

Democratization in the USA? The Impact of Antebellum Suffrage Qualifications on Politics and Policy

DAVID A. BATEMAN

Did the first wave of democratization in America—the removal of property and taxpaying qualifications for free adult men—produce consequential changes in representation and policy? This paper leverages unique features of electoral institutions in particular states to empirically identify the impact of reform on enfranchisement rates, turnout, patterns of representation, and policy outcomes. I draw extensively on a uniquely comprehensive dataset of suffrage qualifications—corrected for common miscodings—and on both newly collected as well as currently underused data on state electoral results and legislative behavior, supplemented with more familiar data on federal politics. I find that there was a sizeable body of adult free men disenfranchised by restrictive property qualifications, the abolition of which had a significant but modest effect on turnout. The impact on patterns of representation and policy outcomes, however, was even more modest, and the null hypothesis cannot be confidently rejected for the entire US. I provide evidence that this attenuation of an effect in representation and policy outcomes was the result of a high degree of preference similarity between free adult men disenfranchised and enfranchised by restrictive qualifications.

INTRODUCTION

Was the first wave of democratization in America—the removal of property and taxpaying qualifications for free adult men—politically consequential? Historians associated with the “progressive school” argued that these qualifications disenfranchised a majority of free men in the early Republic, and they attributed the later upsurge in political participation and flourishing of policy reform associated with the age of “Jacksonian Democracy” to their removal (Becker 1920, 35-36; Schlesinger 1922, 74). As a stylized fact, this story continues to underpin many theories and characterizations of American political development, despite decades of revisionist critiques and the absence of a consistent empirical foundation connecting democratizing reforms to increased turnout and policy outcomes.

I provide descriptive empirical estimates of the magnitude of disenfranchisement as well as causal estimates of the impact that expanding the right to vote had on turnout—the number of votes cast or

David Bateman is an associate professor in the Government Department, Cornell University, 14853 Cornell University. (dab465@cornell.edu)

the proportion of free adult men who voted—on substantive patterns of representation and on public policy outcomes. I draw extensively on a uniquely comprehensive dataset of suffrage qualifications, corrected for common miscodings, and on both newly collected as well as currently underused data on state electoral results and legislative behavior. I supplement this with more familiar data on federal politics. Causal identification for different categories of reforms is achieved by leveraging institutional rules in a few states that required simultaneous elections to be held under different qualifications. More generalized estimates are then calibrated against these baselines. Because the most important estimates are derived from examining the same electoral district at the same time, but operating under two different suffrage regimes, the analysis can accommodate some of the pervasive empirical difficulties of studying franchise reforms, including heterogeneity in the size of the treatment, the endogenous relationship between party organization, suffrage reform, and changes in politics and policy, and covariation in franchise institutions and structural features of states economies and settlement patterns (Engerman and Sokoloff 2005).

The paper helps expand and refine recent comparative and cross-national analyses of suffrage expansions (Corder and Wolbrecht 2016; Morgan-Collins 2016; Scheve and Stasavage 2012; Berlinski and Dewan 2011; Miller 2008; Aidt et al. 2006). These studies have tended to find mixed results, presenting a puzzling disconnect between theories of suffrage reform premised upon actors' expectation that reform will be consequential, and empirical analyses of its effects (see also Acemoglu and Robinson 2008). I offer an integrated explanation for why suffrage reforms might not produce corresponding changes in politics and policy, highlighting three stages in the representational process at which a causal connection might break down. First, the preferences of new voters might be sufficiently similar to those of the existing electorate so as to leave the median voter or public opinion to which elected officials are responsive largely unchanged. Similarly, the number of persons enfranchised, their relative propensity to vote, or their uneven distribution across districts might attenuate the impact of a reform on district-level electoral outcomes. Finally, any changes in electorate preferences and electoral outcomes might not meaningfully change the set of policies that can be enacted. I study the impact of franchise reform at each step in this process.

Contrary to some recent historical accounts (Ratcliffe 2013), I find that there was a sizeable body

of adult free men disenfranchised by property qualifications, the abolition of which had a significant but ultimately modest effect on the size of the actual electorate that turned out and cast a vote. The causal impact of enfranchisement on patterns of representation and policy outcomes, however, was considerably attenuated, and the possibility that corresponding differences and changes in policy and politics were not consequences of franchise reform cannot be confidently rejected. While divided lawmaking institutions and party control over the legislative agenda likely contributed to the attenuation of suffrage expansion's effects on policy, I also provide evidence that, in party choice at least, the preferences of free adult men who were disenfranchised by property qualifications were only marginally different from those who were included.

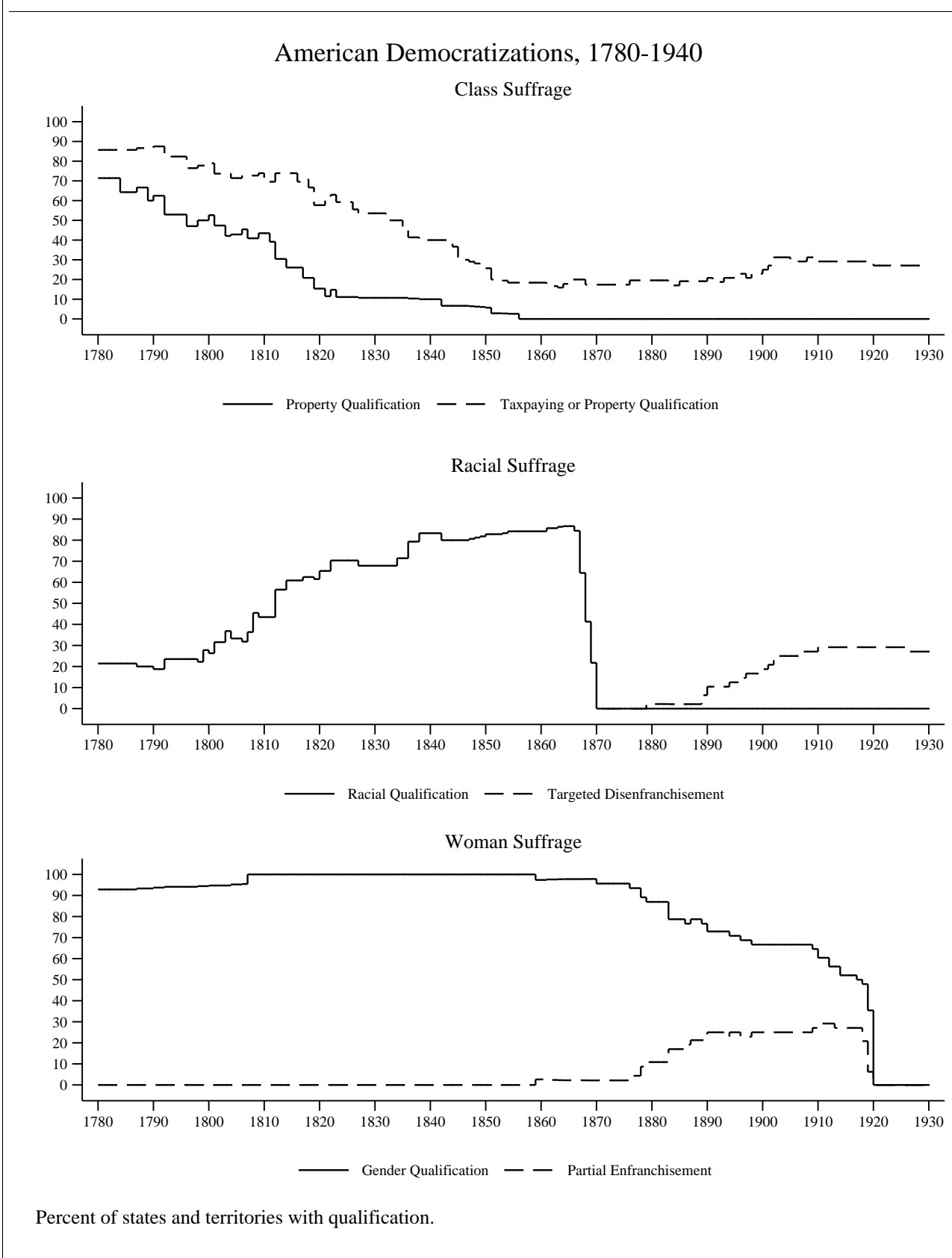
DEMOCRATIZATIONS IN AMERICA

The United States has experienced several waves of democratization and de-democratization, as the criteria required for casting a vote in elections to public office has been revised to include or exclude particular categories of persons (Keyssar 2001). Figure 1 traces the proportion of states and territories that restricted the right to vote by conditioning it on four distinct types of criteria: the ownership of property or payment of taxes or being ascribed the civic and social status of “white” or “male.”¹ The proportion of states restricting the vote through the first two criteria—ownership of a specified amount of property or payment of specified taxes—gradually declined until the end of Reconstruction, after which it increased modestly both in and outside of the South. An explicit racial criteria, by contrast, became increasingly common over the course of the antebellum era, only to be superseded and prohibited by the Reconstruction Acts and the 15th Amendment (Bateman 2018). Three decades later, a new wave of voter restrictions based on property ownership, literacy, or payment of taxes—most of which explicitly targeted black southerners—were enacted by state legislatures and constitutional conventions (Kousser 1974; Valelly 2004).

The deliberate omission of a gender criteria in New Jersey meant that women with an independent

¹Other common qualifications were that the voter be a citizen, that they have resided in the state and legislative district for a varying length of time, that they not be a pauper, that they not be in the service of the US military, and that they not have been convicted of particular classes of felonies.

FIGURE 1. Waves of American Democratization



legal status, white and black, could and did vote for state and federal office. A reform of the state's fraud-prone property qualification, however, provided legislators with an opportunity to disenfranchise women along with aliens and non-whites in 1807 (Lewis 2010; Klinghoffer and Elkins 1992). No state or territory would enfranchise women for territorial, state, or national elections until Wyoming did so in 1869, and it would take more than half a century of organized activism before a gender criteria for voting was made unconstitutional (McConaughy 2013; Teele 2018). In terms of numbers, the 19th Amendment and the reforms that preceded it constitute by far the largest wave of enfranchisement in American history.

There is no little doubt that the enfranchisement of African Americans, while lasting in full only one generation in the South, was immensely consequential, reshaping national and regional politics, transforming southern state policies for decades, and ultimately securing one of the largest redistributions of property in human history, emancipation (Valelly 2016; Chacón and Jensen 2020). There is debate about the impact of votes for women, but most evidence suggests that it was consequential as well, albeit more so in policy outputs than in advantaging one party or ideological persuasion over the other (Corder and Wolbrecht 2016; Lott and Kenny 1999; Andersen 1996).

The impact of the antebellum removal of property and taxpaying qualifications is less certain (Ratcliffe 2013; Keyssar 2001, 42). Many accounts of policy and political change in the early Republic attribute considerable importance to their abolition, seeing in this the cause for the dramatic expansion of the electorate evidenced in prominent data sources and credited with dramatic changes to American politics during this era, including the late-Federalists' "revolution in American conservatism" and the broader rise of populist politics that began in the 1820s, including the organization of the Anti-Masons, public support for the Jacksonian campaign, opposition to finance and the Second Bank, popular support for intensified Indian dispossession, and altered political calculations that changed the institutional character of the presidency, among others (Formisano 2008, 142; Skeen 1986, 255; Fischer 1965; Haines and Sherwood 1957, 4).

The magnitude of disenfranchisement caused by these qualifications, and by implication the consequences of their abolition for politics and policy, has been a longstanding source of debate. While "progressive historians" such as Carl Becker and Arthur Schlesinger argued that a majority of

free American men had been disenfranchised before the Revolution, decades of revisionist studies have found that colonial-era property qualifications “did little to prevent the exercise of the suffrage franchise by almost any member of the adult male population” (Pole 1957, 561; Pole 1962; McCormick 1953). Relying on empirical evaluations of probate records, tax lists, and voting patterns, these historians argued first that a large majority of white men had the right to vote before the vote before the Revolution (Sydnor 1952; Brown 1952, 1955; Brown and Brown 1964),² and second that almost none of them exercised it (Beeman 2005, 35). The newly republican states of the revolutionary era generally liberalized the franchise, and so the size of the excluded free male population in after 1783 would have been reduced even further. The most recent historical summary of the literature endorses this perspective, arguing that historical accounts that build their interpretations around the assumption that a sizeable portion of adult free men were disenfranchised before the “age of Jackson” will be fundamentally misleading, because “the right to vote had always been extraordinarily widespread—at least among adult white males—even before the country gained its independence” (Ratcliffe 2013, 220).

An accurate description of the magnitude of disenfranchisement matters for how we characterize the role of suffrage expansion in the subsequent transformations of the American political order and for our theoretical accounts of its occurrence. While political scientists generally hold that the driving force in suffrage reform in the United States was the efforts of political parties to secure a competitive advantage in elections (Valelly 2016; Schattschneider 1948), a number of historians have suggested that the vote was expanded more out of convenience than anything else: with the vast majority of adult free men already exercising the vote, the administratively burdensome and fraud-prone property qualifications were more of a hassle than they were worth, while taxpaying qualifications constrained the ability of policymakers to alter the tax system without also disenfranchising a portion of their constituency (Ratcliffe 2013, 242; Keyssar 2001, 41-42).

A study of the United States, however, also provides an opportunity to further our understanding of suffrage reforms more broadly. A baseline premise in the suffrage expansion literature is that the

²Many of these studies relied on probate records, which can be biased towards findings of high enfranchisement rates (Cary 1963, 259).

decisions of incumbent elites (and potential counter-elites) are conditioned by their expectation that changes in the composition and preferences of the electorate will impact public policy (Meltzer and Richard 1978, 1981; Aumann and Kurz 1977; Acemoglu and Robinson 2000; Lizzeri and Persico 2004; Llavador and Oxoby 2005). Empirical analyses of the consequences of suffrage reform, however, have found mixed and generally modest results, presenting a puzzling disconnect between our theorized calculations of elites and reformers and the observed results.

The United States offers the opportunity for an integrated analysis of the different stages in the political process at which a possible causal link between suffrage expansion and political or policy outcomes could be attenuated or reduced to insignificance. If the magnitude of the reforms is small or the newly enfranchised does not turnout to vote, then the reform might not result in different electoral outcomes or policy outputs. Consider contemporary felon disenfranchisement and voter identification laws. The former has led millions of American citizens to be denied voting rights, and yet its direct effect on political representation has been modest (Uggen and Manza 2002). The disenfranchising effect of voter identification laws remains a point of scholarly debate (Hajnal et al. 2017; Grimmer et al. 2018; Highton 2017), with most evidence suggesting small and potentially insignificant direct effects on the composition of the voting electorate. The core empirical difficulty in both cases is easily stated: the large number of citizens disenfranchised because of criminal convictions or potentially disenfranchised through a lack of qualifying identification are concentrated among persons with a low propensity to vote and who are not exclusively associated with a single party, even if they are disproportionately composed of social groups more likely to vote Democratic. Given the relatively small numbers of persons involved in any given district, and the complex set of factors shaping turnout and vote choice, any effect will be extremely difficult to identify empirically and might be attenuated to actual insignificance.

There are still other points in the representational process that might further attenuate any effect of suffrage reforms. The preference-formation stage is especially important: if the enfranchised and disenfranchised have broadly similar patterns of partisanship or preferences over public policy—whether because of low levels of inequality, high levels of societal consensus, or because the qualifications are unrelated to the primary determinants of political preferences within a given society—then even large

enfranchisements might not generate substantively important shifts in the median voter. Josep Colomer, for instance, has argued that the effects of suffrage extensions have often been small and temporally limited, “because most of [the newly-enfranchised] have developed similar preferences to those already existing within the incumbent electorate and eventually replicate its voting patterns” (2001, 14). John Conley and Akram Temini (2001) have similarly suggested that enfranchisements which primarily effect “affinity groups”—subsets of the population that have an affinity of interests as well as some awareness of this fact—should be more consequential than those which incorporate groups who are less strictly defined by a shared interest or firmly-held and preference-determining identity.

Finally, even if electoral reforms alter the distribution of electorate preferences this might not be sufficient to change policymakers’ decisions over policy, whether over public goods (Aumann et al. 1987) or over redistributive and distributive ones. If electoral institutions are malapportioned or policymaking is divided into multiple branches, then changes in the median voter might not produce corresponding changes in the median legislator or in the set of policies that fall outside the gridlock interval produced by divided institutions (Krehbiel 1998). Alternatively, if politicians are responsive primarily or even exclusively to the upper classes (Gilens 2012), then we might expect expansions of the electorate to have little effect on policy.

It is in part for these reasons that empirical research on the consequences of electoral reform has often produced conflicting results. Berlinski and Dewan (2011) find that partisan support was largely unaffected by the large expansion of the British electorate in 1867, while Cox and Ingram (1992) have found evidence of at-times subtle changes in political behavior following the enactment of that country’s reform acts. Researchers concerned with identifying the policy effects of democratization have found similarly divergent results (Mulligan et al. 2004; Husted and Kenny 1997). Some have found a relationship between suffrage expansion and expenditures primarily in contexts of low inequality and high educational attainment, where a broad middle class with shared interests drives the expansion of spending (Peltzman 1980, 254); others have found an effect that is delayed by several decades (Aidt et al. 2006). Comparisons across different policy areas have found that suffrage expansions do not make the use of inheritance taxes more likely (Scheve and Stasavage 2012), that initially they make the income tax less likely, an effect that is later reversed, (Aidt and Jensen 2009b), and that they increase spending

on health care (Fujiwara 2015) and tax revenues (Acemoglu et al. 2015). By contrast, inequality in representation units—rather than suffrage inequality—has been associated with long term differences in public goods provision (Beramendi and Jensen 2019).

Studies that do find a relationship between policy outcomes and democratization have tended to be those in which the magnitude of the change was substantial and the groups affected had strong intra-group affinities, or where the regime itself was transformed from autocracy to democracy, radically altering the policymaking process and the distribution of legislator preferences within it (Aidt et al. 2006; Aidt and Jensen 2009a; Lindert 2004; Kaufman and Segura-Ubiergo 2001; Brown and Hunter 1999; Naidu 2012). Even the case of women suffrage—a near doubling of the electorate along an important socio-legal marker—is characterized by mixed results, with evidence that women’s political behavior was broadly similar to that of men but also that politicians responded to the changed electorate with more social spending (Corder and Wolbrecht 2016; Miller 2008; Aidt and Dallal 2008; Lott and Kenny 1999; Husted and Kenny 1997; Lindert 1994; Andersen 1996).

Given this, we should expect the direct political and policy consequences of enfranchising adult free (usually white) men in the early Republic and antebellum United States would be minimal. While in some cases suffrage reform accompanied a change in the ‘regime’—insofar as it occurred alongside broader changes to the state constitution—these were hardly of the magnitude of moving from autocracy to democracy, and were more often an independent cause of the expansion than its consequence. Further, a considerable body of historical work has suggested that the antebellum white population was unlikely to have markedly distinct policy or partisan preferences across the economic categories marked out in franchise qualifications. Land, wealth, and income inequality among whites is generally found to have been relatively low in the colonial and early Republican eras (Jones 1980; Main 1965, 1977; Lindert and Williamson 2016), while the primary basis for partisan divisions tended to fall along lines of region (including intra-state sectionalism) or ‘sociocultural’ characteristics such as religion or national origin (Benson 1961; McCormick 1966).³ If the most notable political difference

³Even the “market revolution” argument, a critique of the sociocultural thesis’s denial of any economic or class-based structure to 19th century American political behavior, tended to place more emphasis on integration into an emerging market economy as a critical line of division, and would not be well-captured by the type and

between an enfranchised and disfranchised white man in the antebellum United States was simply that one was enfranchised and the other not, and if there were not that many of the latter—or they were unlikely to turn out to vote—then we should expect that the direct political consequences of this wave of democratization would have been modest. When combined with the divided institutions of almost all states, and the “catch-all” character of the country’s major parties, we should expect any direct effect of suffrage reform on public policy to have been even further attenuated.

RESEARCH STRATEGY

Establishing a causal connection between suffrage reforms and political behavior or policy outcomes is fraught with problems of endogeneity. Identifying an effect on turnout, for example, is greatly complicated by the role of parties in both designing electoral rules (Valelly 2016) and in mobilizing voters (Aldrich 1995). The heightened competition that might have motivated a rule change might have also led parties to invest in an organizing infrastructure for getting their voters to the polls, the empirical traces of which might be evident either before or after the election. Consequential suffrage reform could, paradoxically, even reduce turnout, if it depressed competition and partisan mobilizing efforts or altered the calculation for entry into a race by high quality candidates.

Such obstacles to causal identification are compounded in the United States by the considerable variation in the legal criteria, resulting in heterogeneity in the “treatment” of the qualifications as well as common miscodings about its timing. Consider the qualifications arrayed in Table 1. Each of the clauses specify ownership of property as entitling a person to vote; in the New Jersey and Virginia examples, however, property is a necessary qualification, while in the others it is one of several alternative means by which a man might be enfranchised.⁴ The criteria are also of greatly varying magnitudes, ranging from freehold ownership of fifty acres—backed by a legal title—to being “worth” fifty pounds “proclamation money” in real or personal property, demonstrated by an oath taken before a local official on the day of election. Tax and residency-based qualifications could be similarly heterogeneous. Louisiana enfranchised white men who had paid a state tax as well as white

scale of property ownership reflected in states’ franchise qualifications.

⁴It is not uncommon to see states in which property ownership was one of several bases for enfranchisement being listed as requiring it.

TABLE 1. Variation in Property Qualifications

Tennessee	New Jersey	Louisiana
Every free man of the age of twenty one years and upwards possessing a freehold in the County wherein he may vote and being an Inhabitant of this State, and every freeman being an Inhabitant of any one County in the State Six months immediately preceeding the day of election shall be entitled to vote.	That all Inhabitants of this Colony, of full Age, who are worth Fifty Pounds proclamation Money, clear Estate in the same, and have resided within the County in which they claim a Vote for twelve Months immediately preceding the Election, shall be entitled to vote.	Every free white male citizen of the United States, who at the time being, hath attained to the age of twenty one years and resided in the county in which he offers to vote one year next preceding the election, and who in the last six months prior to the said election, shall have paid a state tax, shall enjoy the right of an elector: provided however that every free white male citizen of the United States who shall have purchased land from the United States shall have the right of voting.
Virginia	Connecticut	South Carolina
Every person. . . who hath an estate of freehold for his own life, or the life of another, or other greater estate in at least fifty acres of land, if no settlement be made upon it, or twenty five acres , with a plantation and a house thereon, at least twelve square feet, in his possession or in the possession of his tenant or tenants, for term of years, at will or sufferance, in the same county where he gives such vote; . . . and every person possessed of a lot, or part of a lot, in any city or town established by act of assembly, with a house thereon at least twelve square feet, shall have a right to vote. . . . That no feme, sole or covert, infant under the age of twenty-one, recusant, convict, or any person convicted in Great Britain or Ireland. . . nor any free negro, mulatto, or Indian, although such persons be freeholders, shall have a vote, or be permitted to poll.	Every white male citizen of the United States, who shall have gained a settlement in this State, attained the age of twenty-one years, and resided in the town in which he may offer himself to be admitted to the privilege of an elector at least six months preceding, and have a freehold estate of the yearly value of seven dollars in this State; or, having been enrolled in the militia, shall have performed military duty therein for the term of one year next preceding the time he shall offer himself for admission; or being liable thereto, shall have been, by authority of law, excused therefrom, or shall have paid a State tax within the year next preceding the time he shall present himself for such admission; and shall sustain a good moral character.	Every Free white man of the age of twenty one years, being a Citizen of the State, and having resided therein two years previous to the day of Election, and who hath a Freehold of Fifty Acres of Land, or a Town Lot of which he hath been legally seized and possessed at least Six Months before such Election, or (not having such Freehold or Town Lot) hath been a Resident in the Election district, in which he offers to give his Vote, Six Months before the said Election and hath paid a Tax the preceeding year of Three Shillings Sterling towards the Support of this Government.

male settlers (disproportionately Anglo-American) who had purchased land directly from the US government. But as many historians of Louisiana have recognized, the tax qualification amounted to an effective property qualification, because the state taxed only specific forms of property and did not impose a poll tax on all persons. Connecticut's taxpaying alternative, by contrast, was based on payment of town-collected state taxes raised on any person owning particular types of personal property, undertaking a list of professions or occupations, as well as a tax on all male "polls" (persons) above the age of 18 (Walradt 1912). Cross-sectional analyses that lump states together based on whether the qualification was for property, taxpaying, or residency—without attending to the specifics of each provision—inevitably mix together states that were quite restrictive with those that were much less so.

The early date of the first wave of democratization in the United States poses a final obstacle for empirical analysis of its effects. While it remains common to see the expansion of voting rights treated as "the central reform of the Jacksonian democracy movement" (Nabors 2017, 271) in fact all but two states—Rhode Island and Virginia—had abolished an explicit property qualification for national

office by 1822, and all but four states had done so by 1818. Extant data sources on national elections, however, tend to be sparse in their coverage of the early Republic; in any case, this was a period in which when state politics was much more immediately important in the lives of citizens and in the determination of public policy.⁵

This article addresses these problems by relying on new and underused data that can reduce heterogeneity in our measure of the qualifications and has suitable coverage of the early Republic-era, with a focus on state-politics in particular, and through an innovative leveraging of the peculiar electoral features of two states. In order to identify a precise effect of voting qualifications, independent of party or other determinants of turnout, I follow the example of Richard McCormick (1959) in exploiting a peculiarity of the voting regimes of New York and North Carolina, each of which had different qualifications for elections to different offices that were held simultaneously.⁶ To vote for Senate or Governor in New York between 1777-1821 required ownership of a £100 freehold, while voting for the Assembly required a £20 freehold or the renting of a tenement of the value of 40 shillings. To vote for the North Carolina Senate from 1776-1857 required a freehold of 250 acres, while voting for the House of Commons (and from 1835, the Governor) required only the payment of public taxes (Table 2). North Carolina also imposed a poll tax, meaning that almost all free adult citizens paid public taxes.

Crucially, election to these offices occurred simultaneously. So long as we assume that most voters

⁵The federal government after 1800 raised very little in direct or excise taxes, and spent even less on policies that might be considered redistributive vis-à-vis the different economic classes in a particular locality. Most non-partisan (Valelly 2016; McConnaughy 2013) theories of suffrage expansion, however, assume that the enfranchised and disenfranchised would differ on economic, tax, and redistributive policy, policy areas that were largely under the control of the states; our empirical units of analysis are almost invariably local counties or districts, where federal policy would have been even less directly redistributive.

⁶McCormick (1959) calculated summary descriptive comparisons of the aggregate patterns in these two states; the reliance on aggregated data—statewide differences in voting for governor, for example—raised several methodological problems. The analyses in here offer several methodological improvements, and draw on considerably more data. Still, the inferential intuition owes a considerable debt to McCormick’s example.

TABLE 2. Cross-Institutional Differences in Suffrage Qualifications, New York and North Carolina

	High Threshold	Lower Threshold
New York	The senate of the State of New York shall consist of twenty-four freeholders to be chosen out of the body of the freeholders; and that they be chosen by the freeholders of this State, possessed of freeholds of the value of one hundred pounds, over and above all debts charged thereon.... A wise and discreet freeholder of this State shall be, by ballot, elected governor, by the freeholders of this State, qualified, as before described, to elect senators.	Every male inhabitant of full age, who shall have personally resided within one of the counties of this State for six months immediately preceding the day of election, shall... be entitled to vote for representatives of the said county in assembly; if... he shall have been a freeholder, possessing a freehold of the value of twenty pounds, within the said county, or have rented a tenement therein of the yearly value of forty shillings, and been rated and actually paid taxes to this State.
North Carolina	That all freemen of the age of twenty-one years, who have been inhabitants of any one county within the State twelve months immediately preceding the day of any election, and possessed of a freehold, within the same county, of fifty acres of land, for six months next before, and at the day of election, shall be entitled to vote for a member of the senate.	[1776-1835] That all freemen of the age of 21 years, who have been inhabitants of any one county within the State twelve months immediately preceding the day of any election, and shall have paid public taxes, shall be entitled to vote for members of the house of commons, for the county in which he resides. [1835-1860] The Governor shall be chosen by the qualified voters for the members of the House of Commons.

who turned out to vote for a lower office would vote for a higher one, conditional on their being legally entitled to do so, then a simple difference-in-differences design will provide a relatively precise estimate of the number of *voters* enfranchised by one qualification but excluded by the other.⁷ Additional assumptions are required to make meaningful statements about the effect of voting qualifications on partisan and ideological representation. No research design for early Republic can exogenously determine party choices about electoral entry, candidate selection, or mobilization efforts, all of which are thus inherently post-treatment. Nor can we structure a comparison that perfectly controls for unobserved characteristics of the election. But by focusing on differences within the same electoral unit, at the same moment, for electorates whose composition differs primarily on the basis of property ownership, we can considerably reduce other sources of bias. We cannot identify the mechanisms underlying party (dis)advantage across franchise classes, but we can determine whether any such (dis)advantage was perceptible after the parties had made their choices. Finally, the distinct cameral qualifications in North Carolina allow for a direct comparison of patterns of representation by legislators

⁷It does not provide an estimate of how many free adult men were disenfranchised, but of the proportion of voters in assembly elections could not vote for governor. In early Republic New York, periods of heightened party or intra-party competition could on a few occasions see “both Federalists and Republicans prov[e] willing to ignore the state’s laws and allow voters eligible to vote only for the assembly and Congress to vote for governor” (Strum 1981, 348). This would depress our estimates of higher qualifications’ effect on turnout.

elected simultaneously in identical districts by electorates that differed only on the basis of the voting qualification.

Findings from New York and North Carolina might not generalize to the rest of the Union. I accordingly extend the analysis to other states using a uniquely comprehensive dataset of suffrage changes, as well as underused data on state and local elections in the early Republic. The suffrage dataset identifies every constitutional and statutory revision to voting rights between 1775 and 1860, along more than 15 dimensions and for 11 “classes” of voters that have been distinguished for separate treatment in American legal history. The exact date when each qualification went into effect—rather than simply the year in which a reform was agreed upon—is also included. A close reading of the qualifications, distinguishing between different types and quantities of property, the alternative bases for enfranchisement, and matched to the tax provisions in use in the relevant states, allows for a more accurate coding of their relative severity. The result is a still-imperfect but less noisy binning of the qualifications than would be captured by the more common property/taxation/residence schema. This dataset, a greatly condensed version of which is arrayed in Table 3, provides the treatment variable for both state-specific and cross-sectional analyses.

The outcomes of interest for the cross-sectional analyses are turnout, partisan and ideological representation, and policy choices made by state legislatures. Mapping these outcomes on to the timing of suffrage reforms requires reliance on currently underused data on early elections as well as new data and measures of state and national legislative politics. The most important sources of data on voting and turnout in the early Republic comes from the *Lampi Collection* (American Antiquarian Society 2007), an extraordinary compilation of returns for national, state, and local elections, often at the level of the ward or polling place. The Lampi data expands our ability to analyze the abolition of property qualifications in the early Republican era, a period when many extant data sources have relatively limited coverage. Additional data on national elections is drawn from the *United States Historical Election Returns* series (ICPSR 1999). The Lampi and ICPSR data are supplemented for New York and North Carolina by contemporary election tabulations in local newspapers which I collected from www.newspapers.com, the Library of Congress, and the Readex Historical Newspapers Series. State and federal censuses were used to provide demographic data at the county level (ICPSR

TABLE 3. Summary of Franchise Categories

State	Years	Category	State	Years	Category
Alabama	1819-1860	Low	New York	<i>Assembly</i>	
Arkansas	1836-1860	Low		1777-1821	Medium
California	1849-1860	Low		<i>Senate and Governor</i>	
Connecticut	1775-1818	Medium		1777-1821	High
	1818-1860	Low		<i>White Men</i>	
Delaware	1775-1792	Medium		1821-1860	Low
	1792-1860	Low		<i>Black Men</i>	
Florida	1845-1870	Low		1821-1860	High
Georgia	1777-1789	Medium	North Carolina	<i>Senate</i>	
	1789-1860	Low		1776-1857	High
Illinois	1818-1860	Low		1857-1860	Low
Indiana	1816-1860	Low		<i>Commons</i>	
Iowa	1846-1860	Low		1776-1860	Low
Kentucky	1792-1860	Low	Ohio	1802-1860	Low
Louisiana	1812-1845	High	Oregon	1859-1860	Low
	1845-1860	Low	Pennsylvania	1776-1860	Low
Maine	1819-1860	Low	Rhode Island	1775-1842	High
Maryland	1776-1802	Medium		<i>Native Born</i>	
	1802-1860	Low		1842-1860	Low
Massachusetts	1780-1820	Medium		<i>Naturalized</i>	
	1820-1857	Low		1842-1860	High
Michigan	1837-1860	Low	South Carolina	1778-1810	High
Minnesota	1858-1860	Low		1810-1860	Low
Mississippi	1817-1860	Low	Tennessee	1796-1860	Low
Missouri	1820-1860	Low	Texas	1845-1860	Low
New Hampshire	1775-1784	High	Vermont	1793-1860	Low
	1784-1860	Low	Virginia	1776-1831	High
New Jersey	1776-1807	Medium		1831-1851	Medium
	1807-1860	Low		1851-1860	Low
			Wisconsin	1848-1860	Low

Note: Qualifications that begin in 1775 date back to colonial-era documents. For details on coding decisions, see supplementary material.

2005; New York State 1790, 1795, 1801, 1808, 1815, 1822, 1835, 1845, 1855; Benson and Silbey 1984), which were then aggregated to congressional and state legislative districts using available sources and contemporary legislative journals (Martis 1982; Parsons and Hermann 1978; Parsons, Beach, and Dubin 1986; Parsons, Dubin, and Parsons 1990). Analyses of the policy consequences of suffrage reform draw on the Richard E. Sylla, John Legler, and John Wallis (2006) *State and Local Government: Sources of State Funds* dataset; while uneven in its coverage, this remains the best source of data for cross-sectional evidence of state policy priorities in the 19th century (Sylla, Legler, and

Wallis 2006).

Together these data sources allow us to evaluate the impact of suffrage reform on the number of votes cast or proportion of adult free men who voted, on the probability of a district electing a member associated with a particular political party, and on patterns of aggregate state taxing and spending decisions. These cross-sectional analyses are all calibrated against the more precisely identified results for New York and North Carolina, which provide baseline against which we can evaluate the plausibility of the generalized findings.

BASELINE FINDINGS IN NEW YORK AND NORTH CAROLINA

Enfranchisement and Turnout

How many free adult men were disenfranchised by restrictive franchise qualifications? Calculation of the legal enfranchisement rate in the early Republic is greatly limited by the absence of data: very few states had electoral registration systems, relying instead on local boards and judges to check prospective voters against tax and property registers, to admit men to the freemanship by correlating local knowledge to state criteria, or by requiring potential electors to swear or affirm that they met the qualifications.

New York State was unique in undertaking a periodic state census that included counts of the number of electors enfranchised by different criteria, and in doing so both before and after liberalizing its franchise.⁸ While imperfect, the NYS census data can be used to provide a benchmark for our empirical evaluations of the impact of property qualifications in that state. Table 4 lists the proportion of electors enfranchised under different qualifications in New York State. Figure 2 provides a map of the county-level proportion of adult free men who had the right to vote for the legislative assembly in 1814, as well as the town-level count of the number of men excluded from assembly elections.

In 1814, approximately forty percent of the adult free men counted in the census could vote for Governor, while slightly more than seventy percent could vote for the Assembly.⁹ This amounted

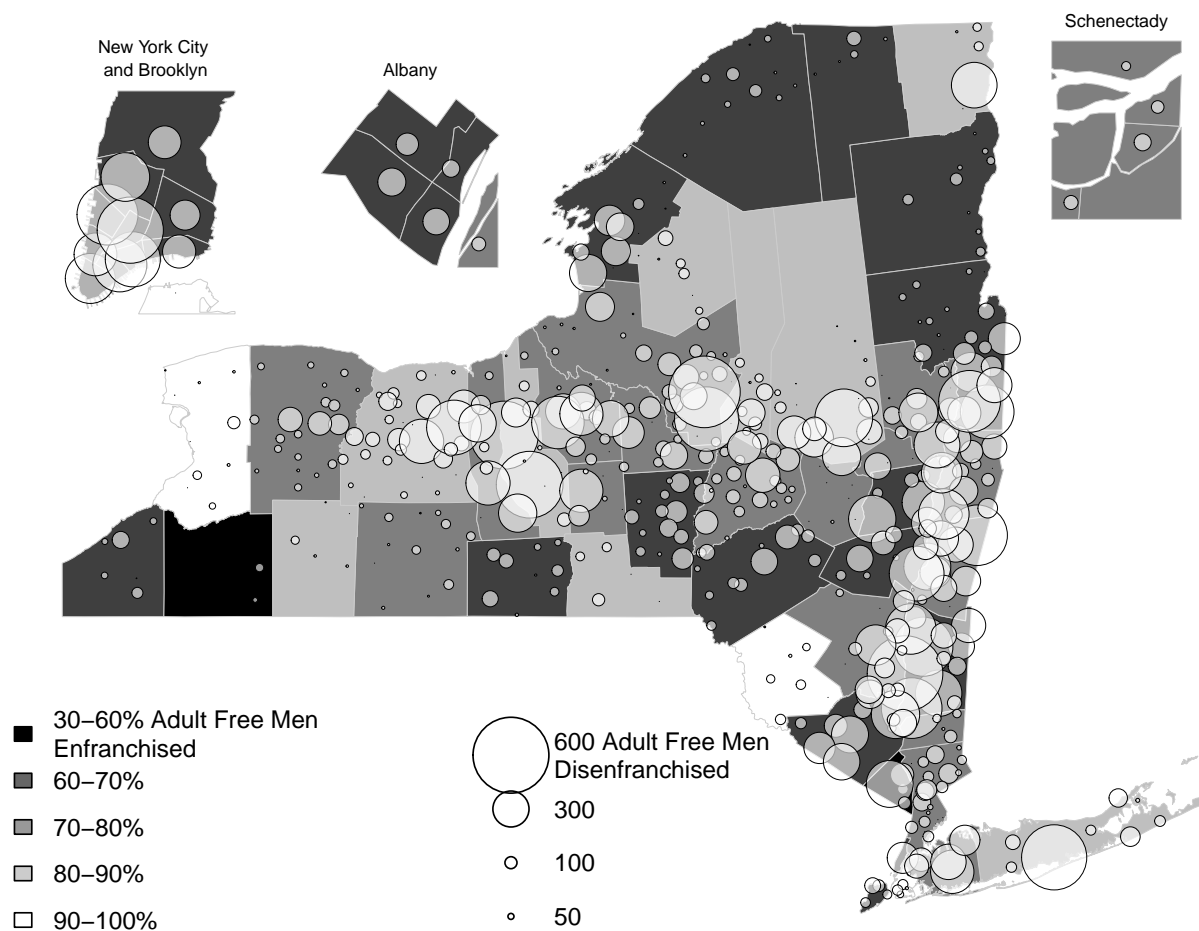
⁸The state did so because it apportioned the assembly on the basis of the number of voters, and could not rely on the federal census to tabulate this information.

⁹The denominator is the estimated proportion of free men over the age of 21. Because many years did not ask

TABLE 4. Enfranchisement Rates from New York State Census

Year	Gubernatorial Elections	Assembly Elections
1814	41%	76%
1821	33%	67%
<i>Removal of Property Qualifications</i>		
1821	85%	85%
<i>Removal of Tax Qualification in 1826</i>		
1835	85%	85%

Note: Author's calculations from New York State censuses; see also McCormick (1959, 405). Enfranchisement rate is for all free adult men.

FIGURE 2. Disenfranchisement in New York State Assembly Elections, 1814

Note: The size of the circles corresponds to the number of free adult men disenfranchised. In order to facilitate visual interpretation, the size of the circles in New York City and Brooklyn corresponds to twice the size of the index.

about citizenship—which was not an explicit qualification until 1821—the denominator includes non-citizens as well. The result is to gradually depress the enfranchisement rate over the course of the 19th century.

to 126,500 and 61,000 free adult men who were disenfranchised by the respective qualifications. Most settlements of any substantial size saw at least a hundred adult men disfranchised, and the disenfranchisement rates in the major cities and in recently (and sparsely) settled counties could be especially high. The 1821 extension and equalization of the suffrage saw the enfranchisement rate increase to approximately eighty-five percent of free adult men, adding more than 57,000 voters to the electorate but also subtracting thousands of men of color (Bateman 2018). The removal of taxpaying qualifications in 1826 likely produced a marginal increase in the enfranchisement rate; when the next census was taken a decade later, however, it was essentially unchanged. A growing immigrant population would, as successive censuses emphasized with palpable concern, soon outnumber the enfranchised electorate in many counties.¹⁰

In short, there was a very large population excluded by the state's highly restrictive property qualification for governor, a much smaller but still significant population excluded by its more modest property qualification for assembly, and a very small and potentially insignificant population excluded by the taxpaying or public labor requirement that existed between 1821 and 1825.

$$Turnout_{dt} = \alpha + \beta Tr_d + \delta Int_t + \gamma (Tr_d * Int_t) + \epsilon_{dt} \quad (1)$$

Did these restrictions have a meaningful impact on political participation? For New York and North Carolina, we estimate a difference-in-differences equation (1), where Tr_d is a binary indicator for turnout in district d in either the control (the more liberal qualification) or treatment group (the more stringent qualification), and Int_t is a binary variable demarcating the period pre- and post-equalization of the suffrage qualifications. We expect Int_t to be negative if the qualifications imposed a real barrier to turnout. District *Turnout* is calculated as a proportion of the total free adult male population, calculated from federal and state census records and matched to state legislative districts.

The results of the difference-in-difference analyses are summarized in Table 5 .¹¹ The key variable

¹⁰In counties where there was a relatively small non-naturalized foreign born population, the enfranchisement rate in 1835 often approached one hundred percent. In 1825, before the tax-qualification was removed, the rate in these counties tended to be between 90-95%.

¹¹In line with changing practices in the discipline, asterices are not used to denote conventional levels of statistical

TABLE 5. Difference-in-Difference Analysis of Voter Turnout in New York and North Carolina

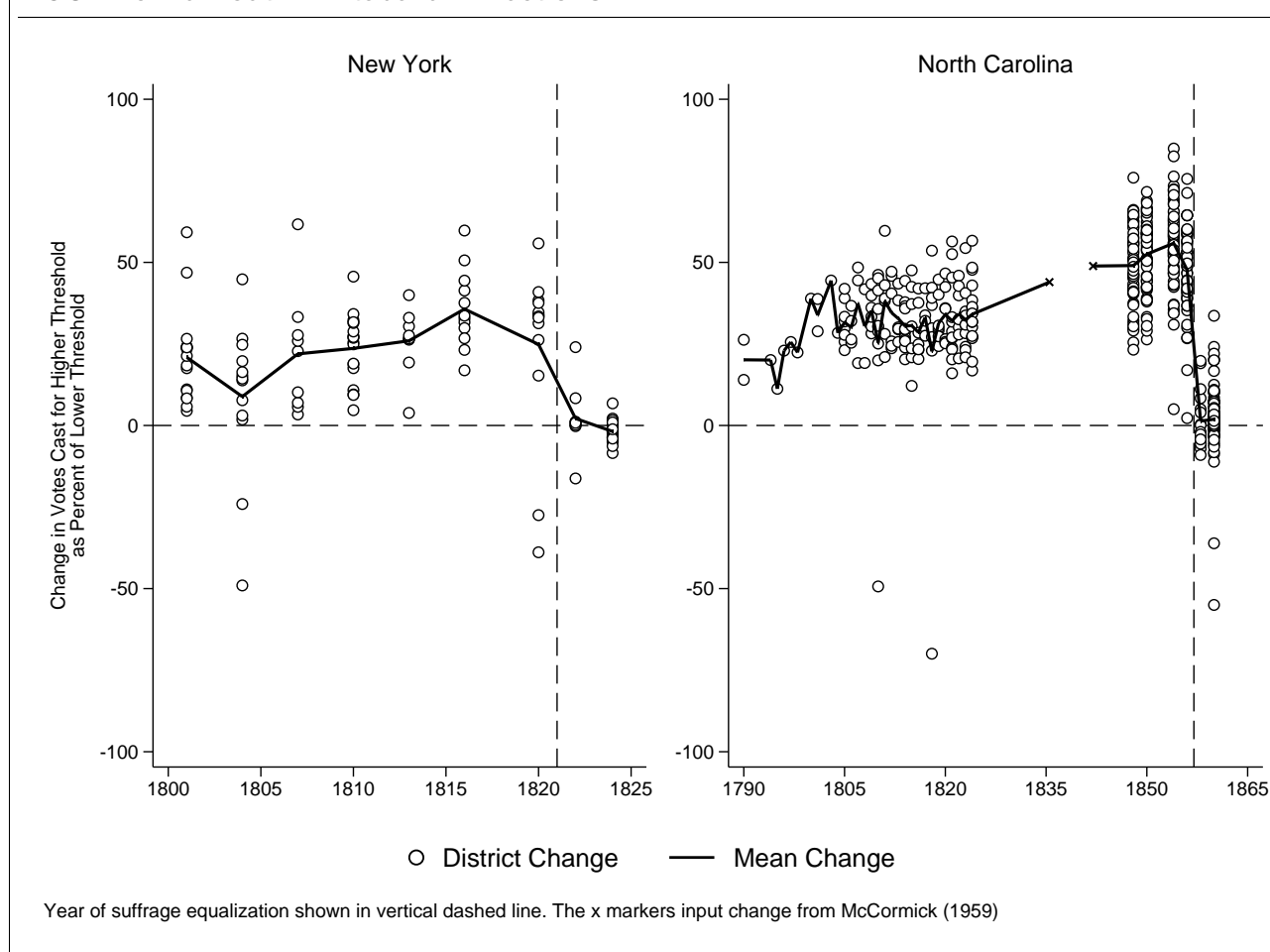
	New York 1800-1824	North Carolina 1848-1860
Senate Electorates	-0.004 (0.007)	0.017 (0.015)
Pre-Reform Period	0.036 (0.039)	0.041 (0.017)
Interaction (γ)	-0.132 (0.014)	-0.432 (0.024)
N	230	271
Unique Districts	43	65

of interest is the interaction term γ from Equation (1), which indicates the difference in the slope from pre- to post-reform between votes for the assembly and governor in the same district. Turnout in higher threshold elections in New York was reduced by approximately 13 percentage points, amounting to about Assembly 30,000 voters who were disqualified by the one-hundred pound freehold requirement for gubernatorial elections. Turnout for senatorial elections in North Carolina was reduced by approximately 43 percentage points before 1857, amounting to approximately 38,000 voters statewide.

The effect of the different qualifications, and their equalization, is graphically summarized in Figure 3. The left panel shows the percent drop off in voting as a percentage of the New York Assembly, with each marker being a county or ward for which election returns for both Governor and the Assembly were available. The solid line is the mean for all districts at each election, while the vertical dotted line shows when the franchise extension occurred. The right panel shows the same information for North Carolina, comparing elections for the House of Commons and the Senate before 1835 and for Governor and the Senate afterwards. The difference in the number of votes cast for the Commons relative to the Senate was consistently above 20 percent of the total votes cast for the Commons, and increased to over 50 percent by the late antebellum era; the actual number of senatorial electors per county remained relatively stagnant, the result of a fixed acreage requirement and the concentration of landed property.

In both states there was an immediate disappearance of any systematic difference in county-level turnout once the voting qualifications for the different offices were equalized. For New York State, the significance. For ease of interpretation, the intercept as well as any time trend or conditioning variables are omitted from the results tables, with a note indicating their inclusion in the model.

FIGURE 3. Turnout in Antebellum Elections



county-level dropoff in turnout correlates with the census measure of disenfranchisement; as we would expect, places where more men were denied the right to vote in gubernatorial relative to assembly elections saw a greater decline in turnout. Both the difference-in-differences design and Figure 3 compare turnout within the same district at the same election. As a result, they effectively control as part of the research design varying levels of electoral competition or party organization across districts and across time, and do so without reliance on post-treatment variables.

While the higher-threshold property qualification does seem to have reduced turnout, there is little evidence of a similar effect for the property qualification required of assembly electors in New York. After the requirements for voting for the assembly were lowered in 1821—from medium to low in terms—turnout in assembly elections was either unchanged or slightly. In North Carolina, turnout in senate and gubernatorial elections declined after suffrage reform. In New York, this was a function of the collapse of organized party competition, with the Federalists abandoning the electoral field and the

Republican party splintering even further into factions; in North Carolina, this too was a function of the final collapse of party competition, as local organizations which had replaced the Whig party after 1854 fragmented further as the sectional crisis intensified.

Representation

The next stage linking suffrage reform with political and policy outcomes is representation, including the propensity of more inclusive or restricted electorates to vote for a particular party and the patterns of legislative voting associated with differences or changes in the franchise. If the parties' support were concentrated at different points in a state's income and wealth distribution, then qualifications that restricted the electorate on this basis should leave an empirical imprint in electoral voting; and if different franchise classes had substantially different preferences over public policy, then we might expect to find evidence for this in the choices made by their elected representatives.

Partisanship Party strategies, including which and what types of candidates to run and what issues (if any) to foreground in the campaign, were inherently endogenous to the electoral institutions, which in turn would shape the parties' respective vote shares.¹² As a result, we cannot leverage the stratified suffrage qualifications of New York and North Carolina to make direct claims about the relative partisanship of the higher and lower threshold electorates.

$$FW_{it} = \alpha + \beta Tr_{it} + D_{it} + \epsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

We can, however, make descriptive claims about the relative ability of each party to compete across the electoral threshold. We do so by estimating equation (2), where FW_{it} is the Federalist or Whig proportion of the total vote in district i at election t , with Tr again being the 'treatment' of having a higher property threshold. The equation includes district-election fixed effects (D_{it}), which makes our estimate of β the within-district/within-election change in the party's vote share associated with the higher qualification. The comparison holds constituency and election cycle characteristics constant, but

¹²Indeed, there is considerable historical evidence that the Federalists responded to their electoral defeats in the first years of the 19th century by running more populist and democratic campaigns, and did so on popular issues such as opposition to the embargo or the compensation act (Skeen 1986).

cannot control for endogenous sources of variation between the upper- and lower-threshold elections, such as candidate recruitment.¹³

The results are reported in Table 6 . The evidence strongly suggests that the parties were able to

TABLE 6. Impact of Property Qualification on Federalist/Whig Vote Share

	New York 1790-1821	North Carolina 1790-1825	North Carolina 1838-1852
Higher Property Qualification	0.002 (0.009)	0.04 (0.024)	-0.03 (0.006)
Groups	842	58	1072
N	1068	71	1772

Note: District/election fixed effects included. The coefficient is the estimate of within-district/election difference associated with the property qualification.

compete effectively across different strata of the electorate in the early Republic (the first two models). Whatever latent differences in partisan support might have existed across the upper- and lower-threshold electorates, the parties seem to have been able to adaptively respond, whether by strategic entry or adaptive recruitment or campaign strategies.

In New York State, for example, there was effectively no difference, with the reported coefficient being both substantively and statistically insignificant. The North Carolina Federalists potentially enjoyed a slight advantage among the large estate owners who could vote for senators; they could expect to receive four percentage points more votes than their opponents, although again the effect does not meet standard levels of statistical significance. Perhaps more telling is that partisan candidates could be identified in only seventy-one out of more than 400 North Carolina elections for which sufficient data could be recovered.¹⁴ Any advantage they might have enjoyed occurred within a context of relatively

¹³A difference-in-differences equation would be inappropriate in this case, as both the Federalists and Whigs ceased to exist as relevant political entities just before or after the alteration of the franchise in New York and North Carolina. In the case of the Whigs, this was unlikely the result of the franchise change; in the case of New York's Federalists, however, it is possible that the extension of the franchise confirmed the decision of the party's disparate and localized leaders to largely cease operations.

¹⁴In only eleven races were both a Federalist and Republican ticket identified.

low partisan engagement and organization. In the later antebellum era, it was the Democrats who tended to perform better in senatorial election. The effect is relatively small, however, and whatever advantage Democrats enjoyed in the upper-class electorate was insufficient to overcome the strength of Whig partisanship—and malapportionment—in the state: after 1835, Democrats were unable to gain a majority of the Senate until 1850, when national crises placed severe strain on the Whig coalition (Dubin 2007, 140).

These aggregated figures mask considerable geographic and temporal heterogeneity. Additional descriptive analyses (not shown) suggest that the relative proportion of votes lost by each party by moving to the higher threshold electorate varied considerably across districts and years. In any given district and election there were often differences in partisan voting across the different thresholds, and in some districts these differences persisted across multiple elections. But these differences did not aggregate into a consistent state-wide pattern or show a consistent partisan direction.

Legislator Voting and Policy The relative support for different parties across differently circumscribed electorates provides a relatively limited perspective on representation. As noted above, the campaigns, recruitment, and policies advanced by the parties were, by assumption, endogenous to the electorate; changes to suffrage qualifications might not impact the election of party representatives, or their respective vote shares, but still produce meaningful shifts in how these legislators represent their districts.

North Carolina's cameral franchises allow for an approximation of what might be the ideal counterfactual comparison of the representational activities of the same candidate chosen by electorates whose composition differed only as a result of differing voting qualifications. Following common practice in the study of American legislatures, I conceptualize representation here in dyadic terms, examining differences in both individual roll call votes and in legislator ideal points, i.e., the relative placement of members on a unidimensional scale.¹⁵

Because the analysis focuses on antebellum state legislative voting, we cannot use the most common ideal point measure, NOMINATE (Poole and Rosenthal 1997), nor the corresponding state-specific measures that Boris Shor and Nolan McCarty (Shor and McCarty 2011) have estimated for the 20th

¹⁵We do not attribute a definite ideological content to this dimension, such as 'liberalism' or 'conservatism.'

and 21st centuries. Instead, I generate ideal point scores using the IRT model of Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers (Clinton et al. 2004), estimated on newly compiled roll call matrices for each legislative session of the North Carolina House and Senate between 1846 to 1859.¹⁶ The central difficulty in making cross-institutional ideal point comparisons lies in projecting the estimates scores into a common space. The standard approach is to use individuals who served in multiple sessions or institutions as bridging units. This is not an option in this case. The more restrictive suffrage qualifications for the Senate are equivalent to a common shock across all senators: since by assumption this occurs for all members who move from the House to the Senate we can neither hold their ideal point constant nor impose *a priori* an alternative structure to legislator change. Instead, I pin down the policy space by incorporating information about the roll calls directly into the estimation procedure (Bailey 2007; Bateman et al. 2017), treating members who served in both chambers as different individuals. By closely examining a decades' worth of roll calls in the Senate and House of Commons, I compiled a list of identical votes cast in both chambers that could be used to project the members' ideal points into a common space. These identical votes were used to merge the Senate and Commons' matrices for each legislative session. I also conducted separate analyses bridging each legislative sessions, in this case merging the common Senate-House matrices by those legislators who served in multiple sessions of the same chamber and from the same district.

A final complication results from the fact that the chambers were apportioned on different bases. The 120 seats in the House were primarily county-based multi-member districts, while the 50 seats in the Senate were single-member districts, sometimes amalgamating several counties into an overarching district; the Senate was apportioned on the basis of taxation, although the majority of counties remained stand-alone districts, while the size of a county's House delegation was determined using the "federal basis" counting enslaved persons as three-fifths of a person. Aggregate differences between the chambers could be the result of these differences, while those senatorial districts that were larger than their House equivalents would likely induce different patterns of political behavior regardless of the

¹⁶This model has the additional advantage of being able to recover more information on legislators who cast relatively few votes and on relatively lopsided roll calls.

steeper suffrage qualifications (Lee and Oppenheimer 1999).¹⁷ I account for this by including district and session fixed-effects, so that the analysis is of senators and commoners elected from the exact same district.

$$ID_{it} = \alpha + \beta Tr_{it} + D_t + \epsilon_{it} \quad (3)$$

$$ID_{it} = \alpha + \beta Tr_{it} + \delta Dem_i + \gamma(Tr_{it} * Dem_i) + D_t + \epsilon_{it} \quad (4)$$

I estimate equation (3) and (4), for legislator i 's ideal point ID at session t ; the treatment (Tr) in this case is simply being a senator, i.e., returned by an electorate that met the higher threshold. The first equation simply looks whether members elected to the Senate were more extreme along the recovered dimension. The second examines the possibility that any effect of property qualifications on voting patterns was mediated by party affiliation, indicated here by γ .

The results are reported in Table 7 , with the first two models estimated on separate legislative

TABLE 7. Effect of Senate Property Qualification on Member Ideal Points

	Session-Specific		All Sessions	
	Ideal Point	Ideal Point by Party	Ideal Point	Ideal Point by Party
Senate	0.023 (0.06)	0.35 (0.08)	0.057 (0.06)	0.54 (0.07)
Democratic		-1.10 (0.08)		-1.22 (0.07)
Interaction		-0.47 (0.10)		-0.72 (0.08)
Groups	562	562	459	459
N	1012	1012	854	854

Note: District/session fixed effects included.

sessions and the third and fourth on the combined matrix. There is no evidence of a common shift toward the ‘left’ or ‘right’ in either of the aggregate models. Instead, we see a pattern of party polarization in the interactive models, with non-Democratic senators becoming considerably more extreme and Democratic senators moving somewhat less in the opposite direction. Nearly identical

¹⁷This is also why a similar analysis is inappropriate for New York State before 1821, where all senators were elected in large aggregated districts that encompassed multiple assembly districts.

results, however, are found when we examine the 1858-59 session, the first to be elected on the same basis as the House.¹⁸ The alteration in the property qualification for voting did not remove the Senate's property qualification for officeholding (Orth 1992, 1773), but it seems just as likely that the polarization in partisan voting in the Senate reflected persistent differences in institutional culture or in the mix of issues that received a vote, possibilities for which extant ideal point measures are poorly equipped to address (Roberts 2007).

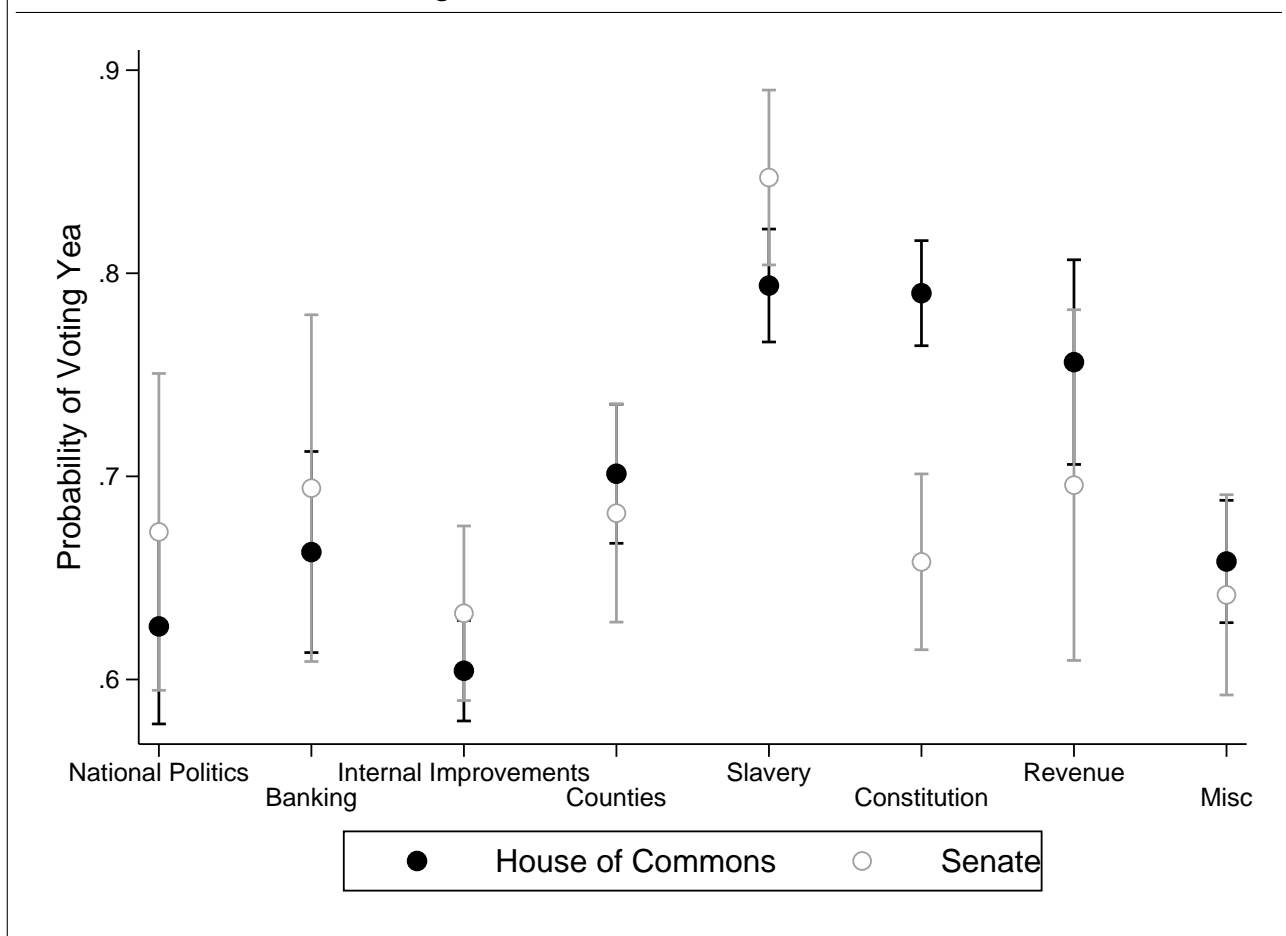
Ideal points provide a conservative estimate of preference divergence, as they include votes upon which property qualifications were unlikely to produce variation, flatten differences across issue areas (Bateman and Lapinski 2016), and include only those bills and resolutions that both chambers were willing to consider. For this reason, we also want to look at how members voted on specific issues. I first estimate a linear probability model of legislator vote choice on all roll calls that occurred in both the House of Commons and the Senate, with district fixed effects and a dummy variable for chamber. The estimate of interest is the within-district difference in the probability of voting yea. The coefficients for different issue areas are graphed in Figure 4. On almost all issue areas members of the House of Commons and Senators from the same district voted nearly identically, with the single exception of constitutional change: here senators were distinct, generally opposing Commons' backed proposals to abolish the franchise for the upper chamber.

EXTENSION TO OTHER STATES AND FEDERAL POLITICS

In North Carolina and New York we find evidence of a substantial body of disenfranchised free adult men in the early Republic and later antebellum period. We find small or negligible differences in partisan voting across the different franchise classes, and inconsistent evidence about the effect of property qualifications on legislator voting. These results, however, might not generalize to the rest of the country. The effect on enfranchisement and participation was largest for New York's gubernatorial and North Carolina's senatorial elections; as detailed in Table 3, these were among the most onerous qualifications in the entire country. The impact of New York's property qualification for turnout in

¹⁸The 1858-59 session, the last before the presidential election of 1860 and the subsequent secession crisis, was not included in the analyses in Table 7, and was not included in the common space roll call matrix.

FIGURE 4. Differences in Voting Between NC Senate and Commons



assembly elections was muted, and seems to have been overwhelmed by the decline in turnout that accompanied the end of the ‘first party system.’ This itself is a bit of misnomer, as party organizations varied considerably across the country and even within particular states; the inconsistent effect of property qualifications on the parties’ respective vote shares might be the result of idiosyncracies particular to how the parties were organized and competed within these two states.

Turnout

To assess the impact of onerous suffrage qualifications on politics and policy across the United States requires cross-sectional analyses that have good data coverage of the early Republic. The most extensive database of early American voting is the Philip Lampi collection maintained by the American Antiquarian Society (2007). I have extensively cleaned this data in order to create a single identifier for every unique combination of place and office, for example, creating an identifier for all elections to the state senate from Prince George’s County, Virginia, or for all elections to the legislative assembly from

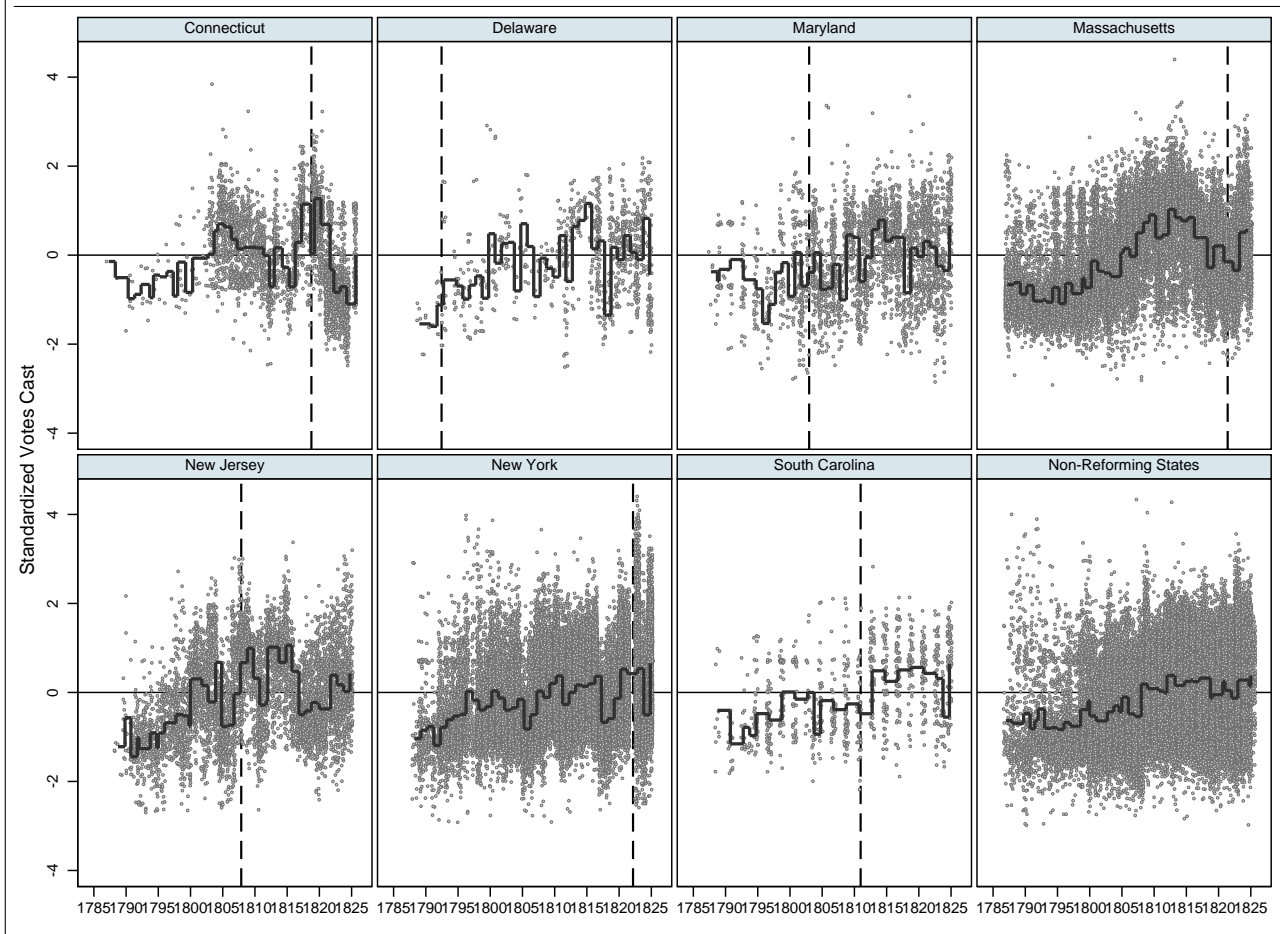
the town of Hartford. Only elections for state assembly, state senate, governor, and the U.S. House of Representatives are included.

The upside of this data is that it allows us to compare turnout across all states, while directly comparing the results to our known estimates of disenfranchisement in New York and North Carolina. There are, however, several downsides: because the intrinsic difficulties of generating the denominator are greatly magnified when undertaken for the entire United States, often at levels of aggregation below or different from the county, we cannot calculate turnout as a proportion of the total number of free adult men. Instead, I generate a standardized measure of turnout for each place/office pairing, $Turnout_{p,o,e} = \frac{(X_{p,o,e} - \overline{X_{p,o}})}{s_{p,o}}$, where $X_{p,o,e}$ is the number of votes cast in place p for office o at election e , $\overline{X_{p,o}}$ is the average number of votes cast for that office in that place across all elections, and $s_{p,o}$ is the standard deviation in votes cast for that office in that place across all elections. The standardized measure is equivalent to a z-score, and so a value of 0.5 indicates that the difference in the number of votes cast in that election was half a standard deviation above the mean for the entire period, while a value of -1 indicates that the difference was a standard deviation below. Our standardized measure will generally trend upwards over time due to population growth, and so a time trend is included in all models. A final difficulty is that the number of votes cast can be impacted by changes in the place, produced by county subdivisions or town annexations; or by changes in the number of members returned from multi-member districts.¹⁹ These shortcomings are, for the moment, irresolvable; the expectation, however, is that on average they are not systematically associated with franchise changes.

Figure 5 shows the basic pattern across all states that substantially revised their suffrage qualifications during this period, with the cell on the bottom-right showing the change for all other states. The vertical lines indicate the precise date when the suffrage reforms went into effect in each state. Because of population growth, we should expect to see an incline over time, with elections at the end of the period showing an above-average number of votes cast. But if electoral reforms had a significant impact on the size of the electorate, we should also expect to see a discontinuous uptick in their wake.

More systematic examinations are summarized in Table 8. The left panel reports the results of

¹⁹Multi-member districts themselves are not a problem for this approach, so long as the number of members—and thus the number of votes each elector is entitled to cast—does not change.

FIGURE 5. Turnout in Early-Republic Elections**TABLE 8. Turnout in Early-Republic Elections: Summary of Regression Results**

State	Medium	High	State	High Threshold
All States	0.39 (0.151)	-0.32 (0.092)	New York	-1.69
Non-Reforming States	-0.01 (0.027)	—		(0.016)
Delaware	-0.70 (0.398)	—	N	24671
Maryland	0.17 (0.138)	—	Groups	21954
New Jersey	-0.47 (0.079)	—		
Connecticut	-0.88 (0.110)		North Carolina	-1.68
Massachusetts	-0.71 (0.032)			(0.016)
New York	0.45 (0.042)	-0.29 (0.040)	N	2268
South Carolina	—	-1.17 (0.254)	Groups	1375

Note: Place/office FE in all models. Standard errors in parentheses; clustered at state-level for multi-state models. Time trend included in all models. Randomly-generated year used as placebo for non-reforming states.

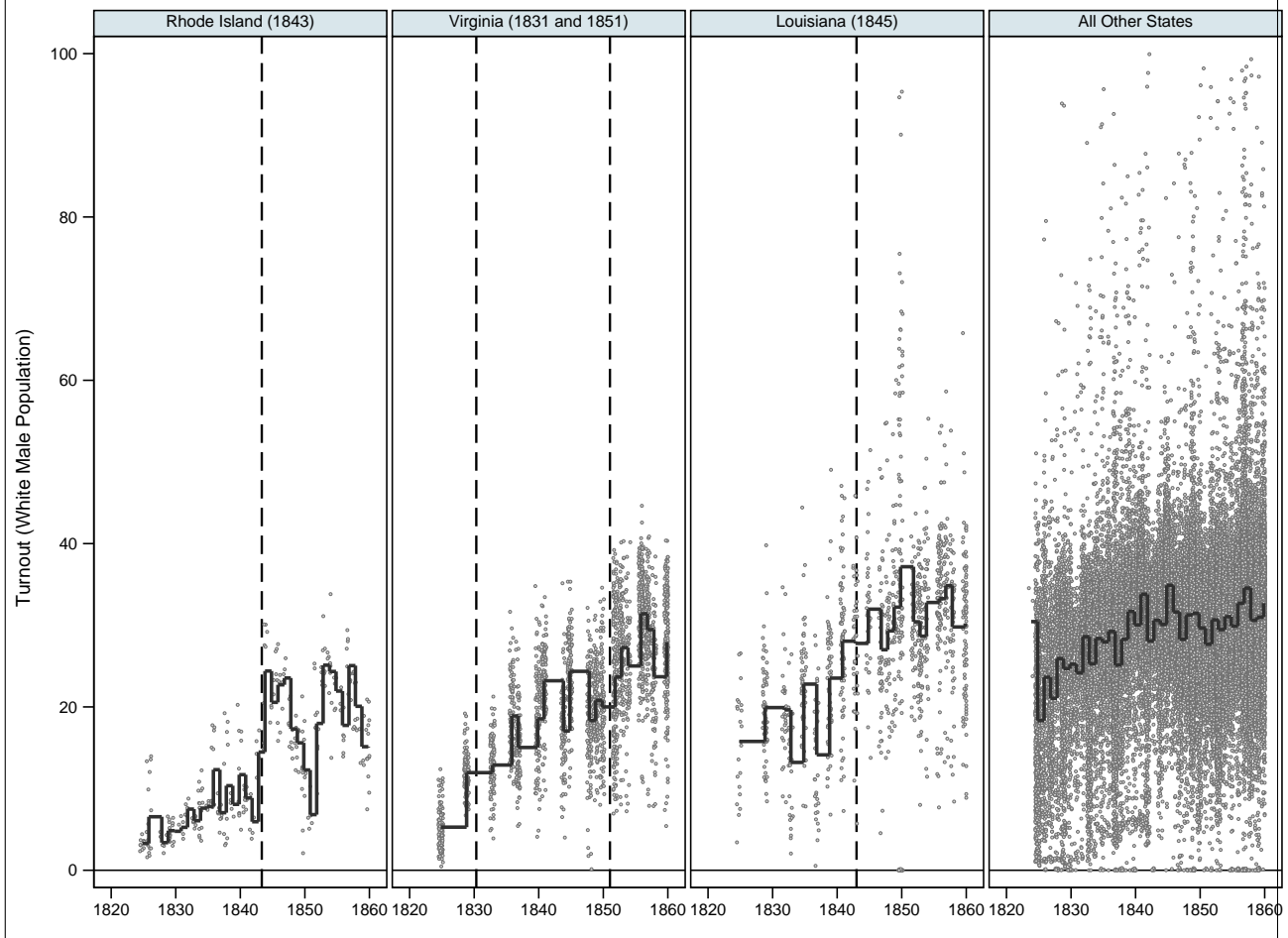
separate analyses for all states, the seven reforming states, and a state-specific randomly generate placebo for non-reforming states. For each of the state-specific estimates the model is estimated on all observations within a 5-year span covering the two years before and after suffrage reform. The most

restrictive qualifications are consistently associated with substantially lower levels of standardized turnout at the district level, perhaps most notably in South Carolina, where their removal in 1810 was associated with a sizeable and sustained increase in turnout. The more common medium level restrictions, by contrast, are much more variable, at times in the wrong direction. They are also much more sensitive to different specifications, with the coefficients' significance and direction changing depending on whether a ten-year, fifteen-year, or twenty-year window is used (not shown). Whatever the magnitude of disenfranchisement, the impact of moderate voting qualifications on turnout was no larger than the normal fluctuations produced by changing levels of party organization and competition.

These results can be calibrated against the more precisely estimates effects of high property qualifications in New York and North Carolina. The analyses in the right panel of Table 8 use place/date rather than place/office fixed effects, with the standardized turnout estimated across all elections for all offices in that particular locality. The model compares this measure of standardized turnout scores across different thresholds in a specific place at a specific election. In both New York and North Carolina, the highly restrictive property qualification was associated with a reduction in turnout of slightly more than one and a half standard deviations relative to a locality's long-term average. The abolition of such restrictive qualifications was associated with an increase in turnout of between 0.29 and 1.17 standard deviations in New York and South Carolina. Put differently, the proportion of men turned away by the most restrictive qualifications tended to be larger among the pool of men who were already winning to turn out to vote in lower threshold elections.

Turnout in Antebellum Elections The Lampi dataset, while extraordinary in its depth of coverage, is limited to the early Republic, the forty years between the end of the Revolution and the end of the first party system and election of John Quincy Adams to the presidency. While this is the most important period for suffrage reform, it predates the era of so-called "Jacksonian democracy" in which many of the political and policy changes often attributed to suffrage reform—either earlier or contemporaneous—occurred. To evaluate the impact of suffrage qualifications for the later antebellum era, and to further establish the generalizability of our findings from New York and North Carolina, I turn to the more commonly used data on county-level elections distributed by the ICPSR. I merged this with census data, aggregated to the district level, and calculated a turnout variable as the number of

FIGURE 6. Antebellum Turnout and Suffrage Reform



votes cast as a proportion of the free white male population. I estimate an linear regression model with district fixed effects. As a point of comparison, I also estimated the models on the more common “property” and “taxpaying” qualifications: by the antebellum era, property qualifications were being used only in Rhode Island, Virginia, and in North Carolina’s senatorial elections (not included in this dataset), while Louisiana used a taxpaying qualification that amounted to a steep property qualification. The states that imposed medium-level requirements in this period were Rhode Island after 1843 (the state had abolished the property qualification for native-born citizens, but retained it for naturalized citizens) and Virginia between 1831 and 1851 (Figure 6). In all models, standard errors are clustered at the state-level.

The results are reported in the left panel of Table 9. Turnout among the white male population was reduced in the few remaining high-qualification states by approximately 12 points, a considerable drop given that this denominator includes children as well as adults. It was reduced by 7 percentage points

TABLE 9. Impact of Suffrage Qualifications Across States

	Turnout		Democratic Vote Share		Democratic Vote Share	
	1823-1859	1823-1859	1823-1859	1823-1859	1787-1827	1787-1827
Medium	-7.03		-2.04		0.82	
	(0.642)		(1.870)		(3.58)	
High	-12.16		-1.23		2.49	
	(1.067)		(2.211)		(10.91)	
Taxpaying		-2.95		-2.05		1.42
		(2.969)		(4.565)		(5.139)
Property		-7.91		-1.97		5.08
		(0.791)		(1.759)		(3.97)
N	42390	42390	39393	39393	615	564
Groups	1880	1880	1882	1882	117	114
Level	County	County	County	County	CD	CD

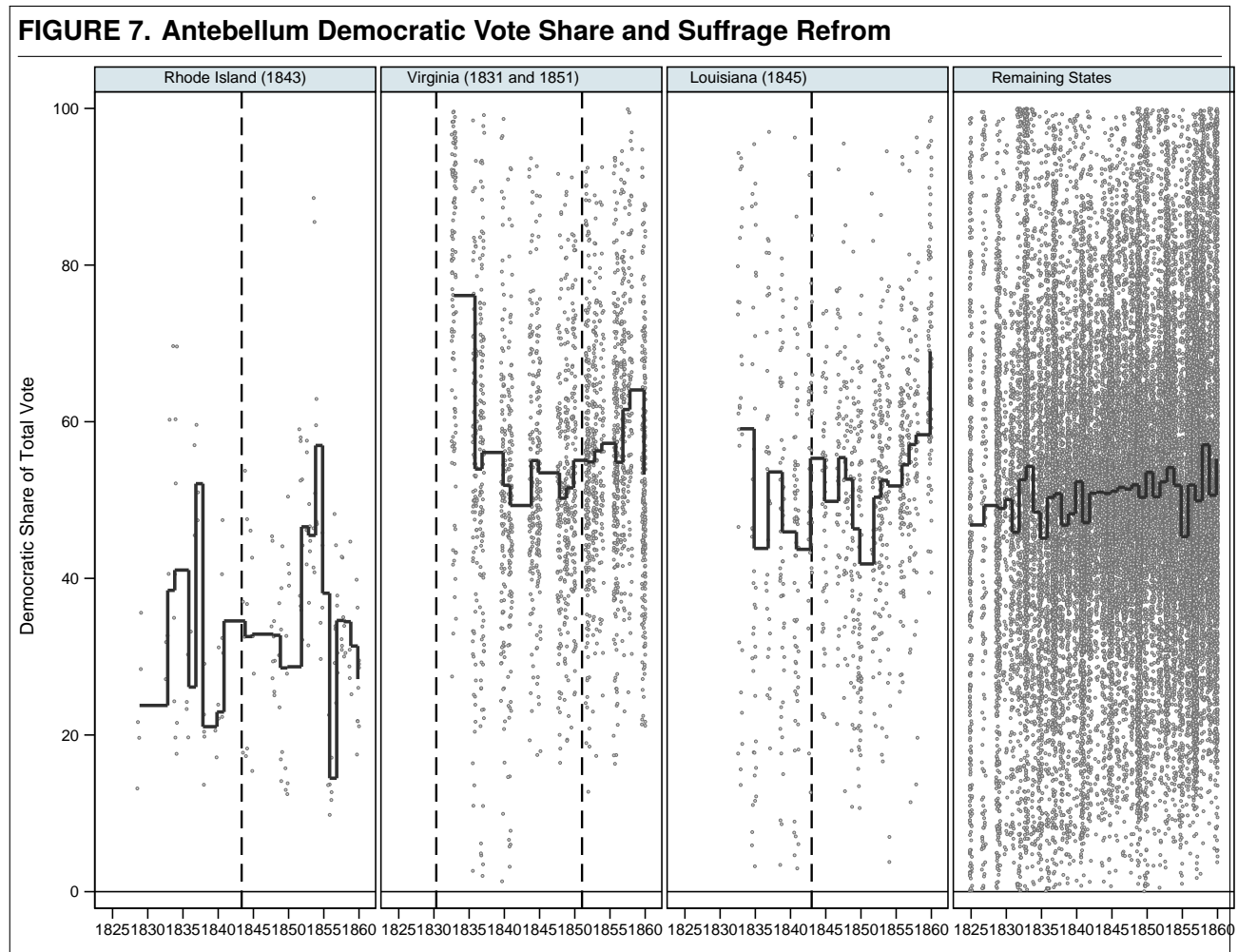
Note: County/CD and decade fixed effects included. Standard errors clustered at state level.

among those states that continued to impose a moderately restrictive qualification. The considerably larger number of states that imposed a taxpaying qualification, by contrast, saw very little if any reduction in turnout. High- and moderate-qualifications for voting rights reduced turnout, but they were by no means the norm after the 1820s.

Representation

Partisanship For New York and North Carolina we found inconsistent and relatively muted evidence that the different parties were (dis)advantaged by restrictive franchise qualifications. Do we find evidence of a more definite pattern across a greater number of states and in the antebellum era? The third through sixth columns of 9 and the aggregate patterns shown in Figure 7 suggest that the parties did not generally experience a stark change in fortunes after suffrage reform. Across all counties for which we have voting data, whether for the antebellum era or the early Republic, the within-county change associated with moving to a less restrictive franchise was substantively small. The early Republic results, shown in the two rightmost columns, are especially vulnerable to changes in the temporal specification. Again, relatively sizeable changes in turnout did not produce consistent changes in party fortunes, whether because the parties were able to adaptively respond or because any partisan divide in the electorate did not divide neatly along the type of class lines embedded in state franchise

qualifications.



Legislative Voting If the parties were able to adapt, we might expect to find evidence for this in patterns of legislative voting. Recall, however, that there was relatively little evidence for this in North Carolina. In that state, the higher threshold required to vote in senatorial elections was associated with a polarization in both parties' representatives, and especially in the voting of non-Democrats; but apart from the issue of constitutional reform itself, senators did not vote systematically different than their House counterparts from the same district.

Table 10 reports the results our analyses of suffrage qualifications on congressional ideal points. In the early Republic, the most onerous qualifications were associated with a sizeable shift toward the "right" (the Federalists') pole on an estimated ideal point dimension, nearly one standard deviation of the full chamber. A smaller, although still important, shift was also evident among those legislators elected from states with moderately restrictive qualifications. The effect of the most restrictive qualifications

TABLE 10. Impact of Suffrage Qualification on Congressional Ideal Points

	1787-1860	1787-1827	1828-1860
High	0.71 (0.130)	0.95 (0.15)	1.08 (0.115)
Medium	.44 (0.222)	0.65 (0.261)	— —
Groups	292	192	270
N	5908	2339	3569

Note: District/decade fixed effects included.

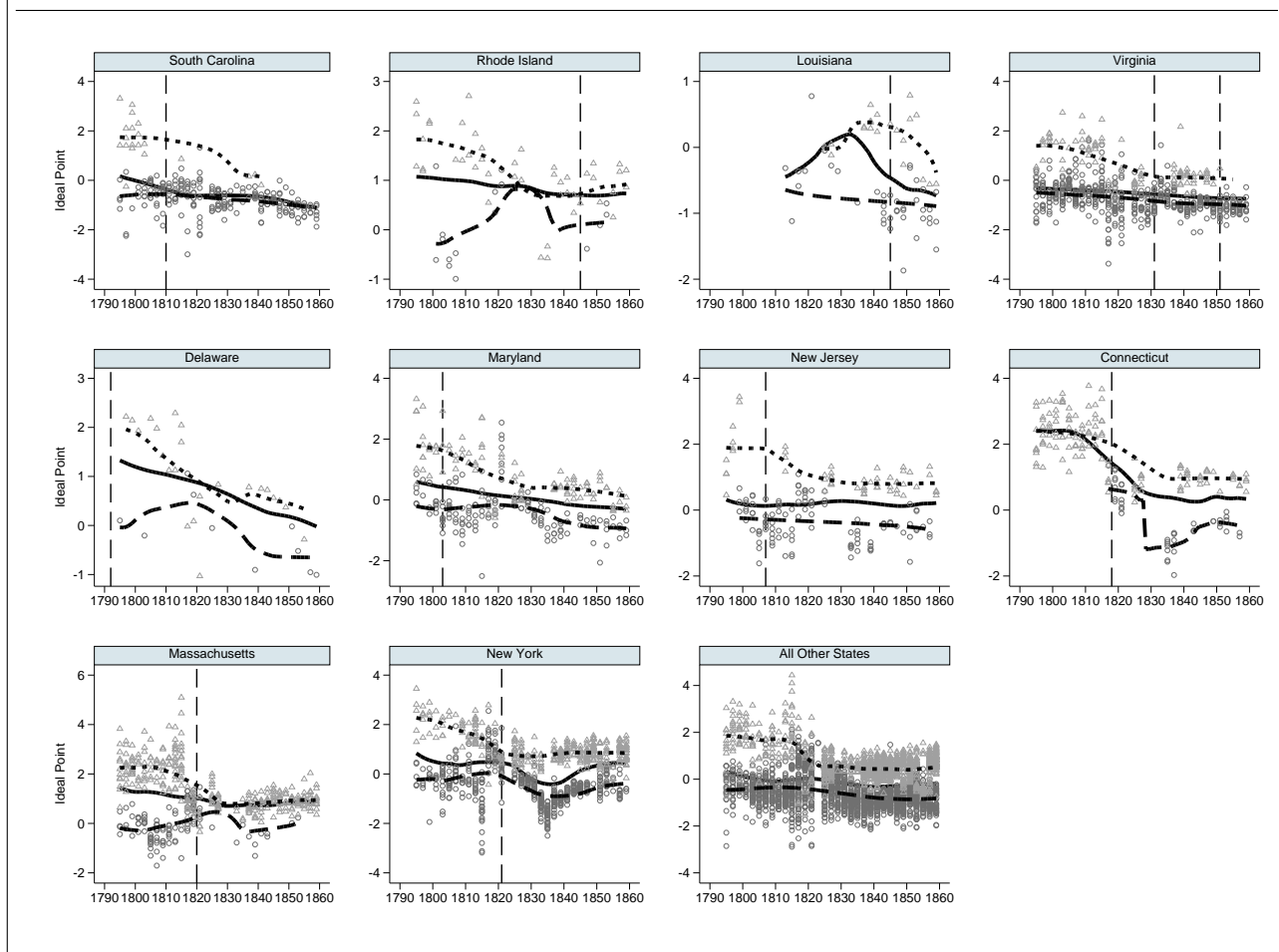
persisted into the antebellum era, although again it is important to note that these results are driven by three states—Louisiana, Virginia, and Rhode Island.

Closer inspection of these patterns, however, suggests some grounds for caution. Figure 8 tracks the ideal points of state congressional delegations. The first row arrays the states with the most restrictive qualifications for voting in congressional elections, and the bottom two rows showing states that had moderate qualifications that were reformed during the antebellum era. The light gray triangles represent Federalists, Whigs, and the later Republican Party, while the grey circles represent the Jeffersonian Republicans and Democrats. South Carolina, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Louisiana appear as possible sites where suffrage reform might have resulted in changed patterns of representation, whether through the election of more (fewer) legislators from a given party or by inducing a move toward the right or left of the estimated dimension. In all of these cases, however, the changes appear to shortly predate the actual revision of the suffrage, suggesting that the balance of partisan power within the state had already changed, with a lowering of the voting qualifications a possible consequence rather than cause.

State Policy Outcomes

If voting restrictions impacted enfranchisement, turnout, and – to a lesser extent – patterns of representation, they might also have shaped public policy, and in particular revenues and expenditures. There is certainly anecdotal evidence to suggest this was the case. The extension of the suffrage in New York, for example, was followed immediately by the addition of all of the state’s unappropriated land to the common school fund; the addition of a further \$100,000 of bank stock to the fund in 1827 came

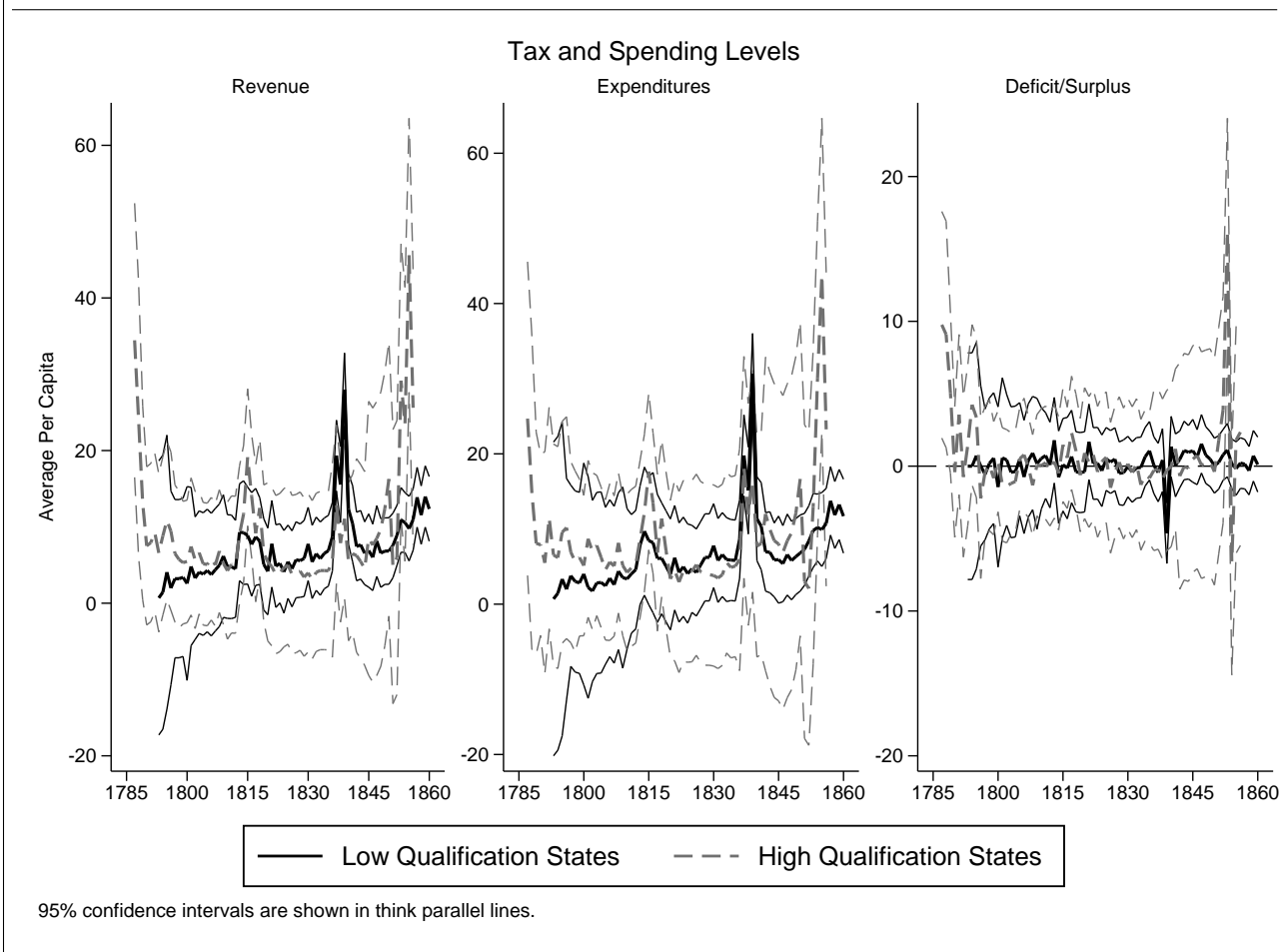
FIGURE 8. Timing of Suffrage Reform and States' Congressional Ideal Point



the year after the removal of taxpaying qualifications. Earlier historians suggested these decisions responded to the desire of the broadened electorate for investments that would alleviate local taxation and rate bills (Sowers 1914, 264). It was after the abolition of property qualifications in Maryland that the issue of taxing corporate privileges became a controversy, with supporters reportedly found disproportionately among the newly enfranchised, for whom it was framed as necessary to meet the growing demand for “a public school system and for internal improvements” (Hanna 1907, 35). The removal of the taxpaying requirement in Ohio coincided with a move to a more equitable system of taxation and property valuation, and again was attributed to the changed electorate preferences (Bogart 1912, 202-29). A Democratic leader in North Carolina argued that the state’s radical changes in expenditures and revenues was the result of an anticipatory response to growing pressures for democratization: “the discussion of the subject [‘free’ suffrage] in 1848 no doubt led to the assumption of a debt of more than two millions for internal improvements. The Senate was based on taxation, and

was therefore not disposed to incur State debts” (Holden 1911, 4).²⁰

FIGURE 9. Differences in Aggregate Revenues and Expenditures



More systematic evidence can be gained from comparing levels of state revenues and expenditures across different voting regimes (Sylla et al. 2006). Aggregate differences in the log per capita revenue and expenditures between states with and without property or substantial taxpaying qualifications are shown in Figure 9. At this level, there seems to be little substantive difference between states with more and less restrictive qualifications. Additional figures in the Supplemental Material show the change in revenues and expenditures by state, with the alterations to their franchises indicated. While

²⁰This preceded the actual abolition of the property qualification. Some senators proposed that a clause be added to an equal suffrage amendment stating that “no tax shall be imposed and levied by the General Assembly on real estate, which shall exceed the proportion to the capitation tax of twelve cents on the hundred dollars value on land, to forty cents on the polls” (Journal of the Senate 1856-57, 35).

in Connecticut the expansion of the franchise corresponds with a substantial decline in tax revenue and expenditures, in — the relationship is the reverse; in most states no visible trend is evident. A closer examination of the data, moreover, suggests that the differences that are apparant are likely explained by factors other than the suffrage. States with higher voting qualifications seem to have had higher revenues and expenditures in the 1780s, but this likely reflects the lingering costs of the Revolutionary War in the period before the federal government assumed responsibility for this debt. The rise in revenue and expenditure levels in the late 1830s reflects both increased tax revenue in some states resulting from a speculative real estate bubble, and the distribution of the U.S. Surplus Revenue in 1837 (Bourne 1885). While the latter was roughly proportional across the states, the former was disproportionately concentrated among states that were also most likely to have liberal suffrage regimes. Finally, the sharp increase among high qualification states in the 1850s in revenue and expenditures reflects the fact that by this juncture every state but North Carolina's Senate had liberalized the right to vote and that the NC Senate had finally begun passing infrastructure bills in an effort to stave off a constitutional change.

To identify an effect of suffrage qualifications on state revenue and spending levels we estimate a model that takes the form,

$$\ln(y_{st}) = \alpha + \beta Tr_{st} + X_{st} + D_{st} + \epsilon_{st} \quad (5)$$

where y_{st} is the real per capita revenue or expenditure in state s at time t , Tr is the 'treatment' of having a higher property threshold, X_{st} is a series of conditioning variables, including a time trend, and dummy variables for whether the country was at war, whether the federal Surplus Revenue was being disbursed to the state (which occurred at the end of the 1830s), whether the previous year's government was under the unified control of the Democratic Party or its predecessor, and the percentage of the population that lived in a census-defined urban area. D_{st} are state fixed effects.

The literature generally hypothesizes that suffrage liberalization should lead to a larger state as well as downward redistribution (Meltzer and Richard 1981). In this case, the treatment of having a high qualification would be negatively associated with expenditures and revenue and with more progressive forms of taxation and spending. A central way in which antebellum states might have engaged in

downward redistribution was through the funding of common schools. These were funded through a combination of local taxes, state taxes, appropriations from a common school fund, and rate bills, and how the spending was financed was at least as important as the level of funding.²¹ Accordingly, we are interested not only on the aggregate levels but in the distribution of revenue raised from different sources and how spending was allocated across areas. To this end, model 5 is additionally estimated on state-level data on revenue sources and expenditures, with the dependent variable in this case being the proportion of the total revenue earned from a given source or spent on a given subject area.

TABLE 11. Revenue and Expenditures

	Log per capita revenue	Percent of total revenue from source		
		Property Tax	Business Tax	License Tax
High Qualification	0.061 (0.352)	9.849 (4.877)	1.055 (1.013)	5.818 (2.5364)
N	634	290	390	407
States	23	15	20	19
R ²	0.134	0.231	0.015	0.052
	Log per capita expenditures	Percent of total expenditures		
		Infrastructure	Education	Public Safety
High Qualification	0.285 (0.343)	-5.283 (13.64)	8.944 (2.962)	2.519 (2.315)
N	604	313	427	532
States	22	20	21	22
R ²	0.107	0.055	0.105	0.153
State-Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Robust standard errors reported in parentheses for state-fixed effects models. Controls include a time trend, dummy variables for war, the Surplus Revenue disbursement, whether state was a free state or slaveholding state, the percentage of the population that lived in a census-defined urban area, and whether the previous year's government was unified Democratic.

Table 11 reports the results. The first column in the upper and lower panel suggests that high qualifications had little to no impact on a state's per capita revenue or expenditures, at least in the

²¹Local taxes and rate bills – fees imposed on families for sending their children to school – were the most regressive forms of education funding, while state taxes on property, banks, or other businesses, or allocation of the proceeds from the public lands, were among the more progressive.

aggregate. The remaining three columns in each panel, however, suggests that states with high qualifications might have relied on a different mix of taxes and put allocated revenue to different public service priorities. High qualification states, for example, seem to have relied more heavily on property and business taxes than other revenue sources, such as poll taxes or fees. New York State, for instance, effectively abandoned the use of property taxes between 1826 – shortly after the taxpaying qualification for voting was abolished, though the process had begun after the abolition of the property qualification – and 1842, when it again came to be an important part of the state revenue (Sowers 1914). High qualifications were also, perhaps counter-intuitively, more likely to dedicate a higher portion of their expenditures to education.

These patterns should be interpreted with caution. The number of observations for the disaggregated categories of revenue and spending is relatively small, especially given the panel structure of the data. The reliance on a small number of states in turn makes it much more likely that unobserved and time-variant features of each state's political economy are driving the disaggregate results. In any case, the effect across different specifications is modest, and given the lack of any consistent pattern suggests at best a highly attenuated effect of suffrage qualifications on revenue and expenditure decisions, with the levels and distribution likely reflecting policy choices conditioned at least as much by the structural characteristics of the state's economy as the specific priorities of the propertied classes.

CONCLUSION

That the considerable changes in American politics, economics, and social organization in the antebellum years flowed from democratization was once a central tenet of American history. It rested, however, on questionable assumptions about the class character of voting, the responsive character of American institutions, and the extent of disenfranchisement. Today, few historians argue that class stratification among white men was the most important axis of exclusion in the antebellum United States; few political scientists, meanwhile, would characterize American political institutions as highly responsive to aggregate public opinion. The status of America's first wave of democratization is accordingly uncertain.

The findings of this paper support the argument that the scope of disenfranchisement was sizeable – albeit not on the scale seen in Europe or among African Americans or women in America – and

associated with depressed turnout among the free white male population. The democratizations of the antebellum era, and especially of the early Republic, were real, transforming the opportunities available to white men to engage in politics. This finding contradicts a re-emerging synthesis in the field of American historical studies (Ratcliffe 2013), and should encourage a renewed engagement with the causes and consequences of this wave of democratic inclusion.

The substantive impact of this on patterns of representation, however, was considerably attenuated: as our analyses moved from enfranchisement to turnout to party voting to legislative behavior and to policy, the effect was either inconsistent or substantively small. It is not possible with existing data to causally identify all of these effects, but the patterns are consistent and behave as theoretically predicted, becoming more uncertain and modest as we move from the most direct to the most indirect consequences. Similar patterns have been noted in many other contexts, and have encouraged some scholars to account for the persistence of de facto elite power after democratization (Acemoglu and Robinson 2008; ?). The degree to which the causes of democratization's attenuated effect on representation and public policy can be fitted into such accounts merits closer study. Perhaps the most likely causes can be found in two oft-cited features of American political institutions: the status quo biases of its governing systems, including at the state-level, and the early emergence of a two-party system that gave partisan activists considerable discretion in defining the issue agendas presented to the public and pursued in the legislature. By establishing the stages at which democratization's potential effects on policy outcomes was disrupted, this study invites a reconsideration of both party organization and legislative responsiveness in the 19th century United States.

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1 SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL TO “DEMOCRATIZATION IN THE USA?”

1.1 DATA SOURCES

The analysis draws on several new and existing datasets. Changes to the suffrage were identified drawing on Alexander Keyssar (2000), Albert Edward McKinley (1905), Chilton Williamson (1961), Kirk Porter (1918), and an analysis of state constitutions and statutes undertaken by the author. It identifies every change to the suffrage on over 15 dimensions, and for 11 “classes” of voters that have been distinguished for separate treatment in American legal history.

Data on voting is drawn from the *Lampi Collection of American Electoral Returns, 1788-1825* (American Antiquarian Society 2007), *United States Historical Election Returns, 1824-1968* and *Candidate Name and Constituency Totals, 1788-1990* (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research 1999; 1995), and supplemented by contemporary election tabulations in local newspapers. State and Federal censuses were used to provide the basic demographic data at the county level, drawn from the *Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-1970* (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research 2005), the New York State censuses (New York State 1808, 1815, 1822, 1835, 1845, 1855), and the *Electoral and Demographic Data for New York, 1830-1875* being especially valuable (Benson and Silbey 1984).

Census and demographic data was matched to congressional districts using Martis (1982), Parsons and Hermann (1978), Parsons, Beach, and Dubin (1986), Parsons, Dubin, and Parsons (1990). State legislative districts were matched to counties on the basis of the contemporary legislative journals.

The federal censuses were available on a decennial basis, while New York’s state censuses were available irregularly until 1825, and every ten years thereafter. Demographic data for intervening years was estimated using the formula,

$$Pop_{it} = [(\ln(Pop_{i,N}/Pop_{i,n})/N) + 1] * Pop_{it-1} \quad (1)$$

where $Pop_{i,n}$ is the first known population size and $Pop_{i,N}$ is the last or next in a sequence of known population sizes for unit (county) i at year t .

With the exception of the New York and North Carolina analyses, where the adult male population is estimated from census categories, the turnout rate for congressional and state elections was calculated using the total white male population as the denominator.¹ At no point in the antebellum period did the census count the number of persons above the age of twenty-one, although it did frequently count the number above 20. The drawbacks of using the total white male population approach is that states varied in their non-citizen population and age structure. The bias this introduces, however, should work against finding a relationship between higher qualifications and lower turnout, as the states with proportionally the largest immigrant and non-adult populations (and thus an inflated denominator) tended to be newly admitted states where qualifications were more liberal.

Data on state revenue and expenditures was compiled by Richard E. Sylla, John B. Legler, and John Wallis (1991).

Voting records in the North Carolina legislature was extracted by the author from the journals of the General Assembly. Information on the composition of state legislatures was taken from

¹To estimate the number of white persons over the age of 21, I relied on the numbers provided in *A Century of Population Growth*, published by the U.S. Census Office (1909, 103), and on those censuses which listed men by age at intervals that approached the age of majority. For instance, using the *Century of Population Growth* figures an estimate of the 16-21 white population was generated for each state, and this was subtracted from the number of white persons aged 16 and above. Similar calculations were performed to estimate the proportion of the free black and enslaved population that was male and above 21. For this I used the 1820 Census, which did differentiate the black population according to age. Using the free white male count as the denominator reduces differences in the estimated enfranchisement or turnout rate, mitigating the effects of different age structures.

Michael J. Dubin (2007).

1.2 SUFFRAGE REGIMES

Table A1 organizes the states across these basic voting regimes, moving a state from one category to another as it alters its franchise qualifications. Perhaps the most important points to note are both the trend by which a state moves down the list—from property to pecuniary to white male suffrage—and the composition of the different categories, with older more settled states appearing in the property qualification section before moving to the taxpaying section, and the ‘free’ suffrage section composed disproportionately of new states formed out of north- or southwestern territories. Table A1 provides the basic set of institutional arrangements compared in the analyses that follow.

Table A1: Property, Pecuniary, and ‘Free Suffrage’ States in Antebellum U.S.

State	Qualification	Period
Property Qualification		
Connecticut	— Freehold valued at \$7 — \$40 assessed personal property — White basis from 1814	1702-1818
Georgia	— £10 personal value — Liable to pay taxes — Mechanics exempted	1777-1789
Maryland	— 50 acre freehold — £10-current money, personal value	1776-1801
Massachusetts	— £3 freehold — Or, any estate £60	1780-1820
New Hampshire	— £50 Real estate	Royal Charter- 1784
New Jersey	— Worth £50 proclamation money	1776-1807
New York	<i>For Assembly</i> — Freehold £20/\$50 — Rented tenement value of £40/\$7 annual — Freeman of Albany or New York City <i>For Senate and Governor</i> — Freehold £50/\$250 <i>For Black Males</i> — Freehold \$250	1777-1821 1821-1870
North Carolina	<i>For Governor [to 1835] and Senate</i> — 50 acre Freehold	1776-1857

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Rhode Island	— £40 Real estate	Royal Charter-
	— Or, which rents for 40 shillings/year	1842
	— Restricted to whites, 1821-1842	
	<i>For non-native born citizens</i>	1842-1887
	— \$134 Real estate	
	— Or, which rents for \$7/year	
Virginia	— Freehold 50 acres (no settlement)	1776-1831
	— Freehold 25 acres (settlement)	
	— Possession of town lot with house of 12 sq. ft	
Pecuniary/Tax Qualifications		
Connecticut	— Freehold valued at \$7	1818-1845
	— Or, militia duty	
	— Or, payment of state tax	
Delaware	— State or county tax; after 1831, county tax	1792-1896
	— 21-22 yr. males can vote regardless of tax payment	
	— White basis to 1870	
Georgia	— Paid taxes	1789-1933
	— White basis	
	— Poll tax imposed in 1866	
Louisiana	— State tax	1812-1845
	— White basis	
Massachusetts	— Any state or county tax	1820-1890
Mississippi	— Enrolled in militia	1817-1832
	— Or, have paid state or county tax	
New Hampshire	— Poll tax	1784-1968
	— Payment of tax by inhabitants of plantations and places unincorporated	
New Jersey	— Paid state or county tax deemed worth £50	1807-1844
	— White basis	
New York	<i>For White Males</i>	1821-1826
	— State or county tax	
	— Labored on public highways	
	— Performed militia duty	
North Carolina	<i>For House of Commons</i>	1776-1867
	— Paid public taxes	
	— White basis (1835-1868)	
Ohio	— Paid or charged a state or county tax	1802-1851
	— Labor on the roads	
	— White basis	
Pennsylvania	— Paid public taxes	1776-1933
	— State or county tax (1790)	
	— White basis (1838-1870)	
Rhode Island	<i>For Native-Born Citizens, before 1888</i>	1842-1950
	— Paid taxes of at least \$1	
	— Performed militia duty	

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South Carolina	— Paid sum equal to tax on 50 acres land	1778-1810
	— Tax of 3 shillings (1790-1810)	
Virginia	— Household or head of family, paid taxes	1831-1851
‘Free Suffrage’		
Alabama	— White Basis/Residence	1819-1868
Arkansas	— White Basis/Residence	1836-1868
Connecticut	— White Basis/Residence	1845-1870
Florida	— White Basis/Residence	1845-1870
	— Enrolled in militia	1845-1868
Illinois	— White Basis/Residence	1818-1870
Indiana	— White Basis/Residence	1816-1869
Iowa	— White Basis/Residence	1846-1868
Kentucky	— White Basis/Residence	1792-1870
Louisiana	— White Basis/Residence	1845-1868
Maine	— Residence	1819-
Maryland	— White Basis/Residence	1801-1870
Michigan	— White Basis/Residence	1837-1869
Mississippi	— White Basis/Residence	1832-1868
Missouri	— White Basis/Residence	1820-1870
New York	<i>For White Males</i>	1826-1870
	— White Basis/Residence	
Ohio	— White Basis/Residence	1851-1870
South Carolina	— White Basis/Residence	1810-1868
Tennessee	— Freeman/Citizen inhabitant of county	1796-1870
	— White Basis/Residence after 1834	
Texas	— White Basis/Residence	1820-1868
Vermont	— Resident one year	1820-1868
	— And, of a quiet and peaceable behavior	1793-
Virginia	— White Basis/Residence	1851-1869
Wisconsin	— White Basis/Residence	1848-1866

1.3 NORTH CAROLINA AND NEW YORK

The suffrage qualifications for North Carolina were unique insofar as they imposed different requirements for voting for distinct offices. The constitutional qualifications are provided in Table A2.

These differences across voting regimes can at best provide the minimum number of voters excluded by the disfranchising clause. If an elector is enfranchised under only one of two qualifying standards, they might be less inclined to turnout. This would bias the estimate of the scope of disfranchisement downwards and suggest more enfranchised voters than was actually the case.

Table A2: Bicameral and Cross-Institutional Differences in Suffrage Qualifications, New York and North Carolina

	High Threshold	Lower Threshold
New York	“the senate of the State of New York shall consist of twenty-four freeholders to be chosen out of the body of the freeholders; and that they be chosen by the freeholders of this State, possessed of freeholds of the value of one hundred pounds, over and above all debts charged thereon. . . . [A] wise and discreet freeholder of this State shall be, by ballot, elected governor, by the freeholders of this State, qualified, as before described, to elect senators.”	“[E]very male inhabitant of full age, who shall have personally resided within one of the counties of this State for six months immediately preceding the day of election, shall. . . , be entitled to vote for representatives of the said county in assembly; if. . . he shall have been a freeholder, possessing a freehold of the value of twenty pounds, within the said county, or have rented a tenement therein of the yearly value of forty shillings, and been rated and actually paid taxes to this State”
North Carolina	“That all freemen of the age of twenty-one years, who have been inhabitants of any one county within the State twelve months immediately preceding the day of any election, and possessed of a freehold, within the same county, of fifty acres of land, for six months next before, and at the day of election, shall be entitled to vote for a member of the senate.”	“That all freemen of the age of 21 years, who have been inhabitants of any one county within the State twelve months immediately preceding the day of any election, and shall have paid public taxes, shall be entitled to vote for members of the house of commons, for the county in which he resides.” [1776] “The Governor shall be chosen by the qualified voters for the members of the House of Commons.” [1835]

1.4 CONGRESSIONAL AND STATE-LEVEL IDEAL POINTS

Legislator ideal points were estimated using the roll call matrices for congressional voting provided by <http://www.voteview.com> and those recovered from state legislative journals. For each congressional session, ideal points were estimated using the Clinton, Jackman, Rivers IDEAL technique, and bridged using the technique outlined in Groseclose, Levitt, and Snyder (1999) to adjust Congress-specific scores.

This method allows for punctuated change in legislator ideal points, and for an analysis of whether individual members change in response to changes in franchise qualifications—analyses that cannot be done in DW-NOMINATE or Common Space scores (Bateman and Lapinski 2016;

for a critique of this approach, see McCarty 2016). For North Carolina, identical roll calls in both the House and Senate were identified and a single merged matrix of roll calls produced on this basis. Members who served in both chambers were treated as a separate legislator for each chamber.

Figure A1: Congressional Ideal Points by Suffrage Regime

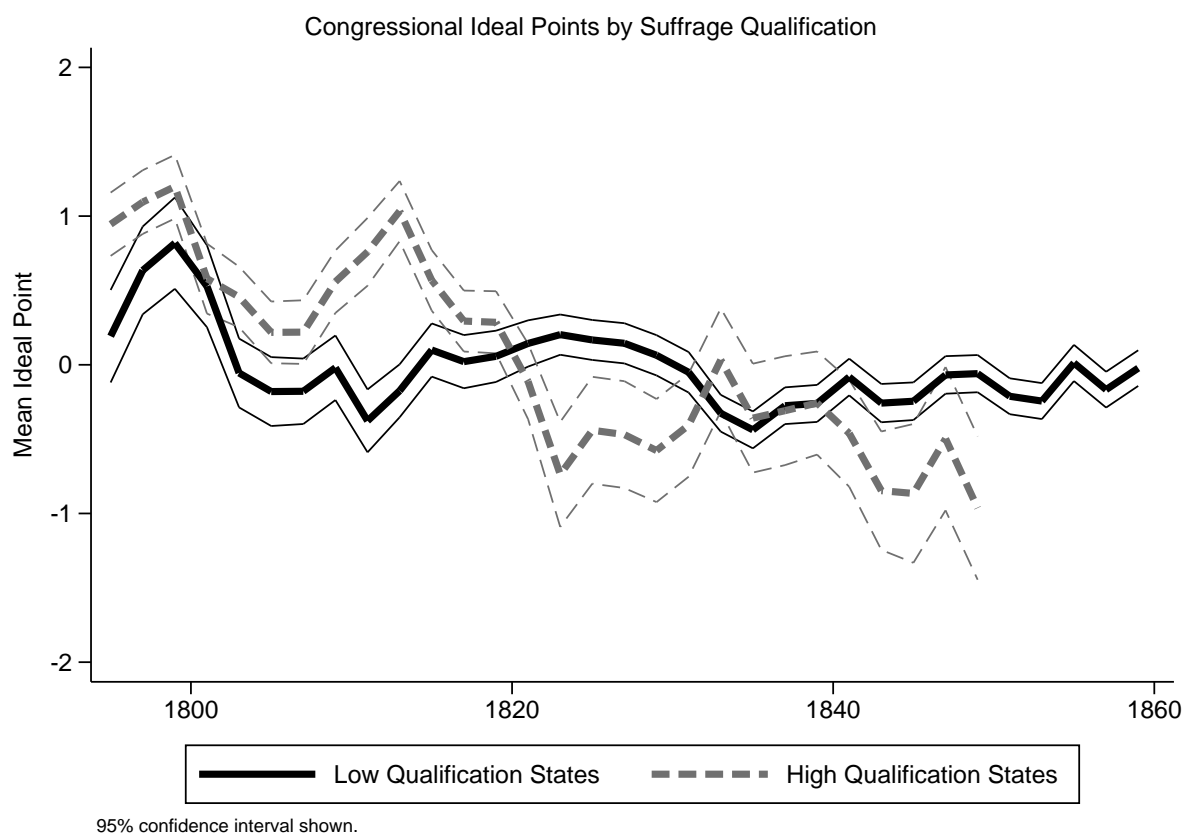


Figure A1 tracks the location of the mean congressional ideal point by state voting regime. In the first party system, high qualifications are associated with – although not necessarily productive of – being on the political right; by the 1820s this has reversed, reflecting the fact that most states that retained property qualifications were in the South, a region that generally favored the Democratic Party.

1.5 ROBUSTNESS CHECKS ON PARTY VOTE SHARES

The patterns described in the main text are generally robust to different specifications and approaches. This is most important for the study of party vote shares, where data limitations and the endogeneity of suffrage reforms and party control meant that causal identification was generally not possible. A supplementary analysis (Table A3) compares the patterns observed in the House of Representatives to those in state legislatures, including both of North Carolina's chambers, with congressional delegations and state legislatures subdivided into historically appropriate regions.

Across the different voting regimes for elections to Congress there is a significant change in the percentage of Democratic legislators elected, albeit one that varies considerably across regions. A similar pattern is evident in state legislatures, although in North Carolina there does not seem to have been much of a difference between the parties across the two chambers. This was in part because both parties competed actively with both the fully enfranchised and partially enfranchised classes, but also because representation in the Senate gave greater weight to ownership of slaves (through a state-level three-fifths clause), giving Democrats in the east a modest advantage in this chamber relative to the west, where the Whigs were more important. While Whigs did better among large property owners, the Democrats did proportionally better in slave-holding districts. The class dimension to American politics did manifest in different patterns of party support: but, perhaps because there was no one consistent dimension, it did so in regionally distinct ways that often cut against the expected patterns.

Table A4 uses the Democratic proportion of the state legislature as the dependent variable.

The effect of both property and taxpaying qualifications is consistently in the correct direction, but the large standard errors again result in only property for the early Republic rising to conventional levels of significance. In the matched-group DiD, the interaction between treatment and the reform period is in the correct direction, is approximately the effect size reported in columns (1) and (3), and is likely distinguishable from zero.

Table A5 examines the Democratic proportion of a state's congressional delegation, this time using panel-corrected standard errors for a Prais-Winsten regression of cross-sectional time-

Table A3: Percent of Legislative Seats by State Won by Democratic/Democratic-Republican Party

Year	High Qualification State/Chamber	Low Qualification State/Chamber	Difference (SE)
<i>Congress</i>			
1789-1820	52%	76%	24 (4.96)
—New England	26%	46%	20 (9.31)
—Mid-Atlantic	61%	62%	0.75 (8.92)
—Ohio and Upper Mississippi Valleys	—	87%	—
—Southern Seaboard	78%	88%	10 (5.79)
—Southwest	100%	100%	0 (—)
1821-1860	45%	63%	18 (3.23)
—New England	30%	39%	9 (7.31)
—Mid-Atlantic	42%	50%	8 (7.91)
—Ohio and Upper Mississippi Valleys	46%	62%	16 (9.09)
—Southern Seaboard	64%	77%	13 (7.09)
—Southwest	40%	67%	36 (7.80)
—Upper Midwest	—	54%	—
<i>State Legislatures</i>			
1789-1820	47%	54%	7 (2.27)
—New England	41%	54%	13 (2.69)
—Mid-Atlantic	63%	54%	-8 (3.85)
1821-1860	49%	54%	6 (1.32)
—New England	43%	44%	1 (2.76)
—Mid-Atlantic	53%	51%	-3 (3.00)
—Ohio and Upper Mississippi Valleys	48%	54%	6 (3.13)
—Southern Seaboard	53%	60%	7 (2.48)
—Southwest	40%	67%	27 (4.11)
—Upper Midwest	—	53%	—
<i>North Carolina</i>			
1835-1857	51%	50%	
1835-1840	47%	47%	
1845-1850	49%	47%	
1850-1857	59%	55%	
Source: Author's calculations using Dubin (2007) and www.voteview.com. Higher qualification for 1821-1860 includes property and taxpaying.			

series, specifying a panel-specific AR1 autocorrelation structure and pairwise selection (Beck and Katz 1995).

Table A5: Democratic Proportion of State Congressional Delegation

Table A4: Democratic Proportion of State Legislatures by Suffrage Regime

	Time-Series			Matched State DiD		
	(1) 1795-1860	(2) 1795-1822	(3) 1834-1860		(4) 1795-1820	(5) 1818-1860
Taxpaying	-5.22 (3.85)	—	-7.60 (3.48)	Pre-Reform	—	-2.50 (2.86)
Property	-9.98 (6.38)	-18.60 (8.64)	-9.09 (5.24)	Treatment Group	—	3.56 (2.15)
				Control Group (High)	—	
Democratic Pres. Victory	0.22 (1.06)	-2.08 (1.70)	2.20 (1.10)	Interaction with Treated (γ)	—	-9.85 (3.98)
				Interaction with Control (High)	—	
N	1,020	223	690	N	—	477
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Matched-Group FE	—	Yes
Standard errors in parentheses.						

The results are consistent with Table 5 in the main text, although the large standard errors mean we cannot distinguish the effect of taxpaying qualifications in the antebellum period or property qualifications in the early Republic from zero.

While the size of the effect for state legislatures might seem smaller than in the analysis of congressional representation, this is because the dependent variable for Congress was a state's delegation and not the legislature as a whole: the smaller number of districts in a state's congressional delegation reduces their proportionality, magnifying the effect of property qualifications.

1.6 COLONIAL ESTIMATES

While this study has been concerned with the post-Revolutionary period, the wave of suffrage expansions that occurred during and immediately after the War suggest that early Republic and antebellum democratizations were expanding an already liberalized franchise. The extent of disenfranchisement in the colonial era is the subject of a considerable literature, although one of its central findings is that many of the records used to estimate enfranchisement are unreliable. Chilton Williamson, for instance, noted that the Rhode Island tax lists “do not draw a distinction between taxes or assessments upon real or personal property, making it difficult to determine pre-

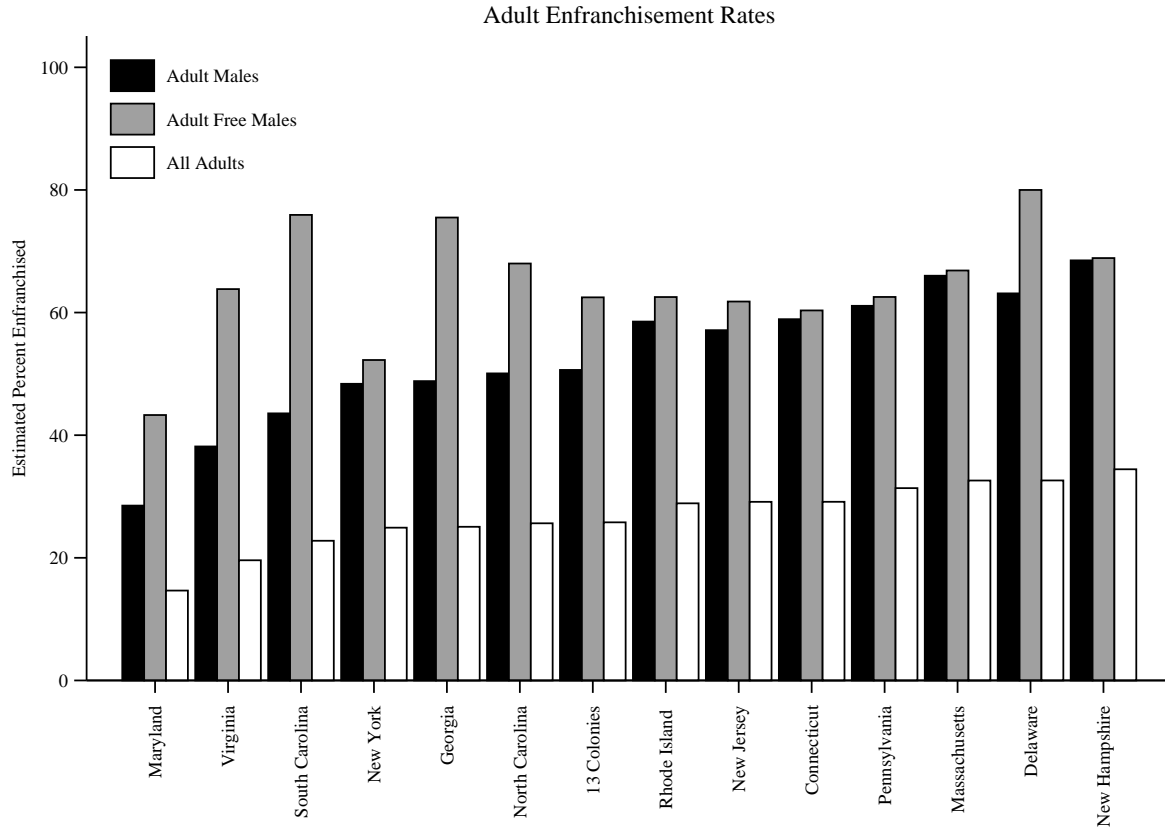
Table A5: Democratic Proportion of State Congressional Delegation

	Time-Series		
	(1) 1795-1860	(2) 1795-1822	(3) 1834-1860
Taxpaying	-11.12 (4.91)	1.06 (8.54)	-12.54 (6.91)
Property	-25.48 (7.17)	-14.85 (9.88)	-23.06 (11.85)
Democratic Pres. Victory	1.89 (4.34)	-1.81 (3.02)	2.34 (2.89)
N	766	250	372
N. Groups	33	24	33
Panel-Correct Standard errors in parentheses.			

cisely the number of adult male residents who were freeholders in either Providence or any other town” (Williamson 1960, 25). Probate records—from which the most inclusive enfranchisement estimates were produced—are especially are likely to bias the estimates upwards (Cary 1963, 259). It is also not often clear whether the tax lists are in sterling or in lawful money: “if we assume that the list is in lawful money, we find that only 53 adult men [in a sampled town] had estates of at least £53.40, and were qualified voters. . . . If the list is in sterling, 75 men had estates of £40 and 84 men would have been unable to meet the property qualifications” (Cary 1963, 261). As noted by Dinkin, “the relative scarcity of tax lists and census reports in certain colonies makes any definitive statement impossible” (Dinkin 1977, 40).

A rough estimate of colonial era enfranchisement rates can be generated by aggregating across the range of secondary sources, improving our estimates by averaging across different experts assessments (Winkler and Clemen 2004). Estimates were included if based on empirical assessments of colonial property and landholding patterns or historical surveys of studies conducted on this basis (Brown 1952, 1955, 1964; Sydnor 1952; McCormick 1953; Klein 1959; Williamson 1960; Pole 1962; Dinkin 1977; Kolp 1998; and Ratcliffe 2013). Figure A2 compares the estimated rates of enfranchisement according to different denominators. In general, the southern and frontier colonies of Georgia, South Carolina, and New Hampshire, saw the greatest proportion of

Figure A2: Estimated Adult Enfranchisement Rates in Colonial America



adult white men included in the franchise, while Maryland had the lowest rate, followed by New York. Overall, these estimates suggest that the proportion who could vote in legislative elections during the colonial period was between half- and three-quarters of free adult males.²

A total enfranchisement rate for all non-indigenous adults would be approximately 22 percent. The enfranchisement rate in England at the time was considerably lower, but would have been near the same level in medium and large borough districts. Moreover, many accounts of colonial America note that the number of people with real or personal property holdings that fell

²The most recent analysis of the franchise suggests that upwards of 90% of the adult white male population could vote, with an overall rate of 80% across the country. This finding, however, is almost exclusively reliant on Dinkin's estimates—especially at the higher end—while acknowledging but seemingly rejecting the findings of others (2013, 230).

below the qualification threshold was increasing (Lockridge 1968). Dinkin notes that “many regions, especially parts of Maryland and New England, saw the number of property holders, thus voters, declining toward the end of the period” (Dinkin 1977, 46), while Allan Kulikoff notes that “the land supply in coastal Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina fell more rapidly than plantation size” resulting in rising prices and decreasing landownership, “exacerbated in Virginia by the amount of land (as much as half in older counties) rich men entailed (a legal form that required all land be given to one son, in perpetuity), thus keeping it off land markets” (Kulikoff 2000, 132–33). The declining proportion of enfranchised white adult men at the end of the colonial period reflected not only growing inequality and decline of landholding, but deliberate policy choices to restrict the franchise (McKinley 1905, 27–28, 31, 77, 161–62, 379). In 1767, for instance, the British government issued instructions to royal governors prohibiting them from enlarging the electorate (Williamson 1960, 89)

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