

**Enfranchisement, Equality and Turnout in the  
European Democratisation Process:  
A Preliminary Comparative Analysis**

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Working Paper n.121  
Barcelona 1996

## **FRANCHISE, EQUALITY AND TURNOUT: PROBLEMS OF ANALYSIS**

It is known that the development of political rights, and in particular those of voting, was the end result of a long historical process going back to the 18th century and was rooted in the development of civic rights. Civic rights developed primarily in relation to the market as rights of property, of contract, of free residence and work-place choice, etc. Civic rights also refer to the potential for associability in a society when they touch upon freedom of faith, thought, speech, assembly and association. The combination of these civic rights constitutes the point of departure for the opening of a political public space and opinion. The successive development of strictly political rights adds the decisive push for political mobilisation, granting the actual legal basis for the development of interest groups and political parties<sup>1</sup>.

However, the process of development of political rights, and in particular of voting rights, should not be seen as a linear development of previous and prerequisite rights of expression, association and opposition. Even in the second half of the 19th century the combination was rather complex. We find cases of extended voting rights not accompanied by firmly established association and expression rights, as well as the reverse. This is in part due to the ambiguous role the process of enfranchisement played in the eyes of the ruling elites. Indeed, from a broad historical perspective from 1848 to the First World War, the level of suffrage granted indicated two quite different situations: suffrage as a device of national integration and suffrage as a device of political representation. In the first case, large levels of franchise were granted from above as an instrument for nationally integrating social groups, but was blocked as an instrument of representation by a vast set of inequality devices from the curia/estate system to plural voting or institutional barriers, from irresponsible government to second chamber predominance etc. Such institutional devices actually prevented the suffrage from performing the role of properly representing electors and granting them a share of parliamentary decisional power. On the other side, and contrary to integration suffrage, restricted or enlarged representational suffrage is based and impinges upon already established opposition and associational rights and constitutes their representational expression. The nature of the suffrage is therefore characterised through 'other aspects' different from the suffrage itself that clarify its role and function within the political system.

In this paper I will leave aside this political meaning of suffrage as a discussion of it requires a parallel analysis of the liberalisation and

democratisation of the political system. I will concentrate my attention on the descriptive comparative analysis of

- 1) the levels of electorate enfranchisement across European countries;
- 2) the institutional mechanisms of inequality;
- 3) the levels of turnout, i.e. the extent to which the enfranchised electorate actually participated in the voting.

Franchise, equality and participation are therefore the three main dimensions along which I will try to classify European experiences. Let us see which problems this exercise needs to face.

Even the simplest analysis of levels of enfranchisement presents important problems if one wants it to be comparative and systematic<sup>2</sup>. First of all, the process is not uni-dimensional as franchise development tends to take France and Great Britain as two extremes and opposite examples. On one side the British model is characterised by slow enlargement, proceeding step by step and deprived of cases of reversal of the tendency, but at the same time the term 'development of franchise' would lead one to believe. The standard treatment of time is characterised by long periods of formal recognition of profound inequalities. On the other side there is the French model, with its universal male direct suffrage proclaimed and written down for the first time in 1793 but never implemented and reintroduced by a decree of the Provisional Government on 5th March 1848. The French pattern is regarded as the prototype of the early and sudden enlargement, but is characterised by frequent reversals and by a tendency toward plebiscitarian manipulation of mass support. The distinction between these two extreme models indicates that it is difficult to find a common dimension along which to rank-order national cases. We may distinguish an **early versus late** dimension; a **sudden versus gradual** dimension, and a **continuity** dimension (with or without important reversals).

Sheer levels of franchise must be weighted with questions of equality. Obviously, the inequalities pertaining to the existence of curia/estate systems or to other forms of plural voting should be taken into consideration. The violation of the "one man-one vote" principle must be incorporated into the analysis of franchise to avoid drawing false inferences from sheer levels of enfranchised population.

Finally, the third problem in the comparative assessment of the development of the franchise relates to the actual levels of participation, in other words to the turnout. The franchise defines a legal electorate as a set of

individuals having the right to take part in elections. However, several other factors played an important role in determining the extent to which this formal right was actually exercised. It will therefore be crucial to investigate the relationship between electorate and turnout in comparative terms to assess to what extent potentially similar electorates were actually resulting in similar levels of vote. This again is a crucial aspect in relation to the development of the electoral force of the left.

A final issue in the comparative analysis of the early enfranchisement - legal and actual- is related to the data. We have a rich variety of estimates of enfranchised people in historical sources, but there is very little systematic standardisation of these data, which makes cross-country comparisons highly unreliable. The electorate is sometimes calculated in percentage of the total or male population; sometimes in percentage of the 'adult' (male or total) population and the latter is defined by the legal standard of the country for adulthood or by the age indicated in the different laws: 30, 27, 24 or later 21 and 18 year old people (sometimes independent and generally higher than the legal adulthood for civic rights as the voting right was regarded as an especially demanding activity). Sometimes figures may be offered as percentage of the enfranchised age group, that is of the population above the legal age indicated by the electoral law.

All this makes a rigorous comparison across time and space very difficult indeed. For this purpose we need a single measure which takes the number of people having legal right to vote in percentage of some entity which is relatively stable and homogeneous over time and across country<sup>3</sup>. For all these reasons we have used a single international source which offers the figure of the electorate as a percentage of the total population (male and female) being 20 or older<sup>4</sup>. All the data concerning the electorate in the group of our elections do take such a population as their reference point. This solution offers clear advantages. Whatever the legal voting age defined by the various laws, whether the suffrage was only male or a mix of male and female or universal, we always have a similar cross-country and cross-space reference point to evaluate how large the enfranchised section of the population was. This measure raises problems only when the voting age is lower than 20, which can result in electorates being higher than 100 percent. However, this problem emerges only in the 1970s, in a phase of well established universal suffrages (except Switzerland) and in which, anyway, the analysis of the electorate loses its importance given the uniformly high levels.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN ELECTORATE**

In sheer quantitative terms, how many individuals were allowed to vote during the 19th century? In Table 1 I have tried to systematise the figures concerning this process. This table is divided into four parts corresponding to the period up to 1880, 1881-1917, 1918-1944 and 1945-1975.

Even a cursory look at the data in Table 1 shows that the **earliness** of enfranchisement depends to a large extent on the period we take into account. If we start by considering the 1848-1880 period, three countries stand out as the very early comers to relatively large suffrages. France, after experimentation with several formulae in the post Napoleonic period from 1815 to 1846<sup>5</sup>, suddenly introduced in 1848 universal (it was already equal since 1831) male suffrage for citizens over 21 years, with a remarkable jump from about 1-2% of the electorate to 36%. Switzerland fundamentally did the same. Universal male suffrage for citizens of 20 years or above was introduced with the constitutional reform which followed the Sonderbund of the autumn of 1847, but its precedents were of a different sort. Switzerland had never really known any *régime censitaire* and had a long tradition of general voting in the mountain cantons. However, electoral inequalities were obtained through the electoral privileges of the cities (of the plateau) against which had been directed the 1830 and 1833 'revolutions' which had enlarged and equalised the suffrage<sup>6</sup>. So, in the Swiss case, the jump is the same and at the same date as in France, but there was less of a break with the past. There are estimates which indicate at about 30% the enfranchised electorate in 1848. Finally Denmark too introduced equal male suffrage in the wake of the 1848 revolution, which produced a radical jump from autocracy to proto-democracy in the Kingdom. The principle, however, was tempered by a great deal more restrictions than in the other two cases<sup>7</sup> and was applied to men over 30. This resulted in an enfranchised electorate smaller than in the other two cases, at about 25%.

The fourth early comer to high levels of male suffrage was Germany. Before 1867 Germany was of course not a unified country and no *Reichstag* existed. However the short lived Frankfurt Assembly of 1848 was elected by universal male suffrage. After that date many German states had a fairly large male electorate. In particular in the primary elections in the Kingdom of Prussia, even if the suffrage was not only indirect, but also unbearably unequal<sup>8</sup>, every male citizen of 24 years or more was entitled to cast a vote<sup>9</sup>. The two elections held in 1867 for the *Reichstag* of the North Confederation were universal male (25 or more years) suffrage elections, and the electorate has been estimated at about 35% of the adult population. After the foundation of the *Reich* all elections

after 1871 were direct, equal and male universal. So, even if official data concerning Germany start twenty years later than 1848, one can safely argue that male universal suffrage of some sort had already been practised since that date.

Beyond these clear four early-comers, all other countries had very restrictive suffrage requirements in the middle of the 19th century, with electorates ranging between 3 and 8 percent of the 20 year or older population and there is not much purpose in distinguishing between them. A case possibly to be singled out is Norway. The 1814 Norwegian constitution introduced what Rokkan regards as the most liberal voting qualifications of the time, estimating that it enfranchised 25% of all men<sup>10</sup>. This corresponded to roughly 10% of the population of 20 or more which was indeed up to 1848 the highest franchise in Western European countries. However, 1848 passed unnoticed in Norway and the electorate stayed stable around 9% or even declined to 8% in the 1870s so that by that time the Norwegian franchise could not be regarded as high in comparative terms.

If we move to the end of this first period, in the 1870-80s, the situation is substantially unmodified. There are only three cases worth mentioning from our point of view. Next to the French, German, Danish and Swiss forerunners, come Austria, Sweden and the United Kingdom as the only three countries where the electorate had bypassed the threshold of 10%. All the others remained at the low levels mentioned before. In Austria the first direct elections to the lower house were held in 1873 (in previous elections the deputies were indirectly elected by Provincial Diets), with an enfranchised electorate of about 10%<sup>11</sup>. Similarly in Sweden, the establishment of a second chamber and of centrally recorded elections came after 1866 and through the 1870s the electorate ranged around 10%. Finally in Britain, the electoral reforms of the 1867-1872 period brought the electorate<sup>12</sup> to about 15% of the population of 20 or more, which at that time was the highest franchise after the four forerunners to universal or quasi-universal male suffrage.

In short, at the beginning of the 1880s, the order of suffrage extension saw France, Switzerland, Germany and Denmark as clearly, the forerunners. Britain was the second largest electorate after them, and Austrian, Norway and Sweden were following close with roughly one adult in ten being enfranchised.

The 1880-1920 period is the crucial phase of suffrage extension. Not surprisingly, in this period the electorate of the forerunners remained substantially unchanged in France, Germany and Switzerland, while it increased only very

slowly and marginally in Denmark, passing from about 27% in 1881 to 30% in 1913. The other 9 countries followed different paths. The first to get substantial electoral enlargements were Ireland and the United Kingdom with the reforms in the middle of the 1880s that introduced a uniform household franchise, a uniform lodger franchise and a uniform £ 10 occupation franchise in every borough and county throughout the country, while leaving ownership franchise differentiated. The electorate was increased by 80% through these measures and reached the level of about 30% of the adult population<sup>13</sup>.

Three other countries enlarged the electorate to reach a third of the adult population, corresponding roughly to universal male suffrage, before the turn of the century: Belgium (1894 first election), Austria (1896) and Norway (1900). The Belgian 1893 reform suddenly increased tenfold what was probably the most restricted suffrage in Europe at that time (excluding Finland for which no reliable figures have been found): from 3.9% in 1892 to 37.3% in the 1894 election. Universal male suffrage was introduced for the National assembly for male citizens of 25 or more years, even if (see later) crying inequalities were maintained.

Austria is a more difficult case to analyse given that elections to the lower House (the *Abgeordnetenhaus*) continued to be held according to a curia system that divided the House into 4 classes: the first (85 seats) made up by male big landowners who paid at least 50 florins of taxes per year; the second (21 seats) by members of the Chambers of Commerce and Trade; the third (118 seats) for all male urban dwellers of 24 years or more who paid 10 Florins or more, and the fourth (129 seats indirectly elected) by male rural commune residents who paid at least 10 florins. Apart from considerations concerning inequalities (see later), the total electorate estimated to be enfranchised under this system was about 12-13% in the 1890s. The 1896 reform however, added a fifth curia to the fourth (72 seats compared with the 353 deputies for the other four) which had a generalized character and universal suffrage for men. This brought the enfranchised population to about 36% of the adult population (see Legend in Table 1).

Finally, in Norway suffrage grew slowly from the 10% that had characterised 19th century elections to 16-17% at the end of the century by gradual reform which extended suffrage from the property and occupational requirements to citizens paying a minimum tax on income (1885). Finally in 1898 (first election 1900) universal suffrage for men of 25 or more was achieved bringing the electorate to about 35%<sup>14</sup>. What is interesting about Norway is that throughout this period the electorate continued to grow by a marginal increase

linked to progressive enlargements: in 1907 a proportion of the female electorate (about 48%) was enfranchised (those with a certain income); in 1913 universal suffrage for adult women was introduced (it had been preceded by women's universal suffrage at the local level in 1911) bringing the enfranchised adult population to 77%, the second highest level of enfranchisement in Europe at that time after the Finnish (see below). Even after that, the electorate continued its progressive growth until the 1930s by the minor incorporation of other sections of the population. Overall, the Norwegian pattern of extension was extremely gradual and progressive.

Finland represents the unique case of a relatively late and extremely sudden male universal suffrage (but early female). Between 1809 and 1867, a four Diet system gave representation to noble heads of families, the clergy, city dwellers (1-2 representatives for each town or group of towns), and to peasants (one representative by jurisdictional district). From 1872 to 1904, elections and meetings of the Diets become more regular (1869 Diet Act), but procedures and qualifications for voting did not change fundamentally except for allowing school and university teachers and civil servants to vote in the clergy curia. The franchise was therefore extremely restricted in this period even if I have been unable to find estimates of it. In 1904, still within the estate system, an increase of the electorate brought the enfranchised adult population to about 9%. The 1906 reform, following the temporary loosening of the Russian hold on Finnish political affairs, introduced suddenly universal male and female (over 24 years) suffrage, direct and secret elections and even proportional representation. In a single and relatively unopposed reform, the Finnish new unicameral Parliament (*Eduskunta*) was elected by 76% of the adult electorate: from being the most restricted suffrage in Europe at the beginning of the century, Finland passed to the largest electorate in only one year and one reform.

The countries that arrived last to universal male suffrage were the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden. Yet there are important differences even in this relatively homogeneous group. Italy had the largest electorate of the three in the 1880s and at the beginning of the 1890s, but its mean level of about 15% was kept constant until the reform of 1913. In fact the Zanardelli Reform Act of 1882 had significantly increased the electorate to about 13%, lowering the male voting age from 25 to 21, by reducing the tax minima and equivalent wealth requirement and educational qualifications. Actually, the increase in suffrage was largely due to this latter element. Before the Zanardelli reform, 80% of those incorporated in the electorate were there thanks to tax and property qualifications; after the reform this percentage dropped to 34.7%, while 63.5% were inscribed thanks to



intellectual and educational capacities<sup>15</sup>. However, in the period of anti-socialist legislation starting in 1894, electoral registers were revised and educational tests were made more stringent with the actual result of disenfranchising almost 5% of the adult population. The electorate fell back to pre-1880 levels and grew slowly in following years, again reaching 15% of the adult population on the eve of the 1912 electoral reform (first election 1913) that introduced almost universal male suffrage (males over 30) brought the electorate to 42% of the adult population<sup>16</sup>. The number of electors suddenly passed from 2.930.000 to 8.443.000 with an average increase of 251%.

Strangely as it might look, as the two countries have never been associated in this way, the Swedish pattern of franchise development closely follows the Italian one. Although no experience of marked disenfranchisement occurred in Sweden in the 1890s, the electorate remained throughout the 1880s and 1890s fairly stable at around 10% of the adult population and rose to about 15% in the first decade of the century. In 1909, only a couple of years before Italy, almost universal male suffrage for citizens of 24 years and over was introduced, with an electorate that doubled from 15.8 to 32.8%.

The Netherlands belongs to this group of late-comers to universal male suffrage. However, its pattern differs from those of Italy and Sweden as the first steps of the enlargements came earlier and the whole process was more gradual. The first reform of the 1880s (1887) doubled the electorate from 5.7% -probably the second lowest electorate of the 1880s after Belgium- to almost 12 % of the adult population through a lowering of economic requirements. A second doubling of the electorate from 11 to 20% took place with the reform of 1896 (first election 1897). This reform, although not introducing universal suffrage, brought the male electorate to a level which meant the enfranchisement of many highly qualified workers, large parts of the lower middle classes and sections of the rural proletariat, and small farmers and tenants. Universal male suffrage was only introduced after World War I in 1918, but the jump in the electorate (to 39.3%) was relatively minor as the electorate had already grown to almost 28% of the adult population in the last pre-war election (1913): an increase of about 11%.

The final stage of enfranchisement concerned of course the female electorate and in this case the sequence of countries is far easier to describe as in most cases it was a sudden, final decision. Only two countries had enfranchised women before World War I: Finland in 1907 together with males; and Norway between 1909 (for women whose own or husband's income exceeded a minimum) and 1915. In Austria, Denmark (29 or over), and Germany,

female enfranchisement took place in a single step immediately after the war, between 1918 and 1919. The United Kingdom and Ireland enfranchised women of 30 years or more (with certain minimal limitations) in 1918 and completed the process in 1923 in Ireland, and in 1928 in The United Kingdom. In both cases, the age limit was brought down to 21 years, as for the men. The Netherlands and Sweden enlarged the suffrage to women at the beginning of the 1920s: respectively 1922 and 1921. Finally Italy, France and Belgium did this only in the aftermath of World War II, between 1945 and 1948. Well behind, as is known, was Switzerland which gave the suffrage to women at the national level only in 1971, one hundred twenty three years after the same right was granted to men.

This rapid comment on the data illustrated in Table 1 shows that a simple and straightforward classification of national experiences is difficult even along a single dimension like earliness/ lateness. Beyond the four clear cut cases of France, Germany, Switzerland and Denmark, the relative position of the other countries has kept changing from decade to decade even if we limit the analysis to the male enfranchisement. In Table 2 I have produced a rank-ordering of the countries according to the average level of franchise they had reached in each decade since the 1860s. This Table clarifies how difficult it is to characterise the experience of a country over the whole period of mass politics development. In fact, relative positions change quite a lot from decade to decade, and make difficult a general appreciation. So, Switzerland and France which were leading up to the 1860s had fallen in the group of the lowest level by the 1920s; Denmark's early start was followed by a stagnation which allowed several countries to catch up with Denmark by the 1870s and 1880s. Germany is probably the only country which consistently keeps itself in the first ranks throughout time. The relative inconsistency in the ranking of countries over time makes clear how difficult it is to generalise about earliness of the suffrage, beyond the simple identification of the early comers.

## **THE TEMPO OF ENFRANCHISEMENT**

We need to qualify our analysis of the timing with supplementary considerations relating to the tempo, i.e. to the rapidity or slowness with which the suffrage was extended. Taking into consideration the tempo of enfranchising complicates considerably the picture, but it is important not only for descriptive purposes, but also in order to clarify more precisely whether similar levels at a given time were the result of gradual growth of the electorate or of sudden expansions of it. Moreover, the timing also has important implications for the

theory of political development and institutional integration. Patterns of political development, and in particular issues of regime stability and institutionalisation, are in fact frequently related to different modalities of enlargement, arguing that sudden increases in franchise exposed the democratising regimes to more pronounced strains than was the case in those with a more gradual development. Moreover, even the issue of party formation and organisational development is linked to the existence, timing and magnitude of major jumps in electorates. Parties developing before or after the major jumps in franchise are often thought to adopt ideological and organisational features which are distinctively different. It is therefore important to be able to assess comparatively the tempo of enfranchisement in order to be able to properly relate it to other politico-institutional developments.

Even in this case, the analysis is not so straightforward as one might think. To help the reader to follow the discussion I have reproduced in graphical form for each country the development of the electorate over time. These figures (Figure 1 a to o) are reported in the Appendix of this paper. In them, next to the line of the development of the electorate, there is also the line (dotted line) of the development of the turnout over time (the percentages of valid votes (occasionally only total votes were available) over the electorate. Turnout levels will be discussed later. For the moment let us concentrate on the sudden versus gradual nature of the electorate's development (see Figure 1 a-o).

Looking closely at the line of the Electorate for each country it is evident that in the vast majority of cases the enlargements of the suffrage proceeded in relatively large jumps. Graduality in a real sense is not the case of any of the considered countries. First of all, sudden and big changes are always the case for female enfranchisement; in all cases but three this change occurred with a single big jump clearly doubling the electorate. Only in Norway, Ireland and the United Kingdom did the female enfranchisement proceed in two but almost consecutive steps: 1909-1915; 1918-1923 and 1918-1929 (I refer, as usual, to first elections under new rule). Male development was of course more differentiated, but also in this case jumps predominate over gradual evolution. Let us define a jump as an increase of more than 10% of the electorate. We see that in no country -excluding the four early-comers- is there absent a jump of at least this magnitude. Looking at Figure 1 c,e,f and shows that for these early-comers one should not speak of growth but simply of stability. France, Germany, Switzerland and Denmark suddenly brought their electorate to an almost universal male level very early and afterwards it remained at the same level until after W.W.I, when it was enlarged to females. These are therefore special cases of early and sudden enfranchisement

followed by an extremely long period (about 70 years at least) of constant and unchanged levels. Early-comers could not have gradual development so that the category of very early and gradual enlargement is as unthinkable as that of very late and gradual. All the other cases were characterised by more or less big jumps. Going from the earlier jumps to the later, the cases are the following: United Kingdom produced the first important jump of about 13 percentage points already in 1885; and again of about 13 points in 1918; Ireland jumped by 18-19 percentage points at the same time; Belgium by 33.4 points in 1894; Austria jumped by 22 percentage points in 1896; Norway by 18.2 percentage points in 1900; Finland by almost 30 points in 1907; Sweden by 16.7 points in 1911; Italy by 27.2 points in 1913; Netherlands by almost 12 percentage points in 1918. Biggest and most frequent jumps occurred before W.W.I and not in its aftermath (only in the Netherlands).

The magnitude of these changes varied. The most sudden increases, in the order of a third of the adult population, were no doubt experienced by Belgium at a very early stage and by Finland and Italy later. Austria had a sudden increase concerning about a fifth of the adult population in 1896. Ireland 1886, Norway 1900 and Sweden 1911 had smaller jumps, at around 18% of the adult population, and finally the Netherlands had only one jump very late after W.W.I and also the smallest in magnitude; just above the 10% limits, like the two British increases. All the other changes not mentioned here can be safely considered as gradual adaptations due to small modifications in economic and/or capacity requirements and in revisions of the electoral lists.

Looking at major jumps in enfranchisement is only one of the possible ways to evaluate the graduality of the suffrage extension in the crucial phase of mass politics development. We can control the provisional groupings identified in this way by calculating the average yearly increase in the electorate for each decade in the crucial period between the 1860s and the 1920s. In Table 3 these figures are reproduced. I have proceeded considering only male suffrage in order to avoid overemphasising change for those countries which were the first to enfranchise women. I have taken the election nearest to the beginning of the decade and that nearest to the end of it, computed the electorate differential and divided it by the standard figure of 10 (years). Countries in this case are regrouped according to the tentative classification made on the bases of the major increases.

Looking at Table 3 we get more confidence in our tentative ordering of countries. The Table offers at the same time information about the location of the

major increases and their magnitude. The steadily declining average increments per annum confirm that this may be a valid ordering of the countries. What is particularly important is that in this case we can compare the relative magnitude of the major jumps with the tendency in previous or later decades. As a matter of fact a 'gradual' development should manifest itself not only in the absence of sudden major increases, but also in an as much as possible constant (even if minor) increases in each decade. In fact, following the table from top to bottom, what is more important is not so much the decline in the magnitude of the per annum increases in the case of major enlargements, but also a generally increasing level of per annum increases in the other decades not characterised by any major redefinition of the franchise.

From this point of view the Netherlands clearly looks to be the most clear-cut Western European case of gradual enlargement. Not only does it present a case of electoral enfranchisement bigger than 10% of the electorate only in the final phase after W.W.I, but what is more important in all other decades (but one) is that the average increase was considerably higher than in the other cases, indicating a process of really progressive enlargement of the electorate. Considering that the 3 decades which precede the final granting of universal male suffrage after W.W.I present a rate of growth of .58, .97 and .64, this means that, roughly in each of them, the electorate was increased by about 6, 10 and again 6 percent, for a total of 22 percent (see Table 1 and Figure 1 i).

Britain, despite its fame as a very gradual development case, presents two peaks, and in other decades rates of growth which are near to zero. Another case worth commenting is Norway. As the Netherlands are often said to 'approach the British model' whilst actually they are the best example of the gradual model, so Norway is also customarily associated with both the Netherlands and Britain in the group of the gradual development countries. However, there is little in our analysis which suggests such an association. The image of gradual development in Norway is probably due to something which is unique to it. Once universal male suffrage was achieved in 1900, the following development was indeed particularly gradual because the enfranchisement of women was granted in several steps and the electorate gradually passed from 35.2 in 1906 to 58.5, to 60.2, to 77.1 and to finally 80.4 in 1918. However, this graduality concerned exclusively the enlargement of the female electorate granted in several steps rather than in a single one as in all other countries except Ireland and Great Britain. As far as the male suffrage is concerned, Norway was not much dissimilar from Sweden or, for that matter, from Austria. Gradual development was the characteristic of the pre-1890 and of the post-1900 period, but in the 1890s the Norwegian electorate

increased by about 20% of the adult population, which is a fundamental break from a gradual process.

At this stage one is more confident of having grasped the essential features of the process, without having forced too many national cases into the comparative framework. I can now provide a comparative classification of the Western European enfranchisement process along the two dimensions of its timing and tempo. This classification provided in Table 4 summarises the argument and the discussion of individual cases made so far. This is as far as one can go in an attempt to comparatively appreciate the development of the franchise.

As we have seen, the most difficult case to be classified is the Netherlands, whose development is unquestionably gradual, but which in terms of timing finds itself in a relatively late-comer position until the end of the first decade of the century. We could classify it as gradual and intermediate as well as gradual and late. I have finally located the Dutch case in the intermediate timing because the levels of enfranchisement in the 1890s and 1900s were considerably higher than those of Italy and Sweden (classified as late-comers).

## **REVERSALS**

A third dimension of suffrage enlargement is the existence or absence of reversals: that is, the more or less linear nature of the enlargement itself. I have felt it unnecessary to explicitly introduce this dimension as a classification dimension because in most cases the development of the electorate was a fairly linear process. In only a few cases can one speak of important reversals. France is the classic historical case for which the label of 'early, sudden and followed by reversal' category was originally forged. However reversals existed with respect to the high promises of revolutionary times and of 1793. Since 1815 France kept a very restricted franchise and came back to universal male suffrage in 1848, still in time to have at that time the largest franchise in the whole of Europe. It is unfair, therefore, to concentrate attention on the Restoration reversal vis-à-vis revolutionary times when the outstanding basic characteristic of the French pattern remains a very early attainment of universal male suffrage. It is true that after 1848 a revision of the electoral lists (the law of 31st May 1850) meant to restrict the franchise, demanding as a prerequisite three years of residence in the voting place. However this reform, that has often been described as a deliberate anti-working class mass disenfranchisement, had only minor effects: the

electorate passed from 9.837.000 in 1849 to 9.836.000 in 1852 to 9.490.00 in 1857, to rise again over the 10 million mark in 1963. Therefore, at most the reform reduced the electorate of less than 340.000 electors, that is about 3 percent on the occasion of a single election -hardly mass disenfranchisement. The entire rest of the electoral history of France remained under the rule of the male universal franchise without reversals of any sort.

In Denmark, the original very democratic promises of the 1848 revolution were somehow muted in the following decade. Confrontation between the King and the conservatives, with their strongholds in the First Chamber, on one side, and the rural-supported liberals in the second chamber on the other, resulted in a minor de-democratisation of the constitution itself. In 1866 suffrage was also restricted, but such changes had their impact felt particularly in the *Landsting* (the first chamber) where higher property qualifications were introduced. However, from the strict point of view of the suffrage, these conflicts manifested themselves more in the stagnation of a relatively high but not yet universal male suffrage throughout the 1850s and 1860s. No real sign of significant disenfranchisement are evident in the post-1849 figures reported in Table 1. On the whole, in these two cases, reversal was less important than usually imagined and with respect to our purpose it occurred in a very early phase much before mass parties had organised.

The only case of a franchise reversal which has significant implication for our analysis is Italy in the 1890s. The revision of the electoral registers carried over in 1894 reduced the electorate from 2.934.000 in 1892 to 2.121.000 in 1895: that is, a reduction of slightly more than 800.000 electors. Almost a third of the electorate of 1892 lost its right to vote in 1895. Moreover in this case, it is unquestionable that the disenfranchisement was deliberately directed against the socialist movement. The latter had founded its first unified national party the year before and the franchise revision was only one of a set of measures set up by the government in a clear anti-socialist operation. Thirdly the disenfranchisement lasted. It was a clear break of the process of growth initiated by the reform law of 1882 and it took 17 years and 5 elections before, in 1909, the electorate came back to the same quantitative level as 1892. This decision was indeed of great political momentum because, if Italy had not stopped its franchise development in 1894 it could have exhibited a very gradual pattern, rather than being characterised as a sudden and late development case. So in the Italian case, we find a disenfranchisement that combines big magnitude, lasting influence and clear anti-socialist political orientation. The Italian case seems to me the only

important disenfranchisement policy directly linked and relevant for the history of mass party formation and regime consolidation.

## **EQUALITY**

Timing and tempo do not exhaust the dimensions of variation of the enfranchisement process which are important for our analytical goal. A second important aspect to be analysed in the perspective of a comparative evaluation of electoral development concerns the fairness of representation mechanisms. The inequality we are dealing with in this section is not the inequality resulting from representation mechanisms -that is, in the mechanisms of transformation of votes into seats- but the simple inequality of the vote; that is, the violation of the principle of one person one vote. Even after suffrage was granted, a number of other obstacles made it difficult to translate vote rights into actual representation. High levels of inequalities in the vote drastically influenced the potential support for outsiders parties, and also shaped their attitudes and reactions to the political system.

It is interesting to wonder whether, from the point of view of an outsider movement, the restriction of an equal suffrage was more acceptable than the inequality of an enlarged suffrage. Up to the turning point of the First World War, attitudes toward the electoral channel were still very ambivalent in most European dominant circles. As mentioned before, the suffrage had a double function in their mind. One was the legitimation of the ruling political elites and in this perspective the suffrage, even if limited, was an instrument of inter-elite recruitment and competition. as the main tool for the selection of the ruling political elites. The second was the political integration of social groups to the nation state. In the second case, the major goal of the electoral process was to offer a symbolic participation right without this making an impact on the selection and recruitment of the ruling elite, which, through various devices, continued to be coopted and selected from dominant social and bureaucratic groups and to be sheltered by electoral pressures from below. In this perspective a large franchise was granted -indeed the integration purposely required it to be as large as possible- but diverting mechanisms were devised or kept in place to ensure that such suffrage had a limited impact on the political equilibrium.

These representational obstacles may have been even more important than suffrage restrictions in institutional integration terms because the arguments waged in their support were likely to arouse a deep and strongly felt 'sense of



injustice' among those who were affected by them. In defending the class weighted voting system in Prussia a Minister argued that classes of people had to vote on the basis 'of their actual importance in the life of the state'<sup>17</sup>. This type of argument made clear the lesser importance of certain people and may have created more resentment than sheer exclusion on capacity (cultural and/or economic) grounds. An unequal vote 'offered' to 'lower', 'marginal' or 'dangerous' groups institutionalised inequalities more evidently and more unacceptably than wide restrictions of the right to vote itself.

These representational obstacles were made up by devices which increased for newcomers and outsiders either the cost of votes or the cost of seats; in many cases they were combined. Mechanisms persisted throughout the 19th century which impeded or hampered the 'one person one vote' principle: **plural voting** and **curia/ estate voting**. Other devices introduced strong elements of distortion in the free and direct expression of the voter's choice: **indirect voting** and **open (non-secret) voting**<sup>18</sup>.

## **OPEN VOTING**

Oral voting and shows of hands greatly facilitated pressures and manipulations by government officials and local elites alike, particularly in non-urban settings. During the 19th century they were slowly abolished everywhere. In France this occurred as early as in 1831, but the practice of non-secrecy remained for a very long period quite widespread and the 'secrecy of the ballot was not particularly well preserved until 1914, when voting ballot and envelopes to cover the ballot were instituted'<sup>19</sup>. Germany and the Netherlands introduced provisions for preserving the secrecy at the end of the 1840s; Italy in 1861, but testimonies of governmental officials' pressures in the direction of manifesting one's preferences in the countryside of southern Italy were denounced up to the beginning of the 20th century<sup>20</sup>. A new wave of ballot secrecy provisions occurred between the end of the 1860s and the beginning of the 1870s with measures in Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland (at the federal level) United Kingdom (and Ireland). Norway did the same in 1885 and the latecomers were Denmark<sup>21</sup>, Austria and Finland which introduced explicit norms to protect secrecy only at the beginning of the 20th century.

## **INDIRECT VOTING**

Indirect voting meant that the ballot was cast not for legislative candidates, but for 'grand electors', who, in turn, selected representatives to parliament. This double step introduced an additional barrier for young movements and for parties that could not rely on established and visible social elites, particularly at the local level. It was conceived as a filter against 'dangerous' candidates. The system was more widespread than is usually thought. France, the Netherlands and Switzerland had used indirect voting in the early part of the 19th century, in the periods respectively from 1815-1817 (France), 1815-1831 (Netherlands), and 1815-1848 (Switzerland) and once abandoned they never resorted again to it. On the contrary, Austria, Finland, Norway, and Sweden kept some form of indirect voting well in to the 20th century. In Austria, voting was indirect from 1861 until 1901 in the IV curia and, since 1897 also in the V curia, so that the bulk of the enfranchised electorate was subject to it. In Finland the vote was indirect until 1906 for the estate of peasants, which obviously constituted the overwhelming majority of the adult population. Norway and Sweden kept indirect voting until 1906 and 1908 respectively, even if in Sweden from 1866 to 1908 the vote was only partly indirect. It is important to note that in Austria, Finland, Sweden and Norway indirect voting may be the key to the explanation of the very late entering into parliament of the first socialist representatives. In Sweden, socialists obtained seats in 1902, 13 years and several elections after their final national centralisation. In Norway seats were obtained only in 1903, after 17 years of extra-parliamentary life. In Finland the difference is lower (8 years) because the party was centralising late anyway (1899). In Austria also, effective parliamentary entry was delayed up to the beginning of the 19th century, even if the party was quite well organised nationally since 1889. However, in the latter two cases one should add to the indirect voting techniques the curia system which obviously did not help either. One should probably add that indirect voting was not adopted in Imperial elections in Germany, but was retained in Prussia up to 1918, and Prussia had an overwhelming importance for the Reich politics<sup>22</sup>.

## **CURIA AND ESTATE SYSTEMS**

Curia and estate system assigned disproportionate numbers of seats to the upper estates, generally representing aristocratic and wealthy families, and the clergy, while formally giving the right to vote to everybody or to a fraction of each major social group. Such systems were retained in 19th century Western Europe in four countries. Sweden gave it up with the reform of 1866. Prussia kept it until the collapse of the Empire; Austria and Finland abandoned it only at the beginning of the 20th century, respectively in 1907 and 1906. In Austria, from the

first direct election of the lower House in 1873 to the electoral reform of 1907, the system was based on 4 curia of electors. However, between 1873 and 1897 the members of the fourth curia (24 year-old male inhabitants of rural communes who paid minimum direct taxes) voted indirectly (and very often orally). Each commune had to elect a secondary elector for every 500 inhabitants. Secondary electors were then inscribed on the electoral lists for the elections of the deputies. When the electoral reform of 14 June 1896 added a fifth Curia, its principle was universal and equal. In it were included male citizens over 24. However, even in this case voting was indirect and in addition to that, the electors of the first four curia were given an additional second vote in the fifth curia. Therefore, in Austria the entire period between 1873 until the reform of 1907 was characterised by unequal and indirect suffrage for important groups and categories.

The Finnish and Swedish systems were very similar. In Finland, since when the Diet had started to meet again with some regularity in 1869 to the 1904-1907 reform, the system was based on the 4 curia of nobility, clergy, towns (burgesses) and peasants. The four estates were organised as following. The first estate offered direct representation to male heads of noble families; the clergy estate offered direct representation to the higher ranking clergy and included elected representatives of lower ranking clergy; the burgher estate was composed of representatives elected by burghers meeting professional and income qualifications; the peasant estate was elected by independent farmers, with the exclusion of tenants and agricultural labourers. Moreover, other complex aspects increased the inequality. For instance, elections were direct to the estate of burgesses, but plural voting was granted to electors as a function of local taxes paid. In the estate of peasants, no plural voting was foreseen, but elections were indirect. One should also add that no provisions for secrecy were specifically envisaged. This infernal mechanism yielded four houses formally endowed with the same powers in which, in 1900, about 150 noble families had the same weight as the 1,083 enfranchised clerics, the 23,469 eligible burghers (representing all those living in an urban context) and the 10,184 enfranchised peasants (representing the whole rural population)<sup>23</sup>.

## **PLURAL VOTING**

Finally, throughout the 19th century in Europe the practice of plural voting remained in vigour, that is, the attribution of extra votes to the wealthy and/or well educated citizens or to representatives of special institutions (churches, universities, etc.). Even this system had the direct effect of bureaucratically

separating citizens into voting categories based on class criteria, and of overweighting the upper classes. Three countries stand out for their important and prolonged practice of plural voting: Austria, Finland and Belgium.

The Finnish continued to use plural voting based on professional and income qualification in the estate of burghers up to 1906. Belgium and Austria are the cases where plural voting played a much more important role also because, rather than being a remnant of past tradition gradually being reduced, it was clearly introduced or made wider in view of checking democratisation tendencies and it therefore acquired a clear political meaning against newcomers. In Austria plural voting was relatively minor up to 1897, but it was made a large scale phenomenon in the context of a democratisation of the franchise. When an additional fifth curia was added in 1897 introducing universal and equal suffrage for male citizens over 24 years, the electors of the first four curiae all gained a second vote. Between 1896 and 1907, therefore about 40% of the Austrian males cast two votes.

Even more clear is the political meaning of the introduction of plural voting in Belgium in 1894. In this case, inequalities were even more accentuated and their introduction was indeed a deliberate act to counterbalance the increase of the electorate. In fact, between 1831 and 1892, for almost 60 years the suffrage had been very restricted in Belgium, but equal. This long tradition of equality in the vote was broken on the occasion of the 1894 electoral reform which introduced universal male suffrage. The package deal counterbalanced this sudden and quantitatively remarkable increase of the electorate with particularly accentuated plural voting procedures: one additional vote was granted to married male citizens older than 35; widows paying more than 5 Fr of taxes and citizens older than 25; owners of real estate above a certain value; two additional votes were granted to citizens having a title of higher or middle level education or having held or holding a public office requiring such a level of education. Combining the two qualifications, one could get to a maximum of three extra votes. The final result was a high level of inequality which lasted until 1919<sup>24</sup>. According to Stengers, there were in 1899-1900 901,000 electors with 1 vote; 313,000 electors with 2 votes (making up, therefore, for 626,000 votes) and 237,000 electors with 3 votes (711,000 votes)<sup>25</sup>. The half a million citizens with more than one vote largely outweighed electorally the 900,000 with a single vote. These heavy inequalities, and the obvious exchange which existed between enlargement of suffrage and its being made unequal in the Belgian case, could have made for a very radical response of the Belgian socialist movement. Actually, the early history of the Belgian socialist movement was largely

dominated by huge fights and confrontation concerning the equalisation of voting rights. However such a system, once combined with the majority plurinomial double-ballot and with a high territorial concentration of the socialist vote, did not penalise socialist parliamentary representation very much and therefore was not profoundly disliked by the socialist themselves.

In the United Kingdom and Ireland plural voting remained in vigour well into the 20th century and actually Britain only eliminated it altogether in 1948. In the United Kingdom between 1832 and 1880, plural voting existed when the economic requirements criteria were met by the same citizen in different constituencies (counties and boroughs) and extra seats were reserved for the election by university graduates. By 1885 plural voting continued only for university and business reserved sets; in 1924 this plural voting was restricted to a maximum of two votes and in 1938 university seats and all plural voting were abolished. The Irish situation was the same until 1918, when, however, plural voting was still maintained for university graduates and occupiers of business premises (maximum two votes) and was definitely abolished in 1923. In these latter two cases the weight of the extra voting was never overwhelming and by the 1880s inequalities had become minor. In Britain in 1911, about 7% of the electorate cast plural votes as a result of their meeting more than one franchise requirement or meeting property requirement in more than one constituency. Although in extreme cases one could go in theory up to 20 votes, the overall impact by the end of the century was minor.

Among the remaining countries, France had resorted to plural voting only in the 1820s and for a very few highly restricted franchise elections. The Swedish eliminated plural voting in the 1866 reform. No manifest plural voting inequalities existed in the cases of Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway, which in their electoral development always kept to the principle of equal vote.

In Table 5 I have synthesised the major representation inequalities so far discussed by country. I have also added a column indicating whether an important occasion of deliberately disenfranchising elections occurred and when, which indicates that the only important case is the Italian electoral reform of 1894 which immediately followed the formation of a socialist party. I have also added a column indicating the final introduction of proportional representation, which represents in most cases the final step in equalisation of voting right. The exception is Belgium, where PR was introduced very early while the plural voting system was retained. It is difficult to reconcile into a single dimension such a wide

array of devices and different situations. We can however say that obstacles to fair representation were several, important and protracted in Austria and Finland; relatively minor and gradually removed in Britain and Ireland; many but also removed early in Sweden (much before the socialist movement appeared on the scene); limited to one device but protracted in Norway (indirect voting) and Belgium (plural voting); fundamentally absent by the time modern parties emerged in Denmark, France, Germany (but with the important exception of the Prussian state), Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

## **PARTICIPATION**

Participation is the last dimension of analysis of the process of enfranchisement. Strictly speaking, it is clear that electoral participation has no direct relation with enfranchisement itself. However, in dealing with historical data that go back to the middle of the 19th century, it is necessary to wonder whether during the process of enlargement of the legal right to vote actual and systematic phenomena linked to the actual utilisation of this right manifested themselves. The turnout indicates the extent to which, for every given level of legal electorate the right to vote was actually transformed into actual votes, and this propensity varied remarkably over time and across countries in the phase of mass enfranchisement. Therefore, comparing turnout levels through time and countries may clarify the different propensities to participate of national enfranchise electorates.

Even in this case our interest concentrates mostly on the phase up to W.W.II, after which levels of turnout, as well as levels of electorate, tend to homogenise to a large extent. What we are interested in are not so much short term fluctuations in turnout from one election to the next, but rather systematic cross-time and space differences in levels of electoral participation and their relationship to the process of enfranchisement.

The first aspect worth investigating is the extent to which the development over time of the turnout tends to present the same elements of linearity as the development of the electorate. If we correlate the two indicators the relationship is weak as one would expect. After all, turnout is the total votes as a percentage of the electorate and should vary independently of the level of the electorate itself. However, if there was a tendency for turnout to grow over time in parallel to the growth of the electorate, this should result in a positive correlation coefficient. Looking at the figures in Table 6, the relationship is almost non-existent. We can

only note that it tends to be slightly negative in the period before 1880 and in the period between the two wars, whilst in the period 1881-1917 and in that after W.W.II, it is positive. We could obviously venture a first tentative interpretation which is suggested by this distribution. In the context of the period 1831-1880, which was a period of fairly constant electorate size, the association is non-existent, while in the following phase which is the only one of more rapid growth in male franchise, it tended to become slightly positive. The Inter-wars period is characterised mainly by female enfranchisement in most countries and this enfranchisement do not seem to produce a corresponding increase of turnout. On the contrary, the final phase of fully enfranchised electorates reproduces at even higher levels the positive association between the two.

These data, however, raise some doubts about a fairly general thesis that links the over time development of the franchise and of turnout. It is often argued that in the context of restricted franchise on the basis of census or capacity requirements, the turnout should be high as it is the expression of the elevated propensity of the richest and most educated strata of the population to participate electorally. Successive enlargements of the franchise, resulting in the granting of the right to vote to citizens of lower socio-economic and cultural status, should result in a lowering of the turnout. This should be particularly true in the cases of big and sudden increases of the electorate and, we may add, in the cases of enfranchisement of women. Their sudden involvement in political roles traditionally associated and reserved for males should produce an accentuated fall in the turnout levels.

These data over a large historical period do not offer much support to this developmental interpretation. To support the hypothesis, one should find different signs for the associations of the 1831-1880 and 1880-1917 periods. It is therefore necessary to have a closer look at to the historical development of turnout. In Table 7 the data concerning the 442 elections between 1831 and 1980, for which it was possible to obtain information concerning the electorate and the turnout, have been arranged by mean level of turnout by decade. The reader will be alerted that before 1870-1880, the data are by far less representative because of some countries which are missing and of others which have very few elections (see Table 1 for a list of elections considered, even if in some cases turnout was not available). Yet, even without being fully representative these data offer a picture of how the turnout levels have developed since the 1830s.

These figures offer only modest evidence of a curvilinear historical effect of franchise development over turnout levels. The mean turnout levels during the

phase of very restricted suffrage are not higher than those in the period of suffrage enlargements. Moreover, since the 1850s the mean level of turnout has not stopped growing. Surely turnout levels were higher in elections during the 1830s and 1840s than in those of the 1850s and 1860s. This, however, can hardly be considered as supporting evidence for the thesis given that the suffrage was not much wider in the latter as compared with the former. It looks as if turnout has a long term development similar to that of the electorate itself. This I think becomes even more evident when we look at the mean level of turnout not by decade, but directly by the level of enfranchised electorate. In Table 8 this is achieved by rank-ordering all elections into five categories according to the level of enfranchised electorate. In no way do restricted electorates show higher turnout levels than wider ones. The only fall in turnout is in the category of the electorates ranging from 60 to 80% of the adult population: from 75.4 to 64.8%, to rise again in the last category to 81.6 percentage. This fall may be interpreted tentatively as the result of the female enfranchisement. Electorates of the 60-80 percent levels were probably electorates which had not totally enfranchised the female, or alternatively totally enfranchised electorates but with a very high voting age (for instance as in Denmark - 30 years)<sup>26</sup>. We may think that early female voting produced a decline in turnout.

In conclusion, there is no evidence to sustain the existence of a long term curvilinear development of the turnout. If anything, it seem that at the European average level the turnout has experienced a long term structural growth parallel to that of the franchise. Yet, the generally linear association over time between the electorate and turnout which is predominant at the overall election level and which is represented in the regression line of Figure 2, may be the aggregate result of national patterns which are more supportive of the curvilinear thesis, according to which early restricted electorates should have a higher turnout than rapidly growing ones. In Figure 2 each country is plotted with different symbols so that a preliminary control for country pattern can be performed.

In all cases except one, the plotting of the electorate and turnout levels suggest no curvilinear type relationship. Only in Norway this is the case. Figure 3 reproduces the Norwegian pattern. In it, the bulk of the early pre-partisan elections show low levels of electorate and low levels of turnout. With the beginning of partisan politics in the 1880s, the restricted electorate was politicised and showed high levels of turnout. These dropped with the increase of the electorate to regain previous levels only in the 1930s. The fact that Rokkan gave a great deal of attention and publicity to this peculiar Norwegian pattern has



probably helped to make it something more than a specific national pattern. But there is, however, no evidence of it being so.

Let us however control the validity of the general thesis that is behind the previous argument: i.e. that major enlargements of the suffrage are accompanied by a fall in turnout. This could be true for major enlargements even if it does not result in an overall curvilinear historical development of turnout levels. I have controlled for each major (greater than 10%) increase in the electorate, the corresponding variation in the turnout level for the same election and the following ones when useful. In Table 9 the results of this exercise are reported, separating the major increases in the electorate resulting from exclusively male enlargements from those which concerned men as well as in part women, and finally from those which concerned only female enfranchisement.

Unfortunately, for some of the cases of major increases of the enfranchised population, the turnout differential is not available. However, the evidence in Table 9 is enough to conclude that no general or even statistically predominant tendency to the fall of turnout in the case of major enlargements of the franchise can be safely ascertained. Paradoxically, the most supportive instance of the three listed in Table 9 is that of male enfranchisement. If we consider that the Belgian 1894 and the Dutch 1918 enfranchisement were associated with important increases of the turnout because in those elections compulsory voting was introduced, we are left with three cases of turnout decline (Sweden 1911, Norway 1900 and Italy 1913) and two of turnout stability and even growth (the Netherlands in 1897 is striking: +16.7% in turnout; France 1848 is a stable turnout, but there is a dramatic drop in the following 1849 election).

In the enlargements which include a part of the male and a part of the female electorate (second three columns) the cases of turnout fall are still slightly prevalent (they all occurred between 1907 and 1918). The most significant, however, is the only British drop of 14.6%, while the others are minor changes. Finally, and most surprising, no general support to the thesis is offered by the female enlargements which produce an equal distribution of increases and drops in turnout. In a nutshell it is hard to interpret these data in view of a general or predominant tendency, and national contextual aspects seem to dominate and be responsible for individual outcomes. The only two countries where increases in electorate invariably result into fall in turnout are Sweden and particularly Norway.

So far, we have excluded the existence of a temporal curvilinear relationship between electorate and turnout, arguing that the two tend to grow

together at the general overall set of elections levels. We have also concluded that no sufficient evidence exists to confirm that major enfranchisement resulted in falling turnout levels. The last point worth investigating is whether individual countries were characterised during the process of mass politics development by systematically higher or lower levels of electoral participation: that is, to pass from the overall characterisation of the process to its variation among country. The period in question is the period up to the 1920s. A first and most direct appreciation of the different levels of turnout in the European countries can be obtained by looking at the Figures 1 a-o located in the Appendix of this chapter. In them, the dotted lines indicate the turnout.

A close scrutiny of these graphs shows a great variety of different national patterns. For instance, Belgium -and Austria since the data on turnout have been available (1919)- is the prototype of the high turnout country irrespective of the level of the electorate. Turnout in this case can be considered to be not a very important source of variation. France and the Netherlands are similar cases of relatively high and stable turnout. In all these cases the level of the electorate does not seem to influence in an important way the level of turnout which is always comparatively high. The United Kingdom and Finland have a medium turnout in this period, between 60 and 70%, and it oscillates around these figures irrespective of electorate development in the UK (in Finland the electorate is very large). Denmark and Germany constitute a different case. The turnout grows steadily over time irrespective of the trend in the electorate. In these two cases, but more clearly in the Danish, it seems that electoral mobilisation takes place mostly through the progressive involvement of enfranchised people, and this increase tends to be gradual over time without being profoundly affected by changes or stability in the electorate. Of Norway we have already spoken. Finally Sweden, Italy and Switzerland are the cases in which throughout the entire period the turnout is systematically low. In Italy it remains stable below 50 and 60% until after W.W.I. In Sweden it grows over time, but (see Fig. 1 m) its starting level was so low (only 20% in 1872) that at the beginning of the century still less than half of the already highly restricted electorate voted. Switzerland has a stable, secular low level of turnout with the exclusion of the 'jump' which occurred in the 20 years between 1919 and 1939. These significant differences in the average level of turnout in the crucial phase of mass enfranchisement and party formation are synthesised in Figure 4, which reproduce the decade mean levels of turnout and electorate for the decades between 1880 and 1920.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This paper was meant to chart the European variation in enfranchisement process. The starting point of the exercise was that the straight-forward characterisations which abound in the literature and which take the lead from a few exemplary cases (a typical example is the opposition of France and Britain) are unsatisfactory. The enfranchisement process was analysed comparatively across four main dimensions: the timing and the tempo of the development of formal rights of voting; the inequalities of these rights, and the actual level of electoral participation that at each historical moment characterised the enfranchised electorates. Special attention was devoted to the relationship which exists between the level of the electorate and the level of turnout, discussing in particular the thesis which argues that the early enlargement of suffrage was accompanied by declining turnout.

Table 10 below summarises in a simple way the experiences of all the countries. I have forced them into three classes separating the extremes (early, sudden and high versus late, gradual and low) with an intermediate category which includes all those cases that do not clearly fit into either of them. Although, as I have shown, there was a great deal of historical variation so that it is difficult to classify each case for the global period, the values in Table 10 are a synthetic appreciation of the main features of electoral development in the crucial period between 1870 and 1920.

Table1(I)

Table 1 (I) The electorate in % of the population 20 years and older: 1830-1944													
Year	Au	Be	De	Fi	Fr	Ge	Ir	It	Ne	No	Sw	Sz	UK
1831		1.9			0.8		1.7						3.8
1832										9.9			
1833		1.9					2						5.9
1834					0.8								
1835							2.1			9.8			6
1837					0.9								
1838										10			
1839					0.9								
1841										9.7			
1842					1								
1844										9.4			
1846					1.1		2.7						6.8
1847		1.8								9.4			
1848		3.1			36.3							~30	
1849			25.7		43.4								
1850										9.3			
1852			25.6		42								
1853			25.1						4.6	9			
1854			25.7										
1856										8.9			
1857		3.3			40.8								
1858			25										
1859										8.9			
1860													
1861			25.3					3.4					
1862										8.8			
1863					41.2								
1864		3.6	24.6										
1865								3.5		8.8			
1866			25.3				6.7						8.3
1866			25.5										
1867						(35)							
1868										8.6			
1869			25.8		42		7.4						14.5
1870		3.7						3.5	5	8.5			
1871					43.7	33	7.7						14.9
1872			26								9.8		
1873	10.3		26.5							8.4			
1874						36.2		3.6					
1875											10.2		
1876			26.7		42			3.8		8.3			
1877					41.8	36.9							

**Table1(II)**

<b>Table 1 (II)</b>													
<b>The electorate in % of the population 20 years and older: 1830-1944</b>													
<b>Year</b>	<b>Au</b>	<b>Be</b>	<b>De</b>	<b>Fi</b>	<b>Fr</b>	<b>Ge</b>	<b>Ir</b>	<b>It</b>	<b>Ne</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Sw</b>	<b>Sz</b>	<b>UK</b>
1878						37.4					10.5		
1879	10.4 <sup>1</sup>		26.9							8.3			
1880								3.8	5.4				
1881			27.1		41.6	36.2	8.2				10.7	38.7	16.4
1881			27.1										
1882								12.1		9.4			
1883													16.5
1884		3.9	27.8			36.2					10.9	38	
1885	13 <sup>1</sup>				41.3					11.4			29.3
1886							27.4	14.1					29.0
1886/7								5.7					
1887			28.3			37.3					10.1	38.1	
1888									11.8	11.8			
1889					41.8		28.9						
1890			29.4			37.4		15.2			10.4	38.3	
1891	12.9 <sup>1</sup>								11.5	12.6			
1892		37.3	29.3			37.8		16.6			10.7		29.3
1893					41.8								
1894		3.9							11.3	16.4			
1895			29.5					11.8					28.9
1896	13.4/ 35.7 <sup>2</sup>										10.8	38.2	
1897								11.7	20.9	16.6			
1898			30.0		42.0	37.8							
1899											11.5	38.0	
1900		37.7						12.3		34.8			28.5
1900/1	14.2/ 34.1 <sup>2</sup>												
1901			29.0	8.3					21.2				
1902					43.2						12.7	37.9	
1903			29.1			38.3				34.4			
1904				9				13.5	24.4				
1905											14.0	37.4	
1906					43.7					35.2			28.5
1907	37.9			76.2		38.3							
1908				75.9							15.8	37.5	
1909			29.8	75.6				15.0	25.7	58.5			
1910			30.1	75.5	43.4								28.7
1911	38.0			75.7							32.5	37.0	
1912		38.2				38.7				60.2			
1913			30.1	77.8				42.0	27.6				
1914					42.8						32.8	36.3	

***Table1(III)***

<b>Table 1 (III)</b>													
<b>The electorate in % of the population 20 years and older: 1830-1944</b>													
<b>Year</b>	<b>Au</b>	<b>Be</b>	<b>De</b>	<b>Fi</b>	<b>Fr</b>	<b>Ge</b>	<b>Ir</b>	<b>It</b>	<b>Ne</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Sw</b>	<b>Sz</b>	<b>UK</b>
1915										77.1			
1916				75.4									
1917				74.5							32.3	38.6	
1918							74.2		39.3	80.4			74.8
1918			69.1				74.1						
1919	85.9	43.8		74.1	43.4	97.9		48.8				40.1	
1920	90.1		74.0			95.1					33.0		
1921		45.5						52.5		86.9	87.9		
1922				73.4			77.5		80.7			40.3	74.5
1923	90.0						97						75.1
1924			79.6	73.5	39.9	98.5				87.4	88.2		75.6
1925		45.2							81.8			40.4	
1926			82.0										
1927	92.6			74.8			95.4			88.4			
1928					40.0	97.9					88.5	40.7	
1929		45.3	80.6	76.5					82.1				95.5
1930	89.9			75.5		98.5				89.6			
1931												41.0	97.0
1932		54.0	82.0		39.6	98.4	93.7				89.0		
1933				75.9		97.6	94.9		82.9	91.0			
1934													
1935			83.9									42.4	97.4
1936		45.6		77.1	40.1					92.6	90.1		
1937							95.0		85.2				
1938							95.0						
1939		45.1	84.6	77.8								42.3	
1940											90.6		
1941													
1942													
1943			85.4				96.9					43.4	
1944							97.2				91.8		





**Table2**

rank-order	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930
1	Fr	Fr	Fr	Fr	Fi	Ge	Ge-Uk- Au	Ge-Ir- Uk-Au- No-Sw
2	Ge-Sz	Ge-Sz	Ge-Sz	Ge-Sz- Be-Au	No	Au	Ne-No- Uk	De-Ne
3	De	De	De-Uk- Ir	De-Uk- Ir	Fr	No	De-Fi- Sw	Fi
4	Uk	Uk	It	Ne	Sz-Ge- Be-Au	Fi-UK- Ir.-De	It	It-Be
5	No	Au-Sw	Au	No	De	It	Be	Sz-Fr.
6	Ir.	No	No-Ne	It-Sw	En	Fr.-Be	Sz-Fr.	
7	Ne	Ir	Sw		It-Sw	Sz		
8	Be-It	Ne	Be			Ne		
9		Be-It				Sw		



**Table3**

<b>Table 3 Rates of Growth per Decade in Male Electorate</b>						
<b>countries</b>	<b>1860-1870</b>	<b>1870-1880</b>	<b>1880-1890</b>	<b>1890-1900</b>	<b>1900-1910</b>	<b>1910-1920</b>
<b>early and sudden increases</b>						
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>-0.04</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>0.44</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>0.25</b>	<b>-0.21</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>stable</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>1.02</b>
<b>Switzerland</b>	<b>stable</b>	<b>stable</b>	<b>-0.04</b>	<b>-0.04</b>	<b>-0.09</b>	<b>0.301</b>
<b>big jumps</b>						
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.33</b>
<b>Finland</b>	<b>stable<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>stable<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>0.10<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>0.10<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>-0.14</b>
<b>Italy</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>-0.29</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>2.87</b>
<b>intermediate jumps</b>						
<b>Austria</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>2.12</b>	<b>0.39</b>	<b>0.60</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>2.07</b>	<b>stable</b>	<b>stable</b>	<b>0.82</b>
<b>Norway</b>	<b>-0.03</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>2.22</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.50</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>n.a.</b>	<b>0.09</b>	<b>-0.03</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>1.98</b>	<b>0.05</b>
<b>minor jumps</b>						
<b>Britain</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>-0.08</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>1.29</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>-0.39</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.58</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>1.17</b>
1) stable: although no precise data are available it is known that no substantial modification of the electoral legislation had taken place in the period. 2): data drawn from estimates in secondary literature. n.a.: neither data nor estimations available						

**Table4**

<b>Table 4</b>			
<b>Comparative Enfranchisement: Timing and Tempo</b>			
		<b>TIMING</b>	
		<b>early</b>	<b>late</b>
<b>TEMPO</b>	<b>sudden</b>	<b>Fr,De,Ge,Sz</b>	<b>Be</b>
	<b>intermediate</b>		<b>Au,Ir,No</b>
	<b>gradual</b>		<b>Uk,Ne</b>

**Table5**

<b>Table 5 Representational inequalities in the Lower Chambers</b>						
Country	introduction of	indirect voting	curia and state	plural voting	disenfranchising	PR
Au	1906	1861-1901 (in the 4th curia and since 1897 also in the 5th)	1861-1907	1861-96 minor 1897-1907 large	-	1919
Be	1877	-	-	1893-1919	1830	1899
De	1901	-	-	-	-	1918
Fi	1907	to 1906 (in the state of peasants)	to 1906	to 1906 (in the state of burghers)		1907
Fr	1831-1846 (1914)	1815-17	-	1820-30	-	1919-1924 1945-1951
Ge	1848	(1849-1918 in Prussia)	(1849-1918 in Prussia)	-	-	1919
Ir	1872	-	-	1815-1914 1918-1922 (-36) minor inequalities	-	1921
It	1861	-	-	-	1894	1919 1946
Ne	1849	1815-1848	-	-	1850	1918
No	1885	to 1905	-	-	-	1921
Sw	1866	to 1866 1866-1908 partly indirect	to 1866	to 1866	1866	1909
Sz	1872(federal)	1815-48	-	-		1919
Uk	1872	-	-	1815-1914 1918-48 minor	1829	-

**Table6**

<b>Table 6</b>		
<b>Correlation between the electorate and turnout</b>		
<b>Periods</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>N of elections</b>
<b>1831-1975</b>	<b>.583</b>	<b>390</b>
<b>1831-1880</b>	<b>-.067</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>1881-1917</b>	<b>.138</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>1918-1944</b>	<b>-.085</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>1945-1975</b>	<b>.439</b>	<b>120</b>

**Table7**

<b>Table 7</b>			
<b>Mean Turnout (Total Votes as % of the electorate) by decade</b>			
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standar Deviation</b>	<b>Number of elections</b>
<b>All Elections</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>442</b>
<b>1830</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1840</b>	<b>63.5</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1850</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1860</b>	<b>49.9</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1870</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>1880</b>	<b>59.7</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>1890</b>	<b>63.7</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>1900</b>	<b>64.1</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>1910</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>1920</b>	<b>73.3</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>1930</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>1940</b>	<b>80.7</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>1950</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>1960</b>	<b>83.9</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>1970</b>	<b>83.3</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>1980</b>	<b>80.7</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>36</b>

**Table8**

<b>Table 8</b>			
<b>Mean Turnout by Levels of Enfranchisement electorate</b>			
<b>Level of electorate</b>	<b>Mean Turnout</b>	<b>Standar Deviation</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>
<b>0.1 to 20%</b>	<b>58.8</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>20.1 to 40%</b>	<b>58.2</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>40.1 to 60%</b>	<b>75.4</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>60.1 to 80%</b>	<b>64.8</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>higher than 80%</b>	<b>81.6</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>All Elections</b>	<b>70.4</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>390</b>



**Table9**

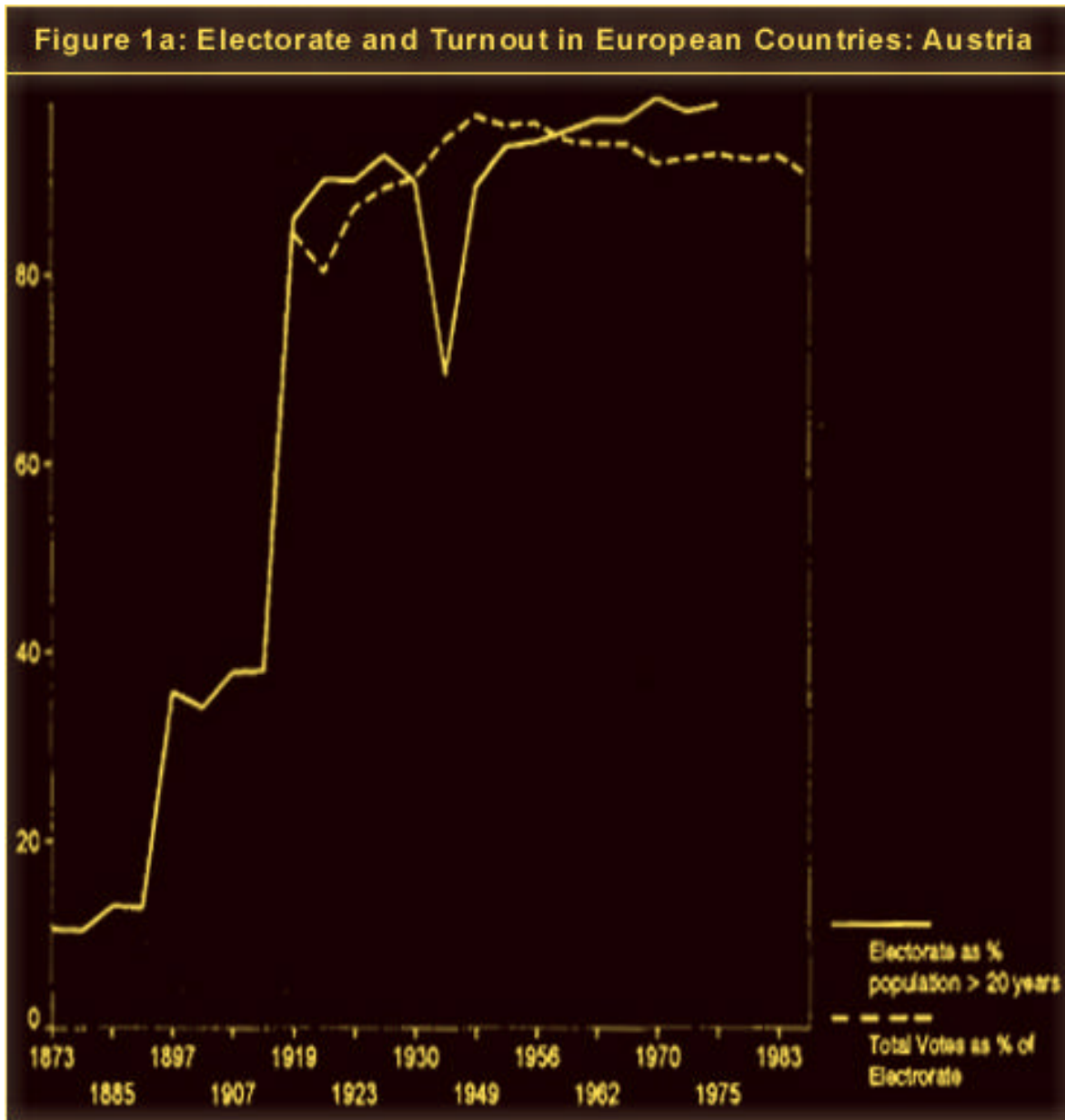
<b>Table 9</b>									
<b>Major increases in the Electorate and Corresponding Variations in Turnout</b>									
<b>country</b>	<b>Only Male</b>			<b>Male&amp;Female</b>			<b>Only Female</b>		
	<b>year</b>	<b>Electorate variation</b>	<b>Turnout</b>	<b>year</b>	<b>Electorate variation</b>	<b>Turnout</b>	<b>year</b>	<b>Electorate variation</b>	<b>Turnout</b>
<b>Austria</b>	1896	+22.8	n.a. <sup>^</sup>				1919	+47.9	na
<b>Belgium</b>	1894	+33.4	+10.7				1949	+46.0	+4.1
<b>Denmark</b>				1918	+39.1	+1.1			
<b>Finland</b>				1907	+60	na			
<b>France</b>	1848	+35.2	1st=+1.4 2nd=-15.4				1945	+48.	-4.6
<b>Germany</b>				1919	+59.2	-3.2			
<b>Ireland</b>	1886	+19.2	n.a.	1918	+45	na	1923	+19.5	+15.6
<b>Italy</b>	1913	+27.2	-4.6				1946	+42.5	+30.7
<b>Nether.</b>	1897	+9.6	+16.7				1922	+41.4	+0.2
	1918	+12.7	+8.6						
<b>Norway</b>	1900	+18.2	-29.4	1909	+23.2	-0.3	1915	+16.9	-4.1
<b>Sweden</b>	1911	+16.7	-4.3				1921	+54.9	-1.1
<b>Switzer.</b>							1971	+42.6	-7.0
<b>Un.King.</b>	1885	+12.8	n.a.	1918	+46.0	-14.6	1929	+19.9	+2.2

**Table10**

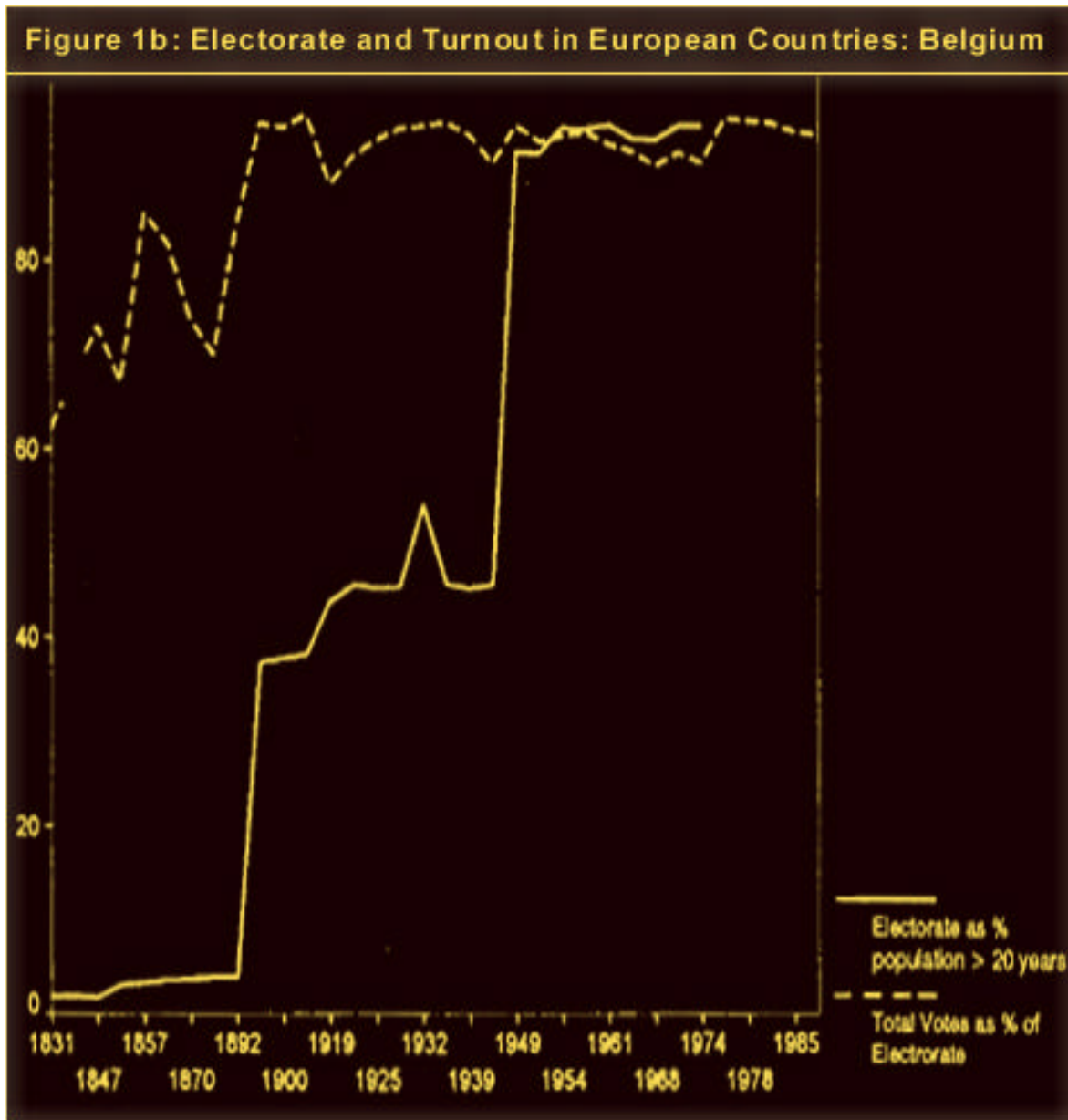
<b>Table 10</b>				
<b>A summary table of the features of the enfranchisement process</b>				
<b>Country</b>	<b>timing</b>	<b>tempo</b>	<b>inequality</b>	<b>turnout</b>
<b>Austria</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>high</b>	<b>high</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>sudden</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>high</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	<b>early</b>	<b>sudden</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>medium</b>
<b>Finland</b>	<b>late</b>	<b>sudden</b>	<b>high</b>	<b>medium</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>early</b>	<b>sudden</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>high</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>early</b>	<b>sudden</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>high</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>medium</b>
<b>Italy</b>	<b>late</b>	<b>sudden</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>medium</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>gradual</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>high</b>
<b>Norway</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>medium</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>late</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>low</b>
<b>Switzerland</b>	<b>early</b>	<b>sudden</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>low</b>
<b>Un. Kingdom</b>	<b>medium</b>	<b>gradual</b>	<b>low</b>	<b>medium</b>



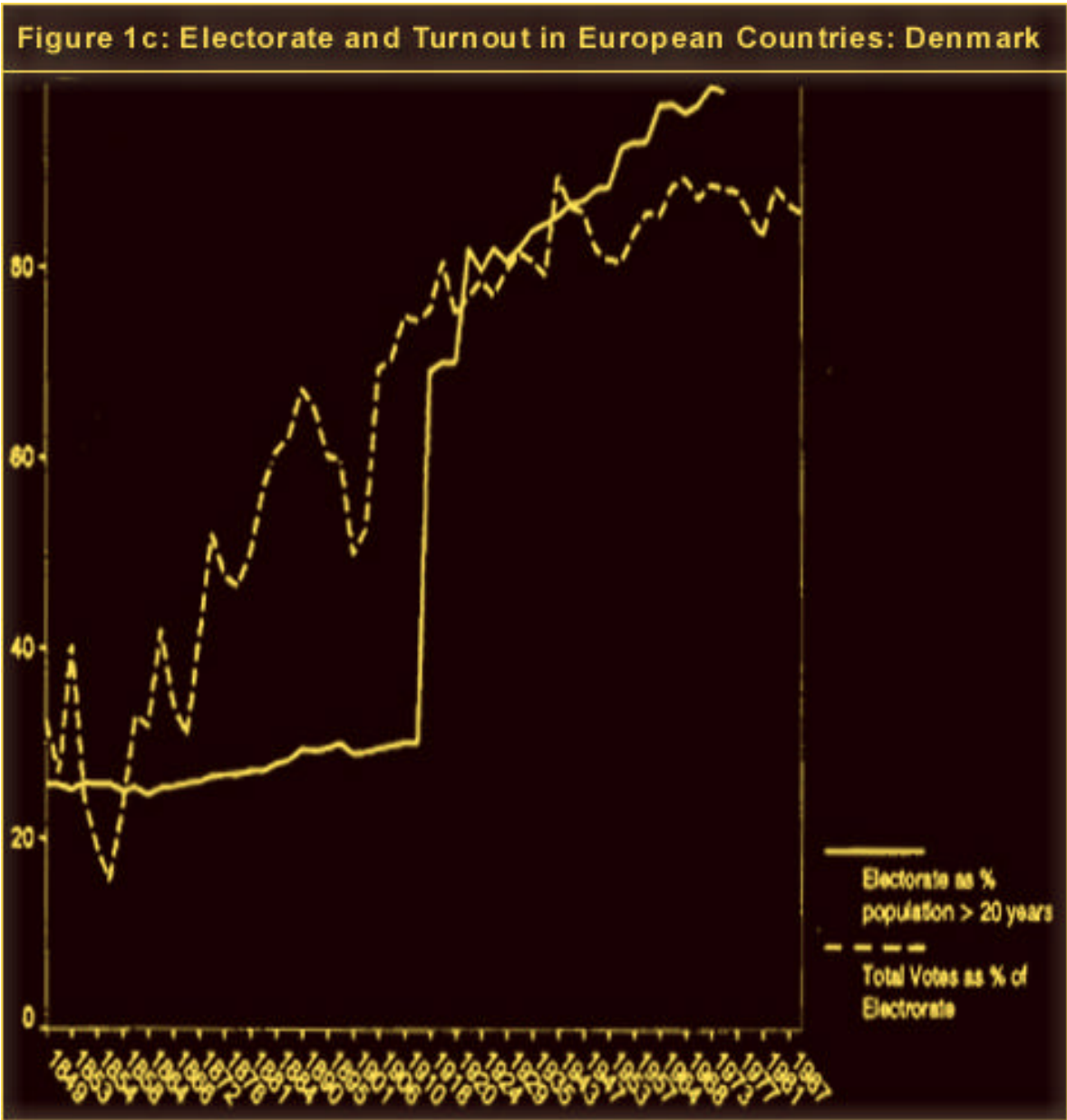
*Figure1a*



*Figure1b*



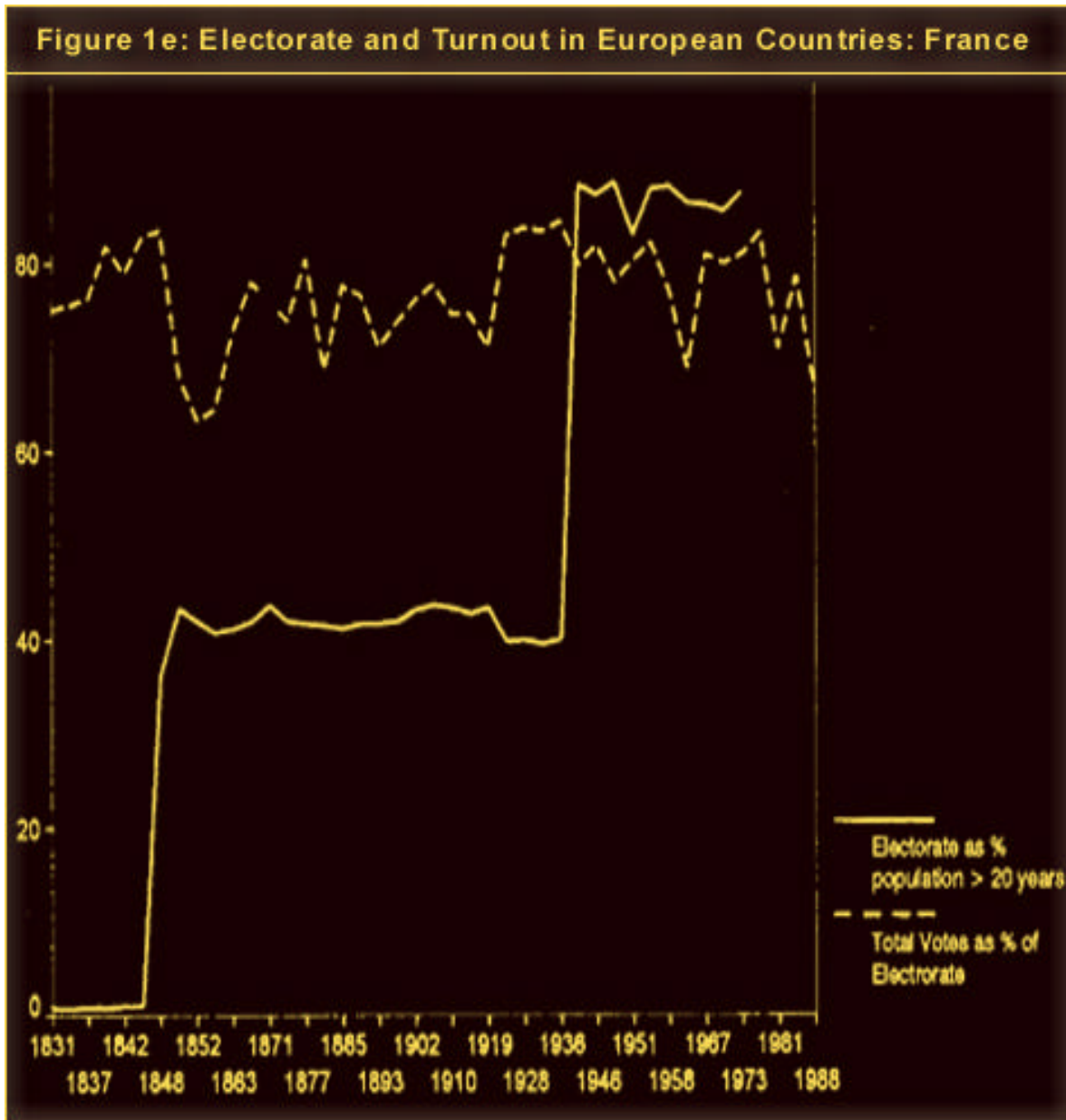
*Figure1c*



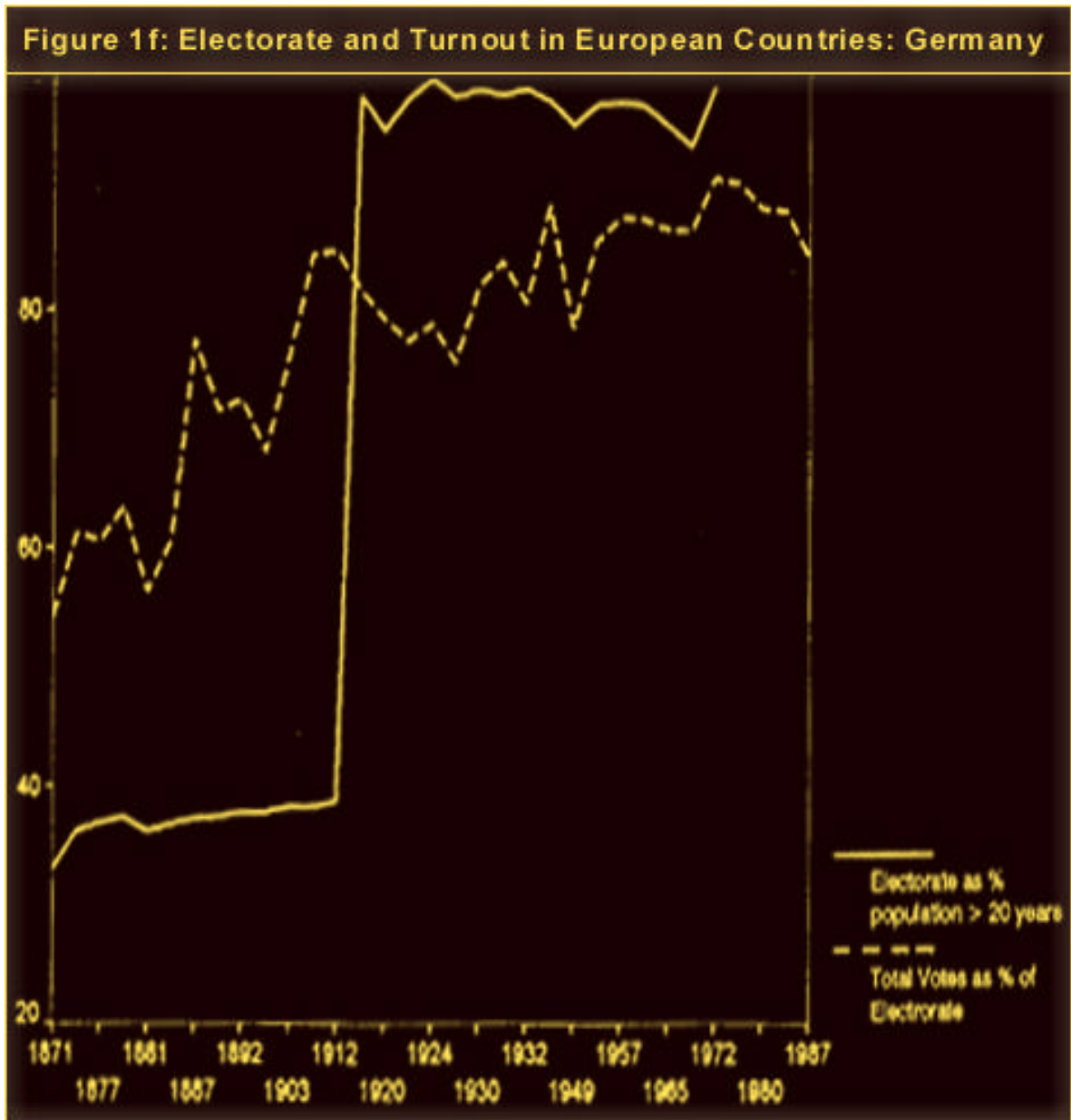
*Figure1d*



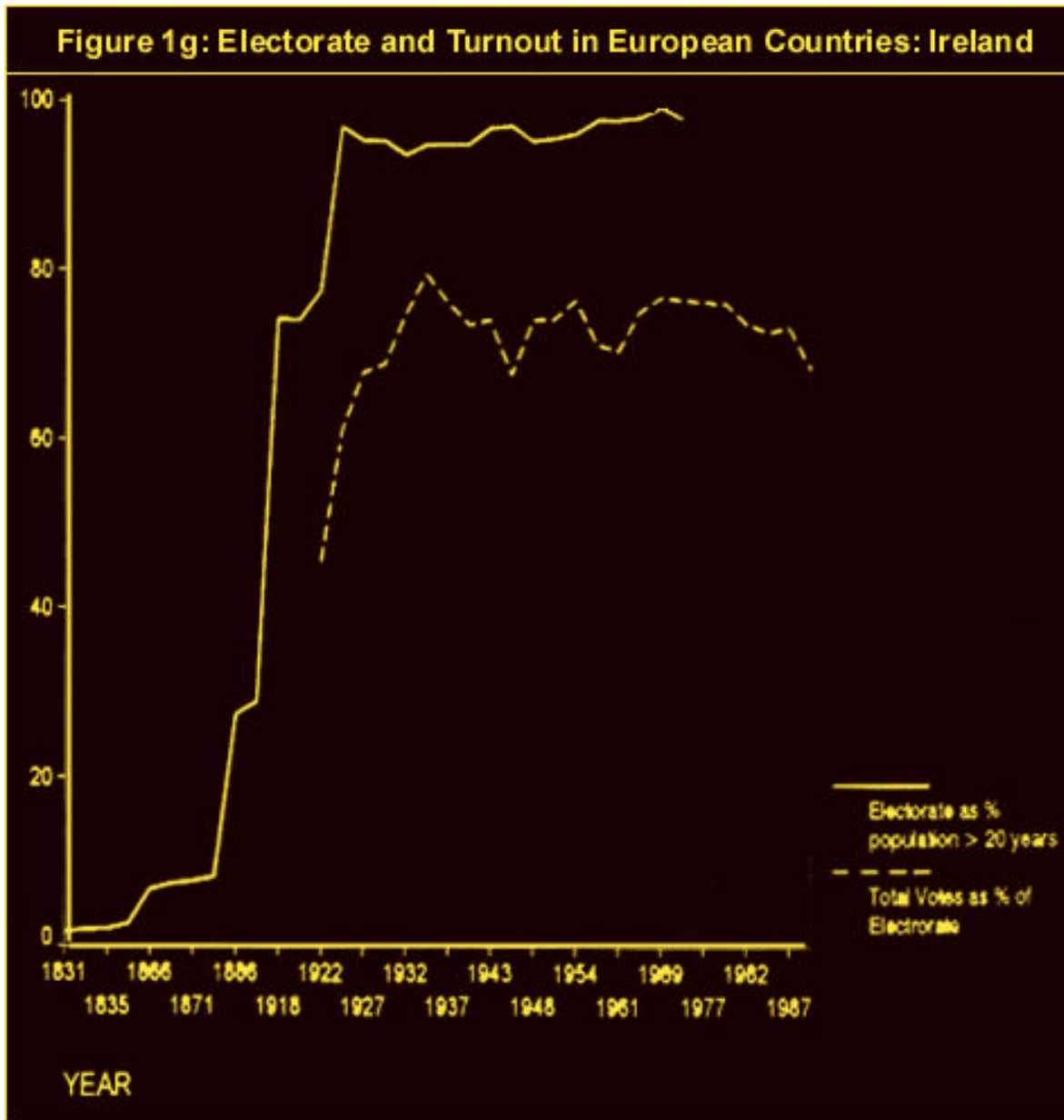
*Figure 1e*



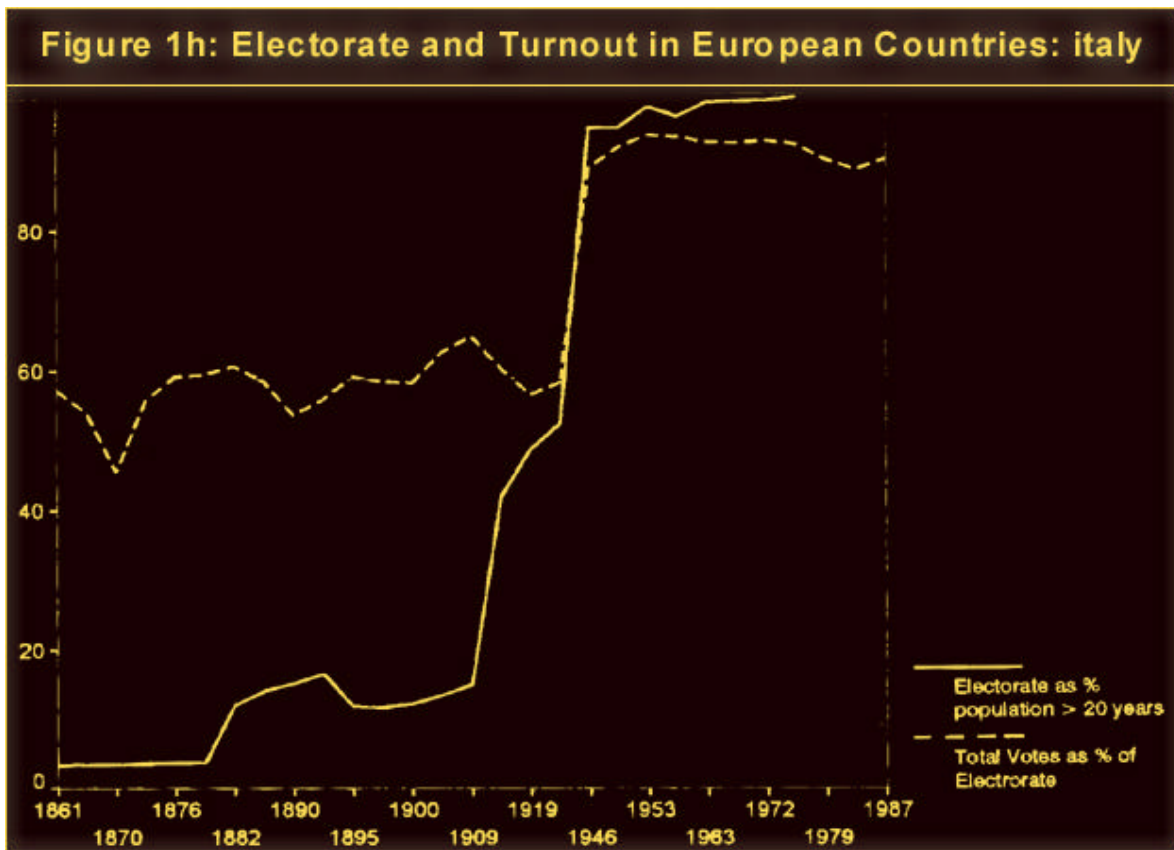
*Figure1f*



*Figure1g*

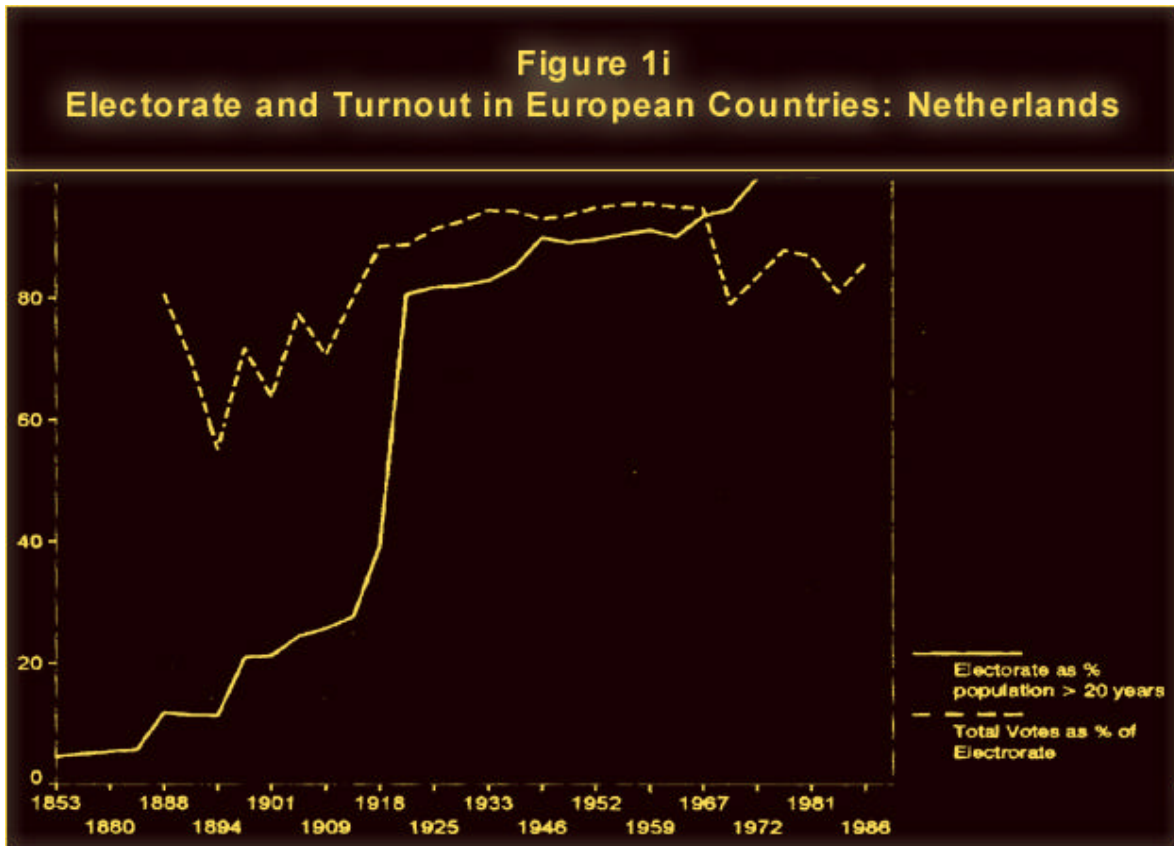


*Figure1h*

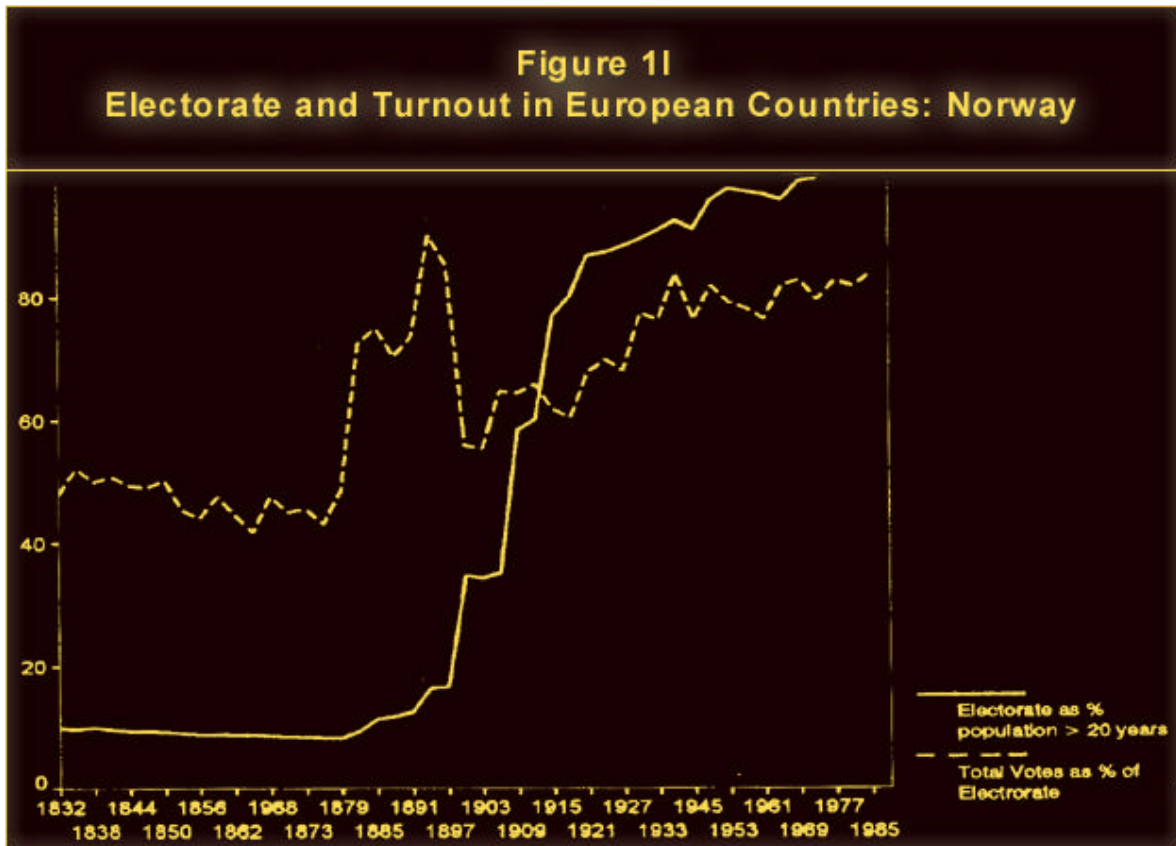




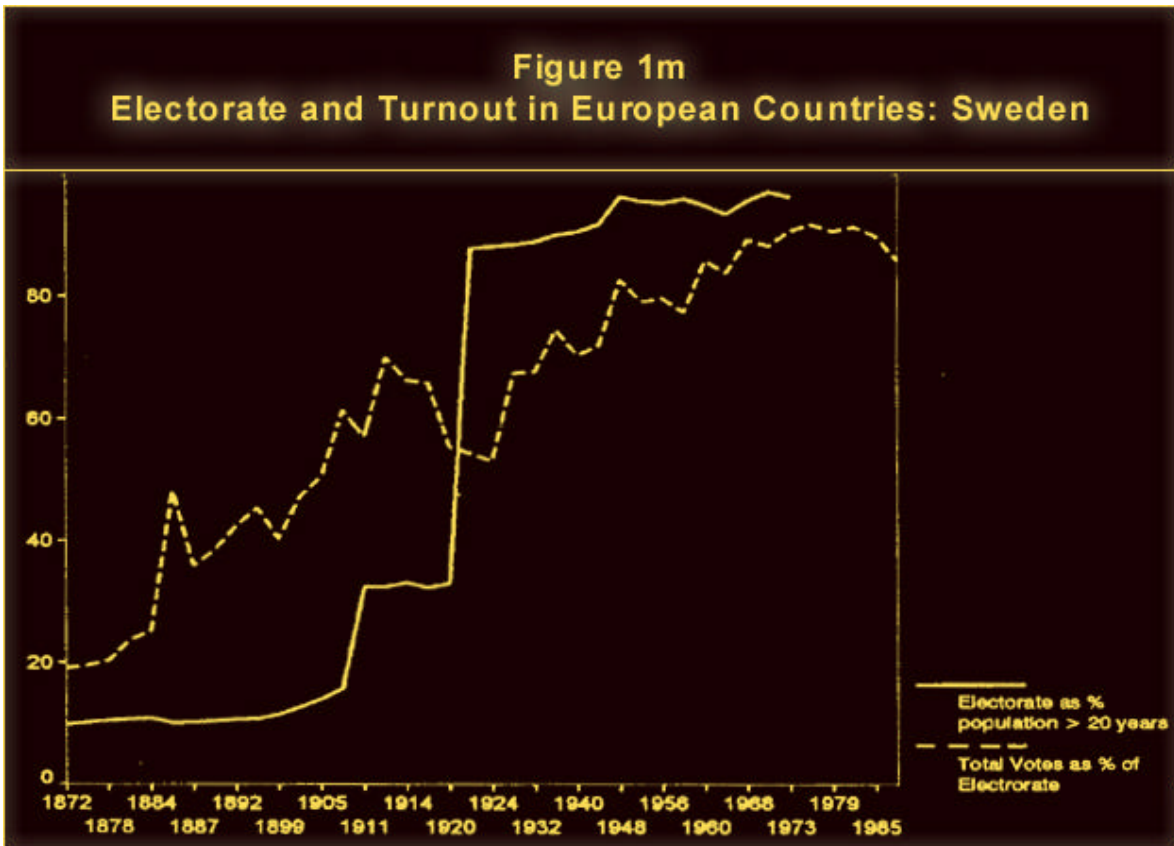
*Figure1i*



*Figure1!*



**Figure1m**



*Figure1n*

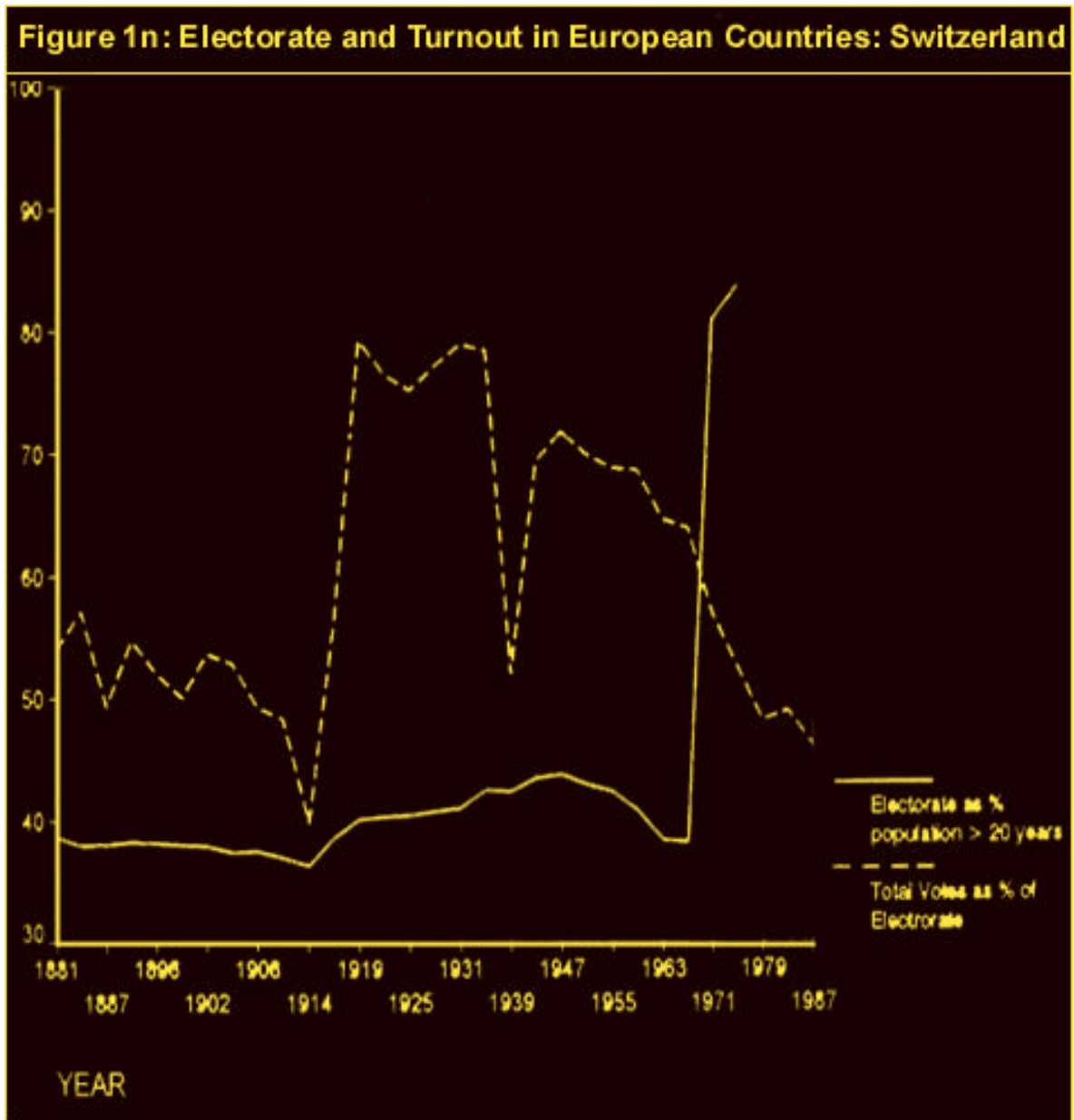


Figure1o

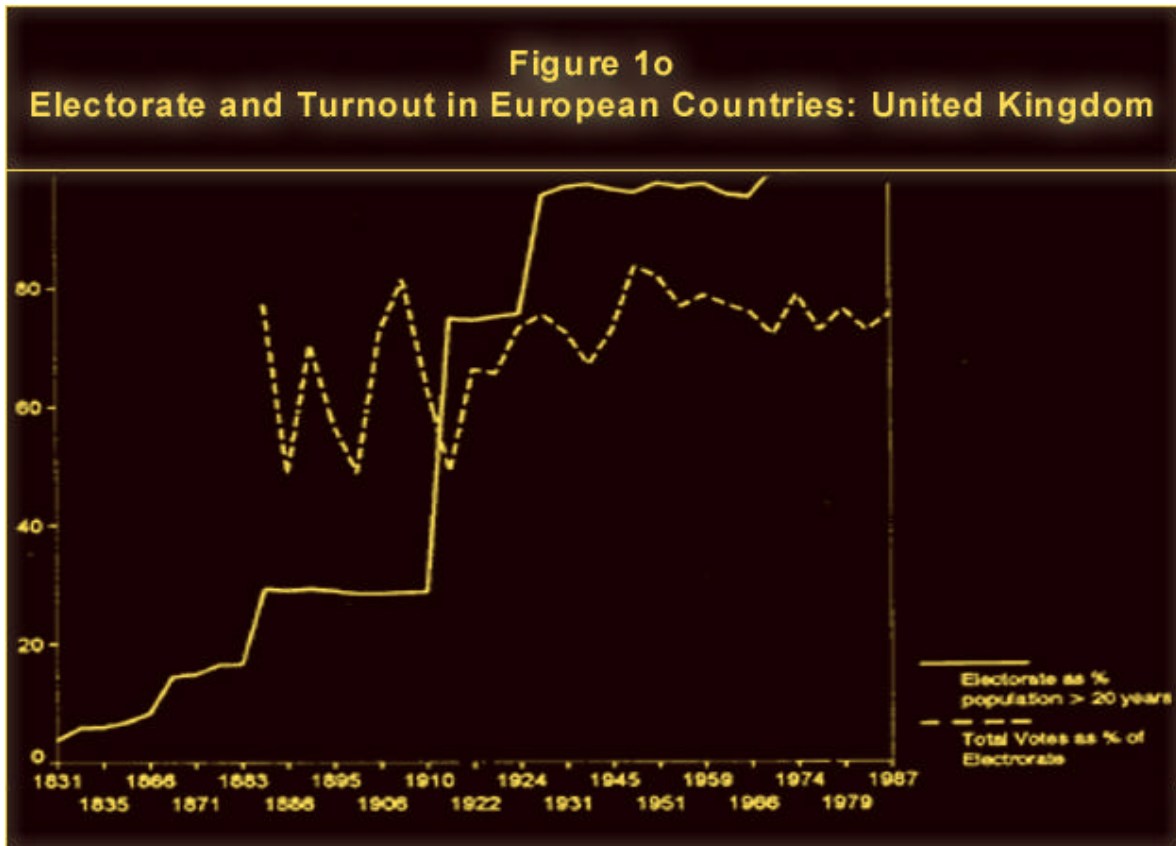
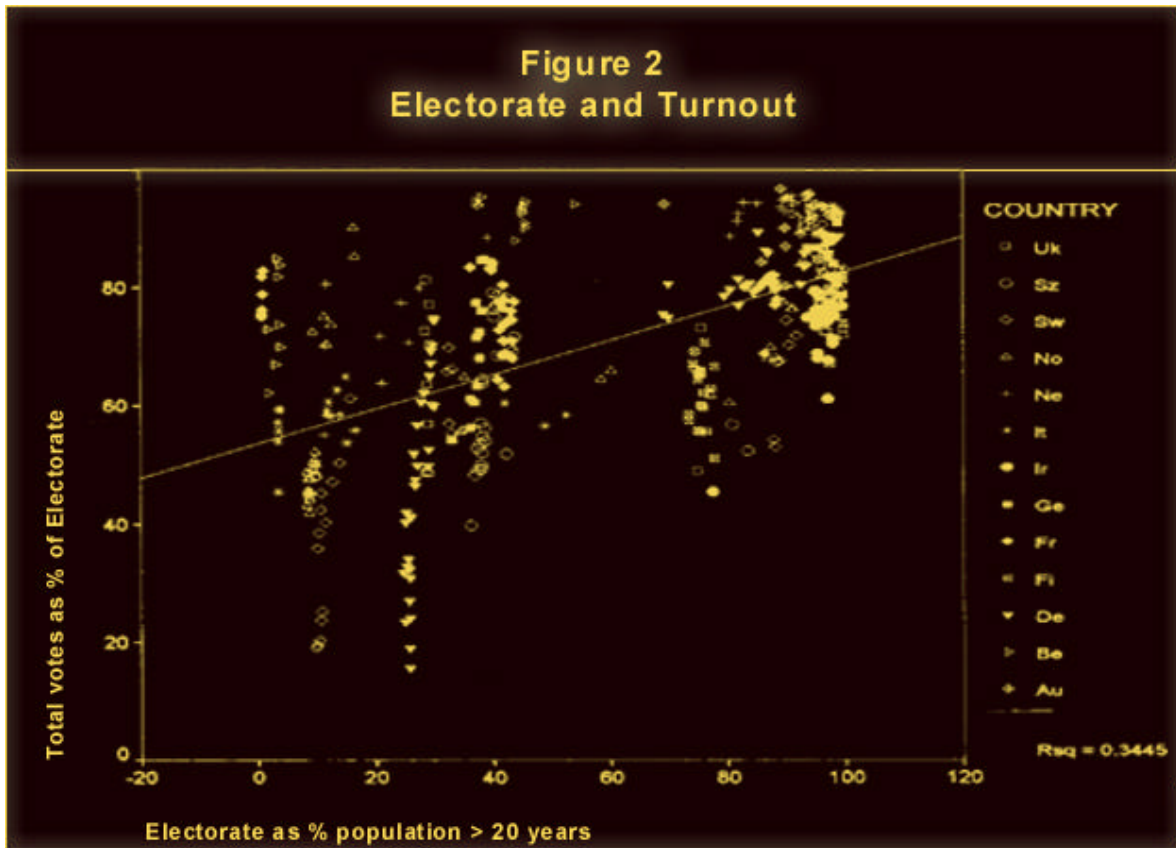
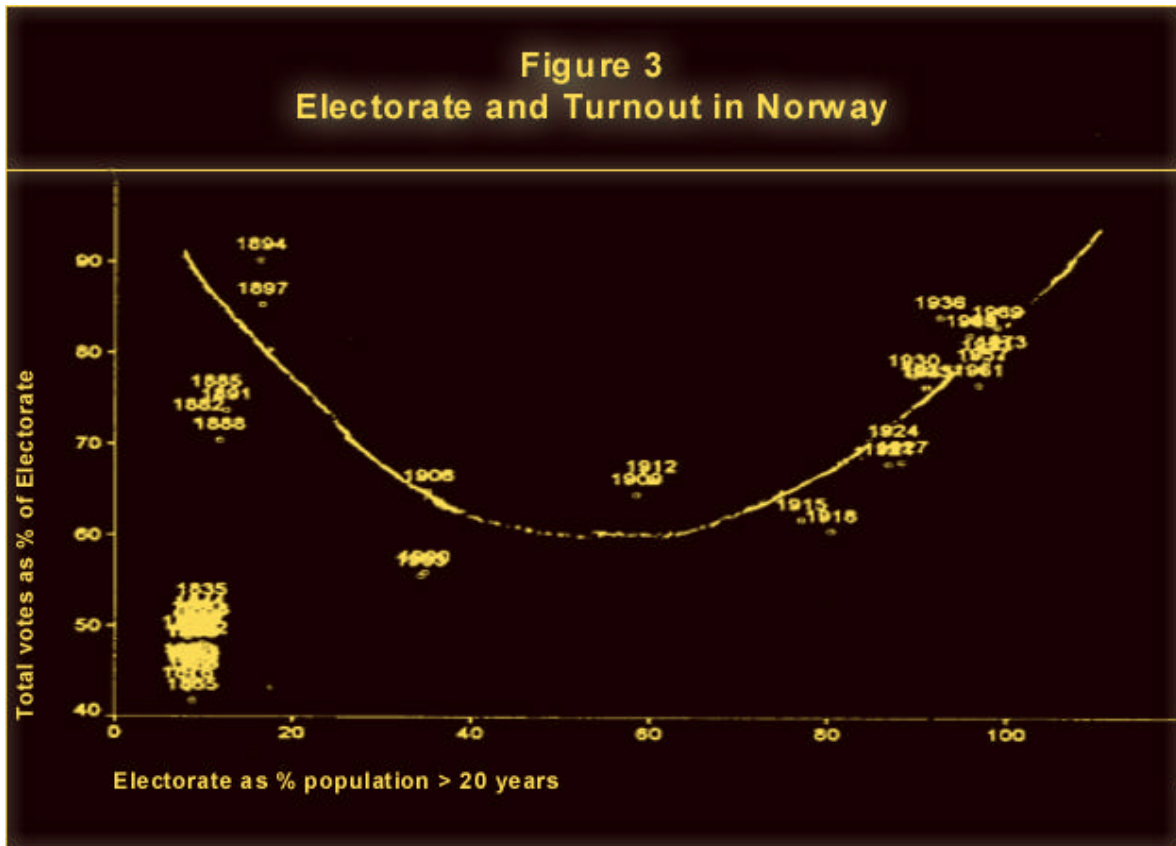


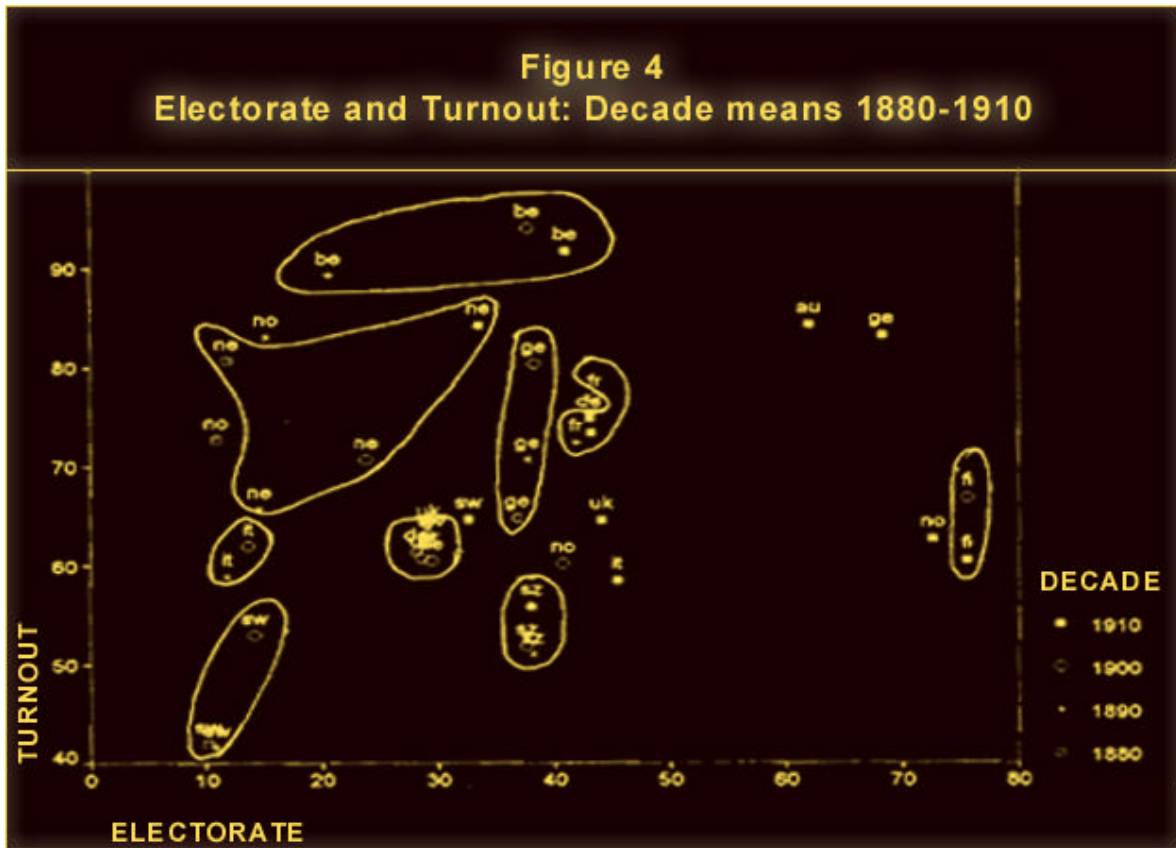
Figure2



**Figure3**



**Figure4**





## NOTES

1. For the waves of developments of rights see MARSHALL, T. H.: *Class, Citizenship and Social Development*. New York, Anchor Books Edition, 1965; and BENDIX, R.: *Nation-Building and Citizenship. Studies of Our Changing Social Order*. New York, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1964.
2. ROKKAN, S.: «The Comparative Study of Electoral Statistics», in ROKKAN, S.: *Citizens Elections, Parties*. Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1970, p. 169-180; and «Mass Suffrage, Secret voting and Political Participation», in COSER, L.A. (ed.): *Political Sociology*. New York, Harper & Row, 1966, p. 101-131, for a general review of the problems of comparative research in electoral statistics.
3. Take a simple example to illustrate the problem as its worst: certain reform acts of the second half of the 19th century actually lowered the property, income or capacity or census requirement for voting, de facto increasing the number of enfranchised people. But at the same time the reform modified also the limit age for vote lowering it, for instance, from 30 to 24 years. The final result is that when the percentage of enfranchised people is computed in reference to the adult population defined by the electoral law, such reform could actually result in a decline of the percentage of enfranchised.
4. FLORA, P. et al.: *State Economy and Society in Western Europe 181-197. A Data Handbook in Two Volumes*, vol 1. *The Growth of Mass Democracies and welfare State*. Frankfurt, Campus Verlag, London Macmillan Press, Chicago, St. James Press, 1983.
5. Immediately after the restoration (1815-1816) the suffrage was kept almost universal for males and equal (dependants were excluded) but only for primary elections meant to elect lifetime members of electoral colleges. The latter then elected members of parliament. Between 1824 and 1830 elections became direct, but the suffrage was restricted and made unequal (the upper 25% of the electorate paying highest direct taxes made an additional electoral body) for men over 30 years. Between 1831 and 1846 the suffrage was equalised for males over 25 but remained highly restricted. For detailed information see CAMPBELL, P.: *French Electoral Systems and Elections 1789-1957*. London, Faber, 1958; and HUARD, R.: *Le suffrage universel en France*. Paris, Aubier, 1991.
6. MARTIN, W.: *Histoire de la Suisse*. Lausanne, Payot, 1980 VIII (I, 1928), p. 252.
7. Electors had to reside in the electoral district for at least one year; dependent people without a family were excluded, as well as those who received poor relief and those whose patrimony was under bankruptcy proceedings. For details about these limitations see DE KIRIAKI, A.S.: *Della riforma elettorale. Saggio di diritto costituzionale e legislazione comparata*. Roma, Forzano, 1885, p. 82-88, which is an invaluable source for the detailed legal aspects of most early 19th century electoral systems. See also CASTAIRS, A.: *A Short History of Electoral Systems in Western Europe*. London, Allen & Unwin, 1980, p. 75-77.
8. The primary elections selected grand electors. Primary electors were not subjects to any restrictions, but were divided in three equal parts. The total sum of the tax paid in the constituency was divided in three equal parts. The first class included the biggest tax payers up to the ceiling of the first third of paid taxes. The second and the third were determined with the same principle with obvious inequalities as a result. According to CASERTANO, A.: *Il diritto di voto*. Napoli, Pierro, 1911, p. 204, in 1893 the proportion of the electorate in the three classes was still 3% in the first, 11% in the second and 86% in the third. He cites the curious example of the case of Essen and Frankfurt where respectively the Krupps and the Baron Rothschild were the only members of the first class.
9. For details about the Prussian and several other German states electoral requirements, see NOHLEN, D. and SCHULTZE, R.O.: *Wahlen in Deutschland: Theorie-Geschichte-Dokumente, 1848-1970*. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1971.
10. ROKKAN, S.: «Electoral Mobilization, Party Competition and National Integration», in LA PALOMBARA, J. and WEINER, M. (eds.): *Political Parties and Political Development*. Princeton (N.J.), Princeton University Press, 1972 (2) (1st 1966), p. 247.
11. The information in the text refers only to the seven provinces carved out of the German-speaking westernmost part of the pre-W.W.I Empire, Cisleithanian Austria which subsequently became the Republican territory (Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 10 September 1919). Burgerland became an Austrian province later in 1921; before he had been the westernmost counties of the three Hungarian provinces of Moson, Sopron and Vasvar.
12. To be more precise, reduction of income and property qualifications concerned only England and Scotland, and not Ireland, where the electorate remained in the 1870's between 7 and 8%. Up to the 1880's the Irish electorate will stay behind that of the other British regions. Estimates of the number of enfranchised

electors are the following according to BUTLER, D.E. and CORNFORD, J.: «United Kingdom», in MEYRIAT and ROKKAN, S. (eds.): *International Guide to Electoral Statistics*. vol. 1, *National Elections*. The Hague-Paris, Mouton, 1969, p. 333:

Number of electors enfranchised as proportion of adult male population

Year	England &	Scotland	Ireland
1833	1/5	1/8	1/20
1869	1/3	1/3	1/6
1886	2/3	3/5	1/2

13. Obviously the series of reforms introduced in this period in the United Kingdom and in particular the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act (1883), the Representation of the People Act (1884), and the Redistribution of Seats Act (1885) had a great deal of other political implications among which the most important were the alteration of the balance of representation in favour of the urban and industrial areas, the single constituency as a rule (although a few exceptions remained) and the sharp increase of the competitiveness of contests, with a decisive drop in 'unopposed' constituencies. See BUTLER, D.E. and CORNFORD, J.: «United Kingdom», in MEYRIAT and ROKKAN, S.: *International Guide...*, *cit.*, p. 334. Here we are exclusively concerned with the extension of the electorate.

14. For more details see ROKKAN, S.: «The Mobilization of the Periphery: Data on Turnout, Party membership and Candidate Recruitment in Norway», in ROKKAN, S.: *Citizens Elections Parties*, *cit.* p. 181-225.

15. See AA. VV.: *Compendio dei risultati delle consultazioni popolari dal 1840 al 1954*. Roma, Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1955; SHEPIS, G.: *Le consultazioni popolari in Italia dal 1948 al 1957: Profilo storico-statistico*. Empoli, Editrice Caparrini, 1958; BALLINI, P.L.: «Le elezioni politiche nel Regno di Italia. Appunti di bibliografia, legislazione e statistiche», *Quaderni dell'osservatorio elettorale*, 15/1985, p. 143-220; BALLINI, P.L.: *Le elezioni nella storia d'Italia dall'Unità al Fascismo*. Bologna, Il Mulino, 1988.

16. The suffrage was universal for males over 30, but certain citizens between 21 and 30 had the right to vote if they paid a minimum tax or had completed military service, finished primary school, or exercised official functions.

17. Prussian Minister quoted in ANDERSON, E.N. and ANDERSON, P.R.: *Political Institutions and Social Change in Continental Europe in the 19th Century*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967, p. 307.

18. The information concerning open, indirect, curia and indirect voting have been collected mainly from GOLDSTEIN, R.J.: *Political repression in 19th Century Europe*, *cit.*; and FLORA, P. et al.: *State Economy and Society in Western Europe 181-197...*, *cit.*; as well as from standard national accounts.

19. WEBER, E.: *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914*. London, Chatto & Windus, 1979, p. 271 offers a number of interesting local examples.

20. DE SANCTIS, F.: *Un viaggio elettorale: Racconto*. Napoli, Morano, 1876.

21. The vote could be written or oral but it was in both cases open. All elections were taking place in open meetings in each district and the vote was actually expressed showing hands for the candidate. If voting was written, votes were then formally counted in public. Over time, written voting became more common.

22. Within the German Empire Prussia always maintained a 'three-class' system based on the three thirds of taxes paid in each commune and which resulted in marked inequalities of vote.

23. GOLDSTEIN, R. J.: *Political Repression in 19th Century Europe*, *cit.*, p. 13.

24. For detailed description of these provisions see GILISSEN, J.: *Le régime représentatif en Belgique depuis 1790*. Bruxelles, Renaissance du Livre, 1956, p. 121-160; and GILISSEN, J.: «Evolution des systèmes électoraux dans les pays de Benelux», *Cahiers du Clio*. 1980, p. 21-48.

25. STENGERS, J.: «Histoire de la législation électorale en Belgique», in NOIRET, S. (ed.): *Political Strategies and Electoral Reforms: Origins of Voting Systems in Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990, p. 85.

26. Given that we compute the electorate as the enfranchised population as a percentage of the total population of 20 years or more, two countries which have both universal male or male/ female suffrage but apply different voting ages, for instance 21 and 29 years, result in two different percentages of which the first is much higher. To avoid this result, one should compute the enfranchise population in percentage of the

enfranchised age group, that is the population above legal voting age. However to do this would involve even bigger distortions. Given that the voting age was in the past very different from one country to the other, we would lose much of the common yardstick for comparative purposes. How, for instance, to evaluate in comparative terms a 80% enfranchised population over 30 years vis-à-vis a 70% enfranchised population over 20 years?