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Explaining a Paradox of Democracy:
The Role of Institutions in Female
Enfranchisement

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Explaining a Paradox of Democracy: The Role of Institutions in Female Enfranchisement*

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Abstract: Switzerland is known for its highly developed direct democracy. However, Swiss women were enfranchised at the federal level only in 1971 and in many cantons even later. We analyze the role of direct democracy in the delayed Swiss enfranchising process by investigating a novel dataset covering referenda among males about enfranchising women. Applying a difference-in-differences approach, we shed light on the conditions under which strong local direct democracy becomes a barrier to women's suffrage. Our results are consistent with direct democracy having two effects: it boosts men's demand to enfranchise women, but it also increases the price for men to do so. Depending on the specific conditions of the vote, the former or the latter effect dominates.

Keywords: women's suffrage, municipal institutions, direct democracy

JEL classification: D72, J16, N24, N44, P16

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1. Introduction

The literature on the effects of democracy provides a complex but consistent picture. While the empirical evidence is mixed for democracy in general, it clearly indicates that well-defined democratic institutions positively affect outcomes such as income, economic growth, happiness, or public policy as politicians are geared to fulfill voters' preferences more effectively (e.g., Frey and Stutzer, 2000; Acemoglu *et al.*, 2008; Funk and Gathmann, 2011; Stadelmann *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, the question arises regarding which conditions encourage a society's will to extend the scope of democracy by enlarging the group of voters. Not least because of increasing migration and thus, a growing number of politically excluded residents, there is an urge to gain a better understanding of the political power-sharing process. For this endeavor, the introduction of women's suffrage in the last century is a particularly instructive case. It is one of the most extensive, non-violent power transfers to a group so far excluded from political participation rights. To date, research on suffrage extension has mostly focused on its effects on economic outcomes such as government spending and redistribution (e.g., Funk and Gathmann, 2015, 2011; Stutzer and Kienast, 2005; Aidt *et al.*, 2006). In contrast, from an empirical perspective, the process of extending suffrage to women has been less analyzed. This paper aims to bridge this gap by examining the Swiss enfranchisement process, which is especially informative for several reasons.

With respect to women's suffrage, Switzerland had been an enclave of male resistance for decades. While the first cantons¹ to enfranchise women for cantonal policy decisions (i.e., cantonal elections and referendum votes) did so in 1959, the last canton that introduced women's suffrage only did it in 1990 after being forced by the Federal Court. Compared with its neighboring countries, such as Germany (1918), France (1944), Italy (1946), and Austria (1919), as well as other western countries, such as the United Kingdom (1928) and the United States (1920²), Switzerland's enfranchisement of women is rather late. As Switzerland is known for its high degree of democracy, this observation seems paradoxical. Why is a country known for its well-developed democracy one of the last to grant suffrage to women as a fundamental democratic right? Is the late and long Swiss journey to women's suffrage caused by its well-

¹ Until 1979 Switzerland consisted of 25 cantons, which are the member states of Switzerland.

² However, unconditional suffrage for Afro-Americans was only established in 1965.

developed democracy and specifically, its direct democracy, which is often accused of discriminating against outsiders (e.g., Hainmüller and Hangartner, 2013)?

Due to its extensive federalism and decentralization, Switzerland exhibits both a high level of direct democracy and a large variety of the extent of direct democracy between cantons and municipalities. Furthermore, the introduction of women's suffrage was a democratic process that lasted for 70 years (~1919-1990), characterized by almost 100 popular votes in which Swiss men decided about enfranchising women in their respective cantons, as well as at the federal level. Therefore, the introduction of women's suffrage in Switzerland is a most instructive case to gain a better understanding of discrimination in direct democracy. In this paper, we concentrate on the role of democratic institutions at the municipal level. We investigate the male electorate's willingness to enfranchise women at the federal level and compare two types of municipalities: *direct-democratic* municipalities with town meetings and *representative-democratic* municipalities with municipal parliaments.³ Using a difference-in-differences approach, we compare the effects of these institutions under two settings. We take advantage of a newly created historical dataset and focus on the two federal votes conducted in 1959 and 1971. Before 1959, no canton had introduced women's suffrage for cantonal or municipal decisions. In 1971, in contrast, about a third of the cantons had introduced women's suffrage for cantonal and municipal decisions.

In municipalities with town meetings, the extent of direct democracy as well as each individual's influence is larger, since all important decisions are taken by the (male) citizens themselves without delegating decision power to a parliament. Thus, the loss in individual influence is larger when suffrage is extended to women. The size of the electorate present in a town meeting negatively impacts each individual's influence as not only the weight of his vote declines but also opportunities to express the intensity of preferences, e.g. agenda-setting power, social control, or individual time to speak.

Based on two elements, our analysis reveals an explanation for the observed paradox of democracy. First, the more powerful the voice of the present voters in determining politics, the higher the cost of spreading democracy and the fewer voters are willing to share their rights with

³ In representative-democratic municipalities the citizens have the right to call for referenda on parliamentary decisions. However, their rights are much more restricted than in direct-democratic municipalities. Of course, the citizens of direct-democratic and representative-democratic municipalities have equal rights at the cantonal and federal levels.

new voters. In other words, we find evidence for a tradeoff between the intensity and the scope of democracy. Second, the empirical analysis suggests that under specific conditions direct democracy also boosts the acceptance of enfranchising women. This finding becomes visible when examining municipalities from cantons that have already introduced women's suffrage for municipal decisions. In these municipalities, the price men have to pay for women's suffrage at the federal level is independent of the municipal institutions. In this setting, strong direct democracy turns out to boost the demand for women's suffrage when compared to representative democracy. This provides first evidence that direct democracy impacts the spread of democracy in two opposing ways: it increases the price for the actual principals to enfranchise women in their jurisdiction, but it also boosts the demand of the actual principals to extend suffrage. In sum, our findings help explain the paradoxical observation about a highly democratic country being one of the last to introduce women's suffrage by shedding light on the limits of expanding democracy.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly reviews the related literature. Section 3 provides a short overview of the process of enfranchisement in Switzerland. Section 4 describes the structure of the historical dataset, while Section 5 models the main mechanisms. Section 6 develops hypotheses about the role of direct democracy for enfranchising women. Section 7 introduces our estimation strategy and provides an overview of descriptive statistics. Section 8 discusses our results. Section 9 summarizes our main findings, draws some conclusions, and offers an outlook at further research.

2. Related Literature

The literature dealing with suffrage extension so far has mostly focused on its effect on economic outcomes. Several papers concentrate on the effects of women's suffrage on the size and the structure of government spending. Applying the hypothesis of Meltzer and Richard (1981) to suffrage extensions, enfranchising new groups increases government size, when suffrage extension shifts the pivotal voter (i.e., the median voter) to a lower income bracket. Lott and Kenny (1999) empirically find an overall increase in US government expenditures for the US after the enfranchisement of women, whereas Aidt *et al.* (2006) uncover a weak increase in expenditures on healthcare, education, and welfare. The latter study's findings are in line with those of Abrams and Settle (1999), who compare the structure of government spending between

Switzerland and other countries before and after Switzerland's introduction of women's suffrage at the federal level in 1971. According to their results, Switzerland experienced a relative increase in social spending but no general increase in government spending. These findings fit those on the behavior of Swiss female voters: Funk and Gathmann (2015) find minimal gender differences for the overall government size but considerable differences for the preferences towards the composition of public goods, and Stadelmann *et al.*, (2014a) find that Swiss female parliamentarians are more likely to vote for redistribution than their male colleagues. Llavador and Oxoby (2005) analyze the connection between the franchise for the working class and economic growth. Using evidence from 11 countries, they identify a connection between economic growth and franchise extension under the following conditions: the existence of economic conflicts among elitist groups, the weakness of landed classes, and a critical mass of the working class.

The literature analyzing the conditions for suffrage extensions focuses on different channels. Several authors analyze different aspects of the link between suffrage extension and the threat of revolution (e.g., Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000, 2001; Conley and Temimi, 2001; Ellis and Fender, 2011; Aidt and Jensen, 2014; Aidt and Franck, 2015). Acemoglu and Robinson (2000, 2001) develop a theory of democratization, in which the current elite provides voting rights in order to prevent revolution or social unrest. Aidt and Franck (2015) concentrate on franchise extensions for male voters in connection to the Great Reform act in 1832. In the empirical analysis of 244 English constituencies, they take advantage of spatial variation in the occurrence of Swing riots. They find that citizens who experienced riots in their closer environment tended to vote in favor of suffrage extension. Conley and Temimi (2001) argue about the potential costs for the current elite if the franchise is not extended. Theoretically they show that even though individuals may not value the vote, they may value the franchise itself. Lizzeri and Persico (2004) offer an explanation to franchise extension in the absence of revolutionary threat. Their model is based on a division within the elite, as the elite did not equally profit from the status quo. In their model a broadening of the electorate also reduces the incentives for political clientelism.

Besides the role of the current elite, the impact of wars on suffrage extension is also discussed in the literature (e.g. Hicks, 2013 and Polishchuk and Syunyaev, 2015). Using cross-country data, Hicks (2013) empirically analyzes the positive relationship between international conflicts and

the likelihood of introducing female suffrage. In this analysis, countries with stronger democracies are somewhat more likely to provide female suffrage.

Another strand of the literature argues about the positive effects of female suffrage for men themselves. Doepke *et al.* (2012) review the literature and contend that men have different preferences with respect to their wives and daughters. Concerning their own daughters, men favor extending women's rights to protect them from marital exploitation. Geddes and Lueck (2002) focus on the role of growing returns to human capital, which make it less attractive for men to deny property rights to women. The allocation of decision rights is also a topic in the experimental literature. Regarding the value of the vote, Fehr *et al.* (2013) point out that individuals might even opt for retaining authority if delegation would improve their material endowment. Moreover, Bartling *et al.* (2014) find evidence that decision rights have a positive intrinsic value exceeding a purely instrumental value. Regarding the process of female enfranchisement those aspects exceeding the purely instrumental character of voting rights might affect the decision making of voters as well.

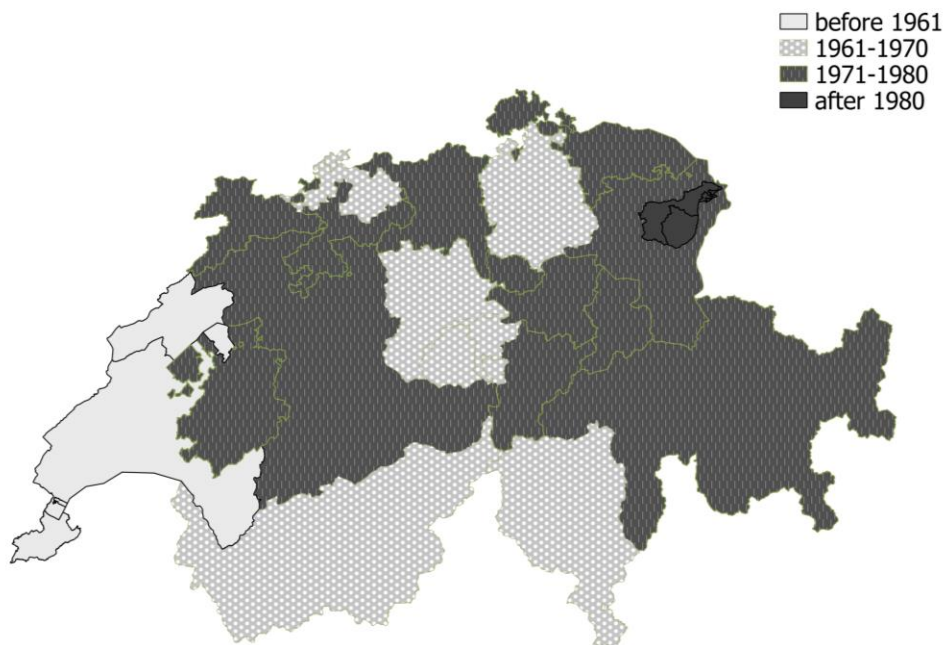
Empirical literature analyzing the process of extending suffrage in general, as well as specifically to women, is astonishingly scarce. This case applies all the more to empirical literature that considers the institutional environment of suffrage extension, which may be explained by a lack of data. Pittaluga *et al.* (2015) focus on universal suffrage for men; in a sample considering ten European countries over the 1840–1922 period, they find that limited powers of parliament seem to foster the acceptance of universal suffrage for men. Using state-by-decade data, Braun and Kvasnicka (2013) analyze the enfranchisement of women in US states over the 1870–1930 period. In their study, the driving force of enfranchisement is the scarcity of women in some states, which induces men to empower women in order to make their states more attractive to them or as they face lower political costs in states with a scarcity of women. Bertocchi's (2011) politico-economic model concentrating on wage differentials is tested with a cross-country dataset covering 22 countries. The narrower the gender wage gap is, the more likely suffrage is extended to women. The percentage of Catholics and the legality of divorce are negatively correlated with suffrage extension. From this literature review, we conclude that despite the extensive literature related to women suffrage, to the best of our knowledge, little is known about the role that institutions play in the enfranchisement of women. Most strikingly, little is known

about the role of the extent of democracy itself, specifically, men's political influence as voters. This paper aims to fill this gap.

3. Women's Suffrage in Switzerland

For Swiss women, their enfranchisement entailed a long process. The founding of the Swiss Association for Women's Suffrage in 1909 and the introduction of women's suffrage in the last canton in 1990 are separated by more than 80 years. In most countries which introduced women suffrage earlier than Switzerland, national parliaments decided about extending suffrage to women. In highly decentralized and directly democratic Switzerland, the decision had to be made by the male voters. Suffrage for decisions at the cantonal and municipal level is granted by the cantons, whereas suffrage for federal decisions is issued by the federation. Thus, men had to decide in each canton separately about enfranchising women for cantonal and municipal decisions, as well as at the federal level about women's suffrage for federal decisions. This situation resulted in a large number of votes on women's suffrage, ranging from votes about partial suffrage only for specific issues such as school and welfare questions, to general suffrage specifically at the municipal level, the cantonal level, or both levels combined, to suffrage at the federal level.

Figure 1. Acceptance of women's suffrage in cantons



The first vote covered in our dataset was conducted in 1919, followed by about 94⁴ cantonal votes and two federal votes.

If the majority of men voting in a canton or the federation agreed to a specific proposal, suffrage was accordingly extended and also imposed on those municipalities in which men voted against the respective proposal. It was only in 1959 when the first cantons started to adopt women's suffrage. In parallel to the process at the cantonal level, two federal votes were held in 1959 and 1971. The second vote was accepted, granting suffrage to women, specifically for federal political decisions. Despite this step, the process of enfranchising women at the cantonal level lasted until 1990, when the last canton (Appenzell Innerrhoden) was sentenced by the Federal Court to introduce women's suffrage at the cantonal and the municipal levels. Figure 1 depicts the sequence of women's suffrage adoption at the cantonal level and illustrates the variation used in the empirical analysis in Section 7.

4. A Novel Historical Dataset

In this paper, we focus on the data about the two federal votes conducted in 1959 and 1971, when Swiss men from all municipalities voted simultaneously on the question of whether suffrage should be granted to women for federal matters.⁵ This data results in a relatively balanced panel with 4,202 municipal observations. To set up the dataset, we use a variety of sources. Most of the referenda data has to be collected at the cantonal level and be digitalized as the data sources are mostly printouts. To control for municipal characteristics, we have collected and digitalized the federal decennial census data, the data provided by the Swiss statistical yearbooks, and the data provided by the cantons. At the municipal level, the dataset provides variations in terms of socioeconomic characteristics and municipal institutions. To measure direct democracy at the municipal level, we use the municipal survey data provided by Ladner (1988). We take advantage of a variable for the organization of municipal democracy, that is, whether the citizens themselves decide in a local town meeting or delegate power to a municipal parliament. We

⁴ The exact number of referenda depends on the definition of what a referenda on suffrage extension is. There are also a few referenda on issues like the reallocation of the power to define suffrage from the constitution to the law. Although it is not fully clear whether such referenda should be counted as referenda on suffrage extension or not, we include them in the sample.

⁵ For our empirical analysis, we have collected a unique historical dataset covering the entire enfranchisement process between 1919 and 1990.

combine Ladner's first survey wave of 1988 with the data of Funk and Litschig (2014), who check for municipal institutional shifts between 1945 and 2010. In the period observed, only 2.5% of municipalities switch their institutional form. To prevent biases in our dataset, the switchers are excluded from the sample in all specifications. In our dataset, this cleanup involves 35 municipalities, indicating that the institutional setting in Swiss municipalities is stable in the relevant period.

Votes on women's enfranchisement were conducted at two levels. At the cantonal level, votes were held on women's suffrage at the cantonal or the municipal level (facultative or obligatory) or both. At the federal level, two votes on women's suffrage were held specifically for this level. Concerning the scope of political decision making, there should be a tendency toward stronger restrictions for women's suffrage at the federal level—the key level that would decide about constitutional amendments. This observation would be consistent with Aghion and Tirole's (1997) finding that delegating in an organization is costly, as the principal loses control and therefore assigns unimportant tasks. Moreover, with federal voting rights, there exists the possibility for women to enforce top-down changes on the cantons, and the judiciary is more likely to impose women's suffrage on cantons (which actually happened in 1990). The fact that it took until 1971 to hold a second federal vote on women's suffrage—although by this time, 40% of the cantons had introduced a form of obligatory women's suffrage, and most cantons had gone through more than three votes on women's suffrage—indicates the resistance to provide suffrage at this level. However, the original attempt to introduce women's suffrage at lower levels, as some kind of test version or insurance against unwanted outcomes, was not as successful as expected. For more than 30 years, no vote was accepted at the cantonal level. Table A1 in the appendix provides an overview of the introduction of obligatory municipal and cantonal suffrage.

5. A Paradox of Democracy

As long as women have no suffrage, adult men are the only voters. They decide on politics, either themselves via direct democratic institutions or by delegating their decision-making power to politicians. To men, extending the group of voters by enfranchising women brings about cost and benefits. On one hand, a man's individual influence on political outcomes decreases as the probability of his vote affecting outcomes decreases. These costs increase in the growing

preference heterogeneity between males and females as well as the strength of direct democracy. On the other hand, men may also benefit when suffrage is extended. According to the Condorcet jury theorem, the quality of democratic decisions under uncertainty improves when more people are involved in the decision making process, as long as their individual errors are independently distributed.⁶ Involving more and different people in the decision-making process may also increase the amount and quality of information available. Additionally enlarging the franchise increases the legitimacy of political decisions. From the literature taking into account the interaction of gender of the recipient and the dictator (see for example Ben-Ner *et al.*, 2004 and Dufwenberg and Muren, 2006), we assume that men do not tend to generally discriminate women. Interestingly Andreoni and Vesterlund (2001) point out, that male giving depends more on the price of giving than female giving. In our empirical analysis, we analyze how men's tradeoff between costs and benefits of enfranchising women depends on municipal political institutions. We expect the costs of extending suffrage to increase with the effectiveness of direct democracy, that is, with the voice of men in politics. Consequently, the tradeoff when enfranchising women depends on the extent of direct democracy. This results in a paradox of democracy, as the following considerations show.

Individual utility of a male voter (U) depends on his individual influence on political outcomes (I) and the scope of democratic equality, as reflected in the proportion of citizens holding voting rights (E). Utility can be expected to grow in I and E . Thus, we have:

$$U = u(I, E) \quad (1)$$

$$\frac{\partial U(I, E)}{\partial I} > 0 \quad (2)$$

$$\frac{\partial U(I, E)}{\partial E} > 0 \quad (3)$$

I and E are characterized in equations (4) and (5). They depend on the proportion of citizens holding voting rights (n) and the strength of direct democratic institutions ($I-a$), which can be characterized as the mirror image of the power delegated to the agents, i.e. to politicians. In a municipality with a close to zero, direct democracy is strong as the politicians have few or no

⁶ For a discussion and application of the Condorcet jury theorem to politics, see Stadelmann *et al.* (2014b).

possibilities to influence political outcomes. The value of a is low, for instance, when the citizens decide in a town meeting on municipal political matters. Section 6 focuses on a possible channel in the variation of a . E is positively affected by the proportion of the population holding voting rights (n). On the other hand, I is negatively affected by n and a , as influence is diminishing in both variables. For simplicity and ease of notation, we directly write:

$$I \approx \frac{1-a}{n} \quad (4)$$

$$E \approx n \quad (5)$$

with $0 \leq a \leq 1$

and

with $0 \leq n \leq 1$.

When women are enfranchised, the electorate increases by the number of women entitled to vote. This results in an increase in n . When the proportion of the eligible population n is increasing, the extent of equality in democracy E is growing, but at the same time, the individual influence on outcomes I is shrinking. This effect increases in the heterogeneity of male and female preference.

Inserting Equations (4) and (5) into Equation (1) yields Equation (6):

$$U(I, E) = U\left(\frac{1-a}{n}, n\right) \quad (6)$$

Differentiating with respect to n yields Equation (7):

$$\frac{\partial U}{\partial n} = \underbrace{\frac{\partial U}{\partial E}}_{>0} - \underbrace{\frac{\partial U}{\partial I} * \frac{(1-a)}{n^2}}_{<0} \geq 0 \quad (7)$$

The overall effect of increasing n on utility may be positive or negative, depending on the relative size of the two right hand terms. Equation (7) also reveals that the total effect of granting suffrage depends on the size of $(1-a)$ in the respective municipalities. The lower the value of a (i.e., the more pronounced direct democracy is), the larger the utility losses through an increase in n , as the negative part of Equation (7) is growing when a is shrinking.

Hence, we expect to observe that municipalities with a higher degree of direct democracy may be more restrictive toward female suffrage. This hypothesis will be evaluated from an empirical perspective in the subsequent sections.

6. Direct Democracy at the Municipal Level

To empirically test the influence of direct democracy relative to representative democracy, one possibility is to concentrate on institutional differences among cantons. However, there are much less observations at the cantonal than at the municipal level. Therefore, this paper focuses at the latter level with its much richer observable variations.

In around 80% of Swiss municipalities, the most important political decision-making body is a town meeting. It constitutes the legislative power and is the prototype of direct democracy (e.g., Mueller, 2003). Town meetings usually take place in the town hall or another large room in the municipality, for instance in a church or a hotel's ballroom. All residents with suffrage can participate and have free speech and full voting rights for all important political decisions. In the other type of municipalities, the respective competencies are delegated to a parliament. Thus, these municipalities exhibit a form of representative democracy, although the parliaments are constrained as the citizens can (under pre-specified conditions) demand a referendum against parliamentary decisions. However, the citizens of the two types of municipalities have identical political rights at the cantonal and the federal levels. Municipalities with town meeting range from the smallest size up to around 20,000 inhabitants (see Ladner, 2002, 2016). In municipalities with town meetings, as well as in those with parliaments, the government commonly consists of five to nine members who are usually individually elected by the voters in majority votes. In municipalities with town meetings, the government invites the electorate one to four times a year to discuss and decide about issues such as the budget, local taxes, infrastructure projects, and cooperation or even mergers among municipalities, as well as to decide about

naturalizations of foreigners.⁷ Most cantons provide the possibility to hold additional town meetings if a certain number of signatures are collected in the municipality.

In town meetings, each citizen can influence politics via several channels. He can decide on policy proposals of the executive, propose amendments to the government proposals, launch his own proposals and initiatives, and decide about the regulations of the municipality⁸ (see Ladner, 2002). In contrast to parliamentary municipalities, town meeting municipalities pose fewer agency problems to the electorate, as the latter makes the final decision itself. During a town meeting, each citizen can influence policy decisions in several ways: by making new proposals and thus setting the agenda, by formulating new arguments for or against a proposal, by expressing especially intensive preferences and thus influencing the preferences of others, and by voting about the particular issues (i.e., by voting in a cascade of decisions about the various proposals and variants brought forward in the discussion). Therefore, town meetings may provide the citizens with procedural utility (for the role of procedural utility in decision making, see Frey and Stutzer, 2004 and Fehr *et al.*, 2013).

According to Ladner (2016), the municipal institutional setting has been stable in the observed period, and switches have been rare. Switching became more common only after our data period (1959–1971). For the 1988–2016 period, Ladner (2016) observes between 2.5% and 4% of municipalities attempting to switch their institutional settings. In even rarer cases of successful switches, several attempts were usually needed.⁹ We exclude the few switchers from our sample.

The theoretical considerations can now be summarized. Men from municipalities with town meetings incur higher costs for enfranchising women than men from municipalities with parliaments. The negative effect of extending suffrage to women (i.e., enlarging n) on individual influence I becomes larger, the lower the value of a . If a municipality holds a local town meeting,

⁷Today, in some cantons, decisions made at a town meeting can be challenged by a specified number of citizens or town meeting participants by demanding a popular vote on the particular issue. However, this was not the case in the period of the extension of suffrage to women.

⁸Schaub (2012) investigates citizens meetings at the cantonal level (a few cantons still have a cantonal citizens assembly ('Landsgemeinde')). He finds that cantonal assemblies provide the electorate with more opportunities to directly influence specific policies, even in larger jurisdictions comprising up to 40,000 inhabitants.

⁹Other potential sources of switching the institutional form might be rules connected to population thresholds. In the observed period (1959–1971), the canton of Vaud applied a population threshold of 1,000 inhabitants; exceeding this threshold, parliaments were mandatory. We control for these switchers, too. A threshold of 800 inhabitants was already implemented in the cantonal constitution in 1885. In 1956, the threshold was increased to 1,000 inhabitants. Moreover by excluding Romandie we perform a robustness exercise excluding the canton of Vaud (see table A3). After the introduction of female suffrage in 1987, the canton of Ticino introduced a population threshold of 300 inhabitants (see Ladner, 2016, p. 19).

the value of a is low, and men lose part of their strong influence, specific to a town meeting when females are enfranchised at the municipal level. Again, the loss in personal influence becomes larger the more women's preferences differ from men's. However, the total impact of town meetings is not predefined. Other drivers, such as different preferences for enlarging democracy, the lack of persons who are politically committed to the municipal work, or the extent of preference heterogeneity, also play roles. Our data allows us to test the total effect of municipal direct democracy on cost and benefit of men voter when women are enfranchised.

7. Empirical Strategy

In the following analysis, we concentrate on the two federal votes. We use the vote history of municipalities to check for the frequency and the persistence of the topic in the particular municipality. To control for year and canton-specific variations, we estimate a linear regression model with cantonal and year-fixed effects.

7.1. Difference-in-differences: Main idea

In the two federal votes of 1959 and 1971, all male Swiss adults were eligible to vote on the question of whether or not Swiss women should obtain full suffrage at the federal level. From an empirical perspective, the two federal votes are especially informative. Enfranchised men in all Swiss municipalities were invited to vote, resulting in a relatively balanced panel. The data structure enables us to observe and compare male support for enfranchising women at the federal level in two types of municipalities in two different settings: (i) municipalities with town meetings vs. municipalities with parliaments, and (ii) municipalities from cantons that obligatorily introduced women's suffrage for municipal decisions either by enfranchising women specifically for municipal matters or generally for municipal and cantonal matters between 1959 and 1971¹⁰ vs. municipalities from cantons that did not do so before 1971. Table A1 (appendix) provides an overview of the chronology of the first obligatory introduction of women's suffrage per canton.

¹⁰The following cantons obligatorily introduced women's suffrage either only at the municipal level or at the municipal and cantonal levels between 1959 and 1970: Vaud, Neuchâtel, Geneva, Basel City, Basel County, Zurich, Lucerne, Ticino, Valais, Nidwalden, and Obwalden.

As long as there is no women's suffrage at the lower governmental level, there is a higher price for men from municipalities with town meetings to vote in favor of enfranchising women at the federal level because the latter increases the probability that the cantons are forced to implement women's suffrage at the cantonal and the municipal levels. However, as soon as women's suffrage is implemented at the municipal level, the retarding effect of town meetings should be less pronounced (or even positive) when compared with municipalities without any form of women's suffrage since the cost effect is eliminated under these circumstances. In the first federal vote of 1959, no Swiss canton had yet installed women's suffrage at the lower governmental levels.¹¹ Therefore, the baseline setting concerning the existing women's suffrage at the lower governmental levels was zero for all Swiss municipalities. This situation was different at the time of the second federal vote in 1971. At that time, Swiss municipalities were voting under two different settings. Some cantons had already introduced women's suffrage after 1959 but before 1971 at the lower governmental levels, whereas other cantons had not.

Since one aim of our analysis is to learn more about the role of institutions, we want to disentangle the cost effect from other potential town meeting effects. The different settings during the two federal votes provide the possibility to do so. The cost effect is only relevant as long as women's suffrage is not introduced at the lower governmental levels because town meetings mainly affect the municipal level. In other words, as soon as women participate in town meetings, the threat of the cost effect should be irrelevant. Additionally, it is possible that men also fear a top-down introduction of suffrage as soon as suffrage is installed on higher governmental levels. Thus, we investigate the cost effect of strong direct democracy relative to representative democracy by comparing males' support for enfranchising women at the federal level in municipalities that have already introduced suffrage at the municipal level with those without any form of suffrage accepted so far.

7.2. Defining the treatment: Women's suffrage not yet accepted at lower governmental levels

To identify the treatment, we construct a variable that indicates whether a municipality introduced women's suffrage at lower governmental levels before 1971 because its canton implemented women suffrage. We call this binary variable *no suffrage yet*, which is assigned the

¹¹The canton of Basel City agreed to allow its municipalities to introduce female voting rights in a facultative manner 1957. However, only one municipality (Riehen) *de facto* implemented suffrage before 1959. We exclude this municipality from our sample.

value of 1 as long as women are not enfranchised at the municipal level. Thus, *no suffrage yet_{ct}* is 1 for all Swiss municipalities in 1959. The coefficient β_2 for the interaction term *town meeting_{mt}*no suffrage yet_{ct}* captures the differential effect of the town meeting under two conditions: *no suffrage yet_{ct}* equals 1 or 0, respectively. Thus, this approach enables us to disentangle the cost effect from other potential town meeting influences. Once women are enfranchised at the municipal level, the cost effect of a town meeting vanishes.

7.3. Defining the treatment: Specification

Since the aim is to identify the role of a town meeting under the treatment, we exclude from the sample the few¹² municipalities that switched their institutional settings during the observed period. We thus estimate the following model:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Yes share}_{mt} = & \alpha + \beta_1 \text{town meeting}_m + \beta_2 \text{no suffrage yet}_{mt} \\ & + \beta_3 \text{town meeting}_m * \text{no suffrage yet}_{ct} + \theta X_{mt} + \delta \text{year} + \gamma \text{canton} + \epsilon_{mt} \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

We cluster the standard errors at the municipality level. With respect to the concerns raised by Bertrand *et al.* (2004), the data structure is characterized by a panel structure of two lengths as we observe municipalities once before and once after the treatment. Even though the treatment variable varies at the cantonal level, we are still able to exploit variations at the municipal level as the institutional setup (town meeting versus parliament) varies between municipalities. In order to work with a balanced panel, we exclude those municipalities that are not observed for both federal votes.

7.4. Variables and data

Outcome variable

The endogenous variable *Yes share_{mt}* is the yes share in votes about women's suffrage, consisting of the yes share of the eligible men's votes in the observed municipality (*m*) and year (*t*). Table 1 lists the descriptive statistics.

¹²In total, 35 municipalities switched their institutional forms in the observed time span and were therefore excluded from the sample.

Main explanatory variables

To gain insights about the role of direct democracy relative to representative democracy in the enfranchisement decision, a main explanatory variable is the binary variable *town meeting*, which takes the value of 1 for a municipality with this institution and 0 otherwise. The other main explanatory variable involved in the difference-in-differences analysis is *no suffrage yet*, introduced in Section 7.3.

Controls

We control for several socioeconomic factors (X_{mt}) that have been mentioned in the economic literature, argued to be important in the Swiss case and are available in the dataset. The control variables can be organized into three groups: indicators of urbanity, women in society, and cultural aspects. We check for urbanity by controlling for the population size (in logs), the share of foreigners, and the proportion of the labor force in the agricultural sector (in the following referred to as agriculture share). To take into account the role of women in society, we check for the female share, the share of married individuals, and the share of working women in the respective municipalities. As Switzerland is divided into three language areas, where the two largest are the German-speaking and the French-speaking parts, we also check for cultural differences.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

<i>Variable</i>	N	Mean	Sd	Min	Max
town meeting	4202	0,83	0,37	0	1,00
yes share	4202	42,52	23,56	0	100
population (log)	4202	6,59	1,28	2,99	12,26
foreigners (share)	4202	8,82	8,42	0	63,63
agriculture (share)	4202	12,07	9,13	0	75
women (share)	4202	48,93	3,62	14,14	72,90
married (share)	4202	35,92	11,24	3,25	69,23
working women (share)	4202	25,54	8,7	0	60
catholics (share)	4202	49,96	37,97	0	100
german speaking (share)	4202	59,94	41,55	0	100
number of vote	4202	2,87	1,88	1	9,00

At the municipal level, we use the percentage of the German-speaking population as a proxy for these cultural differences and the percentage of Catholics as a proxy for religious specificities as well as a proxy for conservative attitudes. Additionally, we are able to explore if the number of earlier votes on women’s suffrage has an impact on the yes share. Therefore, we implement a counting variable for the number of votes already held in a municipality. Swiss female enfranchisement is characterized by cantonal features; therefore, we include cantonal fixed effects in our model. It is difficult to observe the strength of political parties at the municipal level due to data restrictions and differing party structures at the cantonal level.

Table 1 provides an overview of the descriptive statistics, whereas Table 2 depicts the mean comparison of acceptance per municipal setting.

Table 2. Mean comparison of town meeting versus parliament

	town meeting	parliament
Ø yes share 1959	22,52	38,19
Ø yes share 1971	56,58	74,45

In a purely descriptive view, the acceptance of women’s suffrage seems to be clearly and consistently lower in municipalities with town meetings than in municipalities with parliaments. In Section 8, we further investigate this perspective and present the results of the difference-in-differences approach with controls for covariates.

Robustness Checks

In order to evaluate the robustness of our results we perform a large number of control exercises. Table 4 provides an overview of the main results for the most important robustness checks. Due to the fixed effects δ_{year} and γ_{canton} , we analyze variations between municipalities.

We also perform estimations without cantonal fixed effects to exploit the institutional variation across cantons (Table 4). We do not estimate municipal fixed effects in our main model because the institutional type (town meeting versus parliament) is time invariant in our sample. However, for the robustness checks, we estimate a model with municipal fixed effects, the full result of which is presented in Table A2 (appendix). Table A3 in the appendix lists the estimates excluding the French-speaking part of Switzerland. We also present estimates excluding cantons

enfranchising women rather early (before 1968) or rather late (after 1973)¹³. The results are listed in Table A4. With this robustness exercise, we want to rule out that our results are driven by those cantons. To ensure an overlap of both institutional settings, we control for the respective municipality sizes. For an additional robustness check, we limit the sample to a medium range of municipalities by varying the included lower and upper bounds of the municipality sizes. Table A5 (appendix) provides the full results.

8. Results

We start by estimating a lean difference-in-differences model for town meeting, no suffrage yet, the interaction of them, and a control for municipality size (population in logs). We proceed by sequentially adding further groups of covariates to control for additional socioeconomic factors. From Specification (2) onward, we take into account the first set of covariates in our estimations, controlling for urban characteristics, from Specification (3) onward, we control for the role of women in society, and in Specification (4) we add covariates capturing the cultural environment. Lastly, we consider the history of votes on female suffrage. The variable *number of votes* denotes the consecutive number of votes on women's suffrage in the respective municipalities. Together with the year-fixed effects, this variable captures part of the underlying time trend.

The base effect of town meetings measures the difference in the yes share at the federal level between municipalities with town meetings and those with parliaments, when women are already enfranchised at the municipal level. The base effect of town meetings is significantly positive in all specifications and varies around 4 percentage points in Specifications (2) to (5). When women are enfranchised at the municipal level, the strongly direct democratic setting seems to boost men's demand for women's suffrage at the federal level when compared with municipalities with parliaments. We are aware that mostly small- and medium-sized municipalities hold town meetings. However, the dataset contains a rich mixture of municipalities with and without town meetings. Our estimates remain robust when we exclude especially small and large municipalities to focus on a range in which both institutions overlap (see Table A5 in the appendix).

¹³ Further varying the time range did not harm our results.

The controls for urbanity turn out to be important. The percentage of foreigners and the proportion of agriculture have the expected signs. Most importantly, the stepwise inclusion of control variables does not invalidate the base effect of town meetings. Quite the contrary, the base effect of town meetings increases from Specification (1) to (2). From Specification (2) to (5), the size of the coefficient remains quite stable.

The variation of town meetings under the treatment *no suffrage yet* allows us to disentangle the cost effect from other effects related to town meetings. As our focus is this interaction effect, a potential selection bias of the institutional setting poses less of a problem to our results. The coefficient of the interaction *town meeting*no suffrage yet* has always a negative sign and stays robust in all specifications. This coefficient reflects the price effect of town meetings when compared with parliaments. In terms of effect size, Specifications (2) to (5) indicate the following results. As long as women are not yet enfranchised at the municipal level, the acceptance of men from municipalities with town meetings is about 6 percentage points lower when compared with men from municipalities with parliaments.

These results provide evidence for two countervailing effects of strong municipal direct democracy: a price effect and a boost of demand effect. Surprisingly, when female suffrage is already established at the municipal level and, thus, the price effect is switched off, men from municipalities with town meeting are more favorable to enfranchising women at the federal level than men from parliamentary municipalities.

The demand effect of a strong democracy could be explained by at least two mechanisms. One is that a strong democracy boosts men's preferences and willingness to pay for enfranchising women. The other explanation is that the direct democratic environment provides superior tools for men to learn that women's preferences are not too different from men's as soon as they participate in the local town meeting. The results indicate that the demand effect dominates as soon as the price effect is switched off. However, further research is needed to gain a better understanding of the fine mechanics of the demand and the price effects.

Turning next to the different sets of controls, we find that the population in logs has a significantly positive impact on the yes share.

Table 3. Full sample

VARIABLES	(1) yes share	(2) yes share	(3) yes share	(4) yes share	(5) yes share
town meeting	2.405** (0.944)	4.815*** (0.961)	5.358*** (0.947)	4.561*** (0.905)	4.763*** (0.902)
no suffrage yet	-6.023*** (0.674)	-3.991*** (0.724)	-2.499*** (0.870)	-3.625*** (0.857)	-2.668*** (0.907)
town meeting*no suffrage yet	-4.813*** (0.784)	-6.093*** (0.842)	-6.781*** (0.883)	-5.919*** (0.848)	-6.210*** (0.851)
population (logs)	3.266*** (0.205)	0.544** (0.247)	0.186 (0.235)	0.414* (0.222)	0.394* (0.221)
foreigners (share)		0.231*** (0.038)	0.222*** (0.036)	0.146*** (0.035)	0.143*** (0.035)
agriculture (share)		-0.462*** (0.038)	-0.425*** (0.038)	-0.429*** (0.037)	-0.428*** (0.037)
women (share)			0.082 (0.075)	0.082 (0.073)	0.064 (0.073)
married (share)			0.185*** (0.027)	0.155*** (0.026)	0.166*** (0.027)
working women (share)			0.256*** (0.034)	0.239*** (0.034)	0.262*** (0.035)
Catholics (share)				-0.034*** (0.009)	-0.033*** (0.009)
German speaking (share)				-0.139*** (0.010)	-0.139*** (0.010)
number of votes					0.830*** (0.283)
Cantonal FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	4202	4202	4202	4202	4202
R-squared	0.779	0.804	0.811	0.825	0.825

Robust standard errors in parentheses clustered at the municipality level

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

This effect stays robust in most specifications and is in line with our expectations, as municipal population size is an indicator of urbanity and has, moreover, a negative impact on individual influence on municipal politics, which lowers the price of enfranchising women. The agricultural share exhibits a significant negative effect. This was to be expected as the agricultural share is often taken to be a proxy for conservative attitudes in general as well as toward women.

Moreover, it is correlated with low income and, thus, could also mirror an income effect in favor of female enfranchisement. The share of women does not yield robust significant results as shown in Table 3.¹⁷ As the gender ratio plays a major role in the work of Braun and Kvasnicka (2013), these results may be surprising at first sight as they point to the opposite direction. However, this might be explained by the small variance of the women's share in our dataset, especially when compared with the data of Braun and Kvasnicka (2013), who work with data on the US states that are characterized by a substantially larger variance of the women's share at the times of their enfranchisement. The share of married couples exhibits a positive and significant impact on the yes share. We see several arguments to explain this effect. The ballot could have a team effect. Married men expect their wives to double their own preferences at the ballot. Two other non-exclusive explanations are that men trust more in married women than in non-married women, or unmarried men distrust women more generally. The positive sign of the female workers' share fits Bertocchi's (2011) finding about the positive effect of the diminishing gender-based wage gap on the introduction of women's suffrage in her cross-country analysis. Regarding the variables that consider the cultural environment, Catholicism seems to influence the yes share negatively, in line with the obtained cross-country results of Bertocchi (2011). Koukal (2017) presents a more in-depth analysis of religion's role in the enfranchisement process. As expected, we find the proportion of the German-speaking population to be a barrier to women's enfranchisement. This fits the descriptive picture of the Swiss enfranchisement process, as the French-speaking cantons were first movers in providing women's suffrage. The results of Specification (5) indicate that with each additional vote held in the past, the acceptance of women's suffrage increases around 0.8 percentage points.

In the robustness checks presented in Table 4, the results do not change substantially. The results for the full sample (1), which are identical to (5) in Table 3, are robust to dropping cantonal fixed effects (2), including municipality fixed effects (3), dropping the French speaking cantons (4), and dropping the early and late accepters (5).

¹⁷ During the robustness checks, the sign for women's share was ambivalent and mostly insignificant.

Table 4. Robustness checks

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Dependant variabel: yes share</i>	Full sample	Without Cantonal Effects	Municipality Effects	Excluding Romandie	Excluding early & late accepters	size percentiles 5 th -95 th
town meeting	4.763*** (0.902)	4.615*** (0.907)		6.831*** (1.359)	6.627*** (1.361)	5.560*** (0.979)
no suffrage yet	-2.668*** (0.907)	-5.786*** (0.951)	-3.270*** (1.031)	-1.569 (1.556)	-5.125*** (1.656)	-3.317*** (0.977)
town meeting*no suffrage yet	-6.210*** (0.851)	-5.791*** (0.929)	-6.248*** (0.900)	-8.097*** (1.272)	-6.791*** (1.289)	-5.792*** (0.913)
urbanity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
women in society	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
culture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
number of vote	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cantonal FE	✓			✓	✓	✓
Municipal FE			✓			
Time FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	4202	4204	4202	3574	3064	3820
R-squared	0.825	0.780	0.896	0.810	0.828	0.835

Robust standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parentheses: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$ In specification (5) cantons accepting before 1968: Basel City, Geneva, Neuchatel, Vaud, and cantons accepting after 1973 are excluded from the sample: Solothurn, Grison, and Appenzell LRh. (6) are municipalities between the 5th and 95th percentile in terms of size.

If the driving force behind the positive effect of a strong municipal direct democracy after introducing suffrage at the lower level is a better learning environment for females' political preferences, we would expect the result to be driven by the long-term accepting cantons because learning requires time, which seems not the case (5). The results are also robust when the extremely small and large municipalities are dropped from the sample (6). Regarding the effect sizes of the different models summarized in Table 4, the additional cost effect of local town meetings varies around 6 percentage points in all estimates. Tables A2 to A5 lists the full estimates for Specification (3) to (6).

9. Conclusion

This article is the first to present empirical evidence on the role of institutions in extending political rights to a new group. It concentrates on the role of Swiss municipal direct democracy in the process of extending suffrage to women. This paper enriches the relevant literature by taking into account the role of institutions in the timing of female suffrage and by contributing a novel historical dataset. The starting point of the analysis is the paradoxical observation that Switzerland as a highly democratic country is one of the last to enfranchise women. We discern two countervailing effects of strong direct democratic institutions on women's enfranchisement by investigating male voting behavior in the Swiss national votes of 1959 and 1971. It increases the price for men to enfranchise women, but it also seems to boost men's general willingness to empower women. The mechanisms behind the second result, which stays robust in all specifications, offers room for further research. The fact that strong direct democracy is (cet. par.) also boosting the demand for female suffrage could be tried to explain with two alternative mechanisms: a stronger preference for spreading democracy in town-meeting type municipalities or better tools for men to learn about women's political preferences as soon as they are integrated at a lower governmental level. We could not find evidence for the latter mechanism as our main results were fully robust when we only looked at municipalities which have introduced female suffrage only shortly before the vote on extending suffrage at the federal level and, thus, did not have much time to learn. Our results suggest that the late introduction of women's suffrage in Switzerland does not indicate that direct democracy poses a general threat to politically weak groups and human rights. It is rather a consequence of the individual resistance to give up influence in the political process. The more possibilities the current electorate has to directly affect policy, the more they value the vote and the more influence they lose by sharing the vote with new members. Thus, the role of direct democracy for extending the franchise turns out to be an instructive case. The act of benevolence, i.e. enlarging the franchise, comes at a price which increases in the effectiveness of democracy. Thus our results seem to be relevant for democratic decisions such as enfranchising foreigners and adolescents as well as naturalizations.

For the future, we plan to test other channels of direct democracy at both the municipal and the cantonal levels. At the municipal level, we will exploit the fact that at the time of enlarging the franchise to women, municipalities elected their mayors in different processes. At the cantonal level, we will take advantage of a dataset that includes indicators mirroring the extent of direct

democracy, such as Stutzer's (1999) democracy index or the existence of budget referenda and requirements to start initiatives for the Swiss cantons.

10. References

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11. Appendix

Table A1. Chronology of first obligatory introduction of suffrage per canton

Chronology of suffrage extension at the municipal level per canton

Acceptance date	canton	level
February 1, 1959	Vaud	integral
September 27, 1959	Neuchâtel	integral
March 6, 1960	Geneva	integral
June 26, 1966	Basel City	integral
May 19, 1968	Obwalden	municipal
October 19, 1969	Ticino	integral
April 12, 1970	Valais	integral
April 26, 1970	Nidwalden	municipal
September 9, 1970	Basel County	municipal
October 25, 1970	Lucerne	integral
November 15, 1970	Zurich	integral
February 7, 1971	all cantons	federal
February 7, 1971	Fribourg	integral
February 7, 1971	Zug	integral
February 7, 1971	Schaffhausen	integral
February 7, 1971	Aargau	integral
May 5, 1971	Glarus	integral
December 12, 1971	Bern/ Jura	integral
December 12, 1971	Thurgau	integral
January 23, 1972	St. Gallen	integral
April 30, 1972	Appenzell A.Rh.	municipal
March 5, 1972	Schwyz	integral
March 5, 1973	Uri	integral
March 2, 1980	Solothurn	municipal
February 27, 1983	Grison	municipal
November 27, 1990	Appenzell I.Rh.	integral

Excluded are votes about facultative suffrage introduction at the municipal level and suffrage introduction for specific topics. Chronology is based on Ruckstuhl (1986)

Table A2. Municipal fixed effects

Federal votes, municipal FE

VARIABLES	(1) yes share	(2) yes share	(3) yes share	(4) yes share	(5) yes share
town meeting					
no suffrage yet	-6.298*** (0.675)	-6.906*** (0.718)	-3.634*** (0.964)	-3.246*** (0.962)	-3.270*** (1.031)
town meeting*no suffrage yet	-4.244*** (0.778)	-3.542*** (0.810)	-5.764*** (0.904)	-6.256*** (0.895)	-6.248*** (0.900)
population (logs)	4.303*** (1.154)	6.030*** (1.401)	6.965*** (1.414)	7.410*** (1.413)	7.412*** (1.417)
foreigners (share)		-0.170*** (0.063)	-0.156** (0.064)	-0.008 (0.071)	-0.007 (0.071)
agriculture (share)		-0.072 (0.074)	-0.035 (0.075)	-0.023 (0.074)	-0.022 (0.075)
women (share)			0.064 (0.101)	0.060 (0.103)	0.060 (0.103)
married (share)			0.171*** (0.029)	0.160*** (0.029)	0.160*** (0.030)
working women (share)			0.030 (0.038)	0.045 (0.038)	0.044 (0.043)
Catholics (share)				-0.185*** (0.069)	-0.186*** (0.070)
German speaking (share)				0.143* (0.073)	0.143** (0.073)
number of votes					-0.022 (0.300)
Municipal FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	4202	4202	4202	4202	4202
R-squared	0.892	0.893	0.895	0.896	0.896

Robust standard errors in parentheses clustered at the municipality level

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table A3. Excluding Romandie

Excluding Romandie

VARIABLES	(1) yes share	(2) yes share	(3) yes share	(4) yes share	(5) yes share
town meeting	3.501*** (1.320)	5.927*** (1.414)	7.191*** (1.399)	6.467*** (1.302)	6.831*** (1.359)
no suffrage yet	-5.098*** (0.989)	-2.873*** (1.068)	-1.805 (1.161)	-2.785** (1.121)	-1.569 (1.556)
town meeting*no suffrage yet	-5.723*** (1.099)	-7.176*** (1.180)	-8.376*** (1.226)	-7.556*** (1.165)	-8.097*** (1.272)
population (logs)	3.149*** (0.224)	0.422 (0.270)	0.072 (0.256)	0.350 (0.240)	0.348 (0.240)
foreigners (share)		0.272*** (0.043)	0.266*** (0.041)	0.165*** (0.039)	0.164*** (0.039)
agriculture (share)		-0.454*** (0.042)	-0.399*** (0.042)	-0.405*** (0.040)	-0.405*** (0.040)
women (share)			0.113 (0.083)	0.108 (0.080)	0.096 (0.081)
married (share)			0.263*** (0.032)	0.234*** (0.032)	0.229*** (0.032)
working women (share)			0.259*** (0.038)	0.236*** (0.037)	0.245*** (0.039)
Catholics (share)				-0.032*** (0.010)	-0.033*** (0.010)
German speaking (share)				-0.140*** (0.010)	-0.140*** (0.010)
number of votes					0.514 (0.453)
Cantonal FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3574	3574	3574	3574	3574
R-squared	0.754	0.782	0.793	0.810	0.810

Robust standard errors in parentheses clustered at the municipality level.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table A4. Excluding late and early accepters

Excluding late and early accepters

VARIABLES	(1) yes share	(2) yes share	(3) yes share	(4) yes share	(5) yes share
town meeting	4.262*** (1.348)	7.196*** (1.445)	8.216*** (1.422)	6.962*** (1.302)	6.627*** (1.361)
no suffrage yet	-5.775*** (0.988)	-3.439*** (1.077)	-2.744** (1.181)	-3.873*** (1.136)	-5.125*** (1.656)
town meeting*no suffrage yet	-5.483*** (1.090)	-7.031*** (1.190)	-8.338*** (1.245)	-7.321*** (1.174)	-6.791*** (1.289)
population (logs)	3.472*** (0.246)	0.609** (0.286)	0.312 (0.273)	0.520** (0.253)	0.523** (0.253)
foreigners (share)		0.269*** (0.047)	0.253*** (0.046)	0.147*** (0.042)	0.148*** (0.042)
agriculture (share)		-0.521*** (0.050)	-0.454*** (0.051)	-0.435*** (0.047)	-0.434*** (0.047)
women (share)			0.059 (0.094)	0.098 (0.090)	0.109 (0.091)
married (share)			0.254*** (0.035)	0.225*** (0.034)	0.232*** (0.034)
working women (share)			0.248*** (0.041)	0.212*** (0.040)	0.203*** (0.042)
Catholics (share)				-0.010 (0.009)	-0.009 (0.009)
German speaking (share)				-0.163*** (0.011)	-0.163*** (0.011)
number of votes					-0.503 (0.495)
Cantonal FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	3065	3065	3065	3065	3065
R-squared	0.767	0.798	0.806	0.828	0.828

*Robust standard errors in parentheses clustered at the municipality level *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Excluded from the sample are cantons accepting before 1968: Basel City, Geneva, Neuchatel, Vaud, and
cantons accepting after 1973: Solothurn, Grison, and Appenzell I.Rh.*

Table A5. Robustness excluding small and large municipalities

Restricting samples in terms of municipality size

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
<i>Dependent variabel: yes share</i>	Full sample	Full sample	percentiles 1 st -99 th	percentiles 5 th -95 th	percentiles 10 th -90 th
town meeting	4.763*** (0.902)	4.615*** (0.907)	5.265*** (0.936)	5.560*** (0.979)	4.702*** (1.038)
no suffrage yet	-2.668*** (0.907)	-5.786*** (0.951)	-2.792*** (0.935)	-3.317*** (0.977)	-2.712*** (1.015)
town meeting*no suffrage yet	-6.210*** (0.851)	-5.791*** (0.929)	-5.790*** (0.870)	-5.792*** (0.913)	-6.101*** (0.947)
urbanity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
women in society	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
culture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
number of votes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cantonal FE	✓		✓	✓	✓
Time FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	4202	4202	4130	3820	3407
R-squared	0.825	0.780	0.826	0.835	0.846

Robust standard errors clustered at the municipality level in parentheses:

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$