novel dataset (discussed below), I first demonstrate the magnitude of the sea change in local American democracy that occurred over the 19th century: the number of directly elected offices at the state and county level. The main statistical test in this manuscript employs a difference-in-difference (DID) method with data on the timing of suffrage expansion and the growth of elective offices. The DID method involves testing for differences in a state’s number of elective offices before and after suffrage was expanded. By pooling data across all of the existing states, we can also test the validity of my claims about the relative timing of suffrage expansion and the growth of elective offices, as well as popular claims about the geographic pattern of these reforms (Turner 1920).

I use three measures of the independent variable, suffrage expansion. This first is a binary measure of universal male suffrage (UMS)<sup>15</sup>, which democratization scholars generally define

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<sup>15</sup>Also referred to as “universal manhood suffrage”. In the U.S. context, the term “universal white male suffrage” is a more appropriate term, given the systematic exclusion of African-Americans and indigenous

as the absence of property-holding and taxpaying requirements to vote. Keyssar (2009) provides the most extensive data on suffrage requirements in the states. The variable takes the value 0 or 1 depending on whether the state-year is before or after the adoption of UMS.

Second, I use a looser measure of male suffrage that accounts for de jure changes that fell short of universal suffrage. This measure, which I refer to as “wide male suffrage” (WMS), accounts for state’s that lower the requirements for voting but fall short of removing all economic barriers. For example, a state might drop their requirement that voters own property (a “freehold requirement”) and substitute a rule that voters pay their state and county taxes within six months of the election. In the WMS variable, the hypothetical state would take on a value of 0 under the freehold requirement and 1 under the taxpaying requirement, whereas the state would be coded as 0 for the whole period according to the UMS variable.

These binary variables are a second-best option. A better measure of suffrage expansion would account for numerical increase in the size of the electorate, but such data are incomplete. Nonetheless, we can use available data to explore the relationship between electoralization and growing political participation in the Jacksonian period. In the third set of tests, I employ a continuous measurement of suffrage expansion, the percent of males voting in presidential elections between 1824 and 1844 as a measure of the growth in political participation during the Jacksonian period.<sup>16</sup>

## Data collection

Although we have a good sense of how many state and local officials are elected today, we do not have any systematic data before the last century. From 1957 to 1992, the U.S. Census Bureau collected information on the number of elected officials in each state and released the report, “Census of Popularly Elected Offices”, as part of its larger Census of

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people at this time.

<sup>16</sup>These data come from McCormick (1960), and are cited by Engerman & Sokoloff 2005, p.906.

Governments conducted every decade or so. During this time period, Census employees worked painstakingly to tally each office by contacting Secretaries of State and local boards of election across the country. Unfortunately, there was no similar research project attempted before the 1950s that would allow us to observe, decade-by-decade, how American democracy expanded.

The earliest measure of directly elected officials in each state does not precede the 20th century, but the electoralization of state and county government had already occurred by the early 1900s. This data limitation poses a challenge for scholars, who cannot observe or measure institutional change as it occurs, and thus cannot hope to test theories about the conditions associated with the onset of that change.

The goal of my project is to approximate a subset of the Census Bureau's survey of popularly elected offices moving backward in time to the Founding. I collected data on the timing of reforms that made each state and county office elective between 1776 and 1900. The result of this effort is two datasets, one for state offices and one for county offices, that include a list of elective offices in each state, the year of the reform to make the offices elective, and the method of reform (constitutional or statutory).

Importantly, I focus on *executive* officers that are independently and directly elected<sup>17</sup> My data collection excludes judges and judicial officers like clerks, reporters, attorneys, solicitors, and public defenders, in part, because several of those offices have already been researched by other scholars<sup>18</sup>. I also exclude statewide multi-member commissions, councils, and other decision-making bodies because those members tend to be elected from districts. The focus of this project is on those offices that comprised the "well-regulated" system of governance provided by the states, with the counties as the main administrative units of that system.

The data collection strategy was as follows: with the help of several research assistants,

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<sup>17</sup>Contrast this definition with "nonlegislative elected officials" used by Berry and Gersen (2008) which includes judges and multi-member state boards. They find a large increase in the number of such officers from 1967 to 1992: 4,200 to over 10,000 (pg. 1400)

<sup>18</sup>Ellis 2011 for prosecutors, Shugerman 2010 and Wallis 2011 for judges

we established a baseline in the beginning and end of the time period, roughly 1776 and 1900. The first baseline was established by reviewing all of the state constitutions for the 13 original colonies and the few states admitted to the union before 1800. We also read secondary sources and other studies of the period to find references to other offices that were elective by other means, such as statutes or constitutional amendments.<sup>19</sup>

The second baseline was created using the Census Bureau's first survey of popularly elected offices in 1957. We code the offices that are elected at the state and county level in each of the 48 states that existed. Thus we have a very rough measure of the change in the number of state and county elected officials from the Founding to the early 20th century (after which the total number has remained relatively stable).

The next step of the data collection process is the fill in the gaps between 1776 and 1900.<sup>20</sup> The product of this data collection effort is a state-year measure of the number of directly elected *executive* officials at the state and county-levels, with which we can begin to test several theories about the rise of state and local democracy. In particular, I bring in data from other studies on suffrage expansion and exclusion to test examine the relationship between the rise of universal white male suffrage and the rise of direct elections.

There are a few limitations in the dataset. 1) Due to the nature of the collection process, it is possible (although unlikely) that I have have missed some elective offices at random. 2) I might have missed offices that were made elective before 1900, but were unelected by 1957 (and thus not referenced by the Census). 3) The dataset does not include judiciary, legislative, or council-type officers at the state-level. Although many judges and commissions are elected statewide, plenty of other courts and commission/council-type offices are elected in districts. For now, I focus on the executive officers that are elected statewide and countywide in order to avoid confusion. 4) Finally, my dataset does not take territorial

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<sup>19</sup>Another project, *A New Nation Votes* (Lampi 2012), provides election returns for elections in several states in the early Republic period, and I cross-checked my coding of state constitutions against the returns in the NNV database.

<sup>20</sup>The year 1900 was chosen as an initial cutoff in order to focus on the 19th century in its entirety. The period between 1900 and 1957 will be filled in later.

history into account. Several states were territories before entering the Union, and in many cases, residents of federal territories could vote for a range of territory and county offices. The data in this paper only includes figures for states, although a future goal of the project is to collect data on direct elections in the territories.

## The road ahead

The sheer number of elected offices in the United States is an exceptional feature of American politics. In this chapter, I have offered a theory that the proliferation of state and local elected offices in the U.S. as the intentional product of elites facing the threat of suffrage expansion in the 19th century. In the next two chapters, I put this theory to the test using a novel dataset.

In chapters two and three, I apply this new theory to the growth of direct elections at the state and county-levels of government, respectively. I test this claim by collecting a novel dataset on the number of state and county elected offices from 1776 to 1900, the first such collection of its kind for that period. I employ three measures of suffrage expansion to explore the relationship between electoralization and the rise of mass voting. I show that the adoption of universal male suffrage was associated with an average of 1 to 3 additional state offices, with similar effect sizes for county offices. These results hold up when I use a measure of suffrage expansions that fell short of universal male suffrage. Finally, I use the limited data on white male voter participation in the Jacksonian era, 1824-1844, and find a positive relationship between increased voting and the growth of state and county offices.

This project and its results are important for a number of reasons. First, I contribute an explanation of an important feature of American politics that distinguishes us from every other democracy in the world. I extend the only data available on the number of state and local elected offices, produced by the U.S. Census between 1957 and 1992, which will allow researchers to test additional theories about American democracy and local politics

before the post-war period. Third, this research contributes a better understanding of the origins and foundations of the institutions that structure our political life today. I argue that the United States did not inherit or will into existence our expansive local democracy - the large number of state and local offices that we elect today is the direct result of political strategizing and contentious debates in the 19th century.

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## Appendix

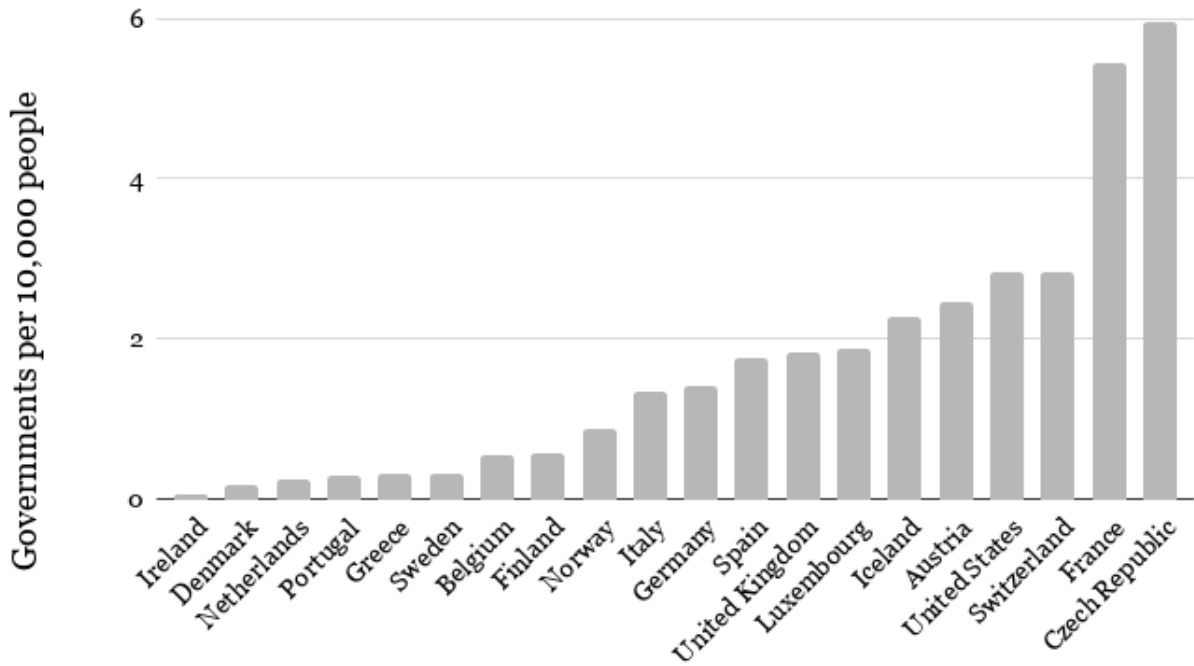


Figure A1: Governments per capita in the U.S. vs selected European democracies. Note: Governments per capita calculated by the author. Data from OECD/UCLG (2016).

## Chapter two:

# The Rise of Elected State Offices

According to my theory laid out in the previous chapter, the root causes of the proliferation of elective offices in the U.S. were a series of commitment problems that caused intra-elite bargaining over the division of public offices to fail. Political elites in the early U.S. fought over the control of public offices and the use of state power, and they reformed their institutions multiple times to solve commitment problems that arose between actors in state government, and between political elites more broadly.

This fundamental problem—that legislators will not want to create and fund public offices, if they think the officials subsequently filling those offices will pursue bad policies—arises in any polity that separates appointment and budgetary powers. For example, many polities in ancien régime Europe suffered budgetary stalemates when legislators with power over the purse mistrusted monarchs with power over appointment (cf. Dincecco 2011; Cox 2016).

To escape from this low revenue equilibrium, the governor and the legislative majority may seek a solution of the following form: create new offices in the executive branch, fund those offices with separate line items in the budget, and ensure that those who fill the offices are agents of more than just the governor. The last condition can be fulfilled in many ways, depending on which other actor is to share control of the new officer. One consequence of the rigorous and sustained separation of powers in the American states is that, whenever mistrust arose between a particular governor and state legislature, there were only a relatively few ways to build trust and avoid fiscal stalemates. Aside from the early experiment with quasi-parliamentary regimes in eight cases, American states have relied on the short list of methods given below to reduce the governor’s appointment power:

(1) Governor nominates and legislature confirms; service during good behavior. These common stipulations seek to ensure that the officer is somewhat beholden to state legislators.

There are, of course, many slight variants both as regards getting into office and the conditions for removal. This option also includes power-sharing institutions, like New York's Council of Appointments.

(2) Civil service examination controls entry into office; service during good behavior.

(3) Statewide election fills the office; service is during good behavior and subject to reelection.

A common variant includes term limits.

(4) Local election fills the office; service during good behavior and subject to reelection.

Again, a common variant includes term limits.

By the mid-19th century most states were “presidential” systems using methods (1), (2), and (3) at different stages to improve credibility. Method (4) stripped away some appointment power from the central state government (the governor and legislature), and gave credible control over public office to local political elites. Local elections were more credible than central appointment or statewide elections to the extent that political elites could control local elections. I consider method (4) in greater detail in the next chapter. In this chapter, I investigate method (3), the electoralization of statewide offices. My focus will be on how suffrage expansion affected elite views of the merits of multiplying statewide offices.

## **The Problem of Filling State Offices**

The state constitutions signed between 1776 and 1790 largely replicated the state patronage that existed before independence (McCormick 1966, Tarr 2000). Elites in the colonies had struggled with the fundamental problem of public office under the rule of royal governors, who typically appointed the state and county officers by decree or with superficial input from state legislatures. Local elites could not trust the King's sheriffs and judges not to expropriate their wealth, and multiple formal and informal institutions existed to clip the royal appointee's power such as term limits and nominating lists, although these too were

not credibly followed. After independence the royal patronage was assumed by the state legislatures, but the fundamental problem of public office remained.

Each state was governed by a state legislature and executive that existed on a continuum between parliamentary and presidential, but legislatures generally had a strong influence over offices (Gailmard 2017). The franchise, which determined the size of the electorate, was important for deciding who controlled those statewide institutions. Every state had some form of suffrage restriction, beyond the nearly universal exclusion of women and people of color, that limited the electorate to those early Americans who held property or had sufficient wealth to pay taxes (Keyssar 2009). How did early American elites address the fundamental problem of public office under a limited franchise?

The simplest mechanism for filling public office—appointment by the governor—can provide some assurances of influence, if the electorate is restricted and a stable elite coalition controls gubernatorial elections. Such conditions existed in several states after independence. Although the stability of elite coalitions may have varied across states (e.g. more stable in feudal Virginia, less stable in mercantile New York), a combination of suffrage restrictions and aristocratic institutions enabled the persistence of an entrenched ruling elite (Tarr 2000). In theory, filling public office is relatively easy under these conditions because the ruling elite have similar interests and the electorate is sufficiently small to control the governor’s appointments. States like Georgia and Connecticut resembled parliamentary systems before 1800 and their institutions served the same purpose: elites filled offices centrally with little conflict.

However, gubernatorial appointment allows influence only to those in the “stable elite coalition” that controls elections. Some elites will doubtless be excluded from the governing coalition. Indeed, Lizzeri and Persico (2004) argue that excluded elites can constitute a majority. This problem manifested in two ways in early U.S. states. One, states with developed political systems before independence (e.g. New England) often featured legislative apportionment rules that favored elites from low-density communities. Elites in high-density



communities were thus excluded from power in statewide institutions. The move to elected state governors, in part, was meant to weaken that exclusion. Two, states that were less developed by independence (the South) often did not provide representation to all of their territories, or else consolidated large swaths of land into large subdivisions with little representation in the legislature. In North Carolina and Georgia, for example, the several Eastern coastal districts held greater sway over statewide politics than the vast Western districts. In both cases, the excluded elites suffered from lack of access to patronage and vulnerability to bad behavior by central appointees.

When some elites feel excluded from the ruling coalition, they may favor suffrage expansion. One rationale for such support is that they believe expanding the suffrage will force politicians to compete in providing public goods, rather than distributing patronage (Lizzeri and Persico 2004). Another rationale would be that some of the old elite hoped to have a better chance of access to patronage under a more expansive suffrage. For example, elites in New England states like Connecticut fought over equal apportionment laws for legislative districts, which favored some counties over others in the statewide patronage system regardless of population size (Tarr 2000). To the excluded elites, expanding the suffrage and/or reforming apportionment rules were means to the same end: greater access to the state patronage. Greater representation in the legislature would allow the new elites to bargain over the allotment of public offices, and expanding the suffrage tied the governor to a greater number of principals.

If suffrage rights are expanded, however, local elites' worries may simply shift. Under a restricted suffrage, they worry about being bilked by rent-seeking elite factions in the state capital. In other words, they worry they will lose at the game of distributive politics. Under a broad suffrage, local elites worry that statewide politicians will pursue public policies redistributing wealth from the rich to the poor. In other words, they worry they will lose at the game of programmatic politics.

## The advantages of divided state power

The key advantage to dividing state executive power into multiple elective offices is that it creates opportunities for political factions to form coalitions. Throughout the early 19th century, political factions formed coalitions and pushed for the use of general tickets wherein voters selected a party, and the winning party (or coalition) leaders filled offices as they saw fit. In decentralizing state power into multiple elected offices, the stakes were lowered in the elections for the central offices that controlled appointments. No longer would a single defeat at the ballot box mean the wholesale loss of public power for a political faction. Instead, multi-faction alliances could form, with one faction taking the governorship, another the attorney-generalship, and so forth. Soon after electoralization occurred at the state level, American political parties began to offer “balanced tickets”, in which regional and sectoral factions within the party each got something.<sup>1</sup> In a few states, fusion tickets allowed minority parties to compete against larger parties for control of any of the several newly elected state and local offices (Argersinger 1980). The development of party tickets facilitated coattails effects for presidential and gubernatorial campaigns, as party ticket voters gave their support to downballot candidates by default (Engstrom and Kernell 2005), making it easier for coalitions to bargain over and coordinate on a single slate.

As suffrage expansion at the state level loomed, the old elites likely worried that they would be overwhelmed at the ballot box by new populist forces (Moeller 2011). Against the backdrop of revolution, war, and reform in Europe, and immigration and social change on the domestic front, American elites would have shared their European counterparts’ anxiety about the tension between the propertied and propertyless. By the 1820s, James Madison expressed his own doubts about the extent to which the federal and state constitutions could constrain mass democracy’s expropriative urges. “[The] danger to the holders of property can not be disguised, if they are undefended against a majority without property.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Later on, political machines in cities like New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia used ethnically balanced tickets and other fusion strategies to win the support of newly immigrated voters (Shefter 1993, Erie 1988

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Przeworski 2009: “Note written at some time between 1821 and 1829, in Ketcham 1986:

Anxiety about protecting property manifested in fear about losing control over public offices – early Americans undoubtedly had preferences for how the instruments of state government were to be used. Controversies abounded in the antebellum period over the use of public power, including the power to tax and spend, as it related to the development of industry and infrastructure like canals and roads. With the policy stakes of filling office on the rise, elites would have been all the more sensitive to surges in the demand for suffrage expansion.

The form of elite worry varied by state. In the Carolinas, landed elites worried that newly-enfranchised voters could not be trusted to defend the institution of slavery. The poor farmers in North Carolina’s Appalachian west had long agitated against the eastern gentry, and if given the franchise, might elect legislators who opposed state-sanctioned slavery. Similar worries abounded in South Carolina, where sizeable minorities of pacifist Christians, namely Quakers and Congregationalists, could use the ballot to weaken the state’s commitment to suppressing slave rebellions (Moeller 11, p 38-39). Elsewhere in the new nation, New England states had inherited aristocratic institutions after Independence that had changed very little in the intervening decades until social change and immigration threatened elite control. Suffrage expansion to Catholic immigrants in Connecticut, for example, threatened the Congregationalist Church’s dominance in state politics (through the Federalist Party), and the rural elites’ resistance to enfranchisement in Rhode Island was met with armed rebellion (Moeller 2011, p 129).

Many scholars cast doubt on the extent to which redistribution actually occurred after suffrage expansions (see Ansolabehere et al 2018, Ansell and Samuels 2014). However, British elites, worried about the increasing expense of the poor laws in the 1810s, re-engineered the electorates that could vote to set the poor rates by allocating votes in proportion to property (see Sturges-Bourne Act 1818). Soon thereafter, Caribbean elites, worried about former slaves out-voting them after the abolition of slavery in 1830, took the extreme measure of

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abolishing their legislatures and being ruled directly from London (Carvalho and Dippel 2016). More generally, Przeworski (2009) provides ample evidence that redistribution was a frequently articulated elite fear on both sides of the Atlantic. Even in the countries where inequality had not led to calls for open warfare or revolution, according to Whig jurist James Mackintosh, suffrage expansion would result in “a permanent animosity between opinion and property.”<sup>3</sup>

American politicians would have been keenly aware of the threats facing their European and Caribbean counterparts, just as revolutionaries on the continent had studied the events preceding and following U.S. independence. Although violent revolution was a less credible threat in the new United States, elites in the states paid attention to the evolving social forces that challenged their bargaining over public offices and budgets.<sup>4</sup> It is at that moment that, I argue, elite incentives to electoralize would have spiked.

The logic behind decentralizing executive power and electing multiple state officers is similar to the logic behind another well-known institutional reform, namely the adoption of proportional representation (PR). Facing closely contested elections over seats in single-member, winner-take-all districts, and the prospect of being shut out of Parliament in the near future, European reformers opted to switch to PR systems in order to preserve a minority share of seats rather than risk losing out wholesale (Boix 1999; Rokkan 1970; Brauns 1932).

## Testing electoralization theories at the state-level

Beginning in this section, and continuing in the rest of this chapter, I provide various pieces of evidence consistent with the hypothesis that the inevitability of suffrage expansion induced

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<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Collini, Winch and Burrow (1983), Przeworski (2009)

<sup>4</sup>The threat of political violence was not absent in the early United States. Mass movements in the east, like the Regulators in the Carolinas (1760s-70s) and the Dorr Rebellion in Rhode Island (1841-1842), resorted to violence against entrenched elites and their supporters in pursuit of political reforms. Of course, political violence also flowed in the other direction – the federal and state governments used violence to systematically exclude and oppress enslaved African-Americans and indigenous peoples before, during, and after this time period.

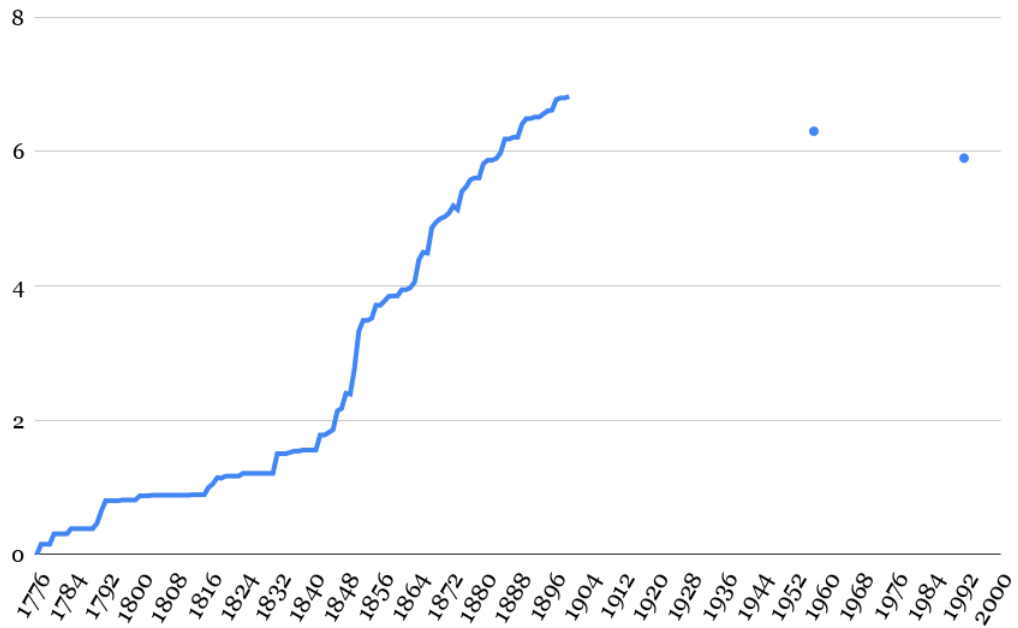


Figure 1: Average number of directly elected state executive officers: 1776 to 1992. (Data for 1957 and 1992 from U.S. Census)

incumbent elites to electoralize. Consistent with this hypothesis, my data on the number of elected state officers from 1776 to 1900 reveal a tremendous change in American politics. In the century after the nation’s founding, the average number of elected state officers increased sevenfold from less than one to over seven. Figure 1 shows this multiplication of elected state offices.<sup>5</sup> Whereas only half of the original states elected their governors in the closing decades of the 1700s, by 1900 all states had elective governors and most states also elected some or all of the following: lieutenant governor, attorney general, auditor, comptroller, secretary of state, superintendent of education, railroad commissioner, and treasurer (Figure A5 in the appendix shows the adoption of elections for these state offices over time).

To provide an initial sense of how electoralization related to suffrage expansion, I convert each year to the number of years it was before or after universal suffrage was achieved in each state.<sup>6</sup> For example, if a state achieved UMS in 1820, then 1819 would be -1, 1818

<sup>5</sup>Figure A4 in the appendix shows the rise of elected state offices in raw numbers: from nearly zero elected state offices in 1776 to over 300 in 1900.

<sup>6</sup>See table A2 in the appendix for state-by-state data on the timing of universal suffrage and electoralization.



Figure 2: Rise of elected state offices and universal male suffrage in Mississippi

would be -2, and so forth. I then estimate the average number of elected state offices in each state using the re-scaled years for each. I subset the data to the states admitted before 1817 to account for the fact that all states that entered the union after that year already had universal male suffrage and several elective state offices.

As an example, consider the case of Mississippi in Figure 2. Mississippi entered the union in 1817 and did not introduce universal male suffrage until the 1832 constitution. In that same year, reformers increased the number of statewide elected offices from two to six, including the governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, auditor, treasurer, and secretary of state.

To what extent was Mississippi representative? Figure 3 shows aggregate results using all states admitted before 1817.<sup>7</sup> The results are stark: the average number of state elected

<sup>7</sup>I limit the x-axis to 60 years before and after universal suffrage. The average year of UMS for the pre-1817 states is 1832, which is 56 years after the revolution. Figures using the full range of dates are available upon request.

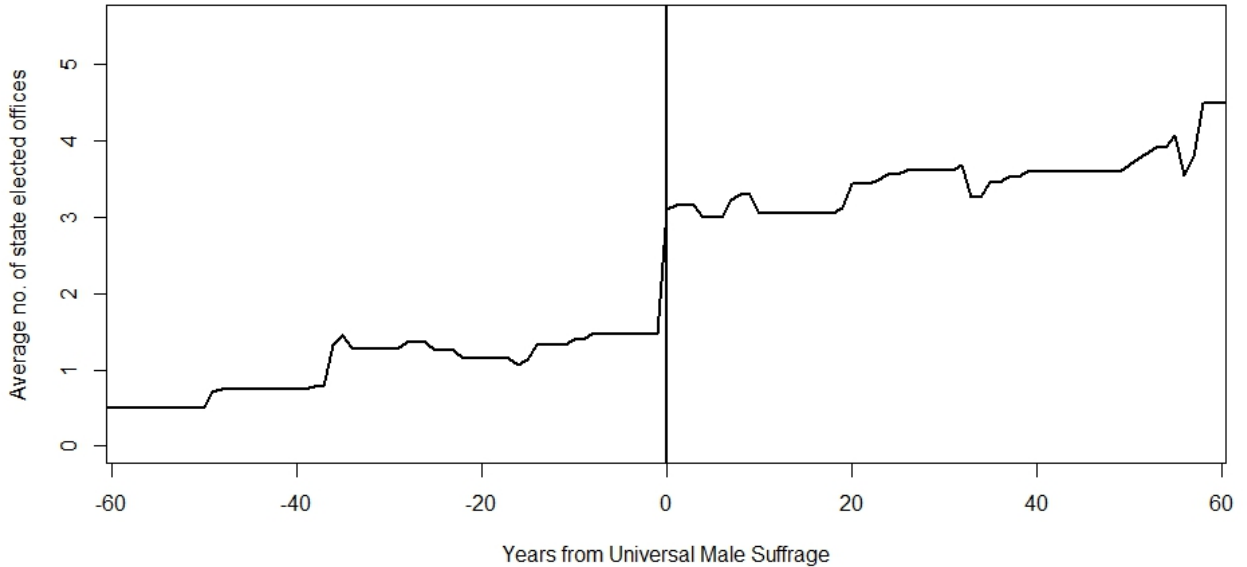


Figure 3: Average number of state elected offices before and after suffrage expansion (states admitted pre-1817)

offices doubles after suffrage expansion, from 1.5 to over 3. I reproduce this analysis with all states from 1776 to 1900 and find similar results: the average number of elected state offices increases from fewer than two before suffrage to over four after suffrage (see Figure A2 in the appendix.). The same pattern is present when we consider expansions of the franchise that fell short of universal suffrage (Figure A3 in the appendix).

## Evidence: Suffrage Expansion and Statewide Direct Elections

To explore the relationship between suffrage expansion and the growth of statewide direct elections more carefully, I use a difference-in-difference approach, as expressed by equation (1):

$$NSO_{kt} = \beta * UMS_{kt} + State_k + Year_t \tag{1}$$

The dependent variable is a measure of the number of elected state officers in state k in

year  $t$ . The main independent variable is a dummy variable that indicates whether or not state  $k$  in year  $t$  has universal white male suffrage, 1 if so and 0 if not. Importantly, the model also includes state and year fixed effects.

Table 1 presents the results of estimating equation (1). In the first two models, I limit the data to those states that were admitted before 1817, the year after which all subsequent states entered the union with universal male suffrage. The simple bi-variate regression shows that universal suffrage is associated with over two additional elected state offices. Not all states elected the same number of offices, although the number in each state was increasing over the 19th century. To account for changes over time and for differences between states, I include state and year fixed effects in model 2. This difference-in-difference analysis finds that universal suffrage was associated with about one (1) additional elected office on average. These results are confirmed by the results of models 3 and 4, which include data for all states from 1776 to 1900.

Table 1: The number of elective state offices and suffrage expansion, 1776-1900

DV=No. of elected state offices	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Universal Suffrage	2.506*** (0.097)	1.019*** (0.106)	3.360*** (0.093)	0.918*** (0.104)	2.840*** (0.110)	1.093*** (0.127)
(Intercept)	1.332*** (0.071)	0.778 (0.410)	1.309*** (0.075)	0.329 (0.432)	3.851*** (0.143)	2.401 (1.348)
Year Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	2304	2304	3374	3374	2826	2826
$R^2$	0.226	0.726	0.279	0.786	0.192	0.780
adj $R^2$	0.225	0.707	0.279	0.774	0.192	0.766

\* $p \leq 0.05$ \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$

Models 1 and 2 include only the states admitted before 1817 (the year when all subsequent states entered with universal male suffrage). Models 3 and 4 include all states from 1776 to 1900. Models 5 and 6 exclude state-years with no elected state officers (i.e. before the governor was elected).

A handful of states did not directly elect their governors until several decades after the Revolution, and it is possible that the results to this point simply reflect the eventual move to elect governors in those states. To account for this possibility, I estimate models 5 and 6 with the data from all states excluding the cases when the dependent variable takes the value zero, and confirm that universal male suffrage is associated with between one and three



additional elected state offices. Thus, my results are not driven solely by the move to elect governors.<sup>8</sup>

## Parallel trends assumption

A key premise that underlies the difference-in-difference approach is known as the parallel trend assumption. Parallel trends requires that (i) confounders varying across the groups be time-invariant; and (ii) time-varying confounders be group-invariant. Confounders are omitted variables that correlate with the treatment and affect the outcome. Note that if a time-varying confounder varies significantly across groups before any group is treated, then the groups should follow different paths pre-treatment. So, we can gain confidence that confounders, that are both time-varying and group-varying, are not causing significant bias by showing that pre-treatment trends are parallel in the treatment and control groups.

To illustrate, suppose the number of state elected offices is the same in two states, but then diverges when one state adopts universal male suffrage while the other does not. The parallel trend assumption would be satisfied in this hypothetical pair. Note that the assumption is satisfied whether or not the non-adopting state has previously adopted universal male suffrage (i.e. the non-adopting state has been “pretreated” by the treatment of suffrage expansion). The numerous historical and political differences between states challenges the notion that one can be considered a counterfactual for another, especially in a causal inference setting (Keele & Minozzi 2013). Nonetheless, an example is illustrative - consider Mississippi, Kentucky, and Louisiana from 1822-1843 in Figure 4.<sup>9</sup>

Whereas Kentucky entered the Union with universal male suffrage in 1792, Mississippi and Louisiana retained, economic qualifications for voting upon admission in 1812 and 1817, respectively. All three states elected the governor by 1822, with Mississippi and Kentucky

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<sup>8</sup>See Figure A5 in the appendix for the state-level electoralization trends for offices including lieutenant governors, attorneys general, secretaries of state, and treasurers.

<sup>9</sup>The dotted line in Figure 4 represents the average number of state elected offices in 19 states that did not change their suffrage requirements within a decade, before or after, Mississippi. The 19-state trend is mostly parallel to the trend in MS from 1822-1831 and 1833-1842, as we would expect if the parallel trends assumption is satisfied.

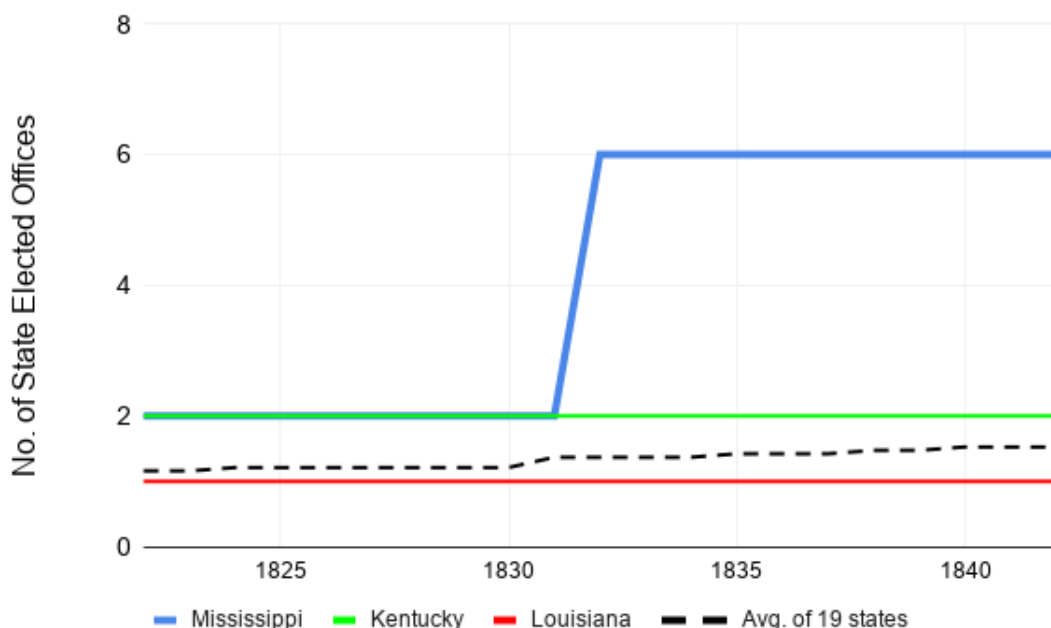


Figure 4: Elected state offices in Mississippi vs 19 other states (Miss. adopts UMS in 1832)

voters also electing the lieutenant governor. In 1832, Mississippi reformed its constitution to remove economic qualifications for voting and to make four statewide offices elective: attorney general, auditor, secretary of state, and treasurer. Louisiana and Kentucky did not change their suffrage requirements in 1832 and they did not increase the number of state elected offices. We can say that the electoralization trends in the three states were parallel throughout the 20 year period *except* in the year that Mississippi adopted universal male suffrage.

To generalize the three state comparison, I proceed as follows. For each year in which at least one state adopted UMS or WMS, I calculate the mean trend in statewide elective officers in the decade before and after for (a) all states adopting UMS/WMS; and (b) all states not adopting UMS/WMS. Figure 5 shows the difference between the trends plotted over two periods.<sup>10</sup> The parallel trends assumption would be in doubt if we observed the adopters

<sup>10</sup>I calculate the mean trend by computing the difference in the mean number of statewide elected offices in states that adopt UMS/WMS and states that do not adopt UMS/WMS (within a decade). I regress that difference in means on the year  $t$  in the intervals  $[A-10, A-1]$  and  $[A+1, A+10]$ , where  $A$  is the year of suffrage

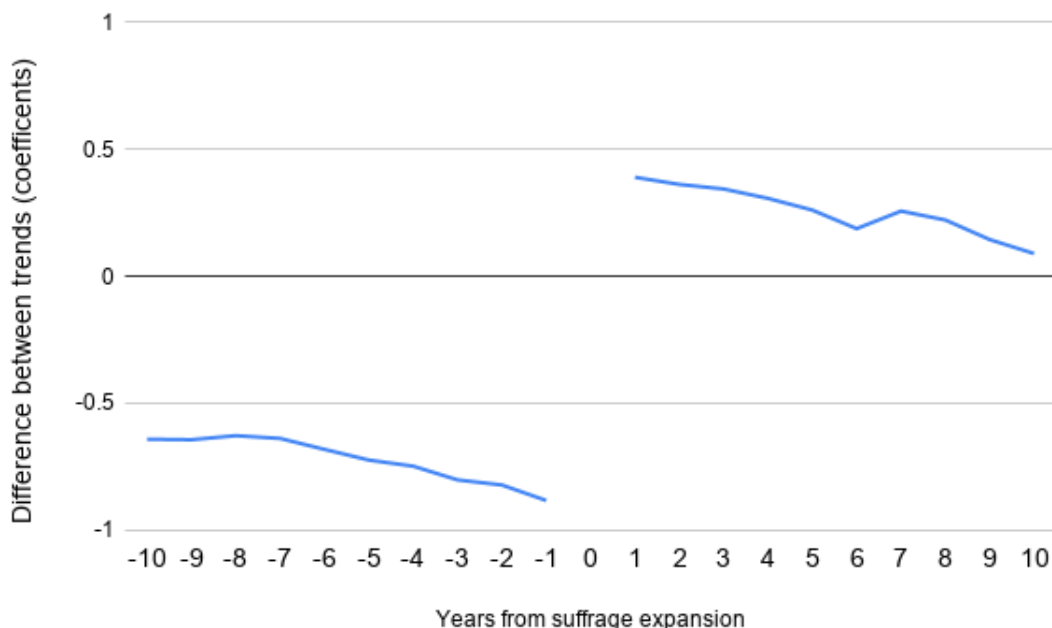


Figure 5: Difference of statewide electoralization trends in UMS/WMS adopters and non-adopters

electoralizing at a higher rate than non-adopters in the period before suffrage expansion. I find that in no case were the adopters exhibiting significantly faster electoralization trends than the non-adopters prior to suffrage expansion. Indeed, as can be seen, non-adopters were (usually insignificantly) electoralizing at a faster rate than adopters in the pre-reform periods. Therefore, the simple comparison between Mississippi, Louisiana, and Kentucky is not misleading.

I perform two additional tests to provide support for the parallel trends assumption. First, I test the robustness of the fixed effects model to the inclusion of state-specific time trends. The fixed effects model accounts for the nationwide trend over time and state-level characteristics that might affect the number of statewide elected offices, but it does not account for trends within states over time. A conventional test for the parallel trends assumption is to include state-specific time trends, by interacting the “state” and “year” variables in

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expansion and the intervals represent the decades before and after expansion. The coefficient estimates for the pre- and post-expansion periods are -0.028 and -0.031, respectively. Neither estimate is statistically significant at conventional levels ( $\alpha \leq 0.10$ ).

the fixed effects model, and to observe the change in size, direction, and significance of the main coefficient estimate. If the inclusion of state-specific time trends reduces the size of the estimate or increases the p-value above conventional levels (e.g. above 0.05), then the parallel trends assumption is cast into doubt. In this case, I find that state-specific time trends have virtually no effect on the estimates and standard errors from the fixed effects model.

Second, I test the robustness of the main results to the inclusion of lead variables for suffrage. The lead variable takes the value 0 or 1 depending on the size of the lead and the value of the main explanatory variable. For example, a lead of 2 years will produce a value of 1 for the lead variable in time  $t$  in state  $k$  if the value of the explanatory variable is equal to 1 in time  $t+2$  in state  $k$ . The parallel trend assumption may not hold if the inclusion of lead variables reduces the size or significance of the main (non-lead) coefficient estimate. I estimate the fixed effects model with leads of varying length, from 1 year to 10 years, and find support for the parallel trends assumption. The precision of the model is unchanged, and the size of the effect itself actually increased: the addition of a 1 year lead increased the main coefficient estimate by 57%.<sup>11</sup>

## Confounding variables

Even if pre-treatment trends are parallel, however, it remains possible that the confounders change just when treatment is applied. In this case, some factor that causes both suffrage expansion and electoralization might have (i) varied little across states in the pre-treatment period; and then (ii) surged in a particular state-year, causing the affected state to expand the suffrage and electoralize.

What might such confounding factors have been? Although I cannot consider all possibilities, I can consider the main factors that the previous literature suggests. In particular, one might think that one of the following factors pushed simultaneously for suffrage expansion

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<sup>11</sup>In the model with a 1 year lead, the estimate for the effect of suffrage increased from 0.97 to 1.52. In the model with a 10 year lead, the estimate increased by 37%.

and electoralization: the populists, the frontier, or matching incentives.

In the case of the populist reformers in the Age of Jackson, they consistently pushed for suffrage expansion. However, as already noted in chapter 1, they did not consistently promote electoralization. In order to control for the possibility that a Jacksonian populist surge was pushing simultaneously for suffrage expansion and electoralization, I substitute the share of white males voting in federal elections for the binary measure of suffrage expansion in a section below.

Suppose Frederick Jackson Turner was correct about the democratizing affect of the American frontier, and that the frontier states' demand for labor drove them both to expand suffrage and to electoralize. My main analysis already controls for the frontier thesis in two ways. First, by including state fixed effects in the specification, I am able to control for each state's 'frontierness as of 1800'. That said, if demand for labor is the key variable, then this could well have varied across both states and years. How to address this threat? First, it seems unlikely that demand for labor would change sharply from year to year in a given state. So, again, state fixed effects might partly address the problem. Second, if a state that expands statewide suffrage simultaneously allows a suffrage gap to continue, or increases such a gap, then that would cast doubt on a labor demand story. I provide evidence on this score in a later chapter.

With regards to the matching theory, Wallis' (2000) argument is that the incentive to match services to taxes was fairly consistent across the states at any given time. The year fixed effects in the difference-in-difference approach described above accounts for any changes over time in the incentives to match services to taxes.

Although I cannot definitively prove that the parallel trends assumption is met and all confounding variables are accounted for, I show that the main results of the fixed effects model are robust to the inclusion of state-specific time trends and lead variables. The comparison between Mississippi, Kentucky, and Louisiana in Figure 4 is illustrative and together with the statistical tests suggests that the difference-in-difference method is appropriate for

this project.

## **Is the treatment *exogenous*?**

Researchers across multiple disciplines employ the difference-in-difference method to estimate the impact of state policy changes on a variety of social outcomes, notably health and socio-economic outcomes (Betrand, Duffo, and Mullainathan 2004, Zeldow and Hatfield 2019). A key assumption that undergirds this method is that policy interventions, be it a new social program or suffrage expansion, are random conditional on time and group fixed effects. In this case, we need to assume that two states that had not yet adopted UMS by year  $t-1$  had probabilities of adopting it in year  $t$  that depended only on their respective time-invariant features (i.e., the state fixed effects) and the year effect for year  $t$ . If instead some variables existed that (i) varied across time; (ii) varied across states; and (iii) influenced the adoption of UMS, then the difference-in-difference estimates can suffer from omitted variable bias – if these variables also caused electoralization. My assumption will be that pressure for UMS was fairly homogeneous across all the states in a given year (i.e. a zeitgeist effect), with some adjustment for each state’s durable characteristics (such as frontiership). In other words, my assumption is that suffrage expansions were largely random conditional on time and group fixed effects.

## **Robustness Checks**

I include three robustness checks in the appendix. First, we might expect that states will not increase the number of elected offices simultaneously with the onset of universal male suffrage, but rather that elites will anticipate suffrage expansion and take steps to change institutions beforehand. In the case of a difference-in-difference analysis, we might expect that the size of the coefficient estimate will vary with distance from the discontinuity (i.e. the onset of UMS). However, we should expect the estimate size to be close to the “year zero” estimate

before the discontinuity if state political elites anticipated the rise of universal suffrage. On the other hand, we should expect the estimate size to decrease after the discontinuity if my argument about the timing of electoralization and suffrage expansion holds water - we would not expect states to increase elected offices after the onset of UMS.

Figure A1 shows the coefficient estimates for model 2 that result when we shift the independent variable by 10 years before or after the onset of universal suffrage. This technique allows us to test the sensitivity of the results to changes in the timing of the intervention, and helps account for *anticipation effects* - political elites might have foreseen the coming onset of UMS and increased the number of offices beforehand.<sup>12</sup> The results are consistent with our expectations based on my argument: the estimate size is increasing before the discontinuity and declines steadily afterward.

Second, we might be concerned about autocorrelation when we use time series data like state-year counts. To address the concern about correlation overtime, I employ a method proposed by Bertrand, Duflo, and Mullainathan (2004) to ignore the time series information and collapse the data into two periods: before and after suffrage expansion.<sup>13</sup> Using the state-year data from the main analysis, I regress the number of state elected offices on a dummy variable for universal male suffrage, and fixed effects for state and year. I then separate the residuals from the OLS regression into pre-expansion and post-expansion periods. Finally, I regress the mean residuals on a dummy for the post-expansion period. The coefficient is positive and statistically significant, suggesting that residuals in the previous year  $t-1$  are correlated with the residual in year  $t$ . Although the aggregation method is superior to clustering standard errors at the state-level, both methods do not perform well when the number of treated cases is small. Bertrand, Duflo, and Mullainathan (2004) suggest that

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<sup>12</sup>See Autor et al 2006 for an example of this statistical strategy.

<sup>13</sup>The simplest form of this method is used in cases where the treatment, such as a change in state law, is applied to all cases at the same time. If all states had adopted universal male suffrage in the same year, we could simply collapse the electoralization data by calculating the average number of state elected offices in the two periods - before and after UMS - and regress the two period panel on a dummy variable for the post-expansion period. Given that states implemented these reforms at varying points between 1776 and 1900, we must use more sophisticated methods (Zeldow and Hatfield 2019).

10-20 states may be too low, where just 17 states in my analysis receive the treatment.<sup>14</sup>

Third, I consider an alternate measure of the dependent variable using data on partial suffrage expansions that fell short of universal suffrage. My theory says that incumbent elites felt threatened by the prospect of greater mass participation in elections, and that those fears were relevant in states that expanded suffrage partially or fully. Partial reforms included creating taxpaying requirements in the place of property-holding requirements, or an equivalent lower economic barrier to voting. We can think of these reforms as WMS - wide male suffrage. Table 2 shows test of increase in state offices associated with wide suffrage expansion using the same models above. The WMS results are consistent with the UMS results: suffrage expansion is associated with an additional 1 to 3 elected state offices.<sup>15</sup>

Table 2: The number of elective state offices and partial suffrage expansion, 1776-1900

DV=No. of elected state offices	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Wide Suffrage	3.059*** (0.102)	0.943*** (0.113)	3.763*** (0.112)	0.883*** (0.111)	3.148*** (0.174)	0.667*** (0.141)
Intercept	0.516*** (0.086)	0.857* (0.431)	0.516*** (0.100)	0.666 (0.446)	1.347*** (0.166)	0.638 (1.396)
Year Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	2304	2304	3374	3374	2826	2826
$R^2$	0.281	0.723	0.250	0.785	0.103	0.775
adj $R^2$	0.280	0.704	0.250	0.773	0.103	0.761

\* $p \leq 0.05$ \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$

The variable “suffrage expansion” includes partial expansions, such as dropping a property-holding requirement while keeping a taxpaying requirement. Models 1 and 2 include only the states admitted before 1817 (the year when all subsequent states entered with universal male suffrage). Models 3 and 4 include all states from 1776 to 1900. Models 5 and 6 exclude state-years with no elected state officers (i.e. before the governor was elected).

<sup>14</sup>The literature on policy diffusion suggests that the collapsed data approach is more appropriate than clustering standard errors for addressing concerns about autocorrelation. Nonetheless, I cluster the standard errors at the state-level in the six basic models as an additional test of the autocorrelation threat. The results, shown in table A3 in the appendix, show mixed support for my theory. Although the base models without state and year fixed effects are robust, the other models are no longer statistically significant at conventional levels. No matter the method of correcting for autocorrelation, there are concerns in this case about the low number of states being treated (17).

<sup>15</sup>see Figure A3 in the appendix for the trend over time in the state admitted before 1817.



## Alternate measure of suffrage: Percentage of White Males Voting

Finally, I conduct an additional test using a third measure of suffrage expansion: the percentage of white males voting (PWV) in presidential elections from 1824-1844 in 23 states. According to my theory, elites felt threatened by the the changing composition of the electorate that resulted from poor white men gaining the franchise. To this point, I have focused on *de jure* reforms that increased the pool of eligible voters in state elections, although the effect size of each state's reform is unclear. My theory would predict that the threat to elites posed by mass voting would have been in the presence of *de facto* growth in electoral participation. As the percent of adult white males voting in the presidential election increased, elites might have observed or feared an analogous growth in voting for the statewide offices that controlled the appointment of local offices. In this scenario, we expect states will expand the number of state and local elected offices.

The PWV data between 1824 and 1844 reveal a general increase in participation over time in the 23 states admitted by 1820, although there is considerable variation within and between states. Table 3 presents the results of a bi-variate regression and difference-in-difference test, similar to table 1. An increase in the percent of white men voting is associated with a positive and statistically significant increase in the average number of elected state offices, however the effect size is quite small. Across six models, a 10% increase in voter participation was associated with an increase of just 0.1 state offices on average from 1824-1844.

These results are consistent with my prediction, although it is worth noting limitations in the data. First, just three states passed new laws to expand suffrage in this time period (New York in 1826, Tennessee in 1834, and Mississippi in 1832). Despite the period's reputation as the "Age of Jackson", much of the *de jure* suffrage expansion in the U.S. took place before or after 1824-1844. Second, although a few states did electoralize in this period (e.g. Connecticut in 1831 and 1835, Georgia in 1824, Rhode Island in 1842), many others did so before 1824 or after 1844. The explanation for this difference in timing is found in my theory:

Table 3: The number of elective state offices and Percent Males Voting in Presidential elections, 1824-1844

DV=Percent of men voting	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Percent Males Voting	0.011** (0.004)	0.012* (0.005)	0.009** (0.003)	0.009* (0.004)	0.007* (0.003)	0.014*** (0.004)
(Intercept)	0.895*** (0.215)	2.758*** (0.289)	1.018*** (0.181)	0.335 (0.273)	1.406*** (0.190)	0.191 (0.243)
Year Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	375	375	459	459	386	386
$R^2$	0.027	0.723	0.020	0.720	0.014	0.775
adj $R^2$	0.025	0.691	0.018	0.691	0.012	0.747

\* $p \leq 0.05$ \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$

Models 1 and 2 include only the states admitted before 1817 (the year when all subsequent states entered with universal male suffrage). Models 3 and 4 include all states from 1776 to 1900. Models 5 and 6 exclude state-years with no elected state officers (i.e. before the governor was elected).

elites sought to increase elected offices before they lost their hold on state politics. The elite-led Federalists had withered by 1824 and the Whigs were ascendant by 1844, thus we would not expect much electoralization in that period. Indeed, movement toward electoralization was not considered in some states until the Whigs seized power in the mid-1840s-1850s and sought a bulwark against their subsequent demise.<sup>16</sup>

## Electoralization on the Frontier?

The data on elected state offices can be used to test another popular claim about democratization in the United States: Turner's frontier thesis. According to Turner, the states that gained entry to the Union during the mid-19th century led the way on several political reforms that came to define American life after spreading back east, notably suffrage expansion, voting rights for women, and direct elections. Do the data support Turner's claim? As noted above, my main analyses control for each state's frontierness as of 1800. Additionally, Figure 6 shows one simple test that suggests there is some truth to the frontier thesis. States

<sup>16</sup>The following states expanded offices during the Whig era: New Jersey (1844), Massachusetts (1855), Maryland (1851), Virginia (1851), New York (1846), Kentucky (1850), Ohio (1851), Louisiana (1852), Indiana (1851), Illinois (1854), Arkansas (1847), Michigan (1850), and Iowa (1857). The movement toward elected prosecutors and judges also occurred in this time period (Ellis 2011, Shugerman 2010).

admitted after 1800 (i.e. those west of the Appalachian mountains) tended to have a higher number of elected state offices than states admitted before 1800. Even after the original states expanded the number of elected state officials by the mid-century, they continued to lag behind the new states (approximately six officers in the old states versus eight in the new ones). The pattern is more stark when we look at county-level electoralization – frontier states entered the union with a relatively high number of elected offices and the original states consistently lagged behind (see Figure A6 for the county electoralization trends in pre- and post-1800 states).

More research is needed on this topic, but one possible explanation for the observed pattern is that frontier states tended to enter the union with universal suffrage (after 1817) and a high number of state and county elected offices because the deliberate bodies through which elites might bargain over filling public office, the territorial assemblies, lacked the capacity to centrally appoint hundreds of offices across dozens of sparsely-populated counties. Universal male suffrage did not pose a threat to incumbent elites in the territories because there largely were none. Rather, the high number of state and county offices enticed political and economic entrepreneurs to venture out West, invest capital in a fledgling county, and become their own homegrown elite with the power to influence local politics and secure allies in public office.

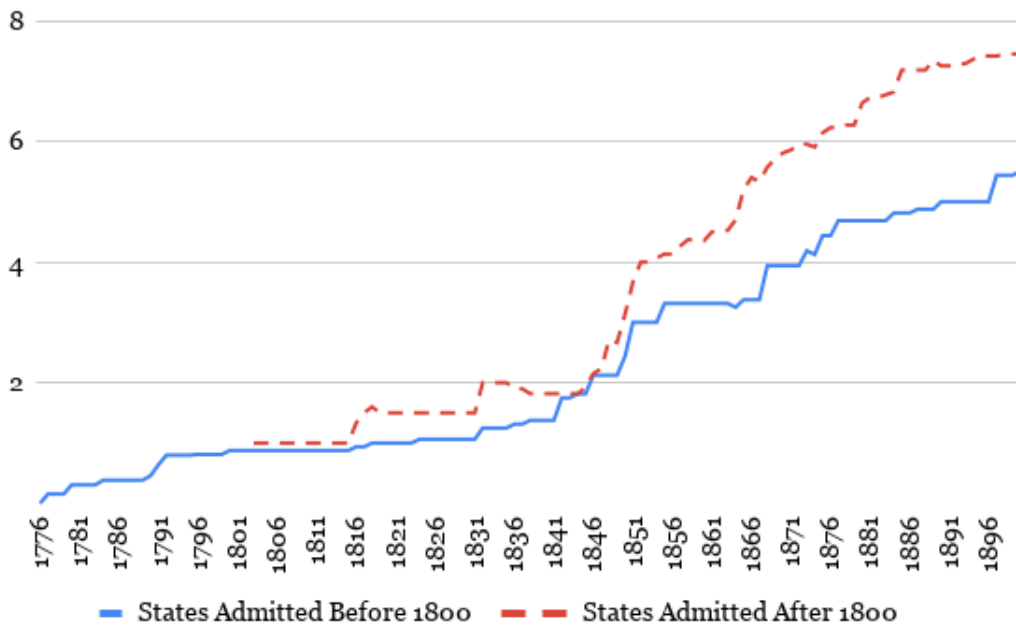


Figure 6: Average number of elective state executive officers in states admitted before and after 1800

## Conclusion

Political elites in early US states faced choices about how to design their institutions, ranging from pure parliamentarism to pure presidentialism. They settled on a range of options in between. Common to the states, however, was a slow-moving trend toward increased political participation for white males, although this wave rose and crashed in each state at different points over 75-100 years. I argue in this chapter that these impulses challenged the arrangement over filling public offices that elites had enjoyed since the founding.

American elites fearful that Jacksonian populists would overwhelm them in a winner-take-all electoral system accordingly sought to increase the number of separately elected statewide offices. By doing so, they ensured that the vote shares that they could still marshal in the newly expanded electorate could be rewarded with at least some offices.

By pairing a novel dataset documenting the timing of state-level electoralization and suffrage expansion with a difference-in-difference approach, I show that the abolition of

suffrage restrictions was associated, on average, with an increase of 1 to 3 state elected offices. The direction and significance of the results are consistent across subsets of states, including the original thirteen colonies, states admitted before 1817, and all states up to 1900.

The difference-in-difference results are also robust to a number of alternate specifications and measures of the variables of interest. I provide evidence that the parallel trends assumption is not violated, and include state fixed effects to control for time-invariant confounding variables that might have driven a state to simultaneously electoralize and expand suffrage. The direction and size of suffrage effects is similar whether I use universal male suffrage, partial male suffrage, or the percent of white males voting to measure “suffrage expansion”.

State governments in the US today feature more elected offices, on average, than subnational governments in comparable democracies. Voters in the states directly elect an assortment of offices that are non-elective elsewhere in the world: attorneys general, state auditors and comptrollers, secretaries of state, treasurers, education superintendents, and commissioners (regulators) of agriculture, insurance, labor, public utilities, state lands, and railroads. With the exception of subnational parliaments, such as the Legislative Assembly of Ontario (Canada), and the far less common chief executives, like the Governor of the State of Chihuahua (Mexico), democracies around the world do not fill subnational offices by direct election. This chapter has taken the first step in explaining how the United States became exceptional in this sense. More research is needed to explain the other side of the puzzle – why didn’t elites in other countries decentralize state power into multiple, independently elected state offices, especially in those countries with federal and presidential systems.

In the next chapter, I adopt a similar research strategy to explore electoralization at the county level, where the politics and mechanisms of elite control take a slightly different form. Whereas the division of executive power at the state-level was endorsed by elites who could form coalitions via balanced tickets and fusion politics to secure multiple statewide elected offices, at the county-level elites used different mechanisms of control. Elites were willing

to devolve state power to the local-level and create multiple elected county offices not just because they were threatened by statewide suffrage expansion, but because they also had the ability to set different qualifications for voting in local elections. Thus, incumbent elites could mitigate the impact of suffrage expansion on who held public office by maintaining or erecting new barriers to mass voting in local elections.

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## Appendix

### How often did electoralization and suffrage expansion co-occur?

When we compare the timing of electoralization and the onset of universal male suffrage, it is clear that states did not follow the same path. Among the states that did not enter the union with universal suffrage (e.g. most states admitted before 1817, none admitted after 1817), five states electoralized before suffrage expansion (Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania), eight did so concurrent with suffrage expansion (New Hampshire, Mississippi, New Jersey, Louisiana, Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia, Delaware), and nine expanded elected offices after they reached universal male suffrage (Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee).

Table A1 describes the distribution of electoralization in time around suffrage expansion. The table shows the composition of the 2001 state-years between 1776 and 1990 for the 17 states admitted before 1817 (i.e. those states that ultimately adopted universal male suffrage). In the decade before and after suffrage expansion in each state (349 state-years), the number of elected offices increased in 19 state-years (nearly 6%). The number of elected state or county offices also increased in 32 of the 1652 state-years that fell more than a decade away from suffrage expansion (nearly 2% of such cases). A significant proportion of the electoralization that took place in the 18th and 19th centuries, 37% of state-years (19/51), occurred within a decade of the onset of universal male suffrage. A simple t-test shows that the difference of means within a decade of UMS and outside a decade of US is statistically significant at the 95% level.

Table A1: The change in state or county offices around the time of suffrage expansion (pre-1817 states)

Decade before or after UMS?	Increase in state or county offices	
	Yes	0.054
No	0.019	(32/1652)

Note: The two-tailed p value equals 0.0002. The 17 states in the dataset were admitted before 1817 (when all subsequent states had universal male suffrage). I use the date of universal male suffrage in each state, except PA and RI, for which I use another major suffrage expansion (dropping property-holding requirement).

## Endogeneity and Instrumental Variable Estimation

A number of scholars use instrumental variables based on spatial variables, namely country or region averages, to address concerns about endogeneity.<sup>17</sup> A plausible spatial instrument in this project might be the percent of states that have adopted universal male suffrage. In order to be valid, an instrument must i) predict the endogenous regressor; and ii) satisfy the exclusion restriction – the instrumental variable only affects the outcome variable through the instrument’s influence on the treatment variable. As a first plausibility test, I regress the number of elected state offices on the instrument. The coefficient is positive and statistically significant – between 1776 and 1900, the percent of states with UMS varies from 0% to 97.7% and a 20 point increase is associated with approximately one additional elected state office. The coefficient from an OLS regression of the endogenous regressor (the binary measure of UMS in a given state-year  $kt$ ) on the instrument is positive and statistically significant, whether I use all states or only the treated states (those admitted before 1817).<sup>18</sup>

Does the percent of states with UMS satisfy the exclusion restriction? Start by considering what would need to be true if the instrument did not violate the exclusion restriction - the percent of states with UMS in a given year  $t$  would not have had a direct impact on the number of elected state offices in the states without UMS. This is plausible because elite control over public offices was still guarded by economic qualifications to vote.

It is possible that the strong assumption about treatment exogeneity fails to hold *and*

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<sup>17</sup>See Betz et al 2018 for a review. A few prominent studies relevant to this project include Boix 2011 and Acemoglu et al 2008.

<sup>18</sup>The correlation between the state-year measures of UMS and the percent of states with UMS is 0.62 for all states and 0.55 for pre-1817 admissions.

the instrument fails to satisfy the exclusion restriction if elites in non-UMS states believe that reforms in other states impact the likelihood of future reforms in their state (or if those beliefs precipitate actions that make it so). Along these lines, one way in which the exclusion restriction might be violated is through spillover effects (Betz et al 2018). Imagine that the incumbent elites in non-UMS states observe the percent of states with universal suffrage and conclude that suffrage expansion in their own state is inevitable and on the horizon. The non-UMS states might start to electoralize before the onset of UMS in order to i) set-up the post-expansion institutions to their advantage in a less publicly visible, and risky, setting than a constitutional convention, or ii) put loyal incumbents into public office that will buttress government against the worst impulses of the newly enfranchised in the first few years after reform.<sup>19</sup> Figure A1 shows the estimated effect of suffrage expansion using lags and leads up to 10 years, and the pattern suggests that states might have anticipated suffrage expansion and electoralized early, but the effect is strongest in the actual year of suffrage expansion.

Based on these concerns about the spatial instrument satisfying the exclusion restriction, and other concerns about spatial instruments in general, I conclude that the percent of states with UMS is unlikely to be a valid instrumental variable.

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<sup>19</sup>Economic qualifications to *hold* office served a similar buffering function (Corvalan et al 2016).

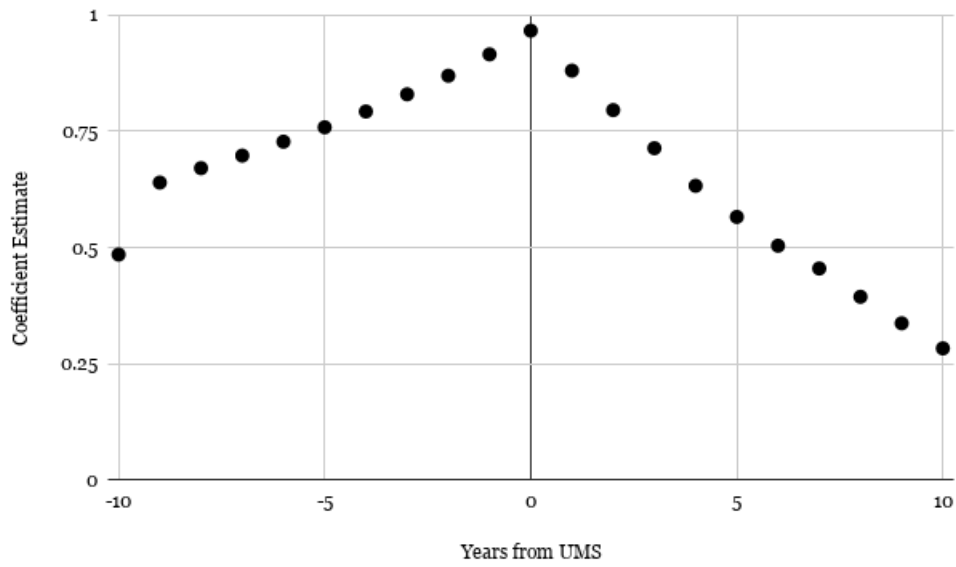


Figure A1: Effect Size of Universal Suffrage on No. of Elected State Offices (+/- 10 years; pre-1817 states)

## Additional Tables and Figures

Table A2: Timing of Universal suffrage and electoralization, 1776-1900

States	Year of Statehood	Year of UMS	Date(s) of increase in no. of elected state offices	Date(s) of increase in no. of elected county offices
<b>Delaware</b>	1787	1897	1792, 1897	1792, 1891, 1897
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	1787	1933	1790, 1873	1838, 1850, 1873
<b>New Jersey</b>	1787	1844	1844	1844
<b>Georgia</b>	1788	1798	1824, 1877,	1855, 1872, 1873
<b>Connecticut</b>	1788	1845	1817, 1831, 1835, 1896	1833, 1838
<b>Massachusetts</b>	1788	1891	1855	1855
<b>Maryland</b>	1788	1801	1838, 1851	1851, 1867
<b>South Carolina</b>	1788	1810	1865, 1868, 1875,	1808, 1868
<b>New Hampshire</b>	1788	1792	1784, 1792	1876. 1877
<b>Virginia</b>	1788	1851	1816, 1851	1851, 1857, 1870
<b>New York</b>	1788	1826	1846	1821, 1846
<b>North Carolina</b>	1789	1868	1868, 1887, 1900	1868. 1877
<b>Rhode Island</b>	1790	1888	1842	None
<b>Vermont</b>	1791	1791	1884	—
<b>Kentucky</b>	1792	1792	1850, 1890	1796, 1850, 1890
<b>Tennessee</b>	1796	1834	1897	—
<b>Ohio</b>	1803	1851	1851, 1852	1821, 1833, 1851
<b>Louisiana</b>	1812	1845	1845, 1852, 1868, 1898	1845, 1850
<b>Indiana</b>	1816	1816	1840, 1851, 1855	1840, 1843, 1851, 1899
<b>Mississippi</b>	1817	1832	1832, 1884, 1890, 1895	1832, 1868
Illinois	1818	1818	1848, 1854, 1870	1826, 1870
Alabama	1819	1819	1865, 1868, 1875, 1881	1827, 1868, 1875,
Maine	1820	1820	None	—
Missouri	1821	1821	1865	—
Arkansas	1836	1836	1847, 1865, 1868	1838, 1847, 1868, 1874
Michigan	1837	1837	1850	—
Florida	1845	1838	1868, 1885	1868, 1885
Texas	1845	1845	1866, 1869, 1894	1850, 1876
Iowa	1846	1846	1857, 1878	1848, 1873
Wisconsin	1848	1848	1881	1849, 1858, 1869
California	1850	1850	1880	1851, 1865, 1880,
Minnesota	1858	1858	None	—
Oregon	1859	1859	1872, 1892	—
Kansas	1861	1861	1871, 1883	1868
West Virginia	1863	1863	1872	None
Nevada	1864	1864	1870	—
Nebraska	1867	1867	1875, 1885	—
Colorado	1876	1876	None	None
North Dakota	1889	1889	None	—
South Dakota	1889	1889	None	—
Montana	1889	1889	None	—
Washington	1889	1889	None	—
Idaho	1890	1890	1894	1894
Wyoming	1890	1890	None	None
Utah	1896	1896	None	—

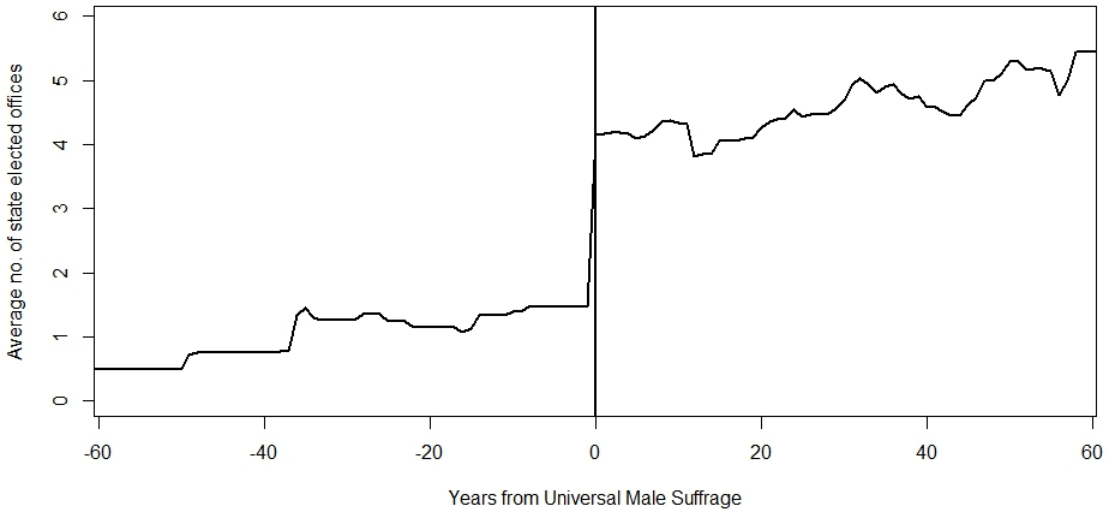


Figure A2: Average number of state elected offices before and after universal suffrage expansion (all states 1776-1900)

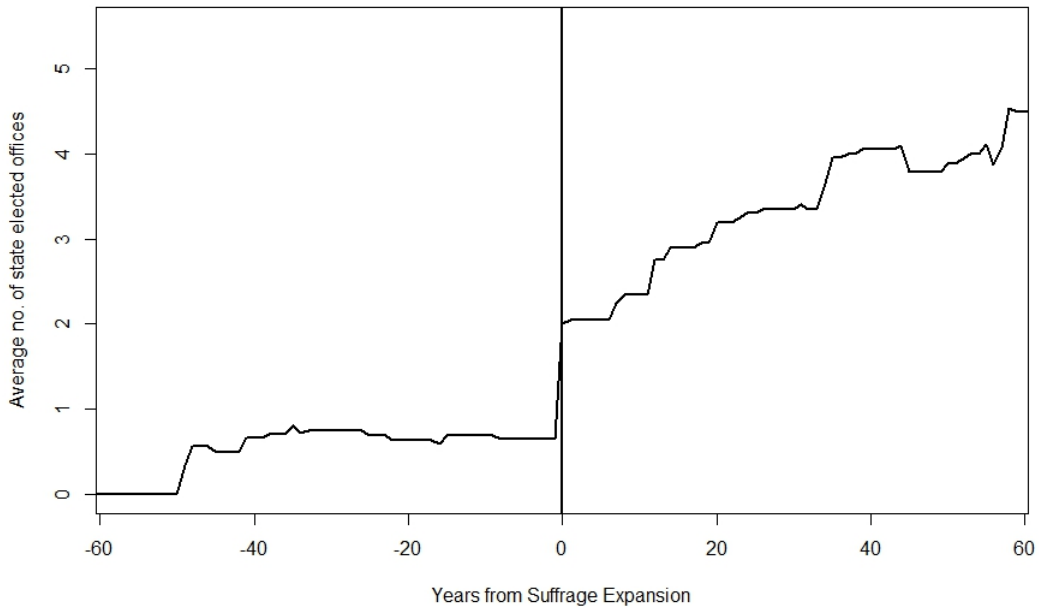


Figure A3: Average number of state elected offices before and after partial suffrage expansion in pre-1817 states

Table A3: Clustered Standard Errors - The number of elective state offices and suffrage expansion, 1776-1900

DV=No. of elected state offices	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Universal Suffrage	2.56***	0.97	3.25***	0.85	2.61***	0.82
	(0.528)	(0.106)	(0.736)	(0.691)	(0.554)	(0.688)
(Intercept)	1.29**	0.859	1.29**	0.44	2.17**	0.57*
	(0.331)	(0.281)	(0.326)	(0.450)	(0.446)	(0.204)
Year Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
State Fixed Effects	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
N	2304	2304	3374	3374	2826	2826
$R^2$	0.226	0.726	0.279	0.786	0.192	0.780
adj $R^2$	0.225	0.707	0.279	0.774	0.192	0.766

\* $p \leq 0.05$ \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ \*\*\* $p \leq 0.001$

Standard errors are clustered by state in all models. Models 1 and 2 include only the states admitted before 1817 (the year when all subsequent states entered with universal male suffrage). Models 3 and 4 include all states from 1776 to 1900. Models 5 and 6 exclude state-years with no elected state officers (i.e. before the governor was elected).



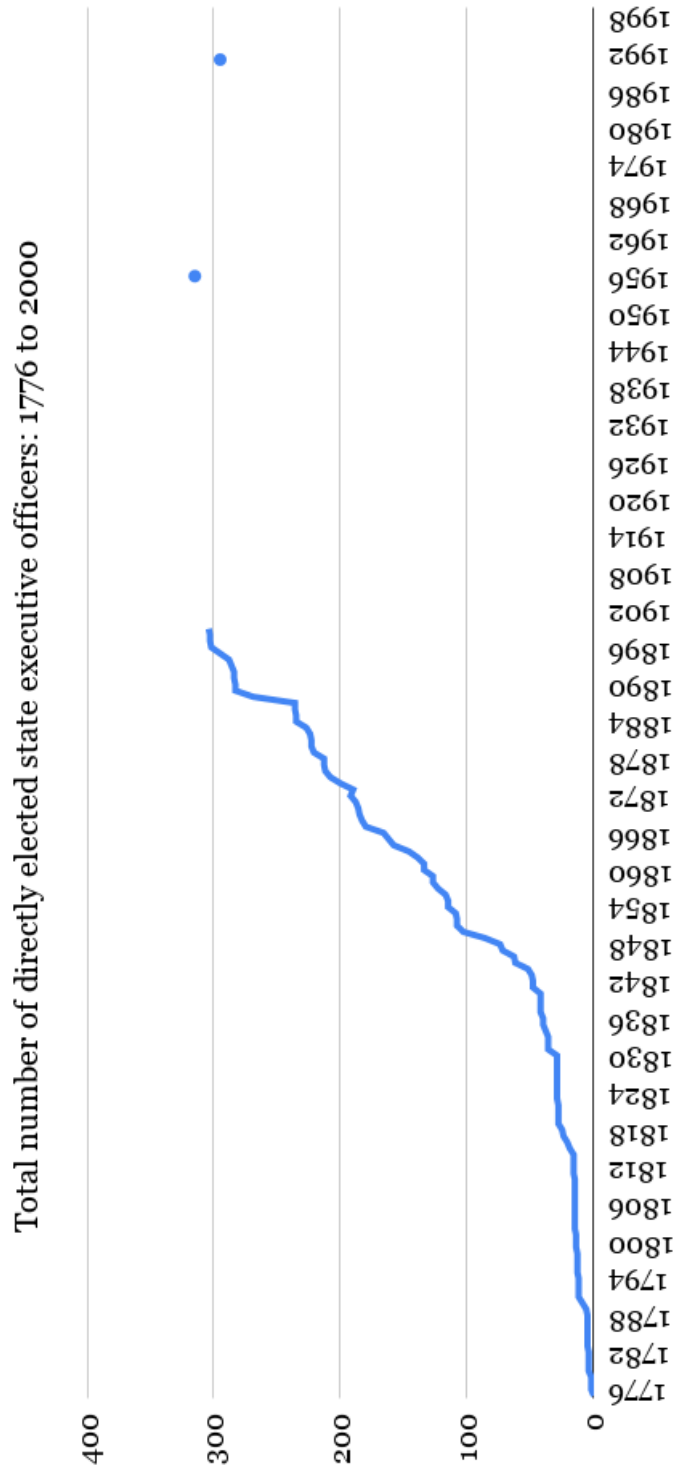


Figure A4: Total number of directly elected state executive officers: 1776 to 2000

Proportion of states with statewide elected offices, 1776-1912

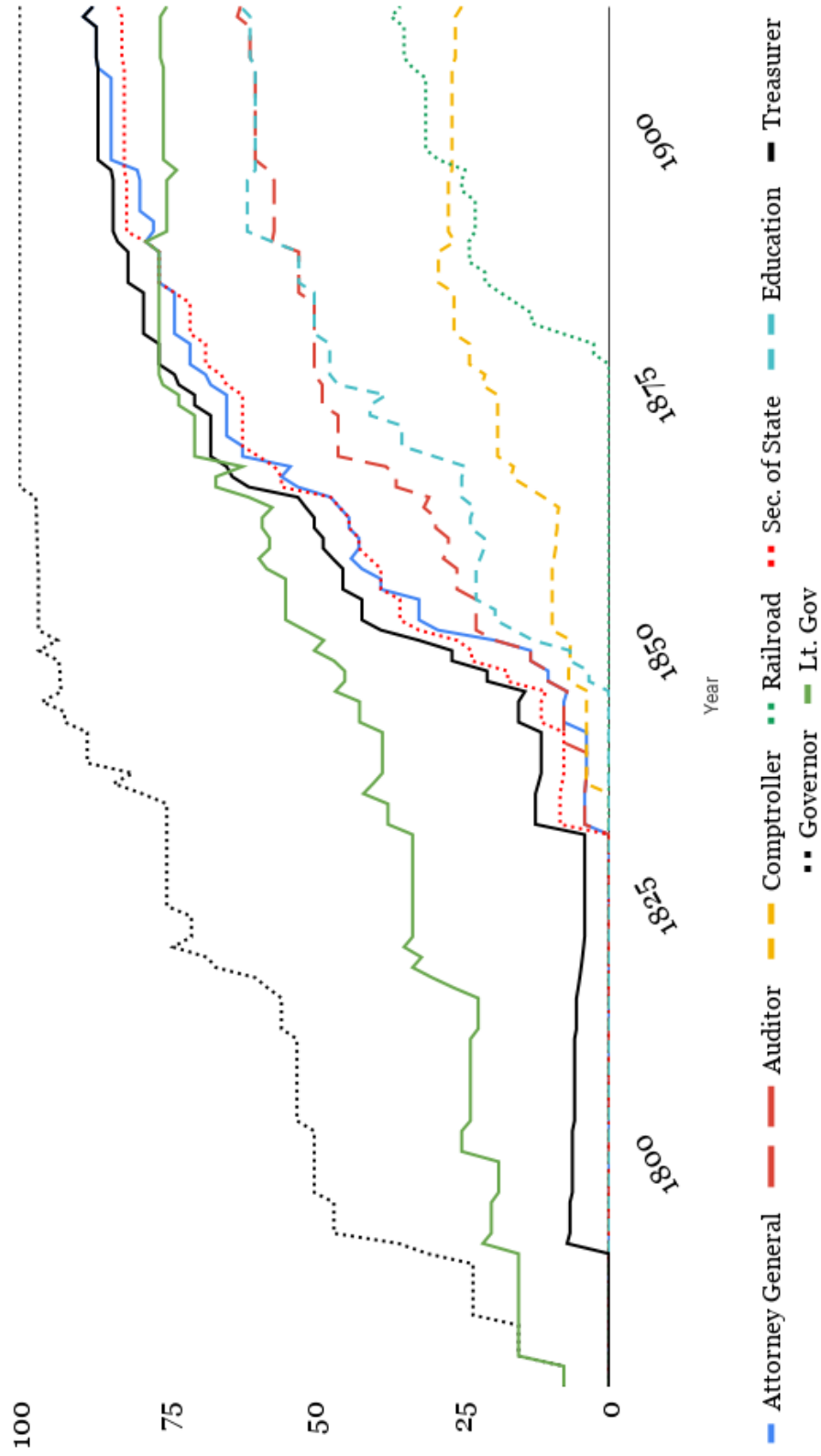


Figure A5: Proportion of states that elect each type of statewide office.

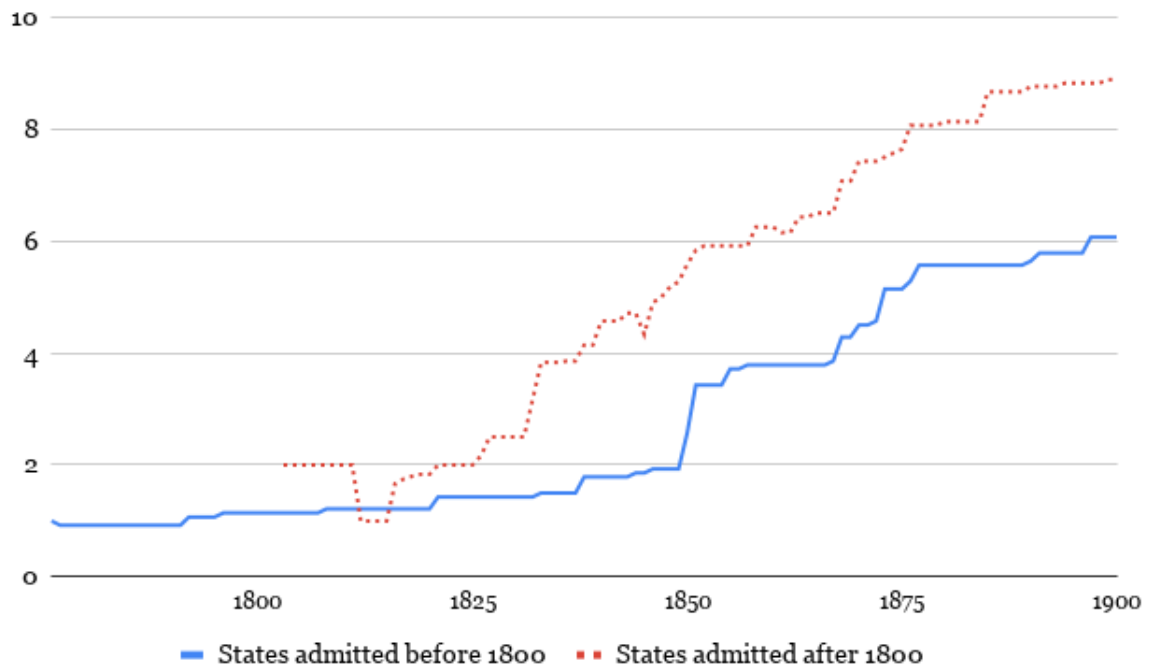


Figure A6: Average number of elective county executive officers in states admitted before and after 1800