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“Peasants into Citizens: Suffrage Expansion and Mass Politics in France”

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Peasants into Citizens: Suffrage Expansion and Mass Politics in France

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The rise of mass politics is conventionally attributed to state expansion and economic modernization. We propose a complementary institutional explanation, highlighting how the expansion of voting rights politicizes the general public and enhances their mobilization capacity. To test this argument, we use discontinuous variation in suffrage levels in the French local elections during the July Monarchy (1830-1848). Communes with more suffrage later showed a heightened interest in public affairs, capacity for collective mobilization, and opposition to autocracy. Even when introduced and practiced in an autocratic system, the right to vote seems to encourage the development of a pro-democratic mass public.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The distinguishing feature of the modern state is the extent to which "people participate in politics and are affected by politics" (Huntington, 1968, 36). In recent centuries, politics in most places has transformed from an almost exclusively elite-level affair to one marked by social movements and revolutions, mass electorates and parties, and other forms of mass-level political engagement like petitioning, protesting, and general interest in public affairs. What accounts for the rise of this mass political mobilization? How did historically marginalized groups like peasants, workers, and other "lower classes," previously dismissed as passive and disorganized "potatoes in a sack," acquire political agency and become citizens?

A recurrent theme in the literature on mass politicization concerns the role of political institutions, particularly the expansion of the right to vote. Scholars who study democratization emphasize how the expansion of suffrage transforms mass politics from violent rebellions to peaceful casting of ballots (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000, 2006; Boix, 2003; Tilly, 2004; Przeworski, 2009; Aidt and Franck, 2015). Suffrage expansion, at least in theory, turns rebels into voters. Unless we treat mass voting as the only expression of mass politics, democratization theories cannot explain how more inclusive voting rights shape mass politics beyond their mechanical effect on the magnitude of the electorate.

On the other hand, the literature on political modernization attributes, at best, a negligible role to formal political institutions. This literature sees the emergence of mass politics as a deterministic consequence of the expansion of the state and its penetration into society through bureaucratic administration, social services, mass public education, and military conscription (Rokkan, 1961; Tilly, 2004). It also sees mass politicization as a consequence of economic modernization: industrialization, urbanization, migration, and communication and transportation technologies (Deutsch, 1961; Lerner, 1958; Moore, 1966). Absent a modern state and economy, voting rights cannot alone convert the passive

masses into active citizens with political agency (Bendix and Rokkan, 1962). Even when the enfranchised groups vote, they do so not as "citizens" focused on national political affairs but as "peasants" whose choices are shaped by elite deference and preoccupation with parochial matters (Weber, 1976).

This paper argues that the expansion of voting rights catalyzes mass politics by increasing the share of citizens with skills and incentives to participate in politics through electoral and non-electoral means. Unlike democratization theories, we suggest that mass political mobilization might be not only a cause but also a consequence of formal institutional change. Suffrage creates not only voters but also citizens. In contrast to the literature on modernization, we contend that the emergence of mass politics can be shaped by formal political institutions instead of being fully predetermined by economic structure.

We test this argument empirically using data from 19th-century France. As the first country to introduce universal male franchise, France is an important case for understanding the impact of formal institutions on political development. We use the quasi-exogenous variation in suffrage levels induced by local election law during the July Monarchy (1830-1848). Using new commune-level data on a range of political outcomes between 1847 and 1852, we quantify how the experience of wider suffrage impacted the later mobilization of the masses into politics.

The communes with higher levels of suffrage subsequently became more politicized in three ways. First, they displayed higher interest in public affairs, as can be judged by higher subscription rates of newspapers towards the end of the July Monarchy (1847). Second, they organized more intense local insurgencies against the overthrow of the parliamentary republic in the coup by Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte in 1851. Third, they showed more pronounced opposition to the autocratic reforms proposed in the plebiscites in 1851 and 1852. Using canton-level electoral results from Second Republic legislative elections, we show that our three politicization measures are strongly associated with electoral support for "pro-democratic" candidates. Taken together, our findings suggest

that voting rights, even when introduced at the local level and practiced under an autocratic regime, can stimulate the emergence of a pro-democratic public.

These findings have implications for understanding how the broadening of formal rights of electoral participation shapes political development. Even though the conceptual distinction between broader political inclusion and democracy is well-known (Dahl, 1972; Stasavage, 2020), suffrage expansion is often treated as synonymous with democratization (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000, 2006). That the two are not equivalent is evidenced by universal suffrage being a norm even among the most tyrannical dictatorships. The expansion of suffrage, especially before the "third wave of democratization," was often introduced by ostensibly autocratic regimes that limited electoral competition and manipulated the voting process. Examples include New Spain (Rivera, 2012), Imperial Germany (Anderson, 2000), and France under Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, who exploited the universal suffrage as an instrument of authoritarian rule (Price, 2001).

How, then, should we think about the role of suffrage expansion in the history of democratic development? For the public to pose a credible revolutionary threat, which is often considered necessary for the emergence of democracy (Boix, 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006) and its defense against executive takeovers (Weingast, 1997; Svolik, 2020), it must have political agency in the first place. From this perspective, our results suggest that political inclusion has downstream consequences favorable for the emergence and survival of democracy in the sense that it creates a public that is better positioned to demand and defend democracy.

The existing literature has examined how suffrage expansion affects electoral turnout and representation (Berlinski and Dewan, 2011; Larcinese, 2014). Because the electoral behavior of the excluded population cannot be observed, these studies cannot distinguish whether the franchise has a compositional or a transformational effect; that is, whether newly enfranchised voters were already different from the previously eligible ones or if, instead, franchise expansion changes the population.

In contrast, analyzing electoral and non-electoral political outcomes when the previous suffrage restrictions were no longer binding[1], we are able to evaluate if the expansion of voting rights fosters the development of mass politics. There is some recent scholarship on the mobilizing effects of rights-expanding reforms, but it does not focus on voting rights. Aidt and Leon-Ablan (2023) find that changes in parliamentary representation following the Great Reform Act in Britain increased civic participation, and Finkel, Gehlbach and Olsen (2015) show that serf emancipation in Russia intensified popular mobilization.[2] By focusing on the impact of suffrage expansion on mass politics, our study maps directly into the core debates in the literature on democratization and modernization.

2 Mass Politics and Its Institutional Roots

Mass politicization refers to the increasing involvement of the general population in politics. This phenomenon, observed most prominently in 19th-century Europe and later elsewhere, can be characterized in terms of two major transitions. Mass politicization means the expansion in the *magnitude of politics* defined as "the ratio of political activity, however institutionalized, to all of the other activity that takes place in society" (Palombara, 1963, p. 42-43). A wider range of individuals take actions that can be interpreted as political. Voting in elections emerges as a new form of political activity, which mechanically contributes to the overall magnitude of politics. Collective demands for *economic* concessions, like food riots and anti-tax rebellions, are supplemented or substituted by collective demands for *political* reforms.

The second feature of mass politicization is the transition from *localism* to *centralism*, a shift from "embedded to detached identities as a basis of political rights and obligations" (Tilly, 2004, p. 253). Not only do a wider range of individuals become involved in politics,

[1] Most of our outcomes are measured when universal male suffrage was in place.

[2] Another related literature analyzes the effects of the Voting Rights Act in the U.S. Lacroix (2023) shows that VAR reduced political violence. The result speaks more about the change in the mode of mass politics (ballots vs bullets) rather than the scale, which is our focus.

but the focus of their involvement shfits from local-level to national-level issues. As people come "in direct, unmediated communication with the central authorities" (Rokkan, 1961, p. 133), they start paying greater attention to national-level affairs (Weber, 1976). Peasants, historically the most populous class, went from being a peripheral group largely neglected by the central political elites to becoming an actor whose "attitude forms parts of the permanent calculations of politicians" (Hobsbawm, 1973, p. 17). In the process of mass politicization, the peasants, whose politics previously had been limited to local economic grievances, began paying attention and taking sides on national-level political affairs – they became citizens.

How do democratic institutions contribute to mass politicization? In one sense, it is obvious that the advent of elections and the expansion of suffrage increased the magnitude of politics by offering the public low-cost political participation alternatives to costly measures like riots or rebellions. If mass politicization is narrowly measured by the share of the population that votes, then it is essentially coterminous with the expansion of suffrage. A more interesting question is whether the expansion of suffrage has a non-mechanical effect on mass politicization, that is, whether it magnifies engagement in national-level affairs aside from broadening participation in elections.

The expansion of voting rights can politicize the general public through several channels. The right to vote creates the demand for information about issues, candidates, or parties. As Rousseau noted in the *Social Contract*, "however feeble the influence my voice can have on public affairs, the right of voting on them makes it my duty to study them." Because it rarely takes place in isolation from the wider political context, voting in elections is a "formative practice" (Carpenter et al., 2018); it facilitates other types of political participation such as reading newspapers, discussing political affairs with others, petitioning, or protesting. Social movements "parallel and feed on electoral politics" by using it as a platform for signaling their support and articulating demands (Tilly, 1993, 275).

As the masses get involved in politics through voting, political entrepreneurs become

motivated to mobilize mass support. Such mobilization can come in the form of *electioneering*: campaigning, organizing parties, or getting out the vote (Amat et al., 2020). But it may also come in the form of *public policy* such as the expansion of mass education (Paglayan, 2021), transportation (Weber, 1976), redistribution (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006), or provision of public services (Ansell and Lindvall, 2021). The two processes are mutually reinforcing: mass mobilization incentivizes mass-oriented policy, which in turn raises the stakes in national-level politics for the masses.

The argument that mass politics has roots in suffrage is in line with how historical actors understood the impact of its expansion. A common reason for the expansion of suffrage was the sovereigns' desire to undermine local elites by making the "commoners" more independent: "kings make the lower classes of the State participate in government in order to humble the aristocracy" (Tocqueville, 2000, p. 8). The right to vote awards a modicum of political agency to the "common people" and, by undermining local intermediaries, positions the people in a direct relation to the central state, making them both subjects and actors in national-level politics.

Contemporaries of suffrage reforms were often apprehensive of the agitation voting rights may cause, in line with our argument. Imperial Japan limited suffrage using tax requirements specifically "to minimize the possibility of rootless radicalism" (Jansen, 2002, p. 415). In Germany, suffrage restrictions were grounded in fear that "lower classes" would erupt in violence and "destroy everything – culture and liberty" (Rose, 1972, p. 133). The concern in France was that wide suffrage "carries within it the seeds of a social revolution" (Price, 2001, p. 105). The argument that suffrage politicizes the mass population resonates with the qualitative record. We now turn to test it quantitatively.

3 Suffrage and Mass Politics in France

We test our argument using data from France in 1830-1852, a period marking a shift from the July Monarchy (1830-1848), through a short-lived parliamentary democracy in the

Second Republic (1848-1852), to a new authoritarian rule under the Second Empire (1852-1870). We outline the changes in the distribution of voting rights during this period and review how possessing these rights may have impacted the development of mass politics.

3.1 The politics of suffrage

Brought into power by a Parisian rebellion against the Bourbon regime in 1830, the July Monarchy reduced the tax requirement for vote-eligibility in the National Assembly elections by 100 francs, thereby raising the vote-eligible to 200,000 adult males, a tiny fraction of the total population. More profound changes occurred at the local level. The 1831 municipal law introduced triennial elections to municipal councils and granted voting rights to about 2.7 million adult males, thirteen times more than at the national level.[3]

The suffrage at the municipal level was more permissive for several reasons. For the conservatives who voted on electoral reform, peasants were "enlightened" enough to comprehend local-level issues; "the farmer and the artisan may struggle to judge complicated broader issues, but they are capable of weighing up the interests of their own communities" (Crook, 2021, p. 31). Furthermore, popularly elected municipal councils were expected to facilitate local administration by monitoring state agents and reporting local grievances.[4] Another reason was the perception that populated urban areas were hostile toward the regime and had already displayed a greater capacity to mobilize against it – wide suffrage in such places would only further ignite rebellions (Crook, 2021, Ch. 1). Faure, a rapporteur for the 1831 law in the Assembly, justified the differentiated treatment of urban and rural areas as follows: "Calling a tenth of the population in communes of 1,000 inhabitants and below does not appear dangerous because the in-

[3]Since 1800, mayors and municipal councils had been appointed by prefects. Under the 1831 municipal law, mayors were still appointed but had to be selected from the elected municipal councils. Nonetheless, their powers were constrained by centralization, as most decisions had to be approved by prefects (Tanchoux, 2013).

[4]Statement on the Assembly floor: "I dare say that [the government] needs, as much or even more than the people themselves, these communal magistratures." *Archives Parlementaires*, Second Serie, Volume LXVII, p. 437, January 31, 1831.

terests are simple and the populations do not have the germs of these passions that erupt so easily in other places [whereas] too large assemblies will carry real dangers and the consequences of such elections would be disastrous."[5]

Like its predecessor, the July Monarchy was overthrown by a Parisian insurrection in February of 1848. The Second Republic was proclaimed, restoring political freedoms and universal male suffrage, fifty years after the 1789 Revolution. Even though they hoped that universal suffrage would yield them a victory, the republican leftists did not obtain a majority at the Constituent Assembly in April of 1848. In 1849, Napoleon Bonaparte's nephew, Louis Napoleon, was elected president, and the legislative elections resulted in a conservative majority in the National Assembly. On December 2, 1851, having failed to modify the constitution to allow him a second term, Bonaparte staged a coup, which was met with the largest peasant rebellion since 1789 (Margadant, 1979). Shortly after suppressing the rebellion, Bonaparte conducted a referendum to extend his presidency and then another one in 1852 to reestablish the Empire.

Even though previously Bonaparte had promulgated suffrage restrictions enacted by the National Assembly, now he proclaimed himself an unconditional champion of universal suffrage. The universal suffrage was the "sanction" of the new regime (Marx, 1871). The Bonapartist system was "the first manifestation in Europe of a plebiscitarian, nonliberal authoritarian solution to the crisis of democracy" (Linz, 2000), foreshadowing later fascism and electoral authoritarianism.

3.2 Mass Politicization

The conditions for the politicization of the masses, which in 19th-century France mainly meant the peasantry, were much debated by contemporaries. Having used their suffrage to elect conservatives in 1848 and 1849, the peasants were held in contempt by the Parisian liberals as "isolated in their ignorance" (Price, 2004, 241), overly malleable by land owners

[5] *Archives Parlementaires*, Second Serie, Volume LXVII, p. 616, February 9, 1831.

and local notables, and afflicted by "rural imbecility" (Stasavage, 2020, 275-6). Instead of liberating themselves from the rural elites, as the republicans had hoped they would, many peasants voted in deference to them. Louis Blanc (1880, 68), one of the leaders of the 1848 revolution, bemoaned that "universal suffrage was only the victory of rural districts, the sojourn of ignorance, over a city, radiant source of light."

The success of Bonaparte's plebiscites can also be viewed as a result of insufficient politicization of peasants. In the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx insinuated that "the Bonapartes are the dynasty of the peasants" and derided the latter for their "belief in the miracle that a man named Napoleon would bring all glory back to them." Peasants were "immature masses," "potatoes in a sack" with "no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them." Napoleon championed universal suffrage as a tool to empower peasants against the traditional elites while demonstrating the deference of the masses towards him (Zeldin, 1958; Price, 2001).

Resonating the low opinion about the political agency of peasants by their contemporaries, Eugene Weber (1976) famously argued that peasants became politicized only in the 1870s. Suffrage and voting did not mean much because "elections [were] political only in appearance" as "the ideological and extra-local aspects of national politics remained the preserve of traditional leaders" (Weber, 1982). The uprising of 1851 against Bonaparte's coup was not indicative of mass politicization either, as it was an example of "archaic" politics driven by local economic grievances and influences of the traditional elites (cf. Soboul, 1956). Weber argued that peasants were politicized only with the expansion of the state through mass education, conscription, and communication networks.

While it may be true that a major push in the politicization of the French peasantry came with the Third Republic, many historians have pushed back on the notion that the peasants were previously politically docile across the board. Agulhon (1970, p.256) contends that the "descent of politics towards the masses" started well before the 1870s and cannot be attributed solely to socio-economic changes. The results of the 1849 legisla-

tive elections also suggested peasants' gradual emancipation from local elites: although it brought a conservative majority to the assembly, there was substantial progress of the left in rural areas as compared to the 1848 election (Furet, 1999, p. 427).

While local influences and economic issues certainly mattered for the mobilization in the 1851 uprisings, national-level concerns about political liberties and the system of government were also important motivating factors for the participants (McPhee, 1992, 235-242). In a national-level study of the uprising, Margadant (1979) rules out local economic distress as a primary driver and argues that the insurgents were able to mobilize in places where the republican secret societies managed to gain the support of peasants and were able to mobilize in the face of repression. The success of such a strategy was likely more successful in places where peasants were already politicized.

The politicization of peasants before the 1870s, to the extent that it existed, was catalyzed in large part by electoral politics (Price, 2004). Before 1848, this came mostly from municipal elections during the July Monarchy, which generated intra-commune conflicts and often enabled peasants to vote out rich landowners who previously dominated local politics.[6] Many historians identify these elections as a critical juncture: even though the "level of such politics was lower," it was "enough to wrench [the popular classes] from their passivity" (Agulhon, 1983, p. 13). They served as "a first apprenticeship for peasants of public, if not political, life" (Tudesq, 1982, 218). This high level of engagement motivated political entrepreneurs aiming for seats on municipal councils to seek popular support through mass-oriented policies such as investment in public infrastructure, primary education, or the privatization of communal rights (Tanchoux, 2013).

In sum, the historical record contains many indicators that the French masses were politicized to some degree already before 1870, but unevenly: only in some places did they vote for the republicans during the Second Republic, rose up against Bonaparte, and voted against him in the plebiscites. We hypothesize that the uneven distribution of

[6]See Agulhon (1970, 269-273), Vigier (1973) and Guionnet (1997, 559).

mass politicization can, in part, be accounted for by the differential exposure to electoral politics in the municipal elections during the July Monarchy. We now describe the data and methods we use to test this hypothesis.

4 Data and Measures

The unit of analysis is the commune, the smallest administrative division in France. The summary statistics of all main variables are shown in the Appendix (Table A.1).

4.1 Population and Suffrage

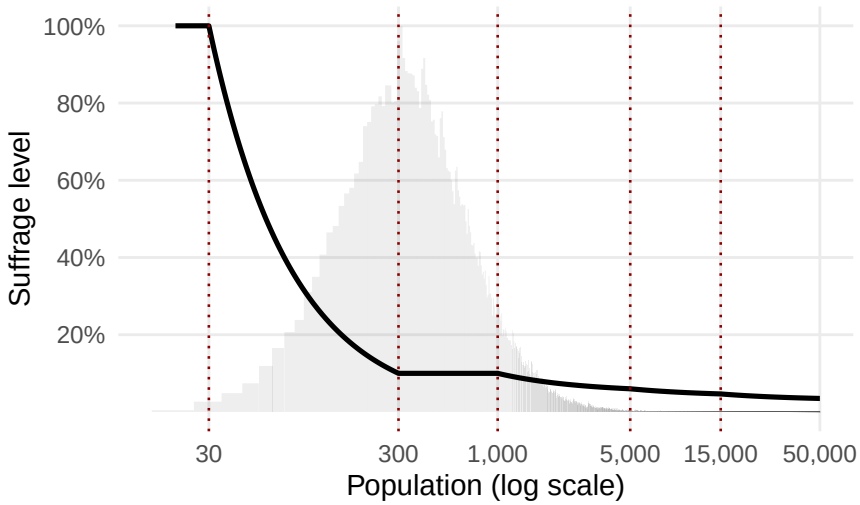
Under the 1831 election law, the number of highest tax contributors eligible to vote in a commune with n inhabitants was determined by the following formula:

$$\mathrm{V}(n) = \begin{cases} 30 & \text{if } n < 300, \\ 0.1 \times n & \text{if } 300 \leqslant n \leqslant 1{,}000, \\ \mathrm{V}(1{,}000) + (n - 1{,}000) \times 5\% & \text{if } 1{,}000 < n \leqslant 5{,}000, \\ \mathrm{V}(5{,}000) + (n - 5{,}000) \times 4\% & \text{if } 5{,}000 < n \leqslant 15{,}000, \\ \mathrm{V}(15{,}000) + (n - 15{,}000) \times 3\% & \text{if } n > 15{,}000. \end{cases}$$

The number of adult males who could vote was increasing in the commune's total population but at a decreasing rate creating a sizable advantage for smaller communes. The *suffrage level*, the percentage of the population eligible to vote, is therefore equal to

$$f(n) = \frac{\mathrm{V}(n)}{n} \times 100\%.$$

Figure 1 shows how suffrage levels varied by population. In communes with less than thirty residents, all adult males could vote, whereas only 3.5 percent of the highest tax contributors could vote in communes with over 50,000 residents. We calculate the suffrage levels induced by the election law using the formula $f(n)$ and the commune-level



Note: The black curve is the formula for suffrage levels as a percentage of the total population in the communal elections. The histogram in the background is for the communal population in 1831-1846.

Figure 1: The suffrage assignment rule.

population data from the quinquennial French National Census (Motte and Vouloir, 2007).

4.2 Measuring Mass Politicization

We use three measures mass politicization: (i) consumption of newspapers in 1847 (towards the tail-end of the July Monarchy), (ii) participation in the insurrection against the coup by Louis Napoleon in 1851, and (iii) voting in the Napoleonic plebiscites of 1851 and 1852. Due to lack of commune-level data, which is required by our empirical design (see Section 5), we cannot study how municipal suffrage impacted electoral behavior during the July Monarchy and during the Second Republic before Napoleon's coup of December 1851, which is an important omission.[7] However, we supplement our results with the canton-level analysis of elections during the Second Republic (see Section 7).

Newspapers. The first outcome measures the number of newspapers delivered to each commune from the Postal Survey of 1847 (Marin and Marraud, 2016). The crucial role of the printing press in the emergence of mass politics is widely acknowledged. The press

[7]The dataset by Cagé and Piketty (2023) reports election results for the Second Republic at the level of commune, but these data are statistically imputed from canton-level results making them unsuitable for our analysis.

is "the public sphere's preeminent institution," according to Habermas (1991, 181). The spread of information and ideas in a common vernacular creates a shared identity and engenders local interest in national-level affairs (Anderson, 1983). The contemporaries also saw the spread of the press through postal deliveries as a key development in the growth of an informed public: "the post comes to deposit enlightenment at the threshold of the hut of the poor as at the gate of palaces" (Tocqueville, 2000, 9).[8]

We treat newspaper deliveries as indicative of the local interest in public affairs. Of course, the newspapers carried entertainment news and literature but the political dimension was important. This fact is laid bare by the concern by the July Monarchy that the press might incite public disorder, which led to an adoption of the libel laws in 1835; nonetheless, the newspapers continued to comment on political events in "long, serious articles" (Collins, 1959, 86). Even non-political material like crime stories and the emergent genre of "social novel" was often interpreted in terms of their underlying political message (Collins, 1959, 91). Contemporaries complained that the people pay little attention to national affairs but also noted that "in the towns, where newspapers are read and discussed, the Chamber debates are followed with great interest" (Weber, 1976, 243).

Insurrection. President Louis Napoleon Bonaparte's coup of December 1851 against the National Assembly was met with a short-lived but widespread insurrection, and special administrative tribunals were created in the aftermath to prosecute the participants. We digitized the full list of arrest records of 26,884 individuals tried in these tribunals[9] and linked each individual case to their commune based on their place of residence at the time of the arrest.[10] We then calculated the total number of insurgents in each commune.

Historians vary in their assessment of what the insurgency of December 1851 represented in political terms. Some argue that peasants followed the lead of pro-republican urban elites without fully understanding the political implications of the insurrection

[8]Even where the local population was not highly literate, the news content was passed down to the masses by local notables (Charle, 2009, ch 2).

[9]Boxes F/7/2588-F/7/2595, the French National Archives.

[10]We were able to link 23,780 (88%) of the individuals.

(Agulhon, 1970; Margadant, 1979), while others emphasize peasant agency and support for social change: "the ultimate objective of this rural revolt was a desperate attempt to impose a radical – even revolutionary – social change" (McPhee, 1992, p. 242). In either case, however, participation in the insurrection reflects some form of politicization as it went against the interests of traditional elites.

One concern is that the arrest data are more reflective of the local repressive capacity than the actual participation in the revolt. A detailed study of the same lists has shown an 83% correlation between the department-level arrests and the measures of revolt derived from local sources and reports (Margadant, 1979, p. 309). Although this is reassuring, we conduct a number of robustness and measure-validation checks to address this issue.

Plebiscites. The third outcome variable comes from the Napoleonic plebiscites of 1851 and 1852. The 1851 plebiscite asked to designate Bonaparte as chief executive with the right to establish a new constitution, which was approved by 92% of eligible voters. The 1852 plebiscite asked to approve re-establishing the Empire with Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte as its emperor, which was approved by 96% of eligible voters. We have digitized the original documents with the commune-level results of the two plebiscites.[11]

Turnout in the plebiscites would seem a natural measure of mass politicization. However, we do not use turnout because its meaning is quite ambiguous in the context of Napoleon's electoral autocracy. Napoleon employed "tremendous administrative pressure" with the help of local officials, priests, and the police to secure high turnout leading to a perception that "abstention was not permissible" (Crook, 2021, p. 165). Two contradictory predictions about the relationship between politicization and turnout are possible in such a context: politicized individuals should be more likely to vote, and at the same time, because the regime wanted to demonstrate its force through a large turnout, politicized individuals might have expressed their opposition through abstention.

Instead of turnout, we use the share of NO votes per commune, averaged between the

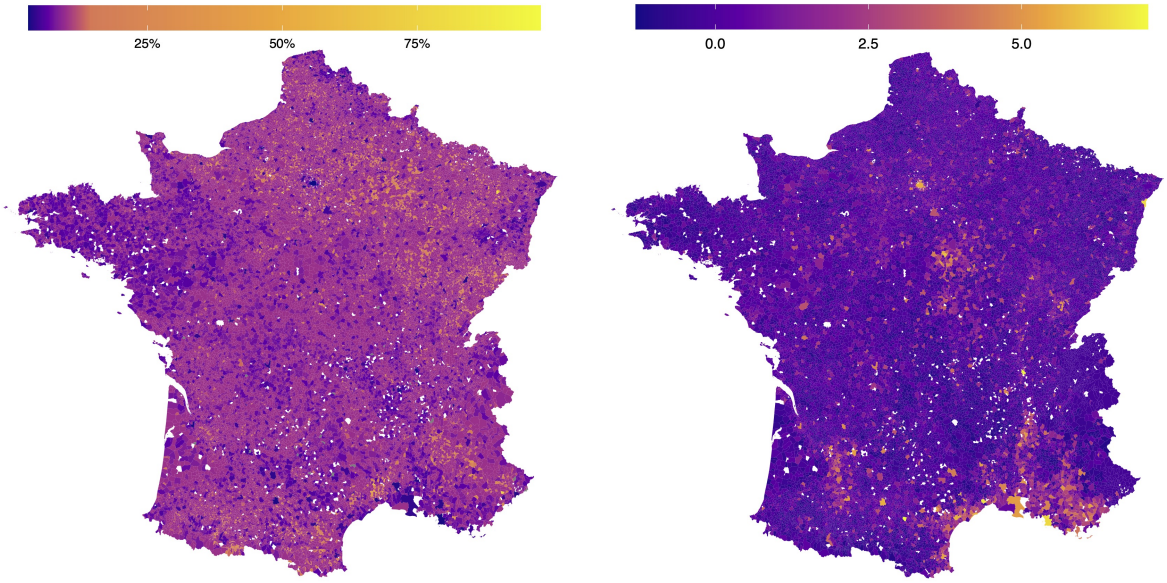
[11] B/II/1047-B/II/1132 (1851) and B/II/1135-B/II/1223 (1852), the French National Archives.

two plebiscites, as the outcome variable. Given the constitutional reforms proposed in the plebiscites, we interpret this variable as capturing opposition to Bonaparte's autocratic rule and support for the parliamentary republic. Such votes also capture the capacity to resist administrative and social pressures to vote in favor of the proposed reforms. The share of NO votes cast indicates a level of political agency, an important feature of politicization. Our prediction is that this outcome variable should take higher values in the communes with higher suffrage during the July Monarchy.

One concern is that the returns of the plebiscite might have been manipulated because the margins in favor of Louis-Napoleon were exceedingly large. However, historians suggest that these high margins were more indicative of the wide support for Napoleon rather than fraud (Furet, 1999, 437). Indeed, many experts of the period have used the returns of the plebiscite as the barometer of the support of Napoleon (Zeldin, 1958; Bluche, 2000; Price, 2004). Furthermore, even if fraud was present, it would only invalidate our results if there was more of it in the communes with higher suffrage during the July Monarchy. It is not clear what mechanism would generate such a pattern.

Extensive and Intensive Versions. We measure mass politicization on the extensive and the intensive margin. The extensive version is an indicator equal to one if the variable takes a positive value and zero otherwise, e.g., any newspapers were delivered, any participants in the insurrection, and any NO votes in either of the two referendums. The intensive version are the continuous variables: the number of newspapers delivered, the number of participants in the insurrection, and the share of NO votes averaged over the two plebiscites. We apply the $\ln(x+1)$ transformation for the intensive versions of our measures to address their skewness.

Indexes of Politicization. The three sets of outcome variables aim to capture distinct but conceptually related dimensions of mass politicization. To capture these separate dimensions jointly, we construct two indexes. First, we create an index of *Extensive Politicization* by normalizing and then averaging the three binary indicators discussed above.



(a) Suffrage levels (1831-1848) (b) Intensive Politicization (1847-1852)

Figure 2: The spatial distribution of the main variables.

Second, we create an index of *Intensive Politicization* by normalizing and then averaging the three continuous variables.

Validity. Later in the paper (Section 7) we provide auxiliary evidence for the validity of our measures of mass politicization. In particular, we show that all the individual variables and the indexes constructed from them are strongly associated with electoral support for "pro-democratic" candidates during the Second Republic.

Spatial distribution. To illustrate the granularity of our data, Figure 2 shows the spatial distribution of the two key variables: (a) suffrage levels during the July Monarchy imputed from the formula and (b) the index of Intensive Politicization. Suffrage tended to be higher in the northeastern region and in certain mountainous areas in the south known for their republican inclinations. There is also some regional clustering in the levels of politicization. To ensure that our results are not driven by such macro-level patterns, our robustness checks include regressions with department fixed effects.

4.3 *Covariates*

We have gathered a range of geographic and pre-treatment covariates that we will use in our balance checks. Geographic covariates include latitude, longitude, area, and altitude, coming from Motte and Vouloir (2007). Distance to the nearest road, forest, and river is measured around 1750 using the Ancien Regime *Cassini* map (Perret, Gribaudi and Barthelemy, 2015). Terrain ruggedness data comes from Nunn and Puga (2012), and wheat suitability from the GAEZ project of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Data on historical conflict come from Chambru and Maneuvrier-Hervieu (2023), and data on the brigades of the *gendarmerie* (military police) in 1810 are from Lignereux (2008).

5 IDENTIFICATION

The electoral rule used in the municipal elections during the July Monarchy, as shown in Figure 1, exhibits several kinks – discrete changes in the slope. We exploit this feature of the electoral rule to estimate the impact of suffrage on the politicization measures using a Regression Kink Design (Card et al., 2015, 2017). Regression Kink Design (RKD) is similar to the more familiar Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) in that both of them exploit a treatment assignment based on a known discrete assignment rule f. However, whereas RDD uses a discontinuity in the *levels* of f around a discontinuity point, RKD exploits a discrete change in the *slope* of f around a kink point.

In our case, the function $f(n)$ assigns a suffrage level for the population of size n. Let $\gamma(n) = \mathbb{E}(Y|n)$ denote the expected value of an outcome variable Y conditional on the population size n. The RKD estimand is the ratio of the *change* in the slopes of the outcome variable at the kink point k to the *change* in the slopes of the treatment variable at that the

same kink point k:

$$\tau = \frac{\lim_{n \to k^+} \gamma'(n) - \lim_{n \to k^-} \gamma'(n)}{\lim_{n \to k^+} f'(n) - \lim_{n \to k^-} f'(n)}. \tag{1}$$

The first term in the numerator is the slope of a regression of Y on n in a small neighborhood to the right of the kink point k, whereas the second term is the slope to the left of k. The numerator represents a reduced-form effect of the kink on the outcome variables. The first term in the denominator is the slope of the suffrage levels in a small neighborhood to the right of the kink point k, whereas the second term is the respective slope to the left of k. The difference between the two slopes represents the first-stage relationship between the suffrage levels (treatment) and the population size (the running variable). Under identifying assumptions that we discuss later, τ represents the change in the outcome variable caused by a one percentage point increase in suffrage levels.

Although the suffrage assignment rule features four kink points (300, 1,000, 5,000, 15,000), we only focus on the kink at 300 hundred inhabitants for two reasons.[12] First, the RKD is underpowered if the change in suffrage induced by the change in population around the kink point is small. The differences in slopes around the 300-inhabitant point are far more pronounced than the differences around other kink points (see Figure 1). The difference in slopes around the 300 point is

$$\lim_{n \to 300^+} f'(n) \; — \lim_{n \to 300^-} f'(n) = 0 - \left(- \frac{30 \times 100}{300^2} \right) = 1/30. \tag{2}$$

The respective differences in slopes at the other cutoffs are between six and five hundred times smaller in absolute magnitude.[13] Second, whereas there are more than 4,000 communes within a 50-inhabitant bandwidth around the 300 cutoff, the amount of data around other cutoffs is too small to estimate the RKD credibly (see Ando, 2017).

[12] There is an additional kink point at 30 inhabitants, which represents a ceiling below which 100% of the population can vote. However, there are only a handful of communes below that point.

[13] The respective values are 1/200 at 1,000, 1/500 at 5,000, and 1/15000 at 15,000.

Letting Y_i represent an outcome of interest in commune i and letting n_i represent the population (running variable), we estimate different versions of the following kink regression with local polynomial specification:

$$E(Y_i|n_i) = \sum_{p=0}^{P} \left(\alpha_p(n_i - 300)^p + \beta_p(n_i - 300)^p \times \mathbb{1}\{n_i \geqslant 300)\}\right), \tag{3}$$

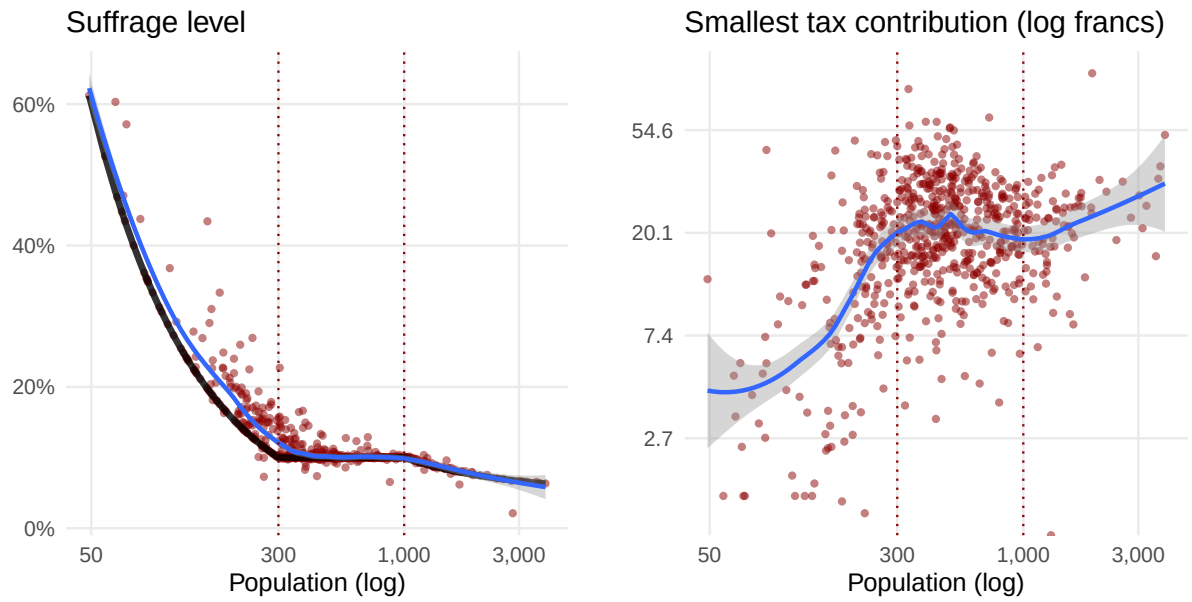
The parameter of interest is β_p, which represents the change in the slopes at the kink point. Following Card et al. (2017), in baseline regressions, we use linear specification (P = 1), triangular kernels, and MSE-optimal bandwidths (Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik, 2015). Per recommendation by Ganong and Jäger (2018, p. 503), we use robust estimation and bias-corrected standard errors (Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik, 2014).

5.1 Compliance

Because we are interested in the effects of the actual enfranchisement as opposed to the effects of the formal election rule, it is important to evaluate the degree of compliance with the law. Unfortunately, the eligible voters' records are unavailable in the French National Archives. To assess compliance, albeit in a limited sample, we obtained the lists of eligible voters in municipal elections for the 791 communes of the Somme department.

The number of observations is too small to credibly evaluate compliance around the 300 inhabitant point using RKD. However, the descriptive patterns shown in Figure 3 are telling. The figure on the left shows the actual suffrage levels as a function of population. The empirical relationship between the two (blue curve) closely approximates the formal rule (black curve). This is despite measurement errors plausibly arising from inaccuracies in the original documents or in the digitization process. The formal rule f accounts for over 94% of the variation in the actual suffrage levels.

We also collected data on the tax contributions of the eligible individuals. As shown in the right panel of Figure 3, the smallest tax contribution is increasing in population in



Left: the vertical axis is the percentage of commune residents with the right to vote. The black curve is the suffrage rule f. Right: the vertical axis the smallest tax contribution (in logged francs) among the enfranchised. In both plots, the blue curve is the loess fit of the data with 95% confidence bands.

Figure 3: Compliance with the suffrage rule in the Somme department.

the intervals where suffrage population is decreasing (below 300 and above 1,000) and it is invariant in population size within the interval where suffrage is invariant to the size of the population as well (between 300 and 1,000). This is another indication that compliance with the formal suffrage rule was high.

Given this evidence of compliance, we proceed under the assumption that the change in slopes of the treatment assignment function at the cutoff is determined by equation 2. Accordingly, our estimand of interest is a rescaled sharp RKD coefficient

$$\tau = \frac{\lim_{n \to 300^+} \gamma'(n) - \lim_{n \to 300^-} \gamma'(n)}{1/30}. \tag{4}$$

The numerator is estimated from regression in (3). The denominator re-scales the reduced form effect given in the numerator so that τ can be interpreted as the effect of a one percentage point increase in the share of the total population that can vote.

5.2 *The Running Variable*

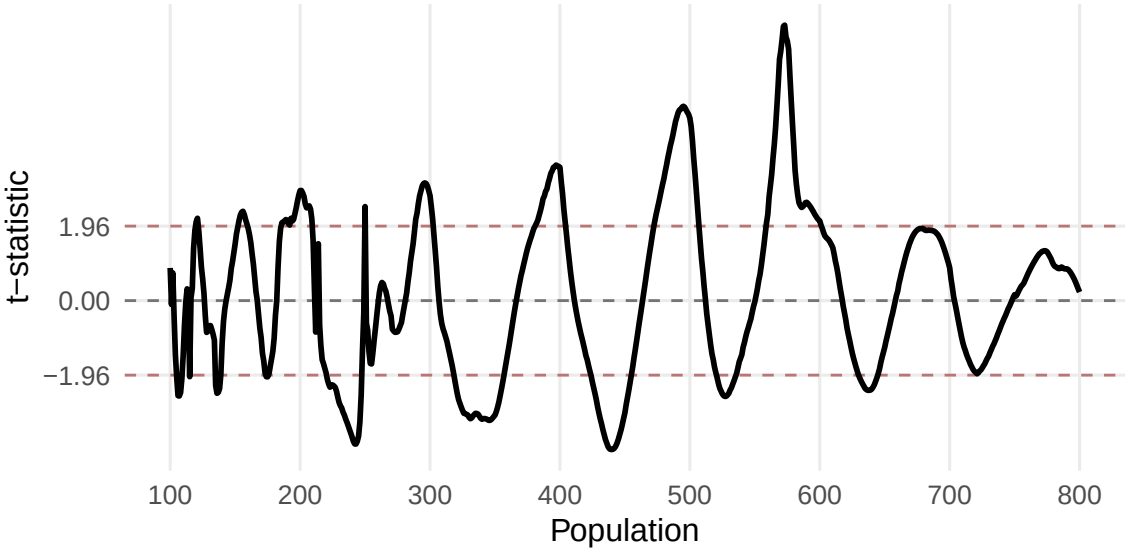
Suffrage levels in the municipal elections were updated with each new census (1831, 1836, 1841, 1846), which means that the communes were switching in and out of the "treatment" status (1,091 switched into and 1,556 out of the treatment status in the period). Since all of the outcomes are measured after 1846, the use of earlier census data may attenuate the estimates by introducing measurement error. To account for that, we construct the running variable in several ways. First, we use each of the four censuses separately, with the expectation that the estimates from the earlier censuses should be smaller due to a larger temporal gap between the treatment and the outcome. Second, to keep the number of estimations manageable, we construct a running variable equal to the minimum population from the two most proximate censuses to the outcome measures, 1841 and 1846.

5.3 *Sorting and Balance*

As in any other design based on discontinuities, the results could be biased because of the self-sorting of units into the treatment condition. This issue is especially common in designs that use population thresholds (Eggers et al., 2018). Because the election law did not produce discontinuous changes in the *levels* of suffrage, there is no reason to suspect that population figures were manipulated to influence suffrage. However, as Figure 1 shows, the population distribution has multiple heaps that happen to be concentrated around the multiples of a hundred, including 300.

We conduct a series of manipulation tests (Cattaneo, Jansson and Ma, 2018) using each population value from 100 to 800. Figure 4 shows the bias-adjusted t-statistic for the null hypothesis that the population density is continuous at the cutoff. The null hypothesis is rejected at 95% levels at 200, 300, 400, and 500 inhabitant points (and a few others). To the best of our knowledge, France had no institutions or policies during the time that changed discontinuously at this cutoff.[14] Our best guess is that the heaping is an artifact

[14]We are only aware of an 1833 law (the *Loi Guizot*) requiring communes with more than 500 inhabitants



Note: The figure shows t-statistics for the continuous density test (Cattaneo, Jansson and Ma, 2018) at a given population cutoff (the minimum population in the 1840s).

Figure 4: Discontinuities in the census data.

of population figures being rounded during census collection or processing. If our results were threatened by sorting, then we should see a discontinuous change in the *levels* of the outcomes of interest at the 300 inhabitant cutoff, but that is not the case (see Table A.3). Furthermore, we estimate the RKD equation using alternative cutoffs and find that our results hold only for the 300-inhabitant cutoff (see Section 6.2).

Next, we check whether the outcomes determined prior to the 1831 municipal election law are balanced around the 300-inhabitant cutoff. Technically, our design only requires no kinks in the slopes around the cutoff, but we still check whether there are changes in the levels of the pre-treatment variables around the cutoff, which would be concerning. Table 1 reports balance tests for fourteen pre-treatment variables for both levels (RDD) and the slopes (RKD). With the exception of *Population in 1821* (which is significant at the 90% level), none of the RDD coefficients are significant, indicating overall balance in the levels of pre-treatment variables. Controlling for the 1821 population makes little difference to our results, as we show later. More importantly for our design, the *slopes*

to build primary schools for boys.

Outcome	RDD			RKD		
	Estimate	BW	Eff. N	Estimate	BW	Eff. N
Longitude	-0.17 (0.19)	191	14,520	0.07 (0.06)	112	9,624
Latitude	-0.18 (0.21)	179	13,967	-0.01 (0.07)	105	8,986
Min. Altitude	-0.11 (0.15)	195	14,424	-0.07 (0.05)	113	9,515
Max. Altitude	-0.05 (0.11)	156	12,371	0.04 (0.06)	89	7,600
Dist Roads (1750)	-0.02 (0.08)	166	13,203	-0.03 (0.04)	112	9,540
Dist Forest (1750)	-0.08 (0.08)	149	12,169	-0.05 (0.05)	112	9,540
Dist Rivers (1750)	0.04 (0.10)	99	8,439	0.07 (0.11)	68	6,021
Dist Gendarmerie (1810)	0.00 (0.08)	107	9,155	0.04 (0.08)	77	6,786
Wheat Suitability	-0.01 (0.13)	159	12,321	-0.02 (0.07)	84	7,124
Ruggedness	-0.04 (0.11)	127	10,622	0.09 (0.08)	80	6,949
Area	0.03 (0.08)	165	12,318	0.08 (0.05)	67	5,492
Population 1821 (log)	-0.03* (0.02)	78	7,148	0.03 (0.03)	51	4,707
Historical Conflict (log)	-0.03 (0.03)	87	7,385	-0.04 (0.04)	71	6,169
Historical Conflict (any)	-0.06 (0.05)	81	6,991	-0.07 (0.06)	68	5,839

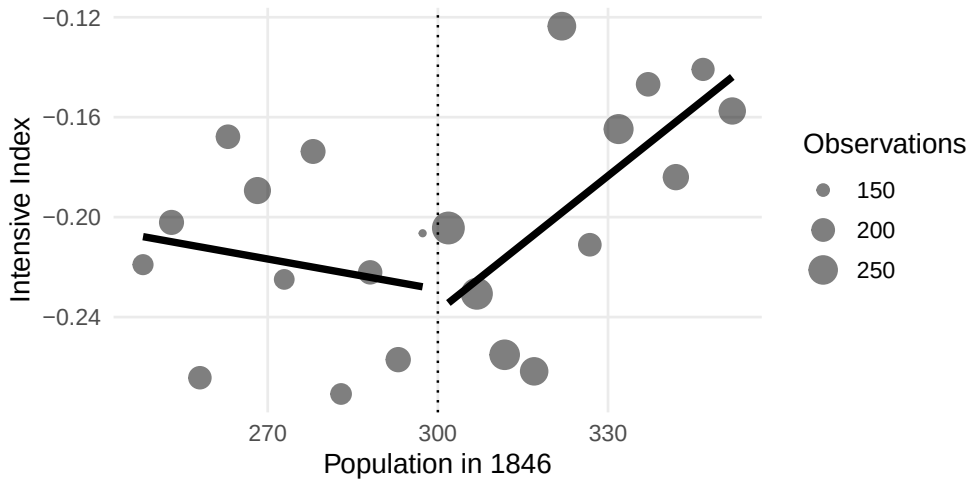
Estimated regression discontinuity (RDD) and kink regression (RKD) coefficients. S.E.'s clustered by department are in parentheses. The running variable is the minimum population in the 1840s. All variables are normalized for comparability. "BW" is the bandwidth, and "Eff. N" is the effective sample. All specifications use local linear regression with MSE-optimal bandwidths. $^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Table 1: Balance tests

of the pre-treatment covariates are balanced across the board as indicated by small and statistically insignificant RKD coefficients.

6 Results

As RKD is not widely used, we start by illustrating the mechanics behind the method using Figure 5. The horizontal axis shows the population in 1846, the closest census to the outcome variables, within the bandwidth of 55 residents around the 300-resident kink point. The vertical axis shows the average values of the Intensive Index of Politicization by bins of five residents. The regression lines are estimated separately on each side of the kink point. The slope on the right minus the slope on the left, after dividing the scaling factor 1/30, gives us the estimate of τ. As the slope on the right is positive and that on the left is negative, the figure implies a positive estimate of $\hat{\tau}$: higher suffrage in 1846



The dots are averages of the Intensive Index of Politicization as a function of the population size in 1846, calculated in bins of five residents. The number of observations per bin is shown in the legend. The lines represent the linear fits on each side of the cutoff.

Figure 5: Reduced-form RKD plot

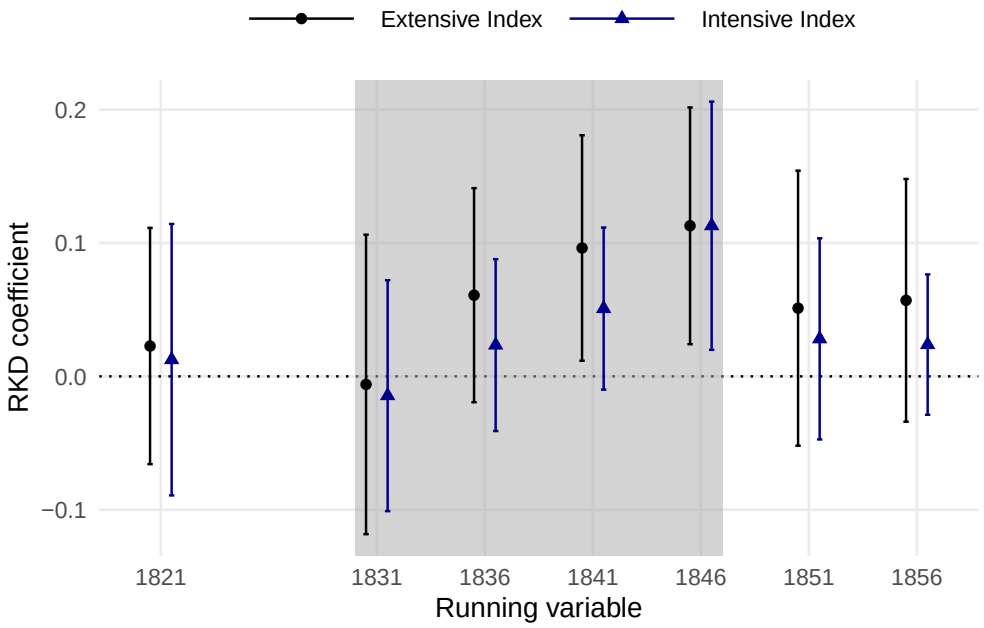
caused more intensive politicization in 1847-1852. We now estimate τ using data-driven bandwidth selection and varying the running variables and outcomes.

6.1 Main Results

We now estimate a set of RKD coefficients τ for the two indexes of politicization using population figures from the censuses of 1821, 1831, 1836, 1841, 1846, 1851, and 1856.[15] The censuses of 1821, 1851, and 1856 serve as placebo cases: the population counts from them did not determine suffrage levels; furthermore, the census of 1856 also comes after the measurement of the outcomes. Figure 6 shows the coefficient estimates with 95% confidence intervals. Reassuringly, the estimates for all of the placebo censuses are close to zero and statistically insignificant.

Within the period where census data did determine the suffrage levels, the estimates become larger with each consecutive census. This temporal heterogeneity makes sense because the more recent exposure to suffrage should have a more pronounced effect. The estimated effects of suffrage in 1831 and 1836 are small and insignificant for both indexes.

[15] No census was conducted in 1826 (Biraben, 1963).



Local-linear RKD estimates of $\hat{\tau}$ representing the impact of a one percentage point increase in the share of the population eligible to vote on the Extensive and Intensive Index of Politicization. The x-axis shows the census year from which the running variable was constructed, and the shaded area indicates the period in which the municipal suffrage law was in effect. 95% confidence intervals were constructed using robust errors clustered at the department level.

Figure 6: RKD estimates using different running variables

The estimated effects of suffrage in 1841 and 1846 are positive and, in three out of four cases, significant at the 95 percent level. Going forward, we use the minimum population during the 1840s as the running variable, which combines information from the two censuses that are most proximate to the outcomes (see Section 5.2).

Table 2 reports the RKD coefficients for both indexes and the individual outcome variable from which the indexes are constructed. The coefficients represent the treatment effect of one percentage point increase in vote-eligibility rate relative to the *total* population. The estimates in columns (1) and (2) suggest that one percentage point increase in the suffrage levels in the 1840s led to a 0.21 point ($\approx 1/3$ SD) higher Extensive Politicization and a 0.13 point ($\approx 1/4$ SD) higher Intensive Politicization.

The magnitude of these estimates may appear too large. Two things have to be borne in mind when interpreting them. First, given that the standard deviation (SD) of suffrage

Table 2: RKD estimates for the indexes and individual outcomes.

	Index 1847-1852		Newspapers 1847		Insurrection 1851		Plebiscites 1851-1852	
	Ext. (1)	Int. (2)	Ext. (3)	Int. (4)	Ext. (5)	Int. (6)	Ext. (7)	Int. (8)
Estimate	0.21***	0.13***	0.14***	0.31**	0.05***	0.04**	0.07**	0.16**
S.E.	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.13)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.07)
Bandwidth	53	58	53	54	55	61	78	66
Effective N	5,025	5,457	4,614	4,614	5,169	5,725	6,857	5,742
Outcome mean	-0.2	-0.2	0.8	1.9	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.7
Outcome SD	0.6	0.5	0.4	1.3	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.9
Suffrage mean	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.8	10.6
Suffrage SD	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.1	0.8

RKD coefficient estimates with standard errors clustered by department. Estimations use MSE-optimal bandwidths and linear slopes. The running variable is the minimum population in the 1840s. "Ext." and "Int." stand for extensive and intensive measures, respectively. $^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

within the estimated bandwidths is around 0.7, a one percentage point increase in suffrage represents about 1.6 of its SD. Second, suffrage is measured with respect to the total population, even though only a subset of *adult males* were allowed to vote. Assuming that one-third of the total population were adult males, we can re-scale the coefficients as follows to obtain more meaningful quantities: one standard deviation increase in suffrage among adult males resulted in $0.7 \times 0.21 \times 1/3 = 0.05$ units (0.08 SD) higher Extensive Politicization and $0.7 \times 0.13 \times 1/3 = 0.03$ units (0.06 SD) higher Intensive Politicization. When appropriately scaled, the magnitudes of the estimates are plausible.

In columns 3-8, we examine each of the individual outcomes separately. Higher suffrage resulted in more newspaper subscriptions, higher participation in the insurgency, and more NO votes in the Napoleonic plebiscites. The results for the extensive measures suggest that one standard deviation increase in suffrage (relative to the adult male population) in the 1840s had the following effects by 1847-1852: the probability of a commune having at least one newspaper delivered increased by $0.7 \times 0.14 \times 1/3 = 0.03$ (column 3), the probability of any insurgents against Napoleon's coup increased by $0.7 \times 0.05 \times 1/3 = 0.01$ (column 5), and the probability of any NO votes in the two plebiscites increased by

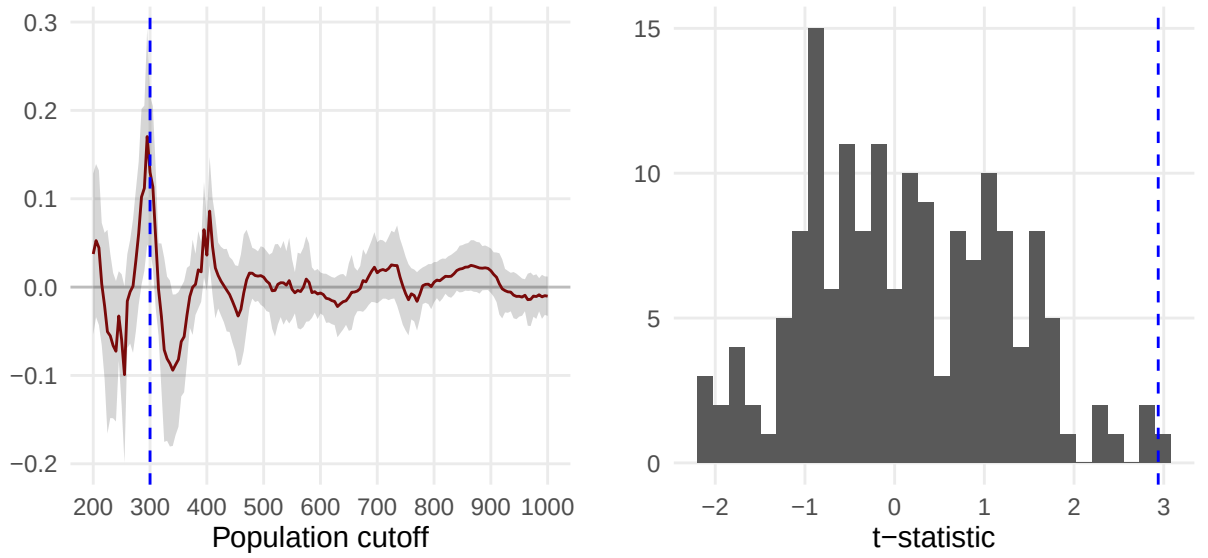
$1.1 \times 0.07 \times 1/3 = 0.03$ (column 7). The respective effects of the intensive measures of politicization are as follows: $0.7 \times 0.31 \times 1/3 = 0.07$ log units more newspapers (column 4), $0.8 \times 0.04 \times 1/3 = 0.01$ log units more insurgents (column 6), and $0.8 \times 0.16 \times 1/3 = 0.04$ log units larger share of NO votes (column 8).

6.2 Robustness Checks

Following (Ando, 2017; Ganong and Jäger, 2018), we estimate the RKD coefficients using a set of cutoffs other than 300, as RKD coefficients should not be significant when using the cutoffs at which the suffrage levels had no kinks. Figure 7 shows the estimated RKD coefficient with 95% confidence intervals for a range of cutoffs from 200 (10th percentile) to 1,000 (75th percentile) in increments of five, using the Intensive Index as the dependent variable. The magnitude of the RKD coefficient peaks around the 300 inhabitant cutoff. Of the twelve significant coefficients, all but one are near 300. The only cutoff far away from 300 for which the coefficient is significant is 405. The distribution of t-statistics shown in the right panel of Figure 7 indicates that the t-statistic for the 300 inhabitant cutoff is rather extreme, suggesting that this cutoff is quite different from the others. The results of the same test for the Extensive Index are nearly identical (see Figure A.1).

We use MSE-optimal bandwidths per standard recommendations (Card et al., 2017; Ganong and Jäger, 2018). Figure A.2 in the Appendix shows the RKD coefficients with 95% confidence intervals for a range of manually set bandwidths. One should bear in mind that if the underlying structure of the data is non-linear, expanding the bandwidths reduces the variance of the estimator at the expense of bias. In line with this, while the effect is substantial and statistically significant at lower bandwidths, it gradually diminishes and tends toward zero as the bandwidth increases.

We also check if our results are not too dependent on the linearity assumption ($P = 1$) by re-estimating our baseline specifications using quadratic polynomials ($P = 2$). The estimated coefficients are similar in sign and magnitude to the baseline results, even though



Left: the RKD coefficients with 95% confidence intervals for different population cutoffs. Right: the distribution of t-statistics for estimates using different population cutoffs. The vertical bar is for the t-statistic obtained at the 300-inhabitant cutoff. The outcome variable is the Intensive Index, and the running variable is the minimum population in the 1840s.

Figure 7: RKD estimates at alternative cutoffs

the estimates are slightly noisier; specifically, the coefficients for the plebiscites lose statistical significance (Table A.4 in Appendix). The noisiness of the RKD estimates with higher-degree polynomials is a known issue in the literature (Card et al., 2017).

Our results could be confounded by department-level factors. The variation in the 1851 insurgency could be capturing the ability of departmental prefects, public prosecutors, and the police to take preemptive measures (Margadant, 1979, Ch. 9). Prefects, the state's local representatives, were also focal actors on which Napoleon relied to control voting (Zeldin, 1958). To rule out such department-level effects, we estimate the baseline regressions with fixed effects for departments, and find that the results are largely similar to our baseline (Table A.5 in Appendix). Finally, the results are robust to controlling for the population in 1821, the only pre-treatment variable that lacked balance in levels (Table A.6 in Appendix).

7 Mass Politicization and Democracy

Our results suggest that wider municipal suffrage during the July Monarchy turned some French peasants into citizens. What are the implications of this transformation for democratic development? A politically mobilized public that can credibly threaten a rebellion is customarily treated as necessary for democracy. But, historically, the political mobilization of peasants was responsible not only for the development of representative democracy but also for mass-based dictatorships (Moore, 1966). So did suffrage expansion stimulate the development of a pro-democratic mass public?

Obviously, we cannot draw on survey evidence to assess what peasants thought about democracy. However, legislative elections during the Second Republic provide a narrow window into this question. The elections for the Constituent Assembly in 1848 and the National Assembly in 1849 saw competition among three groups of candidates: the Party of Order on the right, Moderate Republicans on the center-left, and Democratic Socialists ("La Montagne") on the left.[16] For both parties on the left, "democracy, both as a set of procedures and a code of civic behavior, was [...] a point of departure" (Nord, 1995, p. 254). But Democratic Socialists were especially preoccupied with the defense of the parliamentary republic against the authoritarian aspirations of the Party of Order. As one historian of the period put it, "the *démoc-socs* were the only true partisans of the Republic" (Agulhon, 1983, p. 81). For them, "the terms 'democracy' and 'republic' were synonymous" (Berenson, 2014, p. 107), and the Republic was, above all, defined by "liberal democracy completed by a few strong values" (Lancelot et al., 1996, p. 89).[17]

Accordingly, the support for Democratic Socialists during the Second Republic is a plausible measure of "pro-democratic" mobilization. Ideally, we would want to replicate

[16]Formal party organizations did not exist at that time. These traditional labels refer to rather loose ideological groupings. In the data from (Cagé and Piketty, 2023) that we use later, the ideological labels are constructed from local newspaper coverage of the candidates.

[17]The terminology might be anachronistic to the period. See Claude (1983) for a detailed exploration of the meaning of "republic" and "democracy" in French history.

Table 3: Mass politicization and support for Democratic Socialists.

	Index 1847-1852		Newspapers 1847		Insurgency 1851		Plebiscites, 1851-1852 NO votes		Turnout	
	Ext. (1)	Int. (2)	Ext. (3)	Int. (4)	Ext. (5)	Int. (6)	Ext. (7)	Int. (8)	Pop. (9)	Reg. (10)
DemSoc	0.8***	1.2***	0.07**	0.6***	0.3***	0.7***	0.4***	1.2***	-1.2*	-5.0***
	(0.08)	(0.1)	(0.03)	(0.1)	(0.04)	(0.1)	(0.04)	(0.1)	(0.6)	(1.2)
Voters	0.2***	0.3***	0.03***	0.2***	0.05***	0.2***	0.07***	0.2***	0.1	0.4
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.007)	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.01)	(0.03)	(0.2)	(0.5)
Observations	2,495	2,495	2,455	2,455	2,495	2,495	2,400	2,400	2,358	2,339
Within R^2	0.2	0.2	0.02	0.04	0.1	0.1	0.09	0.2	0.003	0.008
Dept. FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

OLS regressions with canton-level data. 'DemSoc' is the number of votes cast for Democratic Socialists relative to the vote-eligible population, averaged over 1848 and 1849. 'Voters' is the vote-eligible population (logged). In column 9, turnout is measured relative to the total population, and in column 10 it is measured relative to the eligible population. Standard errors clustered by the department. $^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

our RKD regressions on this outcome, but the commune-level data from these elections are not available. As the second-best option, we use canton-level data from these legislative elections (Cagé and Piketty, 2023) to assess the correlation between our measures of mass politicization and electoral mobilization by *démoc-socs* during the Second Republic.

We regress each measure of mass politicization on the electoral mobilization by Democratic Socialists: the number of votes cast for the candidates in this block relative to the number of eligible voters (adult males). We control for the number of eligible voters to avoid confounding by the population size and include department fixed effects to ensure that we draw on comparisons of geographically proximate cantons. Columns 1-8 in Table 3 show that each measure of mass politicization is positively and significantly associated with support for Democratic Socialists. This has two implications.

First, these results validate our measures of mass politicization. Given that it was constructed from arrest records, one could be concerned that the variable *Insurgency* captures state repression rather than anti-Napoleonic mobilization. Similarly, the NO votes cast

in the plebiscites may not represent actual votes against Napoleon's autocratic reforms but rather the inability of local administrators to coerce the citizens to vote in a particular way or to manipulate the figures. The fact that these outcome variables are correlated with electoral mobilization in favor of the most pro-democratic block of the Second Republic partly allays some of these concerns.

Second, these results also suggest that our measures of mass politicization capture more than a generic public engagement in politics. The engagement seems to have been directed toward democracy in its "liberal" rather than "plebiscitarian" or "Caesarean" form. Napoleon fashioned the latter by combining universal franchise with autocracy. The peasants who rebelled against Napoleon's coup or voted against him in the plebiscites could not have done so in demand for voting rights, which Napoleon had already provided. The earlier experience of suffrage during the July Monarchy seems to have created demand not just for the right to vote but also the right to organize and choose – the "liberal" dimension of democracy abolished by Napoleon.

Finally, the last two columns of Table 3 show results from regressions where the dependent variable is turnout in the Napoleonic plebiscites. Turnout here is measured as a percentage of the total population (column 9) or the percentage of the eligible population (column 10). Recall that we did not use turnout in these plebiscites as a measure of mass politicization. The negative coefficient estimates in columns 9 and 10 indicate that turnout in the Napoleonic referendums captures a different, non-democratic type of mass politicization than the outcomes we used.[18]

8 Conclusion

Our analysis of 19th-century France shows that the expansion of suffrage facilitated the rise of a pro-democratic mass public. Rural communes that had wider suffrage in local elections during the July Monarchy (1830-1848) later showed more interest in public af-

[18]RKD regressions on turnout in the Napoleonic plebiscites show null effect of suffrage (see Table A.7).

fairs by reading more newspapers, and they expressed deeper opposition to the rollback of democracy, both at the ballot box and in the streets. These findings align with the historical descriptions of local elections during the July Monarchy as "the apprenticeship in modern politics" (Guionnet, 1997) and as an introduction for peasants to "public, if not political, life" (Tudesq, 1982, 218).

It is worth qualifying that our results speak to the cross-sectional variation in the degree of mass politicization across French localities, not its overall levels in France. We agree with Marx in the *Eighteen Brumaire* and with Eugene Weber in *Peasants into Frenchmen* that most peasants in the period we study were not politicized despite having acquired the universal right to vote. However, our work underscores that, despite generally low levels of mass politicization, there was notable geographic variation attributable to earlier local institutional conditions. While most peasants might not have cared about politics and did not resist Louis Napoleon's autocracy, those who did tended to be concentrated in communes with a deeper experience with suffrage.

Our findings have implications for theories of democratization. After the demise of the Second Republic, its supporters concluded that the Republic "had faltered for want of citizens" and, therefore, "teaching good citizenship" was an essential task in the process of bringing democracy back and keeping it alive (Nord, 1995, p. 251). This is in line with the view of scholars within the revolutionary threat tradition, who argue that a politically mobilized public is necessary for the birth and survival of democracy (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006; Boix, 2003; Przeworski, 2009; Weingast, 1997). From the perspective of this tradition, our results indicate that the right to vote promotes the skills of "good citizenship" that are conducive to democracy. The modernization theorists believed such skills could not develop without railroads, mass literacy, and state expansion. Our analysis not only shows that pro-democratic citizenship can develop independently of economic modernization but also that it is shaped by political institutions.

The analysis may hold different implications within theoretical frameworks that con-

sider democratization a result of elite-level competition. If elites broaden suffrage to prevent redistribution (Ansell and Samuels, 2014), the presence of a politically mobilized public, able to act collectively in demand for redistribution, may preclude democracy. If democracy results from pacts between regime insiders and outsiders (O'Donnel, Schmitter and Whitehead, 1986) or between soft-liners and hard-liners (Przeworski, 1991), the presence of a politically mobilized public may make such pacts, and thus democracy, less feasible. How we should think about the relationship between the rise of mass politics and democracy in the context of competing theories of democratization is a matter of further debate.

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APPENDIX

Table A.1: Summary statistics. Full sample.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Pctl. 25	Pctl. 75	Max
Suffrage (1831-1846 average)	37821	11	5.6	3	10	10	100
Extensive Index	37860	0.0075	0.67	-1.3	-0.41	0.29	3.1
Intensive Index	37860	0.012	0.73	-0.97	-0.42	0.31	7
Newspapers, 1847 (any)	32048	0.84	0.37	0	1	1	1
Newspapers, 1847 (log)	32048	2.3	1.4	0	1.4	3.3	7.5
Insurgents, 1851 (any)	37860	0.092	0.29	0	0	0	1
Insurgents, 1851 (log)	37860	0.13	0.49	0	0	0	6.1
NO votes, 1851-52 (any)	34881	0.65	0.48	0	0	1	1
NO votes, 1851-52 (log)	34881	0.82	0.9	0	0	1.4	4.6

Table A.2: Summary statistics. Sample restricted to communes with between 250 and 350 inhabitants.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Pctl. 25	Pctl. 75	Max
Suffrage (1831-1846 average)	4450	11	1	8.7	10	11	29
Extensive Index	4450	-0.2	0.6	-1.3	-0.41	0.29	1.9
Intensive Index	4450	-0.2	0.52	-0.97	-0.56	0.093	2.6
Newspapers, 1847 (any)	4096	0.76	0.42	0	1	1	1
Newspapers, 1847 (log)	4096	1.8	1.3	0	0.69	2.8	5.3
Insurgents, 1851 (any)	4450	0.045	0.21	0	0	0	1
Insurgents, 1851 (log)	4450	0.05	0.27	0	0	0	3.1
NO votes, 1851-52 (any)	4232	0.54	0.5	0	0	1	1
NO votes, 1851-52 (log)	4232	0.73	0.89	0	0	1.2	4.2

	Index		Newspapers		Insurrection		Plebiscites	
	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Estimate	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.01
S.E.	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.12)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.07)
Bandwidth	120	123	102	114	108	123	155	132
Effective N	10,638	10,982	8,371	9,359	9,696	10,982	12,507	11,059
Outcome mean	-0.19	-0.20	0.77	1.85	0.04	0.05	0.54	0.73
Outcome SD	0.60	0.52	0.42	1.29	0.21	0.26	0.50	0.89
Suffrage SD	1.80	1.89	1.49	1.70	1.57	1.89	2.61	2.09

The running variable is the minimum population in the 1840s. S.E.'s clustered at the level of the department. $^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Table A.3: RDD effects of suffrage.

	Index		Newspapers		Insurrection		Plebiscites	
	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Estimate	0.34***	0.23**	0.31***	1.36***	0.07**	0.07**	0.10	0.11
S.E.	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.39)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.15)
Bandwidth	77	78	67	55	89	97	116	95
Effective N	7,023	7,228	5,706	4,743	8,134	8,803	9,816	8,195
Outcome mean	-0.18	-0.19	0.77	1.88	0.05	0.05	0.55	0.74
Outcome SD	0.61	0.53	0.42	1.28	0.21	0.26	0.50	0.89
Suffrage SD	1.02	1.06	0.87	0.68	1.25	1.41	1.72	1.36

Robust RKD coefficients estimated using data-driven bandwidth selection (Calonico, Cattaneo and Titiunik, 2014), using quadratic polynomials. The running variable is the minimum population in the 1840s. S.E.'s clustered at the level of the department. $^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Table A.4: RKD estimates using quadratic polynomials

	Index		Newspapers		Insurrection		Plebiscites	
	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Estimate	0.22***	0.13***	0.10**	0.29**	0.03**	0.02	0.09**	0.16*
S.E.	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.15)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.04)	(0.08)
Bandwidth	47	49	51	47	66	83	62	54
Effective N	4,489	4,575	4,366	4,121	6,062	7,578	5,428	4,834
Outcome mean	-0.19	-0.19	0.77	1.89	0.05	0.05	0.54	0.73
Outcome SD	0.60	0.53	0.42	1.28	0.21	0.27	0.50	0.89
Suffrage SD	0.57	0.58	0.61	0.57	0.83	1.13	0.77	0.66

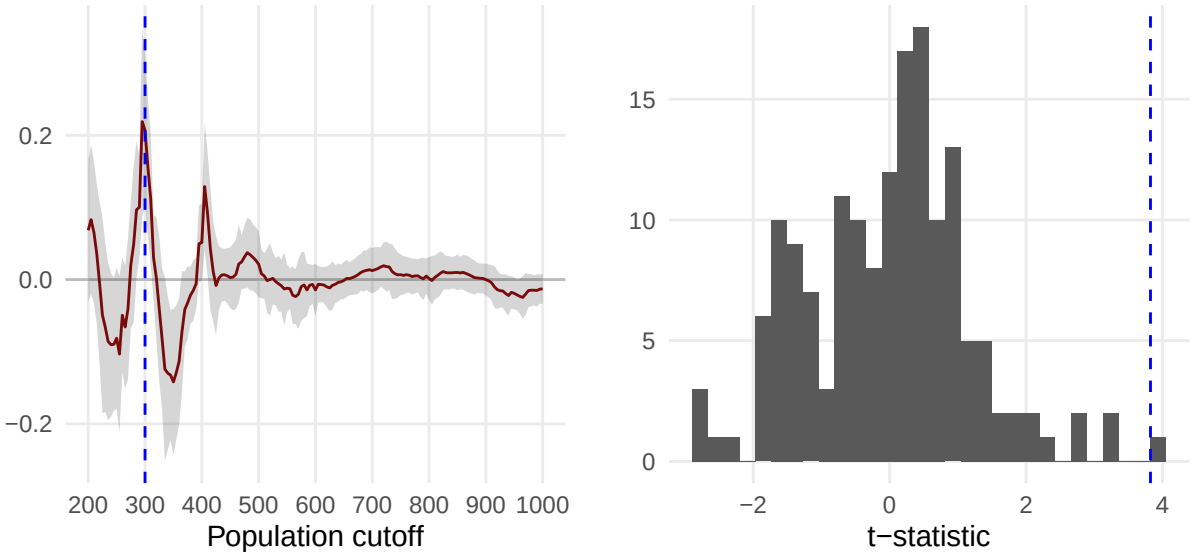
The running variable is the minimum population in the 1840s. S.E.'s clustered at the level of the department. $^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Table A.5: RKD estimates using department fixed-effects

	Index		Newspapers		Insurrection		Plebiscites	
	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.	Ext.	Int.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Estimate	0.23***	0.16***	0.15***	0.39***	0.05***	0.05**	0.07**	0.16**
S.E.	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.14)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.08)
Bandwidth	50	52	51	51	53	58	76	64
Effective N	4,599	4,882	4,396	4,326	4,973	5,399	6,582	5,518
Outcome mean	-0.19	-0.19	0.78	1.88	0.05	0.05	0.55	0.74
Outcome SD	0.60	0.53	0.42	1.28	0.21	0.26	0.50	0.90
Suffrage SD	0.60	0.64	0.62	0.61	0.65	0.73	1.02	0.80

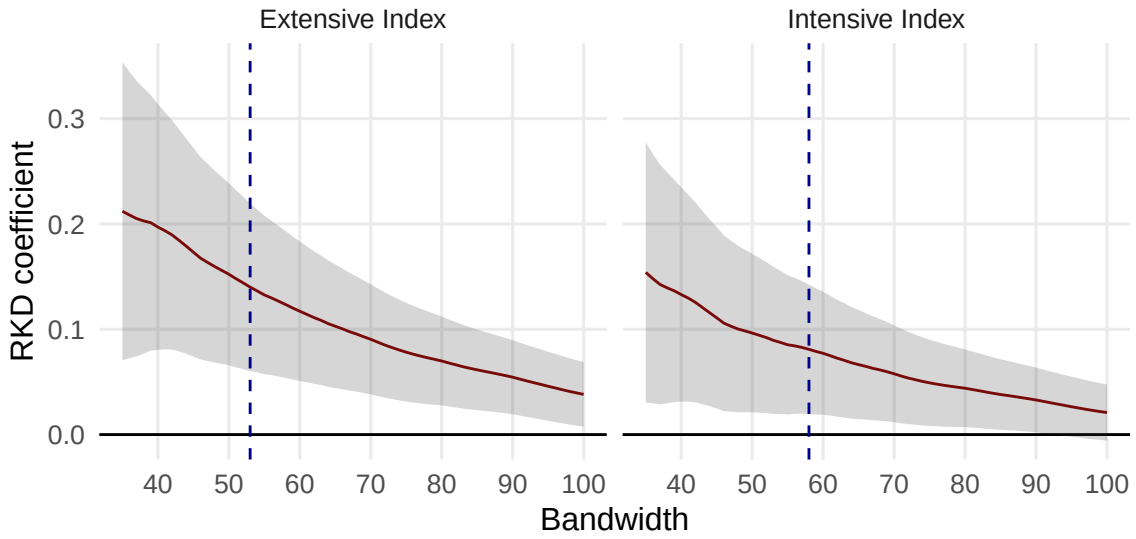
The running variable is the minimum population in the 1840s. S.E.'s clustered at the level of the department. $^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Table A.6: RKD estimates controlling for the population in 1821



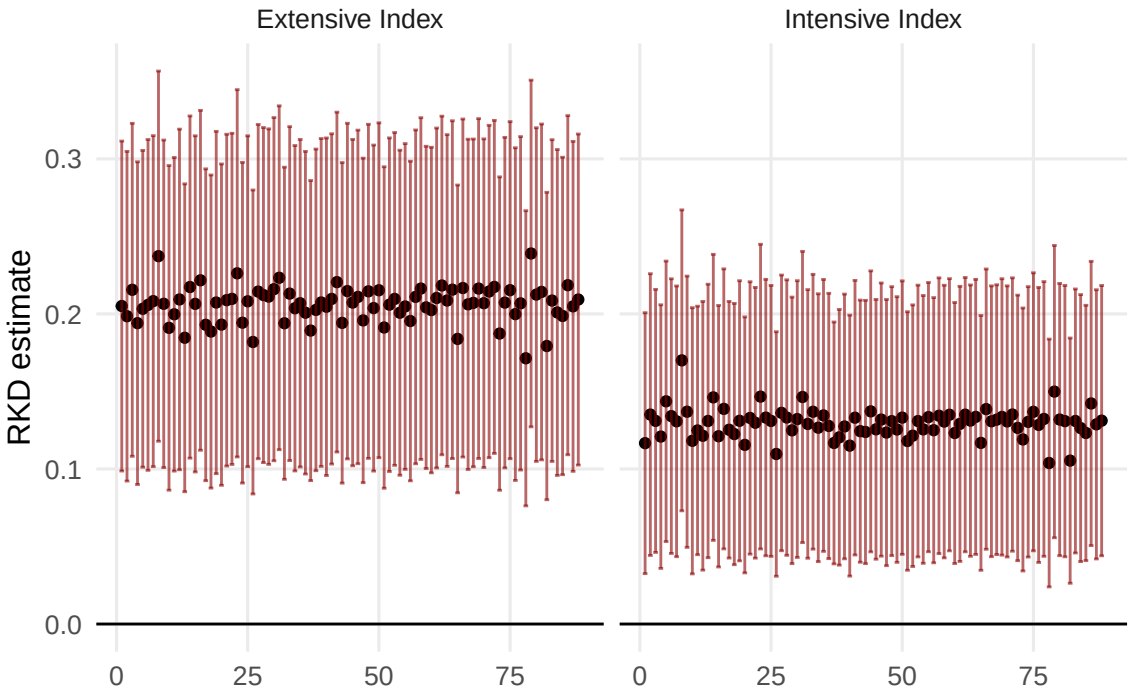
Left: the RKD coefficients with 95% confidence intervals for different population cutoffs. Right: the distribution of t-statistics for estimates using different population cutoffs. The vertical bar is for the t-statistic obtained at the 300-inhabitant cutoff. The outcome variable is the Extensive Index and the running variable is the minimum population in the 1840s.

Figure A.1: RKD estimates at alternative cutoffs (Extensive Index)



Note: The dark red line represents the conventional RKD estimates obtained using the bandwidths indicated on the horizontal axis, assuming linear slopes. The gray ribbons are the 95% confidence intervals constructed using errors clustered at the department level. The left-hand side plot shows the estimates using the Extensive Index, while the right-hand side plot shows the estimates using the Intensive Index. Dashed lines represent the MSE-optimal bandwidths in each case.

Figure A.2: RKD Estimates using multiple bandwidths



Each point is the RKD coefficient estimate from the baseline regression excluding one department. The bars are 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A.3: Leave-one-out

	% Total population			% Eligible population		
	1851	1852	1851-52	1851	1852	1851-52
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Estimate	0.30	-0.39	0.03	0.65	-1.01	0.13
S.E.	(0.30)	(0.62)	(0.40)	(0.88)	(1.09)	(0.58)
Bandwidth	89	63	79	95	67	97
Effective N	6,427	4,876	6,645	5,460	5,409	8,130
Outcome mean	26.20	26.29	26.18	87.34	88.56	88.04
Outcome SD	4.68	4.67	4.43	15.54	10.18	10.25
Suffrage SD	1.25	0.79	1.08	1.35	0.87	1.39

The dependent variable is the turnout in Napoleon's referendums as the percentage of the total population (columns 1-3) or the percentage of the eligible population (columns 4-6). The running variable is the minimum population in the 1840s. S.E.'s clustered at the department level. $^{***}p < 0.01$; $^{**}p < 0.05$; $^{*}p < 0.1$.

Table A.7: Suffrage and turnout: RKD estimates