

INTRODUCTION

TRANSITION TO MODERNITY, THE ACHIEVEMENT OF FEMALE SUFFRAGE, AND WOMEN'S CITIZENSHIP*

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Female suffrage, the context that rendered it possible, and the legal changes that were made before it was finally granted make up a crucial chapter in the history of women's struggles for equality. Reflecting on how this chapter unfolded in a particular country is therefore revealing of the features that women's broader struggles for equality and equal citizenship took in that country. It is particularly revealing of the relative importance that women, on the one hand, and the established socio-political system, on the other, granted the right to vote and be voted for in the context of these struggles and in relation to other rights.

Some fifteen years ago, political theorist Carole Pateman deplored the fact that we know remarkably little about how women won the vote in different parts of the world; how important local circumstances and political configurations were in this process; what the relevance was of struggles for national self-determination; and the degree to which cultural differences or differences in political regimes mattered.¹ This book intends to respond to these questions by casting a look at the articulation of women's suffrage rights in all of the countries that today make up the European Union. It aims to tease out numerous levels of cross-country differences and similarities in women's accession to the vote in these countries. To this end, it focuses on the socio-political context in which women were able to walk towards citizenship, as well as on the legal framework that supported this passage—that is, on the rights women enjoyed at the time they were granted the right to vote and on the sequence of legal reforms that preceded the recognition of female suffrage. A comparative look at the history of women's right to vote across the European Union helps us

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¹ Pateman C., "Three Questions about Womanhood Suffrage", in Deley C. and Nolan M. (eds.), *Suffrage and Beyond: International Feminist Perspectives* (New York: 1994) 331–348.

to understand what was at stake in the fight for suffrage and the expansion of citizenship it implied. It helps to give us a notion of how important the vote was for women, what factors stood in the way of women's suffrage, and what other considerations and events made it possible in different countries at different points of time in history.

This comes at a time at which Europe's gender equality model seems to be gradually departing from a narrowly conceived equal rights/opportunities framework in order to embrace a new democratic framework that actively seeks the disestablishment of the separate-spheres tradition that was entrenched, rather than challenged, with the consolidation of modern states in Europe. In doing so, it is advancing towards women's full citizenship, a task that was only initiated when women were politically enfranchised but has as of yet not been fully completed, as shown by, among other things, the enduring political underrepresentation of women that the chapters in this book describe.

To tell the story of how women were granted voting rights, not just in a few emblematic countries where this question has been more extensively explored (such as the UK or France) but in each of the countries that now make up the political-unity-in-the-making we call the European Union, allows European men and women today to identify differences and commonalities in the histories of women's disenfranchisement, thus providing the background against which a new European paradigm of parity democracy is gradually asserting itself. The stories in this book illuminate the role that female suffrage has played in the construction of female citizenship, and the place female suffrage and female citizenship occupy in working notions of citizenship, shedding light in turn on the strengths and deficiencies of these notions in the face of the construction of a notion of citizenship of European dimensions. The book provides a retelling of the story of how citizenship was gradually coined in Europe, first nationally and then supra-nationally, from a woman's perspective.

Transition to Modernity and Female Citizenship

Women's access to suffrage responded to the dynamics at play in the creation of modern states and the definition of male and female citizenship. This brings us back to the time, more or less historically close, when these countries articulated their transition to modern states, constructed around the notion of citizenship. Transition to modernity had a contradictory impact upon women, which is linked to the fact that both in the

republican and in the liberal traditions of citizenship, the new modern subject was from the start a gendered subject—namely, one shaped on symbolically male features and represented as abstract, disembodied, rational, impartial, and independent—the liberal tradition ignoring particularity and the republican transcending it.²

The modern republican tradition defined citizenship in the new nation-state in the making through the articulation of ways in which citizens were expected to contribute to the common good and to derive their identity from that contribution. This republican tradition, with its roots in Aristotle and Machiavelli, conceived of citizens as economically independent and therefore having enough resources and time to devote themselves to the business of governing the city, and as politically autonomous in being able to form their own judgment about the common good without depending on superiors.³ It also prioritized citizen soldiers who, unlike mercenaries, were willing to defend the polity because they had a stake in it. Both arguments were combined in justifying the exclusion of women, an exclusion which the French Revolution reproduced. Indeed, when the Revolution undermined the intermediary powers of the *Ancien Regime* in order to construct a democratic nation-state of citizens, the active participation of male citizens was predicated on the exclusion of women, who were seen to sustain men's participation through their labour in the 'private' sphere, conceptualized as both separate and subordinate. The conjunction of state, nationality and citizenship were supported by a catalogue of republican duties.⁴ Primary among those was a commitment to patriotism, in essence characterized as 'civic fraternity'. This meant that the republican model for women, and thus the container of their citizenship persona, was motherhood, their role being relegated to the instilment of love for republican virtues and guardians of virtues and morals.⁵ Tellingly, while during the French Revolution women were at first allowed to participate in public debates and meeting as '*citoyennes* without

² Lister R., *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*, 2nd ed. (New York: 2003) 71.

³ This of course was the reasoning used to justify the exclusion not only of women but also of the poor, the non-tax-paying, the non-land-owning, and, in general, the working classes.

⁴ Lister R., Williams F., Anttonen A., Bussemaker J., Gerhard U., Heinen J., Johansson S., Leira A., Siim B., and Tobio C., with Gavanas A. (henceforth Lister et al), *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe: New Challenges for Citizenship Research in a Cross-National Context* (Bristol: 2007) 21.

⁵ Ibid.

citizenship',⁶ the contradiction in terms ended when such forms of intervention were drastically blocked.⁷ Already in 1793, women's club were prohibited, and Olympe de Gouges—author of *A Declaration of the Rights of Women and Citizens*, in which she redefined the nation as 'nothing more than the union of Woman and Man'—was executed. Within the new nation-state, women were not expected to contribute to the common good through their direct political participation, nor to derive their identity from such contribution. In fact, French women did not get the right to vote until 1944.

Nor were women regarded as equal citizens in the liberal tradition. Liberalism developed a language of freedom and rights, an axiological framework that aspired to be universal, by appealing to an undifferentiated human nature and conceiving of individuals as naturally free. The universalism of the liberal discourse enshrined the promise of the liberation of women from former class and gender roles, indeed effacing the differences between men and women as human beings. Yet, in the bourgeois society in which the liberal discourse developed, subjects and rights-holders were only those endowed with property (including of the self), those who could sustain themselves,⁸ and those who were more generally subjected to no one. Just like republicanism, liberalism constructed the myth of the independence and self-sufficiency of the political being. To do this, liberalism shaped the individual as self-possessed. Self-ownership (the requirement that citizens own property in their own persons) was recognized as the basis for political subjects and constituted the move by which women were excluded from the polity, among other reasons because 'women's relation to their childbearing bodies did not assimilate to the model of an autonomous individual empowered to appropriate property'.⁹ This explains why women still remained excluded when, with

⁶ Landes J.B., "The Performance of Citizenship: Democracy, Gender and Difference in the French Revolution", in Benhabib S. (ed.), *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton, NJ: 1996) 305.

⁷ There were 56 women's groups documented between 1789 and 1793. Although officially excluded, women did participate in the referendum on the constitution of 1793 in nearly 30 electoral assemblies in the provinces, even though in the end their votes were not counted. As a consequence, women wrote letters approving of the constitution but expressing their regret at being denied the right to vote. See Chaperon in this volume.

⁸ Lister et al, *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe* 21.

⁹ Meyes E., "Private Property, the Private Subject and Women", in Fineman M.A. and Dougherty T. (eds.), *Feminism Confronts Homo Economicus. Gender, Law and Society* (Ithaca: 2005) 119. Meyes reminds us of the Lockean account whereby property is a condition for liberty that constitutes the political subject and allows him to take part in the social contract. For Locke, property is anything that a man has produced through the physical engagement of the body, the very first property of men being property in their own

the advances of industrialization and the workers' class struggle, the 'property/liberty' connection was expanded to include not only ownership but also capacity of producing property through wage labour.¹⁰ Women were primarily defined as property in the private, and this precluded their capacity to benefit from ownership in the public.¹¹ In other words, liberalism constructed a self-possessed individual as male, displacing the manifestations of men's dependency linked to social reproduction onto

person. As Meyes points out, this makes control of one's body by one's will both the essence of liberty and the basis for appropriation of private property. As Pateman recalls, Kant's philosophy regarding the connection between self-mastery and citizenship and how this connection grounds women's political exclusion is even more telling. For Kant, it is the nature of women that makes them unfit for self-mastery. Self-mastery is demonstrated in the way a man gains his livelihood by not allowing others to make use of him. If social circumstances require a man to enter into employment contract and labour at the behest of another, he lacks the criterion for possession of civil personality and is excluded from citizenship. But this is an accident of fortune and circumstances, making some men servants. In the case of women, it is different, for, he claims, women are creatures of feeling, not reason, and therefore inherently lack civil personality, so that they must be subject to their husbands—their masters—in marriage. Cf. Pateman C., "Feminism and the Marriage Contract", in *The Sexual Contract* (Palo Alto, CA: 1988) 168–169.

¹⁰ This evolution is not only due to the recognition of wage labour as a source of economic independence but also to the recognition of the economic domain, and not just the political domain, as a 'public' domain. 17th-century political thought had separated the familial and the political. In the 19th century, and as the production of goods ceased to be governed by familiar principles and instead became organized through the market, the private and public realms became redefined, the latter now being expanded to include not only politics but other institutions such as the market and education. See Berkovitch N., *From Motherhood to Citizenship: Women's Rights and International Organizations* (Baltimore and London: 1999) 13. In fact, the passage from a pre-modern to a modern economy has been credited for the emergence of the woman's movement in a relatively brief span of time during the 19th century. Thus, it has been argued that in a pre-modern economy and kinship system, women's inferior status could be rationalized given the basic coincidence between the family household and the unit of economic production (the peasant farm, cottage industry, or small family business) typically headed by males. However, the nuclear family structure of industrial urban society required the splitting of the household from the workplace. In doing so, it reinforced the private/public divide, while at the same time placing new demands on men and women. Men were now expected to act as free agents in competitive labour markets, while their wives increasingly devoted more time to household tasks and less to production labour than they had in the farm. The wives, though, needed to be able to act on their own behalf as representatives of their families, something which was in tension with their former roles as minors generating contradictions and triggering demands of autonomy. Needless to say, the incorporation of women into the labour market only underscored the contradictions between traditional dependency and the new need for autonomy that came along with economic and political modernization and at the same time empowered women to further their equalization claims. See Zollinger Giele J., *Two Paths to Women's Equality* (Tayne, New York: 1995) 5–9.

¹¹ Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Polity Press, 1988): 125. The private-property-holder paradigm was therefore male too, relying on the model of an 'owner-actor whose economic power derives from freedom of mobility, autonomy from relational limitations and a singular construction of responsibility'.

women. This resulted in modernity sealing a sexual contract,¹² a contract of fraternity whereby men assigned women the role of sexual and reproductive labour, articulating a division of spheres and gender roles. Women, especially married women, often appeared as the flip-side of autonomy and were therefore excluded from the holding and/or managing of property, all or some forms of paid employment and professions, as well as political participation. Even in Britain, the country with the oldest form of parliamentary representation, women did not get full voting rights before 1928, and this only after long and convoluted struggles.¹³

The separation of spheres and the relegation of women to that of domesticity, as both a distinctly female sphere but also a subordinate domain, was thus at the foundation of modern democracies. If in French law the obedience and subordination of the wife under her master's command was conceptualized as a republican virtue, legitimised by the superior interest of the public good, in English common law the regime of community of the spouses, the so-called common-law doctrine of coverture, meant that the woman lived under the 'cover' of her husband who, as head of household, enjoyed the status of civil citizenship. The regime rested on a fiction that reunited husband and wife in only one person, making the husband that person. Under coverture, a married woman had no independent legal and civil standing; she was deemed to be 'covered' or represented by her husband for public purposes. It was under this dominant paradigm that women's identity as legal subject was subsequently ruled out. The legal subordination of married women was more than a simple matter of exclusion: it helped to 'define civil citizenship, for it was

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The sexual contract was also at the foundation of the American Revolution, for despite the proclamation of the universalistic, democratic, and liberal rights on which it rested, it was also led by British-descended North American male colonists, most of whom 'led patriarchal families structured in accordance with English common law, with wives performing the duties assigned them by their ruling husbands'. See Smith R.M., "The Distinctive Barriers to Gender Equality", in Klausen J. and Maier C. (eds.), *Has Liberalism Failed Women? Assuring Equal Representation in Europe and the United States* (New York: 2001) 186–187. Indeed, women gained suffrage only with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution in 1920. Democratic theorists in America were just as influenced by the separate spheres tradition as their European counterparts. Alexis de Tocqueville did not hesitate to characterize the extension of U.S. men's rights that so fascinated him as 'universal suffrage', although no women were part of that universe. Tocqueville comments: 'in our time the principle of the sovereignty of the people has attained in the United States all the practical development that imagination is capable of conceiving'. De Tocqueville A., *De la démocratie en Amérique*, vol 1 (Paris: 1990 (first published 1835)), cited in Markoff I., "Margins, Centers, and Democracy: The Paradigmatic History of Women's Suffrage", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29, 1 (2003) 90. On the foundational role of women's exclusion from citizenship in the United States, see Siegel, R., "She the people: the

by protecting, subsuming and even owning others that white male property owners and family heads became citizens'.¹⁴

It would be tempting to read the contradictions referred to above as instances of the paradoxical foundations of modern liberal democracies.¹⁵ Modern states rest on a foundational tension that goes beyond questions pertaining to women and gender. There is an undeniable tension between the pulls of liberalism's enlightened claims to the universality of human nature and individual freedom, on the one hand, and the intrinsically bounded democratic tradition of equal citizenship and popular sovereignty in the nation state, on the other. The contradictions that surround the construction of womanhood in modern states cannot, however, be explained as just one more instance of the above paradoxes. Going beyond the tension between freedom and equality, between the universality of human nature and the situated character of national citizenship, between nature's eternal truth and the contingency of bounded democratic decision-making, women's place in the modern state was defined in open contradiction to the tenets of both universal freedom and situated equality. Women were not conceived as equal citizens, nor did the promises of the universal definition of human nature as free encompass women. Instead, the universality of human freedom was qualified to allow for women's difference and for the construction of the female gender as naturally dependent on the male and as naturally destined to the responsibility for the care of children and family. Associating universal freedom with abstract timeless rationality and opposing women's nature to reason served this aim. This dualism, itself in contradiction to universality and reason, supported in turn women's exclusion from equal citizenship and political participation, which were themselves regarded as the spheres of freedom and rationality. Both universalism and (active) citizenship were constructed as male; modern womanhood was constructed as the exclusion from both. Reason, autonomy, economic independence, and the right to bear arms came tightly coupled with the notion of citizenship, and these were precisely the properties that women were denied.¹⁶

In the end, then, the republican as well as the liberal model converged in the basic differentiation between the public and the private sphere, relegating women to the latter. Indeed, most of the theoreticians of the

Nineteenth Amendment, Sex Equality, Federation and the Family", *Harvard Law Review* 115 (2002) 947–1046.

¹⁴ Fraser N. and Gordon L., "Civil Citizenship Against Social Citizenship", in van Steenberg B. (ed.), *The Condition of Citizenship* (London: 1994) 88.

¹⁵ Mouffe C., *The Democratic Paradox* (London-New York: 2000).

¹⁶ Berkovitch, *From Motherhood* 12.

bourgeois society (including Hegel, Kant, and Rousseau) insisted on the special role of women within the family, where a principle of dominance and hierarchy vis-à-vis married women went unchallenged in both the liberal property-ownership and the republican motherhood models. The principle of domination was secured by requiring the wife's obedience and subordination to the husband's 'right of command' and by her economic dependence, anchored in the husband's rights to administer her property and the earnings from her work.¹⁷ This meant that 'when the concept of citizenship was developed as a legal status and in its political meaning as an indicator of a democratization process, the female gender became a political category' and the contradictions within modern civil rights were rendered apparent. A gender-specific division of labour, in tension with the principles of freedom and equality of all men, was established.¹⁸ Far from being a contingent deficiency in the formulation of liberalism and democracy, as was the initial exclusion of the non-propertied from suffrage, women's double exclusion played a structural role in both. This was so in as much as individuals and citizens were constructed as self-sufficient and autonomous, as beings who could elaborate their own norms and could to that extent control their own bodies and destinies, as persons or as members of the polity. In both contexts, autonomy was conceived as independence, and as essential to political citizenship. Human dependency and its management were feminized, and their feminization was justified both upon nature and upon the needs of the nation. In this way, womanhood was constructed as the flip-side of modernity, both excluded from it as its opposite and required by it as its enabling instrument.

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Modern Citizenship and the Pace, Paths, and Forms of Female Suffrage

The modern concept of citizenship was based on the liberal ideas of individualism and equality, developed in the West in the 17th century and signalling a radical break from traditional ideas of society as composed of natural hierarchies and inequalities. The contradictions that this concept of citizenship brought along for women underlie the histories of female suffrage told in this volume. In particular, they account for several of the common features and dynamics of the pace and forms that the

¹⁷ Lister et al, *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe* 35.

¹⁸ Ibid, 42.

achievement of female suffrage took in many countries, regardless of their cultural, national, political, or religious idiosyncrasies. Such features included:

- i) The fact that in several cases the modern political order implied a retrenchment instead of an expansion of women's political rights;
- ii) The fact that oftentimes the struggle for suffrage was fought for men and women on separate tracks;
- iii) The fact that female suffrage was often achieved in a piecemeal fashion, making sure that only some forms of suffrage were recognized or some types of women were enfranchised.

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i) *Modernity as regression*

In several of the national histories documented in the book, we find that the modern legal order came to deprive women of the suffrage rights they had enjoyed under the political institutions of the 'Ancient Regime', linked to feudal notions of status or to the ownership of property. Where they existed, as in Sweden, the Netherlands, and some pre-unitary Italian states (such as the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, Lombardy, and the Venetian Region), these rights were indeed idiosyncratic. They were granted to (some) noblewomen and to taxpaying women in some lands for some elections (often municipal or provincial) and were often indirect. Far from expanding women's voting rights along with men's, however, modern electoral laws and constitutions came to deprive women of (or further restrict) their previous limited voting rights, sometimes by rendering explicit the idea that the gender neutral formulation of the concept of "citizenship" meant only men. This was notably the case with the electoral laws of 1848 in Hungary, 1907 in the Austrian half of the Habsburg Empire, 1865 in Italy, 1866 in Sweden, and 1887 in the Netherlands. These legal norms explicitly excluded women from the vote altogether. Beyond overcoming feudal notions of natural status hierarchies and linking property and economic independence to the franchise, the liberal revolutions thus sealed an understanding of the public sphere of political participation and citizenship as male, in contrast to the private sphere of domesticity reserved for women.

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ii) *Men and women's suffrage: separate tracks*

That the struggle for suffrage was often fought on separate tracks is clear in the relation between the struggle for female suffrage and the expansion

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of suffrage to all men. In some of the stories covered in this book, men's and women's voting rights were pursued and often obtained hand in hand as part of a broader struggle for independence and democratization. This was the case in countries such as Ireland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Cyprus. In some countries, such as Denmark, this was true even outside of the context of the affirmation of independent statehood. Women's fight for suffrage was simply linked to the political class struggle for universal suffrage and parliamentary democracy as part of the same endeavour.

In most other countries, however, women's voting rights were not integrated with men's in the struggle for universal suffrage. Universal suffrage was understood as male, forcing the fight for women's suffrage onto a separate track. Indeed, the stories in this book show how most of the time female suffrage was perceived as qualitatively different from, subordinate to, or even in tension with men's suffrage: at best, it was a distraction from the central issue in the construction of citizenship in the new modern state; at worst, a threat to the unity of the family, with the potential to corrupt both politics and women's nature. Conceptualised as the remnants of unreason in the new world of universal reason, women were considered naturally unsuited for the political sphere and naturally destined to sustain the family. In some places, such as the Austrian half of the Habsburg Empire and Prussia, women's political associations were even forbidden. Whereas the case for male universal suffrage came to epitomize the natural expansion of the democratic egalitarian seeds of the revolution, the fight for women's political rights represented a threat to the private/public division of the spheres. The sexual contract and its disestablishment were at stake.

iii) *Women's suffrage: piece by piece*

Most countries articulated a compromise between approaches to women's nature and social role by limiting the suffrage granted to them to either some forms of political participation or some groups of women. In many countries, including the UK, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark, and Romania, women were granted the right to vote in local elections while still excluded from parliamentary elections. Indeed, while the latter stood for the sphere of politics proper, local politics were regarded as an extension of the family, a terrain where women could put to public use the caring and managing skills they were expected to develop in private. It was an extension of women's private tasks which still left the public arena to

men.¹⁹ This explains why, before they gained suffrage, women were also allowed to participate in school boards in the UK and boards of guardians for the distribution of relief to sick, unemployed, widowed, and destitute in both the UK and Ireland, as well as in social aid boards and councils addressing the needs of children and the young in Denmark.

The gradual approach to women's political inclusion explains the drawing of lines not only between types of suffrage and forms of participation, but also between types of women—that is, why in many countries women who were functionally seen as closer to men (instead of neatly nested in the sexual contract) were put on a faster track to political participation. The functional closeness of women to men was measured in terms of both economic self-sufficiency and marital/family status. In Sweden, already in the 18th century, tax-paying widows could vote. In Hungary, local voting rights were granted to some tax-paying women in 1871. In some Austrian lands, women could vote for municipal councils and provincial diets throughout the 19th century if they paid a certain amount of property or income taxes. In Ireland, women householders in Belfast were the first to be granted the right to vote in municipal elections. In several countries, including the UK, female suffrage was first granted to women with property, and in Finland, Iceland, and Sweden (though not in Denmark) unmarried and economically active women gained the vote before other groups. Most tellingly, in Belgium widows, single mothers of fallen soldiers, and women who had made an outstanding contribution to the resistance movement were entitled to vote and be voted for beginning in 1919, acquiring political rights not as women but as substitutes of heroic men who had died in the war. Sure enough, in case of (a new) marriage they would lose their special political rights. An interesting exception is Bulgaria during its 1934–1937 dictatorship, where married mothers were the only women granted suffrage rights as a way to encourage the reproduction of the nation. In one direction or another, though, marital civil status was seen as relevant to determining women's capacity to participate politically.

The fact that not all women could exercise political functions, and that men were best suited to decide who could or could not, also explains why in some countries women were allowed to be elected (for example, Spain) or nominated (for example, Romania) to political bodies before they could vote. Functional closeness to men or, in any event, departure from

¹⁹ Pateman, "Three Questions about Womanhood Suffrage" 339.

the sexual contract was then the primordial criterion for selective inclusion, as long as the women did not fall within the category of 'deviant'. In some countries, such as Belgium, adulterous women and women prostitutes were explicitly left out. Similarly, Italy excluded 'visible' prostitutes in 1945.

Actors in the Fight: Between Strategy and Principle

The allocation of men and women to separate spheres was both a reality and an ideological construct which often converged in the creation of synergies accounting for the disassociation of men's and women's franchise and the impossibility of a single democratization agenda. Women often did indeed lack economic independence, education, paid employment, and professional opportunities similar to those of men at the time of the fight for universal suffrage. It is therefore not surprising that those committed to women's equality had other causes they perceived as equally if not more pressing than suffrage. Also, women's relegation to the sphere of domesticity, where they were expected to reproduce and to nourish the mores and the traditional culture, allowed making predictions about the conservative, traditional, and religiously affected political behaviour that women would have, were they allowed to vote.

Two related factors delayed women's franchise. First, for a long time, as constitutional democracies were asserting themselves, women's disenfranchisement was not perceived by any of the agents of change as a serious remnant of the legacy of a 'pre-modern' or 'illegitimate' political order to be overcome, as were the lack of recognition of universal male suffrage or the limitation of non-democratically legitimized sources of authority such as that of the Monarchy or the Church, or that of imperial or colonial powers. Second, women were in fact assumed to favour the perpetuation of this 'pre-modern' state of things. Admittedly, this sometimes turned into an advantage, notably in the context of nationalist struggles, where claims for political autonomy and the affirmation of tradition and culture, of which women were expected to be repositories, went hand in hand. For the most part, however, modern political actors did not experience women's disenfranchisement as a pressing concern and were therefore willing to sacrifice or postpone it as a matter of strategy.

The relatively narrow space that the enlightenment ideas of freedom, justice, and equality occupy in the discussion of female suffrage is indeed noteworthy. Some women and women's organisations, and some

progressive political parties in several countries (such as socialist, liberal, or republican parties), embraced the new language of freedom, equality, and justice and saw in the new modern state a true promise of rights and democracy for all, including women. Such principled language certainly bore some weight in some concrete instances, as in the debates about female suffrage in the Spanish Constituent Assembly in 1931. However, the European debate around female suffrage was overall widely dominated by strategic arguments on the part of all relevant actors, many of whom shared a vision about women's natural inclinations as well as their proper social role. Strategy prevailed in positions both for and against female suffrage: both supporters and opponents tried to argue in terms of what was thought to be best for some further cause or for the (future) nation-state. Only sometimes was women's political enfranchisement sought for its own sake and reclaimed as an indispensable element of democratic legitimacy.

This book is full of examples of how more or less well-founded assumptions about women's nature and likely behaviour, as well as the prioritization of other political causes, had an impact on both *when* female suffrage was recognized and *whose actions* ended up being mainly responsible for it. Those against female suffrage feared women's anti-modern tendencies, conservatism, religiosity, and lack of political education, and they warned against both delays in gaining men's universal suffrage and citizenship and obstacles to the achievement of other important progressive endeavours. Those in favour of female suffrage, including, often, conservative and religious parties, shared for the most part these predictions about women's nature and inclinations and thus saw in the female electorate the possibility to preserve a threatened order from the excesses of modernity.

The creation of mass parties at the end of the 19th century had turned women into attractive potential campaigners, and possibly voters, and some political parties felt the urge to recruit women by appealing to causes dear to them. Sometimes this translated into support for female suffrage. Yet most often it did not, and women remained mostly instrumental to achieving political parties' further aims. In particular, in several countries, the fight for women's equal rights was regarded as a threat to workers' rights and livelihoods even beyond suffrage. Indeed, many socialist parties and other left-wing or progressive forces held an ambivalent position towards female suffrage and were willing to compromise equality-based commitments which they embraced in theory, arguing at least for the postponement of female suffrage until male universal

suffrage was achieved.²⁰ Expanding the vote to women on the same conditions as men (which at the time often meant enfranchising only propertied or tax-paying women) was seen as a direct threat to the socialist class struggle. Thus, although socialism in theory prided itself in supporting the cause of women's emancipation, the issue was considered secondary or even subversive, feminists' efforts by definition being suspected of bourgeois tendencies.²¹

Putting class interests in front of gender interests was not all that was at stake, however. Nationalist struggles and fights to limit the power of the Church and the monarchy were often as important in explaining support or resistance to the franchise of women from different actors, including political parties. In Luxembourg, liberals opposed female suffrage because they thought it would threaten their aspirations to limit the sovereign power of the Crown and the influence of the Catholic Church. In Belgium, although female suffrage was mainly supported by the Socialist Party for principled reasons at the turn of the century, the Socialists dropped the demand for female franchise in an attempt to unite anti-Catholic forces in order to break the political domination of the Catholic Party. Similarly, in Italy, although communists after World War II perceived women as crucial in the construction of consent within the newborn democracy, they were still only half-heartedly committed to the cause, fearing the Vatican's influence on women's vote.²² In France, women's right to vote was bound up with political struggles between religious and anticlerical movements, the former invoking tradition and often the monarchy, the latter supporting progress and the Republic. This explains why the Radical Party especially, but also the Socialist Party and the Communist Party resisted female

²⁰ In 1875, women's alleged reactionary political tendencies constituted the most important argument against including women's suffrage in the founding documents of the German Social Democratic Party. Dubois E.C., "Woman Suffrage Around the World: Three Phases of Suffragist Internationalism", in *Suffrage and Beyond* 253.

²¹ The First International (1864–67) was hostile to wage labour for women and unenthusiastic about allowing women into politics. The Second International had a more positive attitude about the women's cause, but it adopted the official policy which prohibited cooperation with bourgeois groups. Even among feminist socialists, clear commitment to suffrage for all men and women, as opposed to a strategy of male universal suffrage first, was only expressed in the First International Conference of Socialist Women held in 1907 in conjunction with the International Socialist Congress. Only after that did women delegates commit to mobilize the whole International for the cause. See Berkovitch, *From Motherhood* 32–33.

²² In fact, communist militants would later blame women's 'conservative vote' for the defeat of their party in the political elections of 1946 and 1948. See Mancini in this volume.

suffrage, which they saw as a threat to secularism and the separation of state and Church. Both in Portugal and Spain, Republican parties had included universal (including female) suffrage in their programs while in the opposition. Yet, when in power, they held a much more ambivalent position, especially towards the possibility of recognizing suffrage to all women, as opposed to only those who, because of their education, emancipation, or progressive credentials, were less likely to counterbalance women's natural or Church-inspired reactionary nature. Although for the most part women were expected and indeed were involved in struggles for autonomy against imperial or colonial powers, when female suffrage was thought to delay the country's journey towards independence it was also resisted on such grounds. This was, for instance, the case in Poland. Also in Ireland, the home rule debate, with its religious overtones, ensured tensions between gender equality and nationalist aspirations at the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century.

Although in general women's political preferences were overwhelmingly assumed to be conservative, and female suffrage was strategically fought for or resisted on those grounds, strategic thinking was applied also when women's vote was assumed to take other directions. In Greece, for instance, in view of the great contribution of women to the antifascist struggle against the Italian and German occupation (1940–1944), the Liberal politicians who governed the country from 1950 to 1952 resisted granting full suffrage to women, believing that they might mostly vote for the Conservatives or, even worse, for the Communists. In Austria, where Social Democrats had supported women's political and social rights, Conservatives feared women's leaning towards the left, while the left feared that women were being led by priests. Although Bulgarian 'narrow' socialists supported women's emancipation in principle, they feared women's leanings towards liberal values, and only included women's suffrage in their program by indication of the international communist movement, after they re-founded themselves as the Bulgarian Communist Party. When in 1920 the Slovenian Liberal Party in government proposed that women who paid taxes or had finished eight years of education could vote in local elections, the Catholic Party protested that peasant (and mostly Catholic) women should be included, fearing that educated, well-off women would vote liberal. Similarly, in 1945 the Maltese Labour Front supported women's appointment to the National Assembly and women's vote because it expected most women to be sympathetic to its cause.

The easy predisposition of political parties to sacrifice women's aspirations or their just treatment for the sake of other 'more important, urgent

or compelling' causes meant that the fight for female suffrage was many times led by strange bed-fellows. As we learn from this volume, the combination of a left-wing force (defending female suffrage on principled grounds) and a right-wing force (doing the same on strategic grounds) was not uncommon. In Belgium, for instance, Catholics offered their support for universal male franchise, a Socialist claim, in return for Socialist support for local female franchise, and both the Catholics and the Communists submitted a bill granting women national suffrage to parliament in 1945. In Spain, Socialists and right-wing parties aligned against the Republicans, who feared women's conservative tendencies, in finally approving women's suffrage, by a very small margin, during the Second Republic in 1931. In many European countries, then, Catholic and/or other conservative forces that had traditionally sustained the separate spheres tradition ended up supporting female suffrage in the belief that women would vote conservative and hence that female suffrage could undo or restrain the excesses of liberalism and the proletarian and revolutionary struggle, including communism and secularism. As a result of this, some countries experienced the emergence of a very conservative 'Christian feminism', as was the case in France and Italy, especially after Pope Benedict XV's declaration in favour of women's enfranchisement in 1919.

*Women's Fight for Female Suffrage: Suffragism and
the Challenge of Speaking with a Single Voice*

The sacrifice of women's full political rights for the sake of other political priorities meant that, to a large extent, women in the fight for female suffrage were unable to rely on the political-party structure system. The shortcomings of what we would call today gender 'mainstreaming' within party structures were clear, and the instances of disappointment reflected in this book are many. In the UK, the liberal government repeatedly disappointed women, and in Ireland, despite women's obvious contributions to both fronts, unionists as well as nationalists prioritized the home rule position over female suffrage, and unionist leaders who had promised to include female franchise in their proposal for a separatist provisional government then failed to live up to the promise.

At the same time, women's associations, which started to flourish in many parts in Europe around the mid-1850s and were mostly led by the impulse of educated, politically connected and bourgeois women, often prioritized causes other than suffrage, causes which they saw as more

pressing to ensure women's independence from men, such as education, employment, and professional development. In fact, sharing many of the assumptions about the likeliness of women's regressive political behavior (at least until they became more politically educated and had the means to ensure financial independence from their husbands and moral independence from the Church), many enlightened feminists shared the concern that female suffrage could hold back the reforms brought by liberalism and modernity.

a) *Women's suffragism*

Partly as a reaction to the inaction of all other relevant actors, partly expressing dissatisfaction with the limited agenda of women's bourgeois associations, and clearly inspired by a suffragist movement with international ambitions, suffragist organizations proliferated at the turn of the century. The features of suffragist organizations varied. Although most were independent organizations, many, including those which were often most successful, had party connections and some were created as a branch of a political party. Whereas most pursued suffrage through the means accorded by the political system, some—notably the suffragettes in the UK—were more radical in their methods, defending different forms of civil disobedience when necessary and, like the members of the Women's Social and Political Union in Britain, engaging in very unconventional activities. These included arson and hunger strikes in prison, what Mrs. Pankhurst called a 'civil war' waged by women.²³

Nearly all of the organizations were in contact with and were influenced by the suffrage movements in other countries and international organizations. Indeed, the cause of female suffrage provided the first occasion for international mobilization in the fight for women's rights. The fight was spearheaded by the women's temperance movement, which, initially rooted in the US, had also gained an international dimension.²⁴ The emergence of a newly militant suffragism was influenced by the upsurge of socialist politics at the end of the 19th century but was

²³ See Pankhurst E., "When Civil War is Waged by Women", in Schneir M., (ed.), *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings* (New York: 1972).

²⁴ The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) was formed in the United States in 1874 as a conventional Protestant women's organization with a narrow moral reform focus; it went on to become a more ambitious and politically articulated organization. In 1884, it led to the formation of the World's Women's Christian Temperance Union, which had great impact in Australia and New Zealand's early winning of suffrage. See Dubois, "Woman Suffrage Around the World" 256.

ideologically and organizationally independent from it. This form of suffragism had its roots in England, but its branches reached out through much of the rest of the world; the International Woman Suffrage Alliance was established between 1899 and 1902. Initially viewed as a working class initiative, suffragist militancy ended up recruiting women of all venues, as it came to challenge dominant definitions of womanhood articulated around the separation of public and private spheres.²⁵

b) *The challenge of overcoming external resistance and internal divisiveness*

Suffragist movements made a significant contribution towards women's suffrage in most countries. This is so notwithstanding internal disputes and divisions within suffragist and women's movements more generally. Internal divisions and conflicts of loyalty made it often difficult to achieve a common front in the fight for women's suffrage. The sources of conflict were several but interrelated. One of the most serious ones was the question of loyalty to a political party versus loyalty to the cause of women's franchise or even, more generally, women's rights. Often, as mentioned, parties paid lip-service to women's empowerment but were then willing to postpone it as a cause they saw as threatening a competing goal. Expressing frustration with the lack of commitment of a party to their cause, women were then compelled to organize separately, either within or outside the party, something which political parties did not always welcome. Indeed, parties were often eager to discipline what they perceived as women's political promiscuity, limiting their ability to step outside the bounds of party lines in their pursuit of a common cause.

Examples of all of the above abound in this volume. In Sweden, women rebelled against their party of reference (in this case the Conservative Party) by founding a separate branch, but then had great difficulty in participating in suffragist associations that recruited members from the entire political spectrum. In Italy, between 1906 and 1908, socialist, Catholic, and bourgeois women's associations cooperated intensively on the issue on women's suffrage, but this alliance did not last long, possibly a main reason why female suffrage was achieved very late.²⁶

Particularly complex was the relationship between feminism and socialism and the way it pitted class against gender struggles. Indeed, by

²⁵ Ibid, 265.

²⁶ See Mancini, in this volume.

the early 20th century a strong feminist movement began to develop within international socialism, a movement which had to struggle both against the sexism of male socialists and the social conservatism of middle-class women's movements. The largest socialist women's movements were in Germany, the United States, and Austria, and Clara Zetkin became international socialism's most well-known leader. The movement embraced political equality as one of its main objectives. It proposed a distinctively socialist argument for women suffrage grounded in the recognition that 'the increasingly public character of women's labour had to be matched with an equally public political role'.²⁷ Socialist suffragists encouraged the creation of women-only international fora—from 1907 through 1915 an informal women's international with annual conferences took place—as well as autonomy for women's organizing in socialist parties. These were actually created in the United States, Austria, Scandinavia, and Germany, which probably influenced women's faster track to suffrage in these countries as compared to others such as France or Italy, where such semi-autonomous organizations never developed.²⁸ At the same time, collaboration beyond party lines remained an obstacle. Although the Second International had a more positive attitude towards the women's cause, it adopted an official policy that prohibited cooperation with bourgeois groups. A price was paid for disobedience. In Denmark, for instance, the Social Democratic Party never recognized an ideologically akin women's organization (in this case, the Social Democratic Women's Suffrage Association) because of its cooperation with women not affiliated to the party.

Participation in war, especially in World War I, also stood in the way of women's making suffrage a common front. Although the majority of suffragists in combatant countries advocated 'preparedness, war work, and service to the state', some were decisively pacifist and led the formation of the international feminist pacifist network called the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.²⁹ Nationally, the cause had the potential to split the suffrage movement in two. In Germany, for instance, World War I divided German feminists into pacifists and nationalists supporting the war.

Divisions along ethnic lines or a nationalist cause also divided women in many countries. These divisions were not always insurmountable

²⁷ Dubois, "Woman Suffrage Around the World" 261, 263.

²⁸ Ibid, 263.

²⁹ Ibid, 269.

(for instance, in partitioned Poland, women's congresses were organized uniting Polish women from all three partitions), but sometimes they were. In the complex social and political context of Habsburg Austria, ethnic and nationalistic loyalties as well as suffrage struggles between liberals, socialists, and Catholics got in the way of a united suffrage movement. The language question caused a division of the Finish Women's Association. Also in Ireland, membership in suffrage societies was depleted by defections to newly formed female nationalist or unionist organizations.

Beyond institutional struggles, many of the tensions were not external but internal to the women's emancipation movement, including suffragist organizations. Indeed, in many countries, the women's emancipation movement was largely fractured along views of the relative urgency of granting women suffrage rights versus other types of concerns, an instance of the feminist movement's difficulty speaking with one voice. In general, while proletarian women fought for equal pay for equal work, the extension of protection of maternity rights, and employment protection for women, middle-class women struggled first of all for access to education and professional training, regarding access to higher education as a prerequisite for active citizenship.³⁰

A connected source of dispute was the question of whether full and equal suffrage should be granted to all women (including the uneducated and illiterate), reflecting a tension between a transformative enlightened agenda, on the one hand, and inclusive politics, on the other.³¹ In Britain, suffragists struggled over whether to go for female votes on the same basis as men (that is, as householders), which was the position of most suffragists, or rather to begin by trying to gain votes for unmarried women, as some suffragist argued in the 1870s and 1880s. In Greece, for instance, a couple of years after women had been granted limited voting rights, the suffragist movement split between those who opposed anything but full suffrage rights for local elections and those who insisted on women retaining the voting rights they already had, with most upper- and middle-class educated people (women and men alike) contesting universal suffrage for

³⁰ Lister et al, *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe* 38.

³¹ In the US, the split of the movement also took place over race issues. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan Anthony of the more radical National Woman's Suffrage Association broke with the abolition tradition and, advocating women's rights first and foremost, opposed the ratification of the 15th Amendment, arguing that it put black enfranchisement ahead of women. Instead, the more moderate American Woman Suffrage Association maintained its alliance with the old abolition cause. See Zollinger Giele, *Two Paths to Women's Equality* 114.

women. At the beginning of World War I, there were four suffrage organisations in Germany, each holding a different position on the extension of voting rights. In the end, such divisions nurtured the creation—but also weakened the force—of separate suffragist movements and associations.

Women's Enfranchisement: Citizenship and Motherhood

A telling example of the extent to which the separate spheres tradition had a bearing on women's franchise is the fact that many of the arguments either in support of or against the franchise alluded explicitly to women's distinct position or experience in the family and to their caring nature as mothers. Arguments concerning women's caring nature and their role as mothers, as well as their political relevance, were most often relied upon by conservative political forces opposing female suffrage. They bear witness to the place that the articulation of the modern nuclear family played in the construction of the modern state. Modernity constructed the family and the public sphere as complementary. The former encapsulated the sphere of human dependency, which the sexual contract left out of the latter, and made it a realm immune to public reason and the demands of politics. Female suffrage, it was said, was politically contentious because it could undermine family harmony and generate social instability. Instead, women were to be represented by the men, as the heads of the family household.³² In Sweden, for instance, there was a parliamentary commission in charge of investigating the potential consequences of female suffrage for issues such as birth and marriage. And in the UK, one of the arguments that Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone held in stubborn resistance to female suffrage was that women could be potentially corrupted by politics and thereby threaten the family.

The perception of suffrage as a threat to the family order also explained why women sometimes organized against their own enfranchisement. In Britain, for instance, women were active in the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage, founded in 1908. This, it has been argued, was due to the fact that the separate spheres tradition 'held out the promise of economic subsistence and a defined social place as a wife to women

³² Notice that two contradictory arguments were lumped together. On the one hand, the argument that women's suffrage was unnecessary because 'their men' already represented 'their' interests assumes unity of interests as the only conceivable scenario. On the other hand, the idea that women's suffrage could disrupt family harmony rests on the possibility of a clash of interests and advocates the subordination of women as the only solution.

from all respectable classes'.³³ Women's economic opportunities had indeed improved by the end of the 19th century, but were still very limited, so much so that working-class women had reasons to fear having to compete economically against men, as anti-suffragists claimed they would be compelled to do.³⁴ Also, middleclass husbands could offer their wives a more comfortable existence than spinsters could provide for themselves.³⁵

While some still feared that women's vote would disrupt family life, others maintained that women would make better life companions for men as equal citizens than as subordinate wives. Also the argument that as mothers and providers of care women were unsuited for political concerns was however also turned on its head. Not only did suffragists draw on the examples of Australia and New Zealand to show that votes for women had not led to neglect of homes and families.³⁶ Many also sustained that, instead, motherhood made for good and caring citizens, particularly suited to act in local politics.³⁷ Women's alleged nature, suited for home and care work, was relied upon by the conservative camp in those instances in which they supported their political inclusion. The nation would benefit if women's natural inclinations to care were put to public service, it was argued. If women were included in the public sphere, they would stand for patriotic motherhood. In some instances, the idea of patriotic motherhood was quite explicitly articulated, as when in Portugal the first voice raised in favour of women's suffrage (that of Domingos Borges de Barros, deputy of Baía, Brazil) on April 22, 1822 proposed the extension of voting rights to all women who were mothers of six legitimate children in the belief that no one gave more to a nation than those who gave birth to its citizens.

Interestingly, many women and even women's activists shared the view that men's and women's contributions to the nation were different in kind and pertained to different spheres. Indeed, as discussed, not all women's

³³ Pateman, "Three Questions about Womanhood Suffrage" 341.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Sawer M. and Simms M., *A Woman's Place: Women and Politics in Australia*, 2nd ed (Sydney: 1993) 10–16.

³⁷ These arguments connect with some current positions on citizenship in general, and on women's citizenship in particular. See in this line Nancy Fraser's proposal of a model of citizenship based on the notion of the universal caregiver (Fraser N., "Gender Equity and the Welfare State: A Postindustrial Thought Experiment", in Benhabib S., *Democracy and Difference* 219–241, at 234–236). See also Tronto J., "Care as the Work of Citizens. A Modest Proposal", in Friedman M. (ed.), *Women and Citizenship* (Oxford: 2003) 131–145.

organizations placed suffrage rights among their priority demands. But even among those that did, the key dividing line was between egalitarians and 'maternalists', the latter grounding their claims in the different, particular role and needs of women, drawing both on maternal values and women's caring approach to life, which, they said, could and should be put to the service of the national interest.³⁸

In the end, then, pro-suffrage voices ended up combining several types of arguments in resting their case, some affirming and some subverting the separate spheres ideology.³⁹ Some suffragists rested their case on considerations of justice. Calling on the universal language of individual freedom and equality, they underscored the fact that what prevented women from participating in the public world was men's monopoly on education, training, paid employment, and suffrage, and not nature. This was the argument most heavily relied upon by the International Women Suffrage Association.⁴⁰ Further, many middle- and working-class suffragists linked the vote to women's economic independence, regarding it as a way to improve their working conditions and their positions as workers in male-dominated workplaces. For other suffragists, however, including those who were recruited from the women's temperance movement, suffrage was vital to strengthen women's position in private life and eliminate men's domestic tyranny.⁴¹ It was a woman's duty as a mother to demand suffrage. Finally, the argument was made that women had a distinctive and valuable contribution to make. Having traditionally devoted themselves to the welfare of their families, charity and philanthropy, women could contribute in the political arena with their distinct knowledge and skills, especially at a time when the legislative concern with social welfare was increasing. It was the good of society as a whole that was at stake.

³⁸ Lister et al, *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe* 39.

³⁹ Pateman, "Three Questions about Womanhood Suffrage" 337.

⁴⁰ Berkovitch, *From Motherhood to Citizenship* 26.

⁴¹ Indeed, the temperance cause addressed those who defined women as particularly responsible for personal and domestic concerns. Their main mission was to protect families from the 'rum cause' (that is, drunk men) through the imposition of legal restrictions, for which women's vote was needed. In this way, the good of the family and political equality were reconciled. Berkovitz, *From Motherhood to Citizenship* 29. The movement connects with one of the strands of modern intellectual history, together with Enlightenment ideas and socialist feminism, to which both British and American feminism has been attributed, namely evangelical Christianity, which emphasized the moral and religious autonomy of women. See Zollinger Giele, *Two Paths to Women's Equality*, citing Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism* (New York: 1981).

*The Achievement of Female Suffrage:
Triggering Factors, Synergies, and Paradigms*

Although it is not possible to identify a single pattern in the path towards female franchise, some factors that contributed to or delayed women's access to suffrage can be identified, as well as the types of synergies that their interactions generated. All of which together accounts for the different paths taken toward female suffrage.

a) *Contributing factors*

With a few dramatic exceptions, notably the cases of England and the United States, the achievement of suffrage in the late 19th century and early 20th century has often been linked to governments granting the vote to women in a calculated and self-interested manner. Similarly, it is a common understanding that women's enfranchisement was 'on the whole a conservative endeavour, both as regards the forces responsible for achieving votes for women and the impact that women's votes had on political life'.⁴²

Examples from this book show these to be overbroad generalizations. In some countries, conservative forces, sometimes including the Church and confessional parties, were indeed often crucial for the granting of women's suffrage, both before World War II, such as the Netherlands⁴³ and Luxembourg,⁴⁴ and after, as in Italy and Belgium. Yet the stories are more

⁴² See Dubois, "Woman Suffrage Around the World" 252, referring to Richard Evan's classic survey, *The Feminists* (London: 1978) and arguing that this is unsubstantiated by empirical research. Regarding the US, see also McCammon H. and Campbell K., "Winning the Vote in the West: The Political Successes of the Women's Suffrage Movements, 1866–1919", *Gender and Society* 15, 1 (February 2001) 55–82, challenging the standard account which gives responsibility to a primarily native, white, male constituency that believed that female voters would bring Puritan norms of behavior into public life but that supported laws restricting saloons and other venues of gambling and prostitution. They argue that, instead, women's access to suffrage came as a result of suffrage movements' mobilization as well as contextual factors, including whether major political parties endorsed them and whether women were already moving into male domains, particularly in higher education and in the professions.

⁴³ In the Netherlands, the achievement of female suffrage was the result of a "pact of pacification" whereby public funding of religious education (defended by confessional parties) was granted in exchange for universal suffrage including female suffrage (defended by a sector of the liberals, and more or less indifferently tolerated by the rest of the liberals and socialists). See Bleijenbergh and Bussemaker, in this volume.

⁴⁴ In Luxembourg, female suffrage was achieved as the result of an alliance between the socialists supporting the cause on principle and conservatives acting strategically in the

complex than that. In Italy and Belgium, for example, we find communists aligning with conservative parties and overcoming the ambivalence or passive resistance of other parties, including the socialists and the liberals in support of female suffrage.⁴⁵ This book is also full of examples of how liberal and socialist parties and key figures within them played key roles in supporting women's suffrage in many countries, often in alliance with women's groups and suffragists.

Describing women's access to suffrage as a top-down process fails to reflect the importance of women's suffrage movements. Such movements have rightly been characterized as constituting an organized international protest mobilizing women around the world to fight against women's 'marginalization in the politics of their own nations', and representing, on the whole, a 'progressive development, drawing on and adding to left-wing political forces, albeit frequently in an embattled fashion'.⁴⁶ In fact, women's determined efforts through the organized labour of feminist movements demanding the vote for women is one of the factors explaining why in some countries women were enfranchised before or at the end of the war, whereas in others they had to wait longer.⁴⁷ According to some, especially between 1890 and 1930, the number of national women's political organizations claiming the extension of women's suffrage in a certain country determined women's likelihood to gain suffrage.⁴⁸

Yet in some countries the conquest of female suffrage *was* indeed a top-down process. Some authors have related this to the fact that from 1931 onwards, and especially after World War II, it was 'international standards, world culture and isomorphism' that become predominant.⁴⁹ With worldwide decolonization and the reorganization in international politics after World War II, and the rise of a truly international women's movement, independence became a major catalyst, with universal franchise being associated with struggles for democracy, national independence, and the

belief that women would support Christian values, fight alcoholism, and support the Monarchy, all against the opposition of liberals (who feared women's conservative vote). See Kmec, in this volume.

⁴⁵ In Italy, before the end of World War II, Communists and Christian Democrats agreed on supporting women's vote. In Belgium, after World War II, the Catholic and the Communist parties submitted a bill to parliament that would grant women suffrage in 1948.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 254–255.

⁴⁷ Pateman, "Three Questions about Womanhood Suffrage" 342.

⁴⁸ See Ramirez F., Soysal Y., and Shanahan S., "The Changing Logic of Political Citizenship: Cross-National Acquisition of Women's Suffrage Rights, 1890 to 1990", *American Sociological Review* 62, 5 (1997) 739.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

birth of the nation-state.⁵⁰ By the last quarter of the 20th century at the very latest, female suffrage had simply become part of the definition of what a modern democracy required, so that 'those who variously negotiated a passage to democratization, overthrew military rule, enlarged the suffrage to include previously excluded racial categories, brought one party rule to an end, or forced concession from the remaining monarchs almost never attempted an electoral system in which women did not have voting rights along with men'.⁵¹ For latecomers to women's full and equal suffrage rights, such as Cyprus, Greece, and Malta, female suffrage was indeed mostly the result of the implementation of more or less self-imposed international democratic standards representing modernization.⁵²

Because sometimes women won the right to vote during or immediately after World War I, it is also commonplace to grant the War itself a positive role in the achievement of female suffrage.⁵³ In some countries, women were indeed rewarded for their active contribution to the war efforts. Also, in times of war and postwar reconstruction, the close family household was often torn apart, with women being pushed into work and public services in a way that rendered more difficult to sustain the fiction of women's relegation to the private sphere. This said, focusing too strongly on the war as the main explanatory cause again undermines the work of generations of feminists. Besides, the correlation is far from clear-cut. After all, whereas some neutral countries, such as the Netherlands or Scandinavian countries, were among the first to grant women the franchise, some combatant countries, including France, Italy, and Belgium, only enfranchised women after World War II. In other countries, such as England, women's war contributions played a role in granting women the vote, but, more than anything, the war seems to have 'provided time and a supra-partisan environment for the political forces necessary to enfranchise women to mature'.⁵⁴ Yet in other countries, such as Germany and

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ See Walby S., "Is Citizenship Gendered?", *Sociology* 28, 2 (1994) 379–395.

⁵² In the case of Greece, the process was not only top-down but also partly exogenous, as it was the American Mission for Aid to Greece which forced liberals who feared women supporting either the conservative or the communists camp to grant universal suffrage to women in the wake of the country's three-year civil war. See Samiou, in this volume.

⁵³ See, for example, Garner L., *Stepping Stones to Women's Liberty: Feminist Ideas in the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1900–1988* (London: 1984) chapter 7; Turner B., *Citizenship and Capitalism* (London: 1986) 60.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 269.

Austria, 'defeat and revolution brought in socialist governments which enfranchised women'; this has been interpreted as an expression of the fact that a more direct causal role can be attributed to the war.⁵⁵

To the extent that women's participation in World War I might have been a triggering factor in some countries, a country's struggle for independence appears to have been a more general galvanizing force in the achievement of female suffrage. To start with, women were normally active in such struggles and this naturally favored the inclusion of their cause as part of the country's emancipation agenda. This of course was natural in the case of latecomers to independent statehood (such as Cyprus or Malta, which became independent states at a time when universally recognized democratic standards included women's equal rights, including political rights). But the reader of this book will realize that this was true more generally and over time, and not just after World War II, when such standards were most widely spread.⁵⁶ Arguably, women's undeniable active contribution to such causes had to be acknowledged, representing a direct challenge to the notion that women were not apt to engage in politics. Furthermore, in some cases, the affirmation of a nationalist agenda weakened, delayed, or contaminated the political polarization around the class axis, an axis which in so many ways had the potential to overshadow the gender axis. Finally, in several countries, the nationalist struggle had both divided the women's movement internally and discouraged political parties to prioritize suffragist claims, so that it was the overcoming of such internal division, when the national question was eventually resolved, which allowed women to build a common front and political parties to prioritize the cause of women's empowerment.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ One of the triggering factors of the early granting of suffrage to women in Finland was women's successful participation both in the nationalist struggle against Russian oppression and in the fight on the language question to defend the affirmation of Finnish instead of Swedish. See Korppi-Tommola, in this volume. Similarly, in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, female suffrage was in part related to the women's involvement in the nationalist struggle against the Russian empire. In Poland too, despite the three partitions in which the country was divided (Russia, Austria, and Prussia), women's groups managed to fight jointly for suffrage and to be actively involved in the nationalist struggle, which clearly contributed to the recognition of female suffrage with the regaining of independence in the reborn Polish state in 1918. See Fuszara, in this volume. Similarly, in Hungary, the century-long struggle for female suffrage was also embedded in the slow process towards Hungary's affirmation as an independent democratic state. See Kollonay-Lehoczky, in this volume.

⁵⁷ The nationalist struggle played a crucial role in the Irish experience as well. Both unionists and republicans thought that including female suffrage would delay their cause,

Other hypotheses have related the achievement of female suffrage to broader conceptions of (women's) citizenship. Notably, in Scandinavian countries there is a tight connection between the early achievement of civil equality and political citizenship rights.⁵⁸ It has been suggested that the fact that several of the countries that first granted women suffrage were mostly agrarian societies, such as Finland, Sweden, and Denmark, is related to the fact that here the lack of separation between the home, labour, and employment made the recognition of women as sources of production more evident, and therefore made the construct of the separate spheres less appealing.⁵⁹

At the same time, drawing from Macpherson, Pateman has argued that female suffrage was granted by the end of the war in so many countries because by then the meaning of the vote had undergone a radical change: franchise had been 'tamed' both through 'the development of the party system and of the welfare state blunting working-class pressure for reform'.⁶⁰ In other words, women gained suffrage precisely when suffrage had lost much of its citizenship importance and transformative power in the face of the increasing importance of social rights.⁶¹

In several countries covered in this book female suffrage was indeed granted when it mattered less altogether, when it could play a mainly symbolic role in the definition of citizenship and the state, such as under

and the nationalist question deeply divided the woman's movement. Following the 1919–1921 Anglo-Irish war, women's active involvement was recognized and women were given the right to vote on exactly the same basis as men in 1922 in the Free State of Ireland, something which had to wait in the UK until 1928. See Hill, in this volume. Also, in Austria, women gained suffrage upon the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy, in 1920, as recognized in the new Constitution of the Republic of Austria. The process was gradual and came as a result of several factors, including the overcoming of class- and ethnicity-based divisions around the country's nationalist struggles. See Bader-Zaar, in this volume. The dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy and the formation of the state of Czechoslovakia in 1918 were also triggering factors for universal suffrage, recognized to both men and women on equal terms in 1920. Before independence, the nationalist struggle was prioritized. See Musilova, in this volume.

⁵⁸ Lister et al, *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe* 31.

⁵⁹ See Fiig and Siim, in this volume.

⁶⁰ See Pateman, "Three Questions about Womanhood Suffrage" 342, citing Macpherson C.B., *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* (New York: 1977) 64–9.

⁶¹ See also I Markoff, "Margins, Centers, and Democracy: The Paradigmatic History of Women's Suffrage" in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 2003: vol. 29, no. 1: 104 arguing that women's voting rights were first achieved in lesser places on the world stage, in lesser places within large geocultural regions, and in lesser places within particular national states. She mentions the examples of New Zealand, Australia, and Finland, which were hardly unambiguously sovereign states at their moment of innovation, and, within the US, Wyoming and Utah, which had not even achieved statehood.

fascist and communist authoritarian regimes—that is, in regimes where elections were the façade of totalitarianism, if they took place at all. Granting suffrage to women under communism linked with the feminist socialist tradition that had criticized the private bourgeois family for enslaving women by reducing them to the status of male property. Communist regimes generally dismissed ‘the woman question’ as a bourgeois anachronism, as a question which had to be integrated within the wider communist agenda of social reform. They therefore often banned and/or took over women’s organizations. Community sharing of housework and child care, women’s joining the production line, and their participation in community affairs through the right to vote and stand for office were promised aligning orthodox Marxism and feminism.⁶² It is therefore not surprising that as part of their rhetoric of social equality, communist dictatorships preserved men’s and women’s suffrage rights where they existed and even tried to ensure women’s representation through the use of quotas. In some countries, such as Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovenia, the communist regime even introduced equal universal suffrage for the first time. Yet of course political rights were in such cases just an empty formality, and both the men and the women occupying political positions in such regimes were at most times puppets of the communist party.

Fascism saw the role of the women differently. Fascist regimes in Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain all rested on a very traditional view of women’s social role as wives and mothers, but they also tried to portray themselves as connected to the needs and distinct contributions of both men and women within the nation. In particular, women were involved in civil society through corporatist feminine organizations, where they were expected to contribute to upholding the moral standards. The family and the home, however, remained their natural places so much so that women’s employment was at times explicitly barred. The dictators in such regimes thus granted men and women some suffrage rights as part of their populist strategy, but in all cases this remained a moot gesture which in a dictatorship came at no political cost.

b) *Synergies and paradigms*

A careful reading of the chapters in this book allows us to identify some common sets of conditions signalling a typology of paths that facilitated

⁶² Zollinger Giele, *Two Paths to Women's Equality*, 11–12.

or delayed women's suffrage. Among the countries that granted women suffrage before World War II, and often before or right after World War I, we can distinguish two groups. First, there are those that followed a 'joint track'. Here women's suffrage was fought for not as a separate cause but rather as part of the struggle for universal suffrage, understood as including both men and women, in search of a modern notion of citizenship sometimes, but not always, linked to a campaign for independent statehood. This joint track was followed in some of the first countries to grant women full suffrage, including Finland (1906), Denmark (1915), Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (1918), Poland (1918), The Netherlands (1919), Luxembourg (1919) and Ireland (1922). Political parties were here the protagonists. Female suffrage was not pitted against male universal suffrage, which allowed political parties, including liberals and left-wing parties, to act out of principle on this front (instead of sacrificing female suffrage on expediency grounds), even though conservative and religious forces seized the opportunity and supported universal suffrage only in exchange for support in some of their causes (such as in the Netherlands, where the price paid was a pacification agreement ensuring public funding of religious education, or in Luxembourg, where universal suffrage came in exchange for support for the Monarchy). The absence of pressure to 'prioritize class over gender' sometimes facilitated the collaboration between women's groups and suffragists and political parties.⁶³

The second group of countries that granted women suffrage relatively early (and, in any event, before World War II) is made up of those where modernization and democratization brought about male universal suffrage first, quite often, though not always, as a result of left-wing and progressive forces prioritizing on strategic grounds class over gender struggles. Three factors were particularly conducive to a relatively early access to female suffrage. First was the existence of strong women's and suffragist movements heralding the cause of women's franchise (as in the UK). Second, and in relation, was the extent to which the groups mobilizing in favour of women's suffrage were able to overcome internal divisions over key issues, including whether to prioritize the worker's struggle over the women's cause (as in Germany),⁶⁴ what position to take regarding a

⁶³ As in Finland, where women's associations were in close collaboration with the Labour Party, within which women had a strong and autonomous organization. See Korppi-Tommola, in this volume.

⁶⁴ In Germany, suffrage was achieved when the divisions between bourgeois and socialist women subsided and socialists' ambivalence around female suffrage was overcome. See Sacksofsky, in this volume.

nationalist struggle (as in Ireland) or whether to participate in World War I (as in Germany and the UK). Finally, crucial was also the degree of support that the women's suffrage movement managed to gather from progressive political parties or key male political figures, a collaboration that played an essential role in many countries, including Sweden, Austria, and Czechoslovakia,⁶⁵ and/or from conservative sectors joining their cause on strategic grounds, as in Spain.⁶⁶

By contrast, pervasive lack of political support, even active resistance of opposing political forces; absence, weakness, or extreme division inside the women's movement; and late access to democracy and independent statehood are responsible for the belated achievement of female suffrage in the rest of the countries we examine in this volume. In particular, it appears that in some countries the granting of male universal suffrage was not sufficient to appease the concern about the purportedly conservative political inclinations of women, which justified the ongoing active resistance of progressive political parties. This was particularly the case when such parties identified other causes—such as the defense of a Republican as opposed to a Monarchical order or the limitation of the powers of the Church—that they thought would be threatened if women were enfranchised. Thus in France, the defence of secularism, heralded by the Radical Party, together with fear of the influence of the Church on female voters, was key in the delay of female suffrage, especially after the mobilization of Christian feminism.⁶⁷ Similarly, when the First Republic (1911–1926) was

⁶⁵ In Sweden, women suffragists joined forces with liberals and social democrats against the resistance of conservatives (see Wangnerud, in this volume). In Austria, success came as a result of low-profile women's suffragism, which began at the end of the 19th century and was fuelled by international suffragism, the overcoming of class- and ethnicity-based divisions around nationalist struggles, and the support of Social Democrats who supported women's suffrage only after men had gained universal suffrage, and against the resistance of Christian Socials and German nationalists (see Bader Zaar, in this volume). Also crucial in achieving the vote for women in Czechoslovakia was the allegiance between some key male politicians and women's groups (of mostly liberal inclination) and, after the turn of the century, specifically suffragist groups, which became particularly active after men gained suffrage. See Musilová and Kobová, in this volume.

⁶⁶ In Spain, female suffrage was achieved under the Second Republic (1931–1936), declared as a consequence of the monarchy failing to transform itself into a constitutional regime, and was linked to the increasing presence of women in republican and socialist political parties. Interestingly, when the Republicans came to power, they opposed female suffrage on strategic grounds, fearing women's conservatism. It was the joining of forces of the socialists and the conservatives and regionalists that allowed them to overcome the Republican opposition by a very small margin. See Aguado, in this volume.

⁶⁷ In France, suffrage was extended to women in April 1944, in the midst of the reorganization of public institutions during World War II, through an order that organized free

proclaimed in Portugal, when the Republican Party came to power, it stopped supporting female suffrage for fear of conservatism attached to women's Catholicism, even though women had articulated much of their mobilization through Republican opposition. As a consequence, female suffrage was delayed until 1975 when the dictatorial regime of the Estado Novo 1926–1974 was finally replaced by a modern democratic regime.⁶⁸

In Italy, lack of durable allegiances among women's associations, when their primary loyalty was to political parties, and a lack of commitment to the suffrage cause from the main political parties, especially the Socialist Party, accounts for women's late access to suffrage in 1946.⁶⁹ Similarly, pervasive lack of support from the main progressive parties and the absence of a suffragist or women's movement mainly explain Belgium's late granting of female suffrage in 1948.⁷⁰ An internal split within the women's movement, late suffragism, and a lack of commitment from mainstream political parties also explain why women in Greece only gained suffrage in 1952, and only with the aid of external pressure.⁷¹ Equally, scissions within the women's movement as well of lack of support from the main political parties explain the postponement of women's suffrage in Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovenia.⁷²

elections and granted political rights to women through provincial assemblies set up in Algiers. Several times before, female suffrage had been very close to being proclaimed, having become a priority in the women's movement after 1910. The two times it came closest, in 1919 and 1935, the Radical Party's opposition prevented it. See Chaperon, in this volume.

⁶⁸ See Amaral and Anjinho, in this volume.

⁶⁹ See Mancini, in this volume. This resistance became especially acute when the Union of Catholic Women formed in 1908 to neutralize the socialist advance.

⁷⁰ Fearing women's conservative/religious vote, in an effort to unite anti-Catholic forces, liberals had agreed to support the socialist claim for universal male suffrage if the latter would let go of women's suffrage. In the end, the example of neighbouring countries (above all the fact that Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands had recognized female suffrage after World War I, and France after World War II), women's contribution to the war, and the strategic action of the Catholic party created the conditions for the bill that the Catholic and Communists submitted to parliament in 1948 that would enfranchise women. See Meier, in this volume.

⁷¹ Indeed, discussions of suffrage had taken place above all after World War I and under the influence of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance. But political parties did not on the whole support female suffrage (with the exception of some individual members). Feminists turned to grassroots campaigning, but the formation of a suffragist association in Greece was very late (after 1920). Moderate feminists, socialist feminists, and suffragists joined efforts between 1928–1934, but the split over convenience of universal suffrage was contested by upper- and middle-class educated men and women and did not allow the formation of a common front. See Samiou, in this volume.

⁷² In Bulgaria, full and equal political rights were only achieved in 1945 as part of the bolshevization of the country, when a communist regime, the People's Republic

Finally, in other cases, the late enfranchisement of women was directly related to the fact that independent democratic statehood was itself late to come. Such delay ensured, that male and female universal suffrage would once again come together and without the need of specific political mobilization or support, reflecting a global consensus around democratic standards. In other words, the later a country consolidated its democracy, decolonized, and achieved independent statehood, the higher the chances that it would automatically assume universal male and female suffrage to be part of the consolidated universal criteria, and the lesser the need for either political parties or women's groups to fight for it locally.⁷³ In this book, both Malta and Cyprus are examples of late female suffrage linked to late decolonization.⁷⁴

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Women's Gradual Achievement of Citizenship: Unsettling T.H. Marshall

The essays in this volume support the views of scholars who have identified serious problems with the longstanding conventions around the modern notion of citizenship, as a container of rights. The theoretical exclusion of women from political life since the 17th century, on the basis that women naturally lacked the liberty and independence needed for

of Bulgaria, was established in 1944. Since the turn of the century, some mostly bourgeois women's associations had been very active, but they had prioritized education and had enormous difficulty finding a common front with the socialists. Also, political parties had remained for the most part fundamentally uncommitted: socialists had remained ambivalent; liberals had only expressed support for gradual suffrage. Only communists were clearly supportive of the cause. See Dasjkalova, in this volume. Similar factors explain the late granting of suffrage to women in Romania and Slovenia, both of which also saw suffrage come with the establishment of a communist regime.

⁷³ It has been noted that only three countries that became independent in the 20th century (Austria, Ireland, and Libya) extended suffrage to men prior to women. The largest worldwide wave of countries extending the franchise to women occurred after 1930, in the wake of decolonization. After 1945, no newly independent country extended suffrage rights to men but not to women. See Ramirez et al, "The Changing Logic" 737–738.

⁷⁴ Notice, however, that there is a difference between Malta and Cyprus. In Malta, universal suffrage for both men and women was achieved in 1947, before the country's full independence, at a time when the colonial powers were being questioned, and by a national assembly entrusted with the drafting of a new constitution. At that time, there was a suffragist movement in Malta, with links to the international community (see Farrugia, in this volume). In contrast, in Cyprus, where political parties were formed very late, no autochthonous women's movement or suffragist movement existed, and the lack of a communication network prevented such movements from being linked to the worldwide suffragist movement; women and men were granted universal suffrage only upon independence from British colonial rule in 1960 and due to the international standards of the time. See Agapiou-Josephides, in this volume.

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public life, rendered womanhood a disqualification for equal citizenship. By the mid-19th century, women's distinct position had become institutionalized through the denial of civil standing to wives and the exclusion of women from the public sphere.⁷⁵ The sexual contract had made women's work in the fields of human reproduction, care and management of dependency within the family indispensable for the *mise-en-scène* of men's independence in the public sphere. The nuclear family had been constructed as the locus where gender relations are defined and supported, and women had been acknowledged to play a role as members of the community. To the extent that this ensured their status as citizens, it implied citizenship of a different kind from men. Instead of resting on the notion of independence, women's citizenship revolved around dependency. As such, it constituted the flip-side of men's citizenship, both its opposite and its enabling instrument.

This is clear in the connection of the different strands of citizenship, as articulated by T.H. Marshall.⁷⁶ In his seminal article 'Citizenship and Social Class', Marshall divided citizenship into three parts, 'dictated by history even more clearly than by logic'⁷⁷—civil, political, and social citizenship.

The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom—liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice.... By the political element I mean the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body....By the social element I mean the right ... to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in society.⁷⁸

The three strands of citizenship were articulated on the basis, respectively, of civil, political, and social rights, recognised in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, respectively. Civil rights articulated the independence individuals required to interact in the private sphere; as such, their recognition preceded rights of political participation, as only independent individuals could act as independent citizens in the public sphere. Social rights then came to guarantee the conditions that enable individuals' civil independence, hence their political participation.

⁷⁵ Pateman, "Three Questions about Womanhood Suffrage" 331–348.

⁷⁶ Marshall T.H., "Citizenship and Social Class" (1949), in Marshall T.H., *Sociology at the Crossroad and Other Essays* (London: 1963) 67–127.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 73.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 74.

Marshall's analysis has been criticised on several accounts. Feminists, in particular, have criticized his failure to reflect how gender (and not only class) divisions structure denial of and access to citizenship rights.⁷⁹ The chapters in this book support this criticism. Women's access to citizenship in the countries that make up the European Union does not fit within the model developed by Marshall. Rather, women's access to citizenship is the inverted image of that model.⁸⁰

Women's Civil Disenfranchisement

All chapters in the book show that the rights that articulate civil citizenship—that is, the rights necessary for individual freedom, understood as self-possession, legal personality, and market freedoms—were the last to be recognized to women. With the main exception of the Nordic countries, women gained suffrage rights before qualifying as independent individuals, through the recognition of equal rights with men in the private sphere, including: the capacity of married women to own property and administer their personal belongings or to live anywhere other than where their husbands insisted; the capacity of the spouses to administer their common belongings collectively; the recognition of both spouses as equal partners in the education of their children; and the overcoming of marital-status related employment discrimination against women, such as women's inability to sign an employment contract without their husband's consent, or the existence of contractual clauses contemplating the dismissal of married or pregnant women. Indeed, until well into the 20th century, European countries articulated women's relations to other individuals through their subordination to men. The decisive steps towards truly equal marriage rights were taken after 1945 and as a rule not before

⁷⁹ Mann, M., "Ruling Class Strategies and Citizenship", *Sociology* 21 (1987) 339–54, has objected to Marshall's conception for its evolutionism and Anglocentrism, denouncing his underestimation of the significance of ethnicity and 'race'. Similarly, Turner, B., "Outline of a Theory of Citizenship", *Sociology* 24, 2 (1990) 189–217, has also been critical of Marshall's ethnocentrism and his neglect of 'private/public' structuring, which, according to him, accounts for variations in conceptions of democracy and citizenship. However, both have been subject to feminist criticism. Sylvia Walby has been critical of Mann's ignoring other social divisions, such as gender, and of Turner's elision between individual and family via the concept of private and the ensuing erasure of women and the household, understood not as a place of personal leisure and enhancement, protected from the totalitarian gaze of the state, but as the site of domestic labour by women. Walby, "Is Citizenship Gendered?" 382 and 384.

⁸⁰ Rodríguez Ruiz, B., "Hacia un Estado post-patriarcal. Feminismo y ciudadanía", *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, n° 149, (2010): 87–122.

the 1960s and 1970s, marriage and family law being regarded as the paradigmatic domains of traditions.⁸¹ Until then, women were excluded from the conditions of civil citizenship, or, if we want, women's civil citizenship was constructed as indirect and subordinated—a modern oxymoron.⁸² Indeed, the historical significance of married women's exclusion from rights and duties of civil law cannot be underestimated given that, until the extension of the franchise beyond the propertied classes, it was civil rather than political rights that conferred the status of citizen.⁸³

This is true of the French, Germanic, and English common law traditions, the only significant exception being, as said, that of the Nordic countries. The French Civil Code, *Code Napoleon*, generally praised as the first realization of liberal principles in private law, fully entailed the preservation of 'the traits of medieval patriarchy the longest and in its purest form'.⁸⁴ The leading rule, that 'The man owes his wife protection; the wife owes the husband obedience' (art. 213Cc), meant that although a wife could formally own property, she was under the legal guardianship of her husband. Forever a minor according to the code, she had to request her husband's authorization for a number of acts, including being a party to legal proceedings, signing contracts, setting herself up in a profession, doing financial transactions, and joining a political party or a trade union. This code had a great impact on all countries subjected to French rule by the Napoleonic wars and left its mark even after those countries or regions gained independence. This was true for Italy, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and some parts of the German states. In English common law, the so-called coverture remained the dominant paradigm. Epitomized by William Blackstone's dictum in his commentary on English common law ('In law husband and wife are one person, and the husband is that person'),⁸⁵ it meant that a married woman could not own property or make contracts without her husband's consent. Free access to both

⁸¹ Lister et al, *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe* 31.

⁸² Young I.M., "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State", in Friedman, *Women and Citizenship* 15–34, at 27.

⁸³ Vogel U., "Under Permanent Guardianship: Women's Condition Under Modern Civil Law", in Jones K.B. and Jónasdóttir A.G. (eds.), *The Political Interests of Gender* (London: 1988).

⁸⁴ Lister et al, *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe* 32, citing Weber M., *Ehefrau und Mutter in der Rechtsentwicklung* (Tübingen: 1907).

⁸⁵ Lister et al, *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe* 32, citing Vogel U., "Fiction of Community: Property Relations in Marriage in European and American Legal Systems of the Nineteenth Century", in Steinmetz W. (ed.), *Private Law and Social Inequality in the Industrial Age* (Oxford: 2000) 91–122.

education and employment but also equal custodial rights over the children were denied to her. Enforced in 1900, with its family and marriage regulation in force until 1953 and 1957 respectively, the German Civil Code reaffirmed the husband's right to decide in 'all matters affecting communal life of the couple' and also re-established paternal authority. Moreover, the husband was in principle granted the exclusive right to manage property and to intervene in his wife's labour contracts.

Even in communist dictatorships, women's official equality with men was translated into equal political rights (and into social rights and benefits) before full civil equality with men was actually spelled out. With regards to this, the Scandinavian development of women's civil status is most interesting, not only because of the different timing but also because of the different speed of the transition from agrarian to modern society, and, in particular, for the way it skipped the bourgeois phase.⁸⁶ Although only after the middle of the 19th century was gender-based guardianship for all women formally abolished, married women's capacity to act was connected to a rather early granting of property rights to all women (1874 in Sweden, 1899 in Denmark, and 1888 in Norway). Marriage legislation reform providing for equal property rights, divorce liberalization, and complete abolition of male authority as well as equal custody of the children also took place several decades sooner than in most other European countries (Sweden 1920, Denmark 1925, Norway 1927, and Finland 1929).⁸⁷ It is therefore interesting to observe that Scandinavian women were among the first to get the right to vote. Indeed, it has been argued that the 'tight connection between achieving political and civil citizenship rights provided Scandinavian women with a better starting position for a citizenship practice that paved the way also for social citizenship'.⁸⁸

Women's Social Disenfranchisement

The different timing of the achievement of women's and men's citizenship rights also applies to social rights. In contrast to the sequence T.H. Marshall developed using the example of the British male citizen, for women an opposite order applied: they were granted social rights before gaining suffrage rights, and of course before qualifying as independent

⁸⁶ Lister et al, *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe* 34.

⁸⁷ For a historical analysis of the Nordic welfare state and its connection to the family model, see also Melby K., Pylkkänen A., Rosenbeck B., and Carlson-Wetterberg C. (eds.), *The Nordic Model of Marriage and the Welfare State* (Copenhagen: 2000) 27.

⁸⁸ Lister et al, *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe* 35.

individuals. In the UK, women were first covered by some restrictive and disciplinary social rights under Poor Laws and then gained some social rights as mothers in the early 20th century.⁸⁹ A similar sequence can be observed in most countries, again with the Nordic exception,⁹⁰ and it explains why these social rights did not aim to enable women to act as independent individuals in the private sphere, hence as independent citizens. Civil laws still ensured women's civil subordination to men. In fact, social rights that could have worked towards women's independence, such as access to education and to the liberal professions, were not among the first to come to women.

Aware of the importance of education for both civil and political citizenship,⁹¹ bridging the educational gap between women and men was a primary objective of feminist activists⁹² and women's organizations in many countries, including the Danish Women's Society, the Belgian League for Women's Rights, the Finnish Women's Association, the Latvian *Jaunā Strāva*, the General German Women's Association, the Hungarian National Association of Female Clerical Workers, the Polish *Enthusiasts*, the Slovak *Živena* (Donatrix of Life), the Czech Women's Clubs, and the Bulgarian Women's Union. Their efforts in this regard were sometimes countered by a conservative approach to women's education geared towards forming good mothers and wives.

With notable exceptions, such as Bulgaria, which equalized high school education for girls and boys in 1897 and allowed women into university in 1901, women were first and foremost granted social rights that aimed, not to educate them, but to improve their living and working conditions as women and as mothers. In a liberal context, these rights

⁸⁹ Ibid, 36.

⁹⁰ In many Nordic countries, such as Denmark, the welfare state developed in strong connection with family reform legislation disestablishing the breadwinner model and framing care of children as a collective responsibility.

⁹¹ The potential of education as a key to other sources of power and opportunities has been defined as revolutionary (Nussbaum M., "Women's Education. A Global Challenge", in Friedman, *Women and Citizenship* 188–213, at 200). Indeed, education plays a central role in the construction of modern citizenship. Speaking about it, T.H. Marshall wrote that 'the duty to improve and civilize oneself is therefore a social duty, and not merely a personal one' (Marshall, "Citizenship and Social Class" 84). At the same time, the construction of men's and women's different citizenship relies heavily on education. This is clear in the space Jean-Jacques Rousseau dedicated to the subject in his book *Emile, or On Education* (New York: 1979).

⁹² Noteworthy were Teréz Brunszvik, Blanka Teleki, and Hermin Beniczky Pálné Veres in Hungary; Anna Karima in Bulgaria; Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė in Lithuania; and Sappho Leontias, Polyxeni Loizias, and Persophone Papadopoulou in Cyprus.

were double-edged and had an impact on the establishment of a gender order in the emerging welfare state, reconfirming a gender-specific division of labour reflected in a 'two channel welfare state'⁹³ or the patriarchal welfare state.⁹⁴

Indeed, as Orloff recalls, the programmes of social provision established across the West in what can be called the 'formative period of the welfare state'—from approximately the 1880s to the onset of World War I—were designed to reflect the breadwinner and the family wage system, which had women as primary caretakers, domestic workers, and, at best, secondary wage earners.⁹⁵ So, just as the 'independent male householder' had been the 'ideal-typical citizen' in classical liberal and democratic theory, the 'male-family provider, working-class hero' served as the 'ideal typical citizen' in the literature on social rights.⁹⁶ This then often translated into a 'two-tier' system (social insurance/social assistance),⁹⁷ the end result of which was to incorporate women in the welfare state indirectly, primarily on the basis of their husband's contribution rather than on their own contribution or as independent right bearers.⁹⁸

Thus women's social rights both protected women and singled them out as unable to protect themselves. They improved women's social conditions while underlying their natural vulnerability and made women the recipients of public help and the likely objects of higher levels of public control. In the public as in the private sphere, women were thus subjected

⁹³ Nelson B., "The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State: Workmen's Compensation and Mother's Aid", in Gordon L. (ed.), *Women, the State and Welfare* (Madison, WI-London: 1990). The split that accounts for such a model is that between labour-market-related social-security programs targeting male recipients and family-based means-tested social-assistance schemes with primarily female recipients. Lister et al, *Gendering Citizenship in Western Europe* 37.

⁹⁴ See Orloff A.S., "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States", *American Sociological Review* 58 (1993) 303–328; Wilson E., *Women and the Welfare State* (London: 1977); Abramovitz M., *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present* (Boston: 1988).

⁹⁵ See Orloff, "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship" 323.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 308, exemplifying by citing Korpi W., "Power, Politics, and State Autonomy in the Development of Social Citizenship", *American Sociological Review* 54 (1989) 309–28; and Esping-Andersen G., *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton, NJ: 1990); and Marshall T.H., *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: 1950).

⁹⁷ Whereas social assistance programmes were designed to serve a predominantly female clientele (such as welfare or aid to family with dependent children, which are politically less legitimate, less well funded, and more oriented towards monitoring clients' behavior and income), contributory social insurance targeted a predominantly male clientele (such as unemployment and retirement benefits). Orloff, "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship" 315.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

to what has been called the 'care/control paradigm',⁹⁹ which resulted 'in the infantilization of women in citizenship terms'.¹⁰⁰ It resulted, that is, in the conceptualization of women as recipients of protection more than as empowered citizens, or as 'passive' citizens—another modern oxymoron. In view of this, it is hardly surprising that in so many countries women's social citizenship was seen as epitomizing women's dependence and subsequently used as an argument to resist female suffrage, independence having always been the central criterion associated with citizenship and men. This is not to say that the argument could not be turned on its head, and, as the stories in this book show, indeed it sometimes was.

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From the Franchise to Parity Democracy: A Change of Paradigm?

As the chapters in this book show, in no single country did access to suffrage translate into women gaining equal political representation with men. Still today, women's representation in the lower house of their national parliament is higher than 40% only in three of the countries in the European Union: Sweden (45%), Finland (41%), and the Netherlands (41%). In several countries (including Cyprus, Hungary, Ireland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Greece, Romania, and Malta), women's representation remains close to or below 15%. Countries in which women's representation is around 20% include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the UK, whereas in Austria, Germany, and Portugal the representation is around 30%. Closer to 40% representation comes only in Belgium, Denmark, and Spain.

Many of the countries with a higher number of women representatives today are among those where women gained suffrage at an earlier stage, including Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Denmark. This correlation does not always stand, however. While Belgium only recognised female suffrage after World War II, it today has a high number of female representatives; in Luxembourg and the U.K, on the other hand, women representatives stand at around 20%, despite both being among the pioneers in enfranchising women. Among the many variables that explain such variations are just to mention a few, the electoral system (proportional systems are known to favour the representation of women over

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⁹⁹ Joseph S., "The Kin Contract and Citizenship in the Middle-East", in Friedman, *Women and Citizenship* 149–169, at 159.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

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majority-based systems), the size of electoral districts (larger districts are known to be more favourable to women's representation), and whether or not gender quotas have been adopted, either internally by all or some political parties or legislatively imposed.

A striking and consistent pattern is that in none of the countries examined in this volume have women achieved parity (meaning a representation that comes close to 50%). In all of them, moreover, it took women several decades after they gained suffrage for women to become political representatives in numbers that could be described as more than token or symbolic. Thus, it took approximately 60 years after women's enfranchisement for Denmark and Sweden to cross the 20% threshold of women in parliamentary seats, and 70 years to reach the 30% mark.¹⁰¹ In Finland, the country that came first in our sample, granting women suffrage as early as in 1906, until the 1970s women's representation remained under 22%, increasing in the period from 1970–1990 to 31%, and surpassing the 30% threshold only in 2007 to reach 41% today. In Germany, where women gained suffrage in 1918, it took women almost 70 years to exceed a representation of 10%, reaching today a 32.9% mark. And in Luxembourg, where women also gained suffrage around the same time (in 1919), 90 years later their representation remains around 20%.

Thus although universal suffrage was envisaged as the means to transit to a democratic state encompassing both men and women, female suffrage failed to question the sexual contract as a foundational myth of the state and this remained, as a result, markedly masculine.¹⁰² The effects of women's political rights were mitigated by women's belated civil citizenship and the gender bias of women's social citizenship,¹⁰³ all of which supported by the cultural and economic reinforcement of the nuclear family and breadwinner model in the post-World War II years.¹⁰⁴ This reinforced the public realm as the territory of men and the private sphere as the domain of women, and consecrated the endemic majority participation of men in public affairs, employment, and politics, in a public arena built upon the foundations of the ideal of male independence.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ See Dahlerup D. (ed.), *Women, Quotas and Politics* (London and New York: 2006).

¹⁰² See Rodriguez-Ruiz B. and Rubio-Marin R., "The Gender of Representation: On Democracy, Equality and Parity", *ICON* 6, 2 (2008) 287–316, at 306.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 309.

¹⁰⁴ For a critique of this family model, see Fraser N., "After the Family Wage", in her *Justice Interrupts: Critical Reflections on the Post-Socialist Condition* (New York: 1996) 41 et seq.

¹⁰⁵ Rodriguez-Ruiz and Rubio-Marin, "The Gender of Representation" 309.

In fact, one of the most fascinating stories told in this book is how the transition from former communist regimes to democratic liberalism was accompanied by an initial phase of 'allergy to feminism', a rejection of a gender-neutral, homogenizing conception of equality and citizenship and the assertion of the role of the 'occupational housewife', which did not exist during communism.¹⁰⁶ Transition to modern democracy was interpreted as validating the separate spheres tradition and arrived hand in hand with a decrease in the proportion of women in the public arena in many countries of the former Soviet-bloc, including Hungary, Estonia, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania. Only now, in connection to EU accession and with the consequent introduction of a European gender antidiscrimination framework and equal opportunities policies, is the notion of gender equality experiencing a re-legitimization.

Of course, much has changed since women first achieved suffrage and since the post-World War II years celebrating 'the angel in the house' model. In most European countries today, many more women take an active role in politics and the labour market than in the immediate aftermath of enfranchisement. In every country, legislative reform has been undertaken to gradually ensure women's equal citizenship. Yet in explaining the gender gap in political representation and, more generally, the ways in which equal franchise has not delivered equal citizenship, the authors in this volume concur in referring to facts such as the unequal distribution of domestic work and unpaid care labour; the gender pay gap; women's segregation and precariousness in the employment market (where they have a greater share of the less-qualified and often part-time positions); lack of child-care and insufficient parental leave; gender bias in social security schemes still entrenching the breadwinner model; and the lack of leadership positions in the private sector, media, and academia, including in business managerial positions. All of these are signs of the legacy of a sexual contract which has not yet been sufficiently dismantled, a legacy that reveals that the public sphere continues to be male dominated and that, to the extent that women have entered the public domain, this has not been accompanied by a parallel shift of men to the private one.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Biin and Albi, in this volume.

¹⁰⁷ These insights are corroborated by longstanding sociological studies on women's underrepresentation in politics that, drawing a distinction between supply-related factors (referring to the fact that few women seem to opt for politics) and demand-related factors (by which male-imposed structures, rules, and practices in politics alienate and

In view of all this, we can only celebrate that at least since the mid-1980s there has been an active agenda of European dimension to broaden the idea of equality between men and women, to finish the task of ensuring women's full citizenship by removing the remnants of the sexual contract. Whereas European policies were initially limited to non-discrimination and equal opportunities in the employment domain, there has been a gradual expansion of what equality between men and women means and gender equality has started to be regarded as a democratic necessity that encompasses women's empowerment in both the public and private –domestic- domains.¹⁰⁸ The Council Recommendation on the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making, adopted following the council's resolution of March 1996, started to epitomize a vision which has since only gained more of a foothold.¹⁰⁹

This evolution at the level of the European Union has echoed a concern with the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making, expressed since the mid-1980s by the Council of Europe. The First European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men held in Strasbourg in 1986 was devoted to 'Equality between women and men in political life-policy and strategies to achieve equality in decision-making', and in 1988 the Committee of Ministers adopted a 'Declaration on equality between women and men', stating that gender equality was an integral part of human rights and a prerequisite for genuine democracy. This was followed up, in 1989, by a seminar on 'The democratic principle of equal representation', where the concept of parity was first discussed. Almost a decade later, the 'Declaration on Equality between women and men as a fundamental criterion of

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exclude women), point to the fact that both types of factors are clearly connected to assigning the management of care and dependency predominantly to women. See Mackay F., *Love and Politics: Women Politicians and the Ethics of Care* (London: 2001) 83 at 57–61. Thus, it has been argued that without a more equitable sharing of household chores, it will be very difficult to achieve equally effective rights for women to take part in public affairs. See also Okin S.M., *Justice, Gender and the Family* (New York: 1984) 4.

¹⁰⁸ See Hubert A., "From Equal Pay to Parity Democracy: The Rocky Ride of Women's Policy in the European Union", in Klausen and Maier, *Has Liberalism Failed Women?* 148.

¹⁰⁹ Most recently, in order to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the European Commission issued a Women's Charter in March of 2010. See COM (2010) 78 final, Communication from the Commission (Brussels, 5.3.2010). In it, the Commission reaffirms its commitment to pursue a more fair representation of women and men in positions of power in public life and the economy, based on its belief that gender balance in decision-making, in political and economic life, and in the public and private sectors will help Europe shape more effective policies, develop a gender-aware knowledge-based society, and create a stronger and more prosperous democracy.

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democracy' was adopted during the 4th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men in Istanbul in 1997, becoming a document of reference for all those working to increase the participation of women in decision-making. The Declaration argued that 'the marginalisation of women in public life and democracy was a structural factor [...] linked to the unequal distribution of economic and political power between women and men and to attitudinal stereotypes regarding the social roles of women and men', preventing both from realizing their potential. In view of this, equality required a 'dynamic challenge to the established power structures and to stereotyped sex roles so as to achieve structural change' and a 'new social order'. Part of this change required 'greater participation by men in the sphere of private life, in caring responsibilities' and a 'more equal sharing of responsibilities for decision-making in political and professional life with women', something which would arguably 'improve the quality of life for all'.

At a national level, there have also been signs of progress. Over the last two decades, the idea of relying on some form of quota to ensure women's access to political office has increasingly been accepted in several European countries. In France, Belgium, Slovenia, Spain, and Portugal, the law imposes some form of gender quota in electing representatives for political office.¹¹⁰ In many other countries, such as Norway, Sweden, Germany, Poland, and the United Kingdom, some of the political parties have adopted gender quotas for electoral candidates voluntarily. It is of course the use of legislatively imposed quotas challenging notions of formal equality, the autonomy of political parties, and dominant conceptions of representative democracy that has been most controversial. Not surprisingly, as the chapters in this volume describe, in several European countries, including France, Italy, Portugal, and Slovenia, gender quota legislation has been accompanied by constitutional amendments sanctioning equal rights for men and women as well as the power of public authorities to take active measures to guarantee such equality, including in the political domain.

More recently, there has also been a growing awareness that parity democracy can only be affirmed if women are incorporated not only into politics but also into all the other spheres of public and private power,

¹¹⁰ See European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C, "Electoral Gender Quota Systems and Their Implementation in Europe" (2008) 11.

something which must therefore include the world of the corporate elite. Many European countries, such as Finland, Sweden, Poland, the Netherlands and Denmark, are approaching the problem of women's underrepresentation in corporate boards of public limited companies through soft measures, including corporate governance codes and charters that companies can sign voluntarily. Increasingly, gender quotas set by legislation are being considered as well. In 2003, Norway became the first country in the world to pass a law requiring all public companies to achieve gender balance (at least 40% of each sex)¹¹¹ on corporate boards, a measure it extended in 2006 to public limited companies. In Spain, in 2007, a law introducing gender parity for electoral office also enshrined the goal of gender parity on corporate boards as a goal to be achieved by 2015. In Iceland, legislation adopted in 2010 applicable to publicly owned and publicly limited companies with more than 50 employees aims to ensure that each sex will make up at least 40% of boards by 2013. Even more recently, in 2011 similar quota legislation for state and public companies has also been approved in France, Belgium, and Italy.¹¹²

This book thus comes at a time when the unequal distribution of power between women and men (both private and public) has become a key issue in European democracies, resulting in new approaches to advance gender equity and to reconceptualise citizenship rights. Reflecting on the forces that led to female suffrage seems now important in order to understand what was at stake, not only in women's claims for political equality, but also in the recognition of equal universal suffrage and the construction of citizenship at a European level. Doing so seems doubly important at a time when the construction of a European citizenship stands as an open political project. This project inevitably feeds on existing notions of citizenship, but at the same time has an enormous potential to redefine these very notions. Exploring the role that female suffrage has played in the construction of female citizenship, and of the place female suffrage and citizenship occupy in working notions of citizenship, seems important at this junction. This book aims to shed light on what the strengths and deficiencies of these notions are in the face of the construction of a notion of citizenship of European dimensions.

¹¹¹ Among the countries setting gender quotas for state-owned companies are also Denmark, Finland, and Iceland since early 2000.

¹¹² For a summary, see Publications Office of the European Union, "Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men in 2010. The Gender Balance in Business Leadership" (Luxembourg: 2011).

Table – Introduction of male and women universal equal suffrage in parliamentary elections within the European Union¹¹³

| Countries | Universal Male Suffrage | Equal Universal Suffrage for Men and Women |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Finland | 1906 | 1906 |
| Denmark | 1915 | 1915 |
| Lithuania | 1918 | 1918 |
| Latvia | 1918 | 1918 |
| Estonia | 1918 | 1918 |
| Germany | 1871 (federal elections) | 1918 |
| Poland | 1918 | 1918 |
| Luxembourg | 1918 | 1918 |
| The Netherlands | 1917 | 1919 |
| Austria | 1907 (federal elections) | 1918 |
| Czech Republic | 1907 (federal elections) | 1920 |
| Slovakia | 1920 | 1920 |
| Sweden | 1909 | 1919 |
| Ireland | 1918 | 1922 |
| United Kingdom | 1918 | 1928 |
| Spain | 1868 | 1931 |
| France | 1848 | 1944 |
| Bulgaria | 1879 | 1945 |
| Slovenia | 1907 (federal elections) | 1945 |
| Romania | 1918 | 1946 |
| Italy | 1919 | 1946 |
| Malta | 1947 | 1947 |
| Belgium | 1919 | 1948 |
| Hungary | 1945 | 1945 |
| Greece | 1864 | 1952 |
| Cyprus | 1960 | 1960 |
| Portugal | 1974 | 1974 |

¹¹³ This table refers to the first time universal equal suffrage was legally granted to men and to women in parliamentary elections, whether or not it was initially granted as a constitutional right.

A LONG TRADITION OF EQUALITY: WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN FINLAND

Aura Korppi-Tommola

Special Circumstances in the Shadow of Imperial Russia

Finnish women gained suffrage and the right to stand for elections very early, in 1906. Finland had been an autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire since 1809, and was governed according to its old Swedish constitution.¹ Dating from the late 18th century, this was an enlightened constitution, which, although it granted relatively strong powers to the crown, also gave legislative power to the Diet of four estates. About 15 per cent of the population was represented in the estate of the Nobility, or had the right to vote, in the Diet elections, for candidates of other estates. These other estates, or houses of the diet, were the Burgess, representing tax-paying burghers in the towns; the Clergy, representing the Lutheran Church and the Helsinki University; and the Peasants, representing rural landowners. Thus, the growing population in cities had no way of influencing politics. The country was very agrarian indeed, with about 90 per cent of the population living in the countryside. This state of affairs lasted until 1906, when the estate-based system of representation was abolished and universal suffrage was granted.

The language of administration and the upper classes in Finland was Swedish, but the majority of Finns spoke Finnish. The most important political question during the late 19th century, then, was about the use of the Finnish language; the first political parties were founded around the language question in the 1870s. The Swedish party was liberal on many issues, while the Finnish party soon split between conservative 'Old Finns' and more liberal 'Young Finns'.² In the diet, the language question eclipsed

¹ Finland was a part of the Swedish kingdom from about 1150 until 1809, and its society and political system were thus very similar to the Swedish ones.

² The Swedish Party dominated the estates of the Nobility and the Burgess; the Old Finns dominated the estate of the Peasants. Both of those parties were against women's liberation, whereas the Young Finns wanted to develop and modernize society and endorsed women's emancipation. Later, during the Russification period (1899–1905), the Young Finns were for open active opposition against the Russian rulers, while the Old Finns led a passive opposition, avoiding open conflict.

other issues to the extent that many members of the estates, who in general were against women's liberation, voted for emancipation legislation if it happened to favor their own language group. For instance, Swedish-party members voted for schools for girls in Swedish-speaking areas and opposed them in Finnish-speaking towns.³ The Social Democratic Party was founded at the turn of the century with a very radical and revolutionary program, but it had no influence within the estates.⁴

Around the end of the 19th century, the Russian government started to standardize legislation in different parts of its empire in order to centralize administration, opening the era known as the 'Russian oppression' (1899–1905). Finns considered this to be an attack on their status as an autonomous grand duchy, a status that they started to fight for by founding an underground movement. In this fight, gender lines were blurred. Women and men worked together giving shelter for men hiding from the authorities, and smuggling and distributing illegal newspapers. Women behaved in a way that previously would not have been considered decent for ladies.⁵ The trade-union movement, which was fighting for better working conditions and universal suffrage, the temperance movement, and women's movements, which were working at the time on a wide range of economic, political, and educational freedoms for women, all gave cover to the fight against Russian oppression.

The era of oppression came to an end in 1905, when the Russian emperor faced trouble after losing the war with Japan, and workers, including Finnish workers, went on strike. Both the women's and the labor movements orchestrated mass demonstrations at this time. Finally, in 1906, these movements succeeded in gaining universal suffrage for men and women. The emperor had to call the Russian parliament, the Duma, into session, but the socialist revolution there was postponed for over a decade. However, civic rights were never on very solid ground for Finns under Czarist Russian rule, which only came to an end in December 1917 when Finland declared independence. The era of independence began with a bloody civil war between socialists and the winning 'white' bourgeois forces in the spring of 1918.

³ Korppi-Tommola A., "Fighting Together for Freedom. Nationalism, Socialism, Feminism, and Women's Suffrage in Finland 1906", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 15, 3 (1990) 184.

⁴ Workers' associations in different parts of the country united their forces, founding the Social-Democratic Party, which demanded wide social reforms including universal suffrage in local and national elections.

⁵ Kiiski V., Tekla Hultin. Poliitikko. Summary "Tekla Hultin, A Politician", *Studia Jyväskyläensia* 15 (1978) 132–152.

Female Suffrage in 1906

Legislation expanding women's liberties and the possibilities for women to earn a living appeared before the 1880s, that is, before there was any sign of an organized movement or real freedom of association, as the crown forbade founding associations that were neither religious nor aimed at developing trade and industry. A small proportion of Finnish tax-paying unmarried women and widows gained the right to vote in local elections—in 1869 in rural municipalities and in 1873 in towns. This was considered a natural consequence of women's right to act independently in law and to sign contracts and of freedom of trade and industry. The discussion of suffrage in national elections started with the founding of the Women's Association in 1884.⁶

The Women's Association's program was broadly similar to the resolutions of the Seneca Falls Convention in the U.S.,⁷ with some elements derived from French intellectual writings about human rights. These women demanded political rights and economic independence, as well as access to all levels of education and to all professions and occupations. Suffrage was mentioned in the first resolution of the Women's Association in 1884, though eligibility was not. It was understood that women would have the right to vote upon the same conditions as men, so that only upper-class women would actually have the vote.

When Finnish members of the diet split into two language groups in the 1880s, the Women's Association faced a split within its ranks, as everything in Finnish politics was linked to the language issue. Conservative upper-class ladies stayed in the Women's Association, which became loosely linked to the Old Finn's party, which focused on facilitating the use of the Finnish language. A group of more liberal Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking women founded their own association, and the Women's Rights Movement Union came into being. The Union was linked ideologically and through family ties to the Young Finn's party and the Swedish-language party. More radical than the Women's Association, the Union supported the growing labor movement and cooperated with labor women until 1903, even though they were upper-middle-class and

⁶ The Women's Association was founded by family members of the leading politicians of the mentioned parties and was chaired first by Elisabeth Löfgren-Lounasmaa, wife to a Young Finnish journalist.

⁷ The first demands of women's liberation were announced in Seneca Falls, USA, in 1840, when a group of American women published a resolution demanding for women the same rights and liberties that the Declaration of Independence granted male citizens.

upper-class ladies as well. These liberal women emphasized everyone's right to seek happiness, to education, and to develop one's talents. At first, the Union took the same line as the Women's Association on the franchise question, demanding limited female suffrage in the elections for the members of the estates. However, in the fall of 1905, the Union changed its position and started to favor universal suffrage. Soon afterwards, the Women's Association also started to support female suffrage without restrictions.

The second chair of the Women's Association, Aleksandra Gripenberg (1889–1906 and 1909–1913),⁸ travelled in 1887 to London and from there to the U.S., where she attended the founding meeting of the International Council of Women (ICW) in Washington in 1888. After that she dedicated her life to women's emancipation and suffrage. She attended most of the ICW's meetings and worked as its treasurer from 1893 to 1904. She travelled in many European countries, studying the legal and social status of women, and helped to found women's associations in Eastern Europe and Russia. She and the chair of the ICW, Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, became friends who were united by the same eagerness for women's liberation, a wealthy upper-class background, and age. The international contacts that Gripenberg made were crucial for two reasons. First, the ideology of women's emancipation and suffrage was learned from reading and travelling. Second, international contacts strengthened the demands of Finnish women at home.

The labor women's movement began from a different background than the traditional middle- and upper-class women did. In the beginning, they wanted better working conditions rather than other civic liberties. Sewers and house servants founded trade unions in 1890 and 1892. Workers founded the Finnish Social Democratic Party in the summer of 1899, and the next year women formed the Social Democratic Women's Union within that party.⁹ The international labor movement had a different take on matters related to gender, endorsing the view that socialism would bring equality for all and that therefore there was no separate women's issue. In the case of Finland, labor women were valued for their work, and their Union was represented in the party leadership.

⁸ The youngest daughter of Baron J. U. S. Gripenberg's 17 children; her family was strongly on the Finnish side of the language struggle.

⁹ Ida Aalle-Teljo and Miina Sillanpää were the strong leaders of labor women. Aalle-Teljo was a member of the group that wrote the program for the Social Democratic Party. Sillanpää was a former house servant who brought initiative to the women's trade union movement and was soon to be one of the leaders of working women.

Labor women worked together with the Burgess women's movement, represented by the Women's Association and the Women's Rights Movement Union until around 1903, when the Social Democratic Women's Union entered the picture with more a radical program, demanding, among other things, universal suffrage. The writings of August Bebel, Ellen Key, Clara Zetkin, and Lily Brown were on the group's reading list, and its message borrowed revolutionary rhetoric from German, English, and Swedish socialists. In 1906, the Social Democratic Women's Union had more than 2,400 individual members, and more than 4,000, or 22 percent, of all members of the Social Democratic Party were women. Labor women worked together with socialist men on the strike committee in 1905, when a general strike spread throughout Russia.¹⁰

The first official claim for women's suffrage was made at the Diet held in 1897, when three members of the Young Finns' party petitioned for women's suffrage on the same conditions as men. According to historian Irma Sulkunen, the petition bore the style and voice of the writer Minna Canth.¹¹ The Diet did not debate women's suffrage much, except in the committee tasked to write a memorandum on the whole voting system. Much was said, however, about increasing the number of voters in the cities. The bill proposing female suffrage in the estate elections was eventually passed in only one estate, the Peasants, and so was miscarried.

The Women's Rights Movement Union called a meeting of all women's associations supporting the emancipation of women in November 1904. Although none of the other associations attended, many women came as private citizens, and the meeting did appear to present women's united ranks to the press and sceptical men.

The next time that women's suffrage was on the agenda, in the fall of 1905, the political situation was different. If not yet powerful, the Social Democratic Party and its women's organization were at least loud. In order to calm the situation, Emperor Nicholas II ordered the Finnish senate to propose a new parliament act that would grant universal suffrage for men. At this point, all women's associations began to demand universal suffrage, thus following the labor women's program. Workers marched on the streets, and the men in the diet and the senate retained only a weak hold on power.

¹⁰ Lähteenmäki M., *Vuosisadan naisliike. Naiset ja sosialidemokratia 1900-luvun Suomessa* (Sosialidemokraattiset naiset, 2000) 48–52.

¹¹ Sulkunen I., "Suomi naisten äänioikeuden edelläkävijänä", in Irma Sulkunen et al. (eds.), *Naiset eduskunnassa. Suomen eduskunta 100 vuotta*, vol 4 (Eduskunta, 2006) 36.

The chair of a joint committee of the four estates in charge of discussing the new bill—a member of the House of Clergy, Professor Robert Hermansson—opposed women's suffrage and especially eligibility for elections, as did many other members of the committee. Eventually, however, Hermansson gave his consent to women's franchise. According to Mikko Perttilä, the committee gave in to the pressure from women and the labor party in their demand for female suffrage because of the restlessness of the street mob and the Social Democrats.¹² The bill was sent to St. Petersburg for the emperor, in the expectation that he would reject it; 'one can not always get what one asks for' was the sentiment, hoping for rejection.¹³

The deputy chair of the senate's financial department (the equivalent of today's prime minister), Leo Mechelin, was in favor of women's suffrage. His private secretary, Tekla Hultin, the first woman doctor of philosophy at the University of Helsinki and a member of the inner circle of the Young Finns, certainly had influence on Mechelin, and one should not deny her importance in the matter. Mechelin submitted the bill to Nicholas II, and when the emperor asked about the issue, he answered that women's suffrage was necessary because the people demanded it. To the astonishment of all, Nicholas II ratified the bill on July 20, 1906. Thus, the most old-fashioned parliamentary system in Europe became the most modern one, with a unicameral parliament whose members were elected by universal suffrage; in principle, all Finnish citizens of at least 24 years of age, men and women, were granted the vote and eligibility.

After this modernization of the parliament, about 20 to 30 percent of citizens could still not vote. People with a criminal record, with some kind of physical or mental handicap, or who had not paid their taxes were excluded from the franchise. Yet, all in all it was a very democratic parliament. The 200 members of parliament (MPs) were elected every four years. The number of MPs from each electoral district depended on its population, which allowed the parties latitude in nominating candidates. Finland has ever since had a multiple-party system, and governments have been coalition ones.

The modern political parties were founded when the nation was preparing for the first elections for the new parliament. The old class society

¹² Perttilä M., *Naisten poliittisen äänioikeuden toteuttaminen* (Naiskuvista todellisuuteen: 1984) 155–156.

¹³ Eduskunnan uudistuskomitean mietintö (Parliamentary committee report), minutes of 12th of December 1905, Perttilä, 1984, 155.

was breaking down, and the turn toward a democratic society was beginning. There was electricity in the air before the first elections in 1907. Political groups established modern parties, which were at that moment the Finns and the Finnish Party (earlier Old Finns), the Swedish Nationalistic Party, and a new Agrarian Party¹⁴ separated from the Finnish parties. The Finnish parties later joined forces to form the National Coalition Party, which had a moderate right-wing program. The Agrarian Party became powerful, gaining votes from the countryside and the political center, and with an agenda focusing on moderate social legislation and the rights of farmers. The Social Democratic Party became more important as its supporters gained the vote. The language question lost much of its importance, and the differences between the working and upper classes became the real dividing line. The socialists had much support from the landless rural population and tenant farmers.

During World War I, in 1916, the Local Government Act granted equal and universal suffrage in local elections. This was considered a natural consequence of universal franchise at the national level, and did not provoke any further discussion about gender.

Why So Early in Finland?

The struggle for women's suffrage was linked to other social issues. One was the fear that traditional sectors of society had of losing power in the face of the rising labor forces and socialism. It was not so much the inclusion of women that was feared, but the inclusion of the propertyless. In fact, the members of the diet argued in 1897 that women would keep the social order better than labor men. Language was another issue. The Nobility was afraid that giving the vote to women would cede more influence to the Finnish-language parties. The Clergy, on the other hand, was ideologically opposed to the emancipation of women; its members thought it was against God's will. Amongst the Burgesses, the Swedish-speaking majority voted against the bill on universal suffrage, while the Finnish-speaking minority pressed the case for universal franchise for men but did not mention women. Noteworthy is that many politicians were in favor of women's suffrage, claiming that women did an excellent job as teachers and in city councils.

¹⁴ The Agrarian Party was formed by the leaders of the estate of the Peasants and other centrist forces between the socialists and conservative upper-class politicians. Ever since, it has played a decisive role in Finnish politics, today under the name The Finnish Centre.

With the political parties, the Old Finns supported women's suffrage more than the Young Finns. Their position rested on strategic considerations of their own power and influence, and whether these would benefit from women's vote. A few individual members in all parties opposed women's suffrage, believing that it was immoral to put the country in the hands of women because doing so would increase social and political instability.

In view of the above, some historians underline the importance of the labor movement and give little credit to the traditional women's movement. Irma Sulkunen, for example, argues that women's associations had few members, all together about 2,000 at most by 1906, when more than 20,000 women were members of the socialist trade unions and the Social Democratic Party. Maria Lähteenmäki agrees, adding that some women's rights fighters were late to accept universal suffrage and had difficulties working with labor women, 'the mob' at the parliament.¹⁵

Nevertheless, I believe the path to women's suffrage should be separated from the one to universal suffrage. There is no doubt that the socialist labor movement worked for universal suffrage; but women gaining political rights was also due to the work, writings, and speeches of the middle- and upper-class women of the women's organizations. They were fewer in number than the labor women, but they had influence on public opinion and on upper-class men.

In many other countries, such as neighboring Sweden, universal male suffrage had been achieved earlier and gradually through many changes in legislation. The political situation was very different there, with even the socialists wanting to proceed gradually, first granting all rights for men and only after that aiming for women's liberation. Because of the backwardness of political life in Finland, however, by the turn of the century the pressure for change was strong. When the moment for democratization came, the women's movement had been promoting its message for decades. Women's rights were commonly accepted as part and parcel of the struggle against Russification. What the world wars brought to many other countries, then, had already happened in Finland.

It is also important to note that Finnish farmers were independent landowners in considerably small farms. More than 70 percent of the economically active population earned its livelihood in agriculture by the

¹⁵ Sulkunen, "Suomi naisten äänioikeuden edelläkävijänä", and Lähteenmäki M., "Naiset tasa-arvoisemman yhteiskunnan puolesta 1907–2003", in Sulkunen et al., *Naiset eduskunnassa*.

end of the 19th century. Because of the modest economy and long distances between farms, married couples worked side by side, and it was obvious that everybody's contribution was needed. This is one explanation for the rather easy path to equality in Finland.

Wage-earning and Well-educated Women

When Finland began to industrialize slowly in the 1860s, life changed. The urban head of the family and breadwinner no longer required his daughters' work, nor could he afford to provide for them. Common girls worked at the factories or as servants in better-off families. Young women started to need income and work, and thus also the right to sign contracts, which made it necessary to grant unmarried women legal rights from 1863 onwards. Women became legally of age at 25. Freedom in trade and industry was guaranteed for women too, enabling them to work in many occupations hitherto closed to them.

Factory work or serving other families was not considered good enough for the daughters of the middle and upper classes, and education became their path out of misery. Teaching was one way out, a growing civil service that was anxious to employ such qualified women was another. Telegraph and post-office work required knowledge of the languages of one's employers, which was one of the particular skills included in women's education at the time.¹⁶ By the end of the 19th century, all unmarried women earned their own livelihood. Young women were supposed to take a job and continue their working life until they became married. Finns married out of love, but love forced women to leave the labor market and take care of the family. Working and paying taxes raised the question of women's suffrage, however, because paying taxes was a precondition for voting in local elections.

Women's rights were in many respects granted during the 19th century, without women in the legislative body of Finland, the estates. It happened little by little from 1860 onwards due to the need for women in the labor market. Well before women's suffrage, unmarried women were able to earn money, sign contracts, and own and dispose property. Married women gained the same rights a little later, but before the turn of the century, as a result of pressure from women's movements as well as domestic and international literature. However, married women continued to be

¹⁶ Risberg E., *Suomen lennätinlaitoksen historia 1855–1955* (Helsinki: 1959).

under the guardianship of their husbands. Civil service was effectively closed for women; they needed an 'exemption of their sex', that is, special permission, to be appointed to public service at any level higher than post-office or other clerical work. While it was often granted, permission was also denied and used to end the careers of talented women. It was a barrier that led many women to not even consider a career in public service.

Miina Sinnlanpää was the first female member of the cabinet. During her time in the cabinet, women gained the right to be appointed to civil service in 1926, and a steering committee was formed to pass a new marriage act that would give married women full legal rights to act for themselves. The committee's proposed Marriage Act was passed in 1929, and with that the demands of the first women's movements were fulfilled. These were some of the few issues on which women worked together across party lines.

Finnish women were well educated at all levels. Common girls had received basic education in the Lutheran Church since the 17th century, and from the 1860s onwards in municipal elementary schools. The University of Helsinki opened its doors to women in 1870, but required special permission until 1901. When the suffrage question appeared on the political agenda, about 14 percent of university students were female, as were half of secondary school pupils. As women achieved success and fulfilled their civic duties, such as paying taxes, no real arguments remained against women's liberation.

With Finnish women gaining the right to vote and stand for election so early, they have been able to play an important role in shaping the construction of democracy and the welfare society. They have promoted many social services, especially in the fields of family, children, and women's health. (Of course, no law has been passed in parliament without the support of men.) In addition, Finnish women have been able to exploit the programs of international organizations such as the League of Nations, the United Nations, and since 1995 the European Union. International pressure was especially visible in the 1980s, when Finland ratified the United Nation's Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Since 1995, there has been a 40-percent minimum quota for the minority sex in public working groups, committees, and boards.

Although basic political rights—suffrage and the right to stand for election—were granted at an early stage, reaching the top in politics took decades. And while legislation guaranteeing general civil rights for Finnish women was completed by the end of 1920s, social rights such as long

maternity leave and public day-care services continued to be granted into the 1990s. Significant steps forward were made in the 1970s and 1980s in all these areas, possibly as a result of the growth of the proportion of women as wage earners and thus their economic independence in society.

Lady MPs Appear on the Political Scene

When the modern parties were formed, they asked renowned women to run as candidates in order to attract women's votes, and women joined the parties most closely aligned to their political opinions. The results of the first elections in 1907 changed the political scene forever, with the socialists victorious and women entering the scene. Nineteen women were elected—ten from the parties of the political center and right and nine social democrats.

Parliamentary life, however, was very unstable until the 1920s. The crown tightened its grip on Finland again in 1908, the emperor dissolved parliament many times, and elections followed each other. Bills miscarried mostly because parliament had no time to deal with them between elections. Women pushed social and women's issues—such as banning of prostitution, labor inspection, health, temperance, and women's rights—mainly within their own parties. One of their first victories came in 1907 when prostitution was banned under the supervision of municipal authorities.

During the civil war in 1918, following the declaration of independence in December 1917, most labor MPs were on the revolutionary losing side and were sent to prison or went into exile to Soviet Russia. Miina Sillanpää, however, did not compromise herself and took over the leading position among labor women. She became a symbol of gender equality, serving as social minister from 1926 to 1928 and in parliament until 1947.¹⁷

We can divide the history of Finnish women in parliament into four periods. The first period lasted until the end of World War II, and saw women occupying between five and 12 percent of the seats in parliament, the lowest coming in 1930 during the economic crisis. Much attention has been paid to the two years during this period when Miina Sillanpää was a member of cabinet. In the second period, between World War II and 1970, women were credited for their war effort. The proportion of women in

¹⁷ Korppi-Tommola A., "Vuosisadan naisparlamentaarikkoja", in Sulkunen et al., *Naiset eduskunnassa* 215–222.

parliament grew as high as 22 percent, and the last cabinet without a woman member was appointed in 1966.¹⁸ During the third period, from 1970 to 1990, the proportion of women in parliament increased to 31 percent. They were elected to chair important committees and parliamentary groups, and were appointed as ministers of ministries other than social, health, and education, which they had been customary limited to previously.

The fourth period began with the elections of 1991, in which women won 39 percent of parliamentary seats; the figure was 42 percent in 2007. Since 1991, it has been customary for about half of the ministers to be women. During this period, women have broken the remainder of the glass ceiling on their way to the top. The reasons for this include the long tradition of women as members of parliament and in politics, as well as the high proportion of women in the labor market. In a democratic political system, leaders of the country cannot fail to take note of the strong support and large numbers of election votes that women receive. Riitta Uosukainen of the National Coalition Party became the speaker of parliament in 1994, and a former trade-union lawyer and long-term member of the parliament, Tarja Halonen, was elected as president of the republic in 2000. Jutta Urpilainen became the first leader of a major party, Socialdemocrats, in 2008.

Finns consider themselves to be gender equal in politics and society. And while their way of life and social services are similar to that of other Nordic countries, Finns' gender equality and high proportion of women in the labor market and politics have domestic roots, which we have explored in this chapter. All problems are not solved, however, and women's organizations continue to work for a better future on several fronts. In politics, they would like to see women holding 50 percent of the seats in parliament. Current gender-related problems are prostitution, domestic violence, and short-term employment contracts for young women. Finally, women have not advanced as far in business as they have in politics and civil service. The labor market remains divided into women's jobs and men's jobs, leading to a biased income structure. Thus, women's salaries are about 80 percent of men's due to the segregation of labor markets, with women working in social services, health care, and education, and men working in business and technology. Although we have come a long way, there is still some way to go.

¹⁸ Ibid.; Korppi-Tommola A., *Tahdolla ja tunteella tasa-arvoa. Naisjärjestöjen Keskusliitto 1911–2001* (Naisjärjestöjen Keskusliitto, 2001) 96–98.

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DEMOCRATISATION OF DENMARK: THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL CITIZENSHIP

Christina Fiig and Birte Siim

Historical Context

In Denmark, women gained suffrage relatively early and undramatically in 1915, when a constitutional reform granted suffrage rights to all men and women over the age of 29. The first democratic Danish constitution of 1849 had granted the vote to men above the age of 30 who had their own household, had lived in the constituency for at least one year, had paid back or been released of their debt, and could dispose of their own estate. 'Women, poor people, criminals and fools' were excluded. As a result, only 14–15 percent of the population could vote.¹

The struggle for women's vote lasted 66 years and was part of the broader struggle for women's formal equal rights. Granting women the vote was controversial and affected fundamental power structures and male privileges in marriage, in the labor market, and in politics. Indeed, the history of female suffrage illuminates the close intersection between women's civil and political rights—between the private and public arenas. It was not an isolated 'women's struggle', but an intrinsic aspect of the deep transformation and democratization of society that took place over a period spanning the end of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century.

The key playing field was parliament, where male parliamentarians debated women's political citizenship.² Indeed, in this chapter we attempt to move beyond the emphasis that Danish gender research places on women's organizations as the main advocates of female suffrage,³ and

¹ Elklit J. et al, *Gensyn med sofavælgernes. Valgdeltagelse i Danmark* (Aarhus: 2005).

² Bach T.K., *En Morgengave. Kvindevalgretsdebatten i Rigsdagen 1886–1908* (unpublished Masters Thesis, Aalborg University, 2003).

³ Dahlerup D., "Et selvstændigt kvindeparti. Den danske kvindebevægelse efter stemmeretten var vundet 1903–1918. En historie om bristede forventninger", in *Kvindestudier, Seks bidrag* (København: 1977); Dahlerup D., "Women's Entry into Politics: The Experience of the Danish Local and General Elections 1908–20", *Scandinavian Political Studies* 1, 2–3 (1978) 139–162; Holm G., *Et hjerteanliggende. Kvinder – samfund – lokalpolitik* (København: 1982).

instead stress the key role that male parliamentarians played in the struggle for universal suffrage that included women's vote. Women were active in voluntary organizations, and some participated in the suffragette organizations⁴ and in local networks,⁵ but the suffragette movement was never a mass movement and was never as militant as it was in Great Britain.⁶

Our main argument is that the Danish struggle for women's suffrage was part of the political and constitutional conflict between the political left and right over parliamentary democracy.⁷ This was a sharp class conflict between the urban and rural political forces, between landowners on the one side and small farmers and workers on the other. The landowners in the Conservative Party (*Højre*), which dominated the upper chamber (*Landstinget*) during the period of enfranchisement, perceived—rightly—a reform of the election system that would expand suffrage to cover women, workers, and servants as a serious threat to their own political power platforms.⁸ The Conservative Party defended the privileged vote and argued against women's vote. The left—a combination of wealthy farmers in the Agrarian Liberal Party (*Venstre*), workers in the Social Democratic Party, and from 1905 also small-scale farmers, school teachers, and intellectuals in the newly formed Radical Liberal Party (*Det Radikale Venstre*)—dominated in the lower chamber (*Rigsdagen*) and struggled for parliamentarism and universal suffrage and defended, for the most part, women's vote.⁹

The History of Female Suffrage

The general political scene for the universal enfranchisement of women and men was based on the four-party system of the time, with the Social

⁴ Dahlerup, "Et selvstændigt kvindepærti"; Hansen H.N., *Landsforbundet for kvinders valgret 1907–15* (Masters Thesis, Copenhagen University, 1992); Højgård L., *Bidrag til den danske kvindebevægelses historie 1879–1900* (København: 1977).

⁵ Rambusch S., "Først valgret - så følger alt andet. Landsforbundet for Kvinders Valgret 1907–15", in Dahlerup D. and Hvidt K. (eds.), *Kvinder på Tinge/ Kvinder i landspolitik i 75 år* (Copenhagen: 1990).

⁶ Dahlerup, "Women's Entry into Politics".

⁷ We want to thank Jytte Larsen, KVINFO, whose article from 2008 served as one of the inspirations for this article. The following section is based on historical analyses in Christiansen N.F., *Klassesamfundet organiseres. 1900–1925. Danmarkshistorie, Bind 12, 1900–1925* (København: 1990); and Ravn A.B., "Kvindefællesskaber under kapitalismen", in Ravn A.B. and Rostgård M. (eds.), *Kvindefællesskaber, Hefter for historie* (Aalborg: 1985).

⁸ Christiansen, *Klassesamfundet organiseres* 59.

⁹ Ibid., 53.

Democratic Party, the Radical Liberal Party, the Agrarian-Liberal Party, and the Conservative Party as the main political actors.

From its formation in 1871, the involvement of the Social Democratic Party in the struggle for women's rights was complex. At the first Congress in Gimle (*Gimlekongressen*) in 1876, the party proposed labor rights for female and male workers as well as universal enfranchisement for both men and women. Yet the party was ambivalent towards the women's emancipation and liberation movement, which made it difficult for female members to engage in the struggle for women's vote. It did support parliamentary proposals for women's suffrage coming from the Radical Liberal Party, but argued that the women's issue should be seen as part of the class struggle, not as a separate issue.¹⁰ Parts of the Social Democratic Party feared that middle-class women would be granted enfranchisement before working-class men. In 1907, the Social Democratic Women's Suffrage Association (*Socialdemokratisk Kvinders Valgretsforening*) was founded by female trade unionists and female party members, but it was never recognized by the party.¹¹ The party thus expected Social Democratic women to withdraw from cooperation with bourgeois and 'non-political' women's organizations. Some Social Democratic women were active in the National League for Women's Suffrage during the first couple of years after its foundation and then withdrew.¹² Still, there was never as sharp a split between the socialists and the women's rights movement as there was in Germany, for example.¹³ As for the other main parties, the Radical Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, and the Agrarian-Liberal Party all contributed differently to the debate on enfranchisement.

From its foundation in 1905, the Radical Liberal Party argued for women's political equality as a key element in relation to election reforms, which would alter the privileged suffrage for the upper chamber. The enfranchisement should include women, servants, and those who received poor people's relief. The party, which broke away from the Agrarian-Liberal Party, was based on support from small farmers, school teachers, university-educated Copenhageners, and a number of urban entrepreneurs and tradesmen. After its establishment, the Radical Liberal Party formed a political alliance with the Agrarian-Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party supporting a reform of the law on local elections

¹⁰ Ibid.; Ravn, "Kvindefællesskaber under kapitalismen".

¹¹ Christiansen, *Klassesamfundet organiseres* 59.

¹² Hansen, *Landsforbundet for kvinders valgret 1907–15*.

¹³ Dahlerup, "Women's Entry into Politics".

that would grant the vote to women and servants.¹⁴ The Agrarian-Liberal Party was based on support from the farmers (landowners), priests, and teachers rooted in the countryside electorate.

The Conservative Party was based on the country's 1,200 aristocratic landowners, the administrative civil servants, and the military, and strong support from urban businessmen. The party dominated the upper chamber and regarded a reform of the election system as a serious threat to its political power platform in most of the provincial towns. Yet some Conservative parliamentarians ended up supporting women's vote for local municipality elections in 1908, believing that women would vote more conservatively than men.¹⁵

The political landscape also included several women's organizations that to varying degrees were protagonists of the fight for female suffrage. Denmark's first women's organization, the Danish Women's Society (*Dansk Kvindesamfund*), was established in 1871 by Agrarian-Liberal Frederik Bajer and his wife, Matilde Bajer. It was the Danish branch of the *Association International de Femmes* (AIF), which was founded in 1868. Yet during its very first year of existence, the Danish Women's Society withdrew from AIF, which had formal equal rights for men and women as its main objective. Indeed, the Danish organization hesitated for a long time to demand the vote for women, fearing that demands for political rights would damage women's search for social acknowledgement and respectability.¹⁶ Thus, instead of arguing for political rights, it focused on civil and social rights such as education, employment, and equality in marriage. Although it had no party affiliation, the organization's politically active members came predominantly from the political centre or right representing bourgeois women.¹⁷ It would take some 35 years after the foundation of the Danish Women's Society in 1871 to add women's enfranchisement to the organization's associational article in 1906. In the meantime, the organization acted politically by contributing to parliamentary debates on women's issues, delivering petitions and arguments to government and parliament on enfranchisement for local elections for wealthy women.¹⁸

¹⁴ Christiansen, *Klassesamfundet organiseres*.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Dahlerup, "Women's Entry into Politics" 141.

¹⁷ Ibid; Højgård, *Bidrag til den danske*; Ravn, "Kvindefællesskaber under kapitalismen".

¹⁸ Ravn, "Kvindefællesskaber under kapitalismen" 242.

Partly because of the bourgeois Danish Women's Society's reluctance, a number of new suffrage organizations were founded from the 1880s on that were more clearly protagonists of the fight for female suffrage. In 1885, Mathilde Bajer, the co-founder of the Danish Women's Society, left that group and formed the Women's Progressive Association (*Kvindelig Fremskridtsforening*), which in 1888 published the first issue of its journal *What do we want?* (*Hvad vil vi?*). The journal went on to become a symbol of the struggle for enfranchisement.¹⁹ Between 1890 and 1894, mobilization around women's vote was organized through the United Women's Association (*De Samlede Kvindeforeninger*), an umbrella group for suffrage organizations and a number of skilled trade unions including those of men's tailors, midwives, and teachers.²⁰ In 1907, the National League for Women's Suffrage (*Landsforbundet for Kvinders Valgret*) was founded. This organization's only claim was women's franchise, and its leadership consisted of women from the Radical Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party. Between the two biggest organizations (the Danish Women's Society and the National League for Women's Suffrage), there was a sense of competition and rivalry.²¹ Both organizations grew rapidly; the former had 6,000 members in 1909 and 7,500 members in 1912, while the latter had 5,000 members in 1908 and 11,000 members in 1912.²² For reasons that will be explained below, neither organization was allied with the Social Democratic Party in a common struggle, even though many women in that party advocated the vote.

¹⁹ A number of prominent members, including the founder, Matilde Bajer, left the organization and formed the Women's Progressive Association [*Kvindelig Fremskridtsforening*] in 1886, with a broader mandate including social and political rights such as workers' rights, peace, and the franchise for women. In 1889, a single woman, Line Luplau, from the rural western part of the country, established the Women's Suffrage Association [*Kvindevalgretsforeningen*], which was the first Danish organization to have the issue of women's enfranchisement as the only point of its program. A couple of years earlier, Luplau had achieved national fame when she initiated a local petition proposing women's rights to vote in local elections by collecting 20,000 signatures (Larsen J., "Kvindekampens fortid og nutid: Heltinder og antihelte. Kvindevalgretskampens historiografi", in Lützen K. et. al (eds.), *På kant med historien : studier i køn, videnskab og lidenskab tilegnet Bente Rosenbeck på hendes 60-årsdag* (Copenhagen: 2008); Rambusch, "Først valgret - så følger alt andet". The organization existed until 1897, when it was co-opted by the Danish Women's Association's Copenhagen branch.

²⁰ Broch B., *Kvindearbejde og kvindeorganisering. Kvinder I konfektionsindustrien 1890-1914* (Århus: 1977) 151-171.

²¹ Dahlerup, "Women's Entry into Politics".

²² Dahlerup, "Et selvstændigt kvindeparti"; Dahlerup, "Women's Entry into Politics"; Hansen, *Landsforbundet for kvinders valgret 1907-15*.

From 1886 to 1915, women's enfranchisement was on the parliamentary agenda on a regular basis, framed first in the proposed reforms of the municipality election laws and subsequently within the amendment of the constitution. The first demands for women's suffrage (in local politics) were raised in the Danish parliament in November 1886 by the politician Fredrik Bajer of the Agrarian-Liberal Party. The proposal landed on a tense political agenda concerning the democratization of parliamentarism, the unicameral system, and the extension of the electorate to include the working class, all of which would change the political geography radically.²³

Reforms of the laws on enfranchisement for men and women were proposed and decided on in the lower chamber, the parliament (*Rigsdagen*), made up of elected members, but voted down in the upper chamber, dominated by the Conservative Party, several times. A reform of the laws on enfranchisement for the municipalities was a common demand of the Social Democratic Party, the Agrarian-Liberal Party, and the Radical Liberal Party, which argued that the cleavages between the different groups of citizens ought to be replaced by universal enfranchisement. The proposal was controversial. For the Agrarian-Liberal Party, granting the vote to small-scale farmers, workers, and servants represented a threat to the party's solid platform of power: the landowning farmers in the local councils.²⁴ After the turn of the century, resistance against women's vote in local elections vanished, as shown by the inclusion of women in a number of elected councils. Resistance to, and delays in, the reform of the election laws can be explained by political instability during the period and opposition to changes in the power balance of party politics that universal suffrage would lead to.²⁵

Danish women's enfranchisement was won gradually. The election of 1901 brought to power a new Liberal-Agrarian government which initiated a reform program under the local authorities that included a number of elected councils. In 1903—that is, three years before the Danish Women's Society officially declared enfranchisement a political goal²⁶—women received the right to vote and be elected for the new parochial church councils, and then for the councils addressing the needs of children and young people in 1905. In 1907, Danish women were able to vote

²³ Larsen, "Kvindekampens fortid og nutid".

²⁴ Christiansen, *Klassesamfundet organiseres* 59.

²⁵ Larsen, "Kvindekampens fortid og nutid".

²⁶ Dahlerup, "Women's Entry into Politics" 143.

for and became eligible for membership on the new Social Aid Boards (*Hjælpekasserne*), a social relief authority allocating financial resources for the underprivileged part of the population. In the first election for the Social Aid Boards in 1908, between 35 and 45 percent of those elected were women, according to unofficial electoral statistics. Official statistics from the 1911 election show similar results.²⁷

With the 1908 reform, all women, married and non-married, gained the right to vote for and to be elected to the municipalities, and a number of legal measures changed the democratic landscape. The electorate was still limited, however, due to several legal conditions. The vote was granted to women, men, and servants above the age of 25 in the municipality where they had lived and paid taxes to the commune during the current year and the year before the elections; this condition was established by Conservatives to prevent servants and casual laborers from voting. Those who received poor people's relief were not granted the vote. The bill was passed in both chambers, and this was seen as a stepping stone towards granting women the parliamentary vote.²⁸

The first local municipal election in 1909 saw a very low number of elected women—only about one percent of those elected. Similar results were replicated in the 1913 and 1917 local elections. Women's representation varied according to elective institution, degree of urbanization, and political party, with more women candidates running and being elected in the capital Copenhagen.²⁹ Moreover, there was a significant difference between men and women voters' participation rates, as well as differences between rural and urban populations. However gender-based differences vanished slowly in subsequent elections as Danish women adapted to enfranchisement rather quickly.³⁰ In the end, both proponents and opponents of female suffrage seemed satisfied with the result of the 1909 elections: proponents were satisfied that the percentage of women voting had reached 50 percent and opponents were relieved that so few women were in fact elected.

The reform of the municipality electoral system provided a good platform from which to agitate for universal suffrage. In 1905, the Social Democratic Party had already proposed the abolition of the upper

²⁷ Ibid., 143–147.

²⁸ Christiansen, *Klassesamfundet organiseres* 60; Elklit et al, *Gensyn med sofavælgern* 30–35.

²⁹ Dahlerup, "Women's Entry into Politics" 147.

³⁰ Elklit et al, *Gensyn med sofavælgern* 25.

chamber and the introduction of universal enfranchisement for all men and women above the age of 21. The other parties would not go along with such a proposal, but they did agree on the need to reform the electorate system which, due to the demographic changes, was biased with the present distribution of mandates.³¹

The final window of opportunity opened when the parliamentary election in May 1913 led to a power shift and the formation of the Radical Liberal Party's (second) Zahle-government with the support of the Social Democrats. The three constitutional-reform friendly parties—the Radical Liberal Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the Liberal-Agrarian Party—decided on the guidelines for constitutional amendments in March 1914, but it would take another parliamentary election before the amendments were approved in parliament and submitted to a referendum in 1915. The revision of the Danish constitution granted universal suffrage to women and men above the age of 29. The legal preconditions of a two-year permanent address in a given commune and household ownership for servants were abolished. With the constitutional revisions in 1915, the electorate more than doubled, from 15 to 40 percent of the population.³² In the next parliamentary election in 1918, women obtained three percent of the seats.

On Constitution Day, June 5, 1915, the Danish suffragettes, dressed in white, marched through the streets of Copenhagen to the Amalienborg royal palaces and the king to mark the occasion of women's parliamentary enfranchisement. Celebrated nationally, the march was symbolic of the previous decades' struggle for the vote, which women obtained some 66 years after the 1849 Danish constitution.

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The Framing of the Arguments

The Danish debate on women's enfranchisement went on for several decades and aired a range of arguments. There are two key points, however. First, many of the arguments for women's vote in local elections (1886–1908) were mirrored in the debate on universal suffrage leading up to the constitutional amendments in 1915. The intersection of gender and class was played out in the debate: the *gender* issue concerned the question of whether married women should have the right to vote or should be

³¹ Christiansen, *Klassesamfundet organiseres* 177.

³² Ibid., 186; Elklit et al, *Gensyn med sofavælgern* 21–38.

represented politically by their husbands; and the *class* issue was about whether servants without economic means should be allowed to vote.³³ Second, the main arguments in favor of female suffrage resembled those raised in other Western countries,³⁴ but their specific formulations and relative weight was influenced by Danish national history, political institutions, and the mobilization of social and political actors.

In the Danish parliamentary debates, we find many variations of two types of pro-suffrage arguments: a) a natural-rights argument based upon ideas of justice and equal political rights; and b) a utilitarian argument based upon women and men's different abilities and talents and ideas about what was good for women and for society; as well as c) a third argument referring to women and men's different interests that was made by the suffrage organizations, but only exceptionally.³⁵ Arguments were part of a political debate and changed over time. In practice, they often drew on more than one discourse. The Agrarian-Liberal politician Frederik Bajer's parliamentary arguments during the 1880s illustrate this point.³⁶ Bajer initially referred to international debates, especially to the British philosopher John Stuart Mill's speech to the British House of Commons on women's enfranchisement in 1867, but also to speeches held in Finland, Iceland, and Sweden. Mill's arguments generally inspired leading Danish intellectuals at the time.³⁷ In subsequent debates, however, Bajer used different arguments which combined the discourses of justice and utility, to the effect that women were political beings with political rights and that they could be useful in cases dealing with health care, school, and social policies. He added a third argument, stressing that women were neither children nor criminals.³⁸

The argument on *justice* was central. There were two versions of this argument, and they changed over time. One emphasized that all citizens with equal abilities in a democracy should have political rights and that the concept of 'the people' included both women and men. Here, suffrage was considered a goal in itself, a simple matter of justice.³⁹ The 'no

³³ Bach, *En Morgengave*.

³⁴ See Dahlerup, "Women's Entry into Politics" 141 for references.

³⁵ Dahlerup, "Et selvstændigt kvindeparti"; Dahlerup, "Women's Entry into Politics"; Ravn, "Kvindefællesskaber under kapitalismen".

³⁶ Bach, *En Morgengave*.

³⁷ Larsen, "Kvindekampens fortid og nutid".

³⁸ Bach, *En Morgengave*.

³⁹ Dahlerup, "Women's Entry into Politics" 141–142.

taxation without representation' dictum was the basis for a second version of the justice argument, which stressed the similarities between men and women as economic beings, but which limited the vote to women who paid taxes.⁴⁰ The Social Democrats' proposal to grant the vote to all women was based on the principle of equality; they argued that differentiating between married and unmarried women would create new inequalities. This position argued that married women's vote would not harm the family and would even make homes happier, whereas inequality would damage both social harmony as well as individual abilities.⁴¹

The *utilitarian* argument pointed out that men and women were different and that women had special qualities and experiences. On this basis, women ought to be granted the vote because their political participation would be useful for and improve society. Women's special abilities, values, and experiences as mothers were perceived as attributes that could improve the quality of political decisions and benefit society.

The justice argument was used particularly by the National League for Women's Suffrage, and the utilitarian argument primarily by the Danish Women's Society (although it also argued, although less so, along the lines of justice⁴²). A third argument, presented by individual members of the two organizations, was that women should gain access to politics because they would be able to represent women's interests that, due to the sexual division of labor, were different from men's.⁴³ According to this argument, women, like other social groups such as farmers and workers, ought to be granted the vote in order to protect their own interests—the assumption being that only women could defend the interests of women.

Conservative representatives in parliamentary debates presented a number of arguments against granting married women the right to vote,⁴⁴ arguments that were in line with the general resistance to granting married women independent legal and political status. There were two crucial arguments, one based on biology and the other on 'sociology', both to the effect that it was not in society's interests to give the vote to married women because doing so would turn marriage into a political battlefield.

The biological argument portrayed women as intrinsically inadequate and unfit for political work due to the female psyche; it was based on

⁴⁰ Bach, *En Morgengave* 30.

⁴¹ Ibid., 51–53.

⁴² Ravn, "Kvindefællesskaber under kapitalismen" 242.

⁴³ Ravn A.B., "Mål og modeller i den gamle og nye kvindebevægelse", *Nyt Forum for Kvindeforskning* 9, 3 (1989) 8–21.

⁴⁴ Bach, *En Morgengave*.

men's and women's biological differences and on the belief that women were emotional and irrational and therefore not suitable for political work. Drawing on the idea of separate spheres for men and women, it was argued that women should not speak in public because they were destined to tasks other than politics, i.e., caring for the family.⁴⁵

The dominant sociological discourse at the time stressed that women's participation in public life was not in society's interests, and that granting married women the vote would break down the fundamental division of work within society, according to which men were responsible for public affairs and women for private households. Conservative members of parliament (MPs) stressed that women's vote would undermine society's gender and power system, arguing that married women ought to be fully politically represented by their spouses, just as in economic life where a married man represented not only himself but his family. Granting married women political citizenship and including them in the public sphere on equal terms with their husbands would create less favorable conditions for the key institution in the private sphere—marriage. The assumption was that gender-equal rights in the political public sphere would disrupt the gender order in the private sphere. The struggle for enfranchisement thus stressed the gender cleavage between the public and the private.⁴⁶

What does this discourse tell us about Danish political culture and public debate at the time of the struggle for enfranchisement? It not only illustrates key aspects of the Danish democratic institutions, but also helps us to understand broader societal power struggles, including those over women's role in the family, married women's legal and political status,⁴⁷ and, more broadly, the democratization of political rights. It put the question of married women's authority and the relationship between spouses on the agenda.⁴⁸ The debate was not only about gender but also about class differences.

From a comparative Nordic perspective, Denmark represents a special case in the struggle for women's political rights.⁴⁹ First, there was no

⁴⁵ Ibid., 75.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Larsen, "Kvindekampens fortid og nutid".

⁴⁸ Koefoed N., "Demokrati og medborgerskab. Sociale og kønspolitiske strategier i debatten om den almindelige kommunale valgret 1886–1908", *Fortid og Nutid* 4 (2008) 251–279.

⁴⁹ Bach, *En Morgengave* 5; Christensen A.D. and Siim B., *Køn, demokrati og modernitet. Mod nye politiske identiteter* (Copenhagen: 2001) 63–64.

differentiation in women's suffrage, as unmarried and married women gained the right to vote in local municipalities at the same time in 1908. This was not the case in Finland, Iceland, or Sweden, where unmarried and economically active women gained the right to vote in local elections before other groups of women. Second, women gained the vote at the same time as domestic servants, and thus universal suffrage included all women and all men. Although demands for women's vote were not met with as strong resistance in parliament as in the British and French cases, there was resistance to *married* women's vote in parliament. The arguments against granting married women the right to vote illustrate that the patriarchal family structure and strong conservative forces in society worked against the political rights of women and the poor and worked for the privileged voting system.

Female Suffrage and Citizenship

Women's struggle for suffrage and for civil and social rights did not follow the same pattern as men's. In many countries, women gained political and social rights before they obtained equal civil rights in marriage.⁵⁰ Female suffrage was a cornerstone in women's democratic citizenship, and political rights were perceived as a means not only to influence political decisions but also to expand women's civil and social rights. In the previous sections, we have shown how the Danish struggle for women's suffrage was linked to the political class struggle for universal suffrage and parliamentary democracy between farmers and workers on the one side and landowners on the other side. In this section, we look more closely at the interconnection between the struggles for women's civil, political, and social rights.

In Denmark, proposals for married women's political rights were directly linked to the struggle for the recognition of authority and civil rights to married women.⁵¹ Danish women attained equal rights in marriage relatively early, and at the end of the 19th century wives had been granted full legal capacity. Thus, women gained basic civil rights in marriage before they won the vote. From a political perspective, this can be explained by the close link between the bourgeois women's

⁵⁰ Siim B., *Gender and Citizenship. Politics and Agency in France, Britain and Denmark* (Cambridge University Press, Singapore: 2000).

⁵¹ Larsen, "Kvindekampens fortid og nutid" 12.

movement—led by the Danish Women's Society—and the pro-suffrage Agrarian-Liberal Party. Fredrik Beyer played a key role in the formation of this political alliance, as both an agitator for women's vote as an MP and a co-founder of the Danish Women's Society. At a socio-economic level, the early reform of the marriage laws was probably made possible by the Danish class structure. The dominant agrarian sector was relatively egalitarian, comprised of many small farms where wives were recognized as having a crucial role in production.

The advancement of Danish women's civil and political rights resembles the development of gender relations in the other Nordic countries. The reform of marriage legislation has recently been linked to the development of the Nordic welfare states. In the early 20th century, marriage legislation was reformed, male privileges were abolished, and basic equality established in all Nordic countries.⁵² During the reform process, starting in 1909 and ending in the 1920s, married women were given the right to dispose their own private property and income, full disposal of the common estate, and custody of the children. Such early introduction of basic equality between spouses was unique in Europe—elsewhere, similar family legislation only began to take shape in the 1960s—and it is a key element in the claim that there is a special Nordic model of marriage.⁵³

The period from 1918 to 1925 saw the passing of a number of parliamentary bills dealing with equality for women, with female politicians such as Elna Munch and Nina Bang playing a key role in the debates.⁵⁴ As a consequence, Nordic women attained formal equal rights with men in terms of education and government posts, voting, and political positions around 1920. Between 1909 and 1929, legislation on marriage was also thoroughly reformed in all Nordic countries, modernizing the institution of marriage, enhancing women's individual rights, and ending the husband's legal power over his wife. The reformed legislation also gave married women the obligation to provide for the family, a measure that, seen in a European perspective, was unique and that questioned the male-breadwinner

⁵² Carlsson-Wetterberg, Christina & Kari Melby. "The claim of economic citizenship: The Concept of equality in a historical context." in *Gender Equality and Welfare Politics in Scandinavia*. (Eds.) Kari Melby, Anna-Birte Ravn, and Christina Carlsson-Wetterberg. Bristol: Policy Press, 2008.

⁵³ Melby, Kari, A. Pykkänen, B. Rosenbeck and C. Carlson-Wetterberg (eds.) 2000. *The Nordic Model of Marriage and the Welfare State*, NORD 2000:27, Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers; Carlsson-Wetterberg, Christina & Kari Melby, 2008.

⁵⁴ Nielsen J., "How Danish Women got the Vote" (no date), www.kvinfol.dk/side/680/article/2/; accessed April 20, 2007.

model during a formative period of the Scandinavian welfare states.⁵⁵ On this basis, scholars have further argued that gender equality in marriage is one of the pillars of the Nordic welfare model, and that early modernization of gender relations through gender equality reforms was an important historical precondition for the development of the universal Scandinavian welfare-state regime with its high degree of gender equality.⁵⁶

Female Suffrage and Citizenship Today

Around 1900, the citizenship debate focused on questions related to suffrage, and it addressed the intersections of gender and class as it dealt with an extension of citizenship to women and the poor. Today, the citizenship debate concerns issues related to the social and political marginalization of immigrants, and it addresses gender as it deals with ethnicity, immigrant women's demands for equal rights, and cultural differences. This final section first looks at the debate about gender balance in politics and then discusses the new challenges to equal citizenship from immigration and increased diversity.

Despite the adoption of formal equality rules in many arenas of society, it took approximately 60 years after women's enfranchisement for Denmark, Norway, and Sweden to cross the 20-percent threshold of women in parliamentary seats and 70 years to reach the 30-percent mark.⁵⁷ Moreover, Danish women's representation did not reach ten percent in the municipalities until 1966 nor in the county councils until 1970. This illustrates both that there is no direct linkage between women's vote and an increase in female representation, and that the male-dominated political-opportunity structure and the dominant discourse about women's primary family role remained major barriers for gender equality in politics. It also illustrates different patterns at the local, national, and European levels. Unlike in many European countries, Danish women's representation in municipal and county councils has generally been lower than at the national level. Since the early 1990s, women's representation has indeed stagnated in local politics at 27–28 percent, while the representation they won in the first four elections (1979, 1984, 1989, and 1994) in the EU Parliament was greater than in national elections.

⁵⁵ Carlsson-Wetterberg, Christina & Kari Melby, 2008.

⁵⁶ Melby, Kari, A. Pylkkänen, B. Rosenbeck and C. Carlson-Wetterberg (eds.) 2000.

⁵⁷ Dahlerup D. (ed.), *Women, Quotas and Politics* (London and New York: 2006).

Female suffrage did not create equality in politics, but it has been a key aspect of Danish women's mobilization and empowerment in civil society.⁵⁸ Between the two world wars, a successful alliance was formed to defend married women's right to work between bourgeois women organized in the Danish Women's Society and women organized in the trade-union movement.⁵⁹ After World War II, Danish women were mobilized as active citizens in the new social movements, and during the last 30 years women entered political parties and became part of the political elite.

During the 1970s and 1980s, a strong women's mobilization outside the political parties was part of the general grassroots mobilization that succeeded in placing women's, peace, and environmental issues on the political agenda.⁶⁰ These movements represented a break with the male dominated political parties, and they were able to influence the political-opportunity structure as well as peoples' everyday lives through the spread of values, norms, and activities to the general public.

Denmark does not have a real gender balance in politics. In the last three elections, women's representation in parliament has remained at about 38 percent. From a comparative Nordic perspective, the Danish gender political model has been characterized as a more 'bottom-up' model than that of Norway and Sweden, and the autonomous women's movement in Denmark has played a relatively stronger role than women's groups in the political parties.⁶¹ In contrast to Norway and Sweden, Denmark has no tradition of a gender quota in its political parties; only the Social Democrats and the Socialist Folks Party have adopted gender quotas, and only for limited functions and short periods of time. This can be explained by the combination of the strong bottom-up tradition in the women's movement, which has made the push for gender quotas in the parties weaker than in Norway and Sweden, and a strong liberal tradition with more hostile attitudes towards state regulation.

Despite women-friendly social policies such as extended public child-care, which have contributed to the high level of participation of women in the labor market, gender equality is still absent from major arenas of society, significantly in leadership positions in the private labor market,

⁵⁸ Christensen and Siim, *Køn, demokrati og modernitet*.

⁵⁹ Ravn A.B., "Lagging far behind all Civilized Nations: The Debate about Protective Labour Legislation for Women in Denmark", in Wikander U. (ed.), *Protecting Women: Labor Legislation in Europe, the United States, and Australia, 1880–1920* (Urbana, IL: 1995).

⁶⁰ Christensen and Siim, *Køn, demokrati og modernitet*.

⁶¹ Bergqvist C. et al, *Equal Democracies? Gender and Politics in the Nordic Countries* (Scandinavian University Press, Oslo: 1999).

the media, and academia.⁶² This challenge has been taken up by researchers on gender, but it is not considered to be among the major political problems that need to be solved. According to the dominant political discourse, ethnically Danish women have already achieved gender equality and gender equality is primarily perceived as a problem for women from ethnic minorities. Gender equality policies are therefore primarily concerned with the integration of ethnic-minority women in the labor market, politics, and society.⁶³

One of the new challenges to Danish citizenship and its gender model comes from immigration, which has increased the diversity of religion, culture, and ethnicity in society, and has created new social and political inequalities between ethnically Danish women and women from ethnic minorities. Immigrant women's social and political marginalization represents a major problem for democracy. It has become apparent that women's inclusion in the political elite does not represent immigrant women. Diversity among women has become a political issue, raising key questions about who has the power to represent whom.⁶⁴

From a comparative perspective, a unique element of the Danish approach to citizenship is still its relatively strong social and political egalitarianism, which was historically combined with a relatively high degree of homogeneity in terms of ethnicity, language, and religion. Globalization, increased immigration, and the subsequent social and political marginalization of immigrant groups therefore challenge the Danish citizenship model's ability to live up to the normative vision that all individuals who live legally in the country should be treated as equal citizens and have the right to be represented in politics and the ability to influence political decisions.

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⁶² Fiig, C. "Women in Danish Politics: Challenges to the Notion of Gender Equality", pp. 311–327 in Gelb J. & Lief Palley M. (eds.). *Women and Politics Around the World: A Comparative History and Survey* (Santa Barbara, CA:2009).

⁶³ Siim B., "The Challenge of Recognizing Diversity from the Perspective of Gender Equality–Dilemmas in Danish citizenship", *Critical Revue of International Social and Political Philosophy* 10, 4 (2007) 491–512.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN LITHUANIA: STRIVING FOR POLITICAL EQUALITY

Toma Birmontienė and Virginija Jurėnienė

In Lithuania, the struggle for women's political rights was closely related to the process of democratization and liberation from Russian occupation. Both men and women were active in the struggle for independence. The Lithuanian Women's Movement started in 1905 as a platform that united women in the fight for both Lithuania's independence and political equality with men. As a result, women and men won their voting rights at the same time. Indeed, women's suffrage cannot be separated from the development of men's political rights at the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century and both were a result of national and political events. In 1905, the Great Seimas of Vilnius recognized men and women equal rights. The provisional Constitution of November 1918 then recognised equal voting rights in elections to the Seimas (parliament) to all Lithuanians, regardless of gender and estate. Lithuanians of both genders voted and were elected to the first Constituent Seimas in the first national elections in 1920. From 1920 to 1926, women were active parliamentarians and played an important role in constitutional developments. Women's political activity was suspended between 1926 and 1990 and renewed after the re-establishment of the Lithuanian state in 1990.

Lithuanian Women's Rights in Historical Perspective: The Statutes

The Great Duchy of Lithuania was established at the beginning of the 13th century. During the 16th century, as Lithuania shared Europe's interest in codification, the Statutes of Lithuania were enacted. The Statutes, which could be regarded as the first codified law in Europe,¹ found their main source in customary law and judicial practice² and reflected the legal culture of the Grand Duchy in the 16th century, including elements

¹ Valikonytė dot; I., Lazutka S., and Gudavičius E., *First Statute of Lithuania* (1529 m.) (Vilnius: 2001) 261.

² Gudavičius E., *The Short Survey of the First Statute of Lithuania/Lietuvos Statutas. The Statute of Lithuania. Statuta Lituaniae* (1529) (Vilnius: 2002) 21.

of the doctrine of natural rights that was part of European culture. The First Lithuanian Statute (1529) covered virtually all areas of law developed at the time: constitutional, civil, family, criminal, procedural, hunting, land, and war law. It made explicit reference to certain democratic principles underlying the law in Lithuania's estate-based society. Thus, its preamble indicated that the statute was addressed to all subjects, regardless of their estate, and its article 9 established that all persons must be judged equally according to the same written law.

In line with this spirit, the First Statute and its subsequent versions (the Second Statute (1566) and Third Statute (1588)) granted noblewomen some rights.³ Although the husband was the head of the family, a dower defended the property interests of the wife.⁴ Some provisions were dedicated to noblewomen's property rights, others to mothers' guardianship of their children. Forced marriage of noblewomen was forbidden—although a daughter who married without the consent of her father or mother thereby waived her dowry and the matrimonial estate. The Second and Third Statutes included the sovereign's promise to protect women 'as free people'.⁵ They stated that marriage did not grant husbands personal rights over their wives, and considered marital violence a crime committed under aggravating circumstances.⁶ They also regulated noblewomen's titles to land and rights of inheritance.⁷ Thus, even though the Statutes of Lithuania did not grant equal rights to men and women, they did guarantee noblewomen some rights and freedoms.

In 1569, Lithuania and Poland concluded the Union of Lublin and formed a confederation of states (commonwealth) that lasted until 1795. The Act of Lublin did not succeed in forming one indivisible nation, thanks to Lithuania's efforts to protect its autonomy and self-government, but Lithuania was greatly weakened by the union. The commonwealth of Lithuania-Poland received the official name of the Kingdom of Poland,

³ Though these rights and freedoms were not explicitly recognized to noblewomen only, in the reality of the 16th century they could only be seen as noblewomen's privileges, as the entirety of civil and family law was based on guarantees and rules of management of the nobles' property.

⁴ Gudavičius, *The Short Survey* 32.

⁵ Valikonytė et al., *First Statute of Lithuania* 292.

⁶ See Andriulis V. et al, *Lietuvos Teisės Istorija* (Vilnius: 2002) 213.

⁷ 'We also decree: if there are several brothers and sisters, independent or dependent, and one of the brothers dies, then his share of the patrimonial estate transfers only to his brothers. If as a legacy there is involved any matrimonial estate, then sisters must receive a share of that estate equal to that of their brothers, and from patrimonial [estate] – a dowry'. Ibid., 89.

even though it was composed of two political entities: Poland (Kingdom) and Lithuania (Great Duchy). In 1795, the commonwealth was divided and occupied by Russia, Prussia (since 1871, Germany), and Austria. Nevertheless, the Third Statute remained in force in Lithuania even after the abolition of its statehood, until 1840.

Lithuania remained occupied by the Russian Empire until World War I, when it was occupied by Germany; only in 1918 was Lithuania's independence recovered. Lithuania was again occupied by the Soviet Union between 1940 and 1990.

*Women's Rights and Political Equality at the End of the 19th Century
and the Beginning of the 20th Century*

The women's movement can be divided into stages: the active fight for women's civic and political rights (from the end of the 19th century to 1905); and the beginning of women's political activity (from 1905 to 1918).

Women's public activities and party building began at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, when Lithuania was under Russian occupation. After Lithuania lost its statehood at the end of 18th century, Lithuanian noblewomen started to play an important role in society.⁸ They engaged in newly created charity organizations, their activity becoming more intense with the rise of the nationalist movement, in which some women played a very significant role. In 1808, in Vilnius, the first mixed charity association, composed of men and women, was created. The available historical sources do not mention its name, but it is known that the association was Christian. In 1844, the Association of the Merciful Sisters was established, patronized by Catholic priests. Most charity organizations worked under churches: Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, and Calvinist. Yet it was only the Catholic Church that, alongside its charitable activity, promoted the national movement and, thus, civic activity in Lithuania.

In the second half of the 19th century, the women's movement in Lithuania emerged as part of a nationalist movement targeted against tsarist politics. Women worked side-by-side with men. Secret schools were opened in which children were taught in the Lithuanian language. Women's demands for political rights came only after demands

⁸ On the Lithuanian women's movement, see Jurenienė V., *Lietuvos moterų judėjima XIX amžiaus pabaigoje – XX amžiaus pirmojoje pusėje* (Vilnius: 2006).

for education. At the time, they primarily made efforts to educate themselves and others. In 1890, women established the first philanthropy organization, the *Žiburelis* (Light). Founded by Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė,⁹ it aimed to teach and support gifted children of both sexes.

At the beginning of the 20th century, women actively struggled for equal rights, suffrage, equal education, and equal opportunities to undertake professional activity. In that period, their activity was supported mainly by philanthropic organizations. The work of women such as Petkevičaitė-Bitė and others inspired changes in social attitudes towards women by proving they were able to participate in political life, to contribute to formation of national consciousness, and to generate progressive ideas. Women's active participation in charity and education prepared the ground for them to take part in political life.

Between 1905 and 1918, women became more active in their struggle for civil and political rights. Indeed, the nationalist movement changed society's attitude towards women, as their importance in social activities increased. National newspapers claimed that women could play an important role in raising the nation's political awareness. Political parties, founded at the turn of the century with different ideologies and political programs, appreciated women's active role in the national movement and supported ideas of equal rights for women. The party of Lithuanian Social Democrats, established in 1896, included women as party members;¹⁰ one of them (Joana Griniuvienė) was even elected to the party's central committee. Moreover, the party's program (promulgated in September 1905) proclaimed the political equality of both sexes. The political party of Lithuanian Democrats, founded in 1902, also included women's political rights in its program. It also supported the struggle for Lithuania's independence and self-government through universal suffrage. The Union of Peasants, founded in 1905, also supported equal political and civil rights for men and women. Indeed, one of its members, Felicija Povickaitė-Bortkevičienė, actively struggled for women's

⁹ A writer and social activist (pseudonym Bitė, meaning 'a bee'), she was the first Lithuanian woman to join the nationalist movement and fight for women's rights. She joined the Democrats' Party in 1902 and was a member of the Lithuanian Women's Association. From 1911 to 1913, she edited a women's newspaper *Žibutė* (Violet), which published many radical articles demanding political rights for women. She was a Seimas member from 1922 to 1926 and ran for the presidency of the Lithuanian Republic in 1926. In 1910, she published the only book for women readers at that time, *On the Women's Issue*.

¹⁰ Established under the leadership of Steponas Kairys, the party aimed at the restoration of the Lithuanian state with the capital Vilnius and a democratically elected Seimas.

equal opportunities. The Lithuanian Christian Democrats party, founded in 1905, had no women members, but it included a declaration of women's political equality with men.

The Russian tsar's government did not react to women's appointment to leading positions in political parties, schools, editorial departments of newspapers, etc., as it did not expect significant initiatives from them. On August 6, 1905, the law on elections to the Russian Duma was passed, according to which male representatives were to be elected on the basis of wealth (and the country was divided into three *curiae*). Women were excluded. Lithuanian women organized a meeting in Vilnius on September 22–23, 1905, at which participants founded the Association of Lithuanian Women, elected a board,¹¹ and approved a program. The aim was to obtain autonomy for Lithuania within ethnographic boundaries with a Seimas in Vilnius elected by general, equal, secret, and direct vote. Another goal was equal rights for women and men, whose equal membership was acknowledged. The program also suggested ways to achieve these aims.¹² With the Association of Lithuanian Women, previously sporadic and dissipated actions grew into an organized women's movement, which created a number of women's groups in the province and cooperated with associations and unions of Russian women.

On September 25, 1905, the Association of Lithuanian Women organized a general assembly in Vilnius. The aim was to become familiar with women's groups active in Vilnius and to clarify their attitudes towards the Duma elections. Representatives from other Lithuanian cities also participated. Participants agreed on boycotting elections to the tsarist Duma and wrote an appeal to Vilnius electors asking for a federal constitution for Russia, with Lithuania as one of its member-states with equal rights. They also asked for the constituent assembly to be summoned in Vilnius, whose members would be elected by general, equal, secret, and direct vote, disregarding gender, nationality, religion, and estate.

¹¹ The board members were Felicija Bortkevičienė, Ona Pleirytė-Puidienė, and Stasė Landsbergaitė.

¹² Means included developing political self-awareness; actively fighting for women's and men's equal rights in towns and villages; helping women to reach equal status at work and in professional education; improving working women's conditions; writing and distributing books, brochures, articles, and appeals, and a variety of propaganda-related materials; creating professional organizations; caring about new women's organizations and associations in the whole country; and educating children by including relevant issues in school curricula.

On October 19, 1905, an assembly (or the Great Seimas) of Lithuanians from different political groups was held in the editorial office of the newspaper *Vilnius News*. Fifteen members were elected to its steering committee, including two women, Felicija Bortkevičė and Ona Šapkauskaitė. The steering committee called for general elections to the Great Seimas (named such because of the significance of its decrees in the reestablishment of the nation state), which were held according to the model of local parochial meetings. Some women, such as Felicija Bortkevičienė, Liuda Purėnienė, and Ona Brazauskaitė, were elected. This reflects an important change. From 1795 to 1905, Lithuanians did not have voting rights, so the fact that people organized local parochial meetings and elected representatives of both sexes to the Great Seimas indicates that society was politically mature.

A stepping-stone in the recognition of women's equality in Lithuania took place on December 4–5, 1905, when the Great Seimas of Vilnius was held. This Seimas decided on Lithuania's independent statehood. It also recognized for the first time the principle of equality between women and men – although women's political rights were constitutionally recognized only in November 1918 (by the first provisional Constitution). Lithuania was thus among the first states in Europe to grant equal rights to its women.¹³

These developments raised women's awareness about their social status. The First Lithuanian Women's Assembly took place in 1907, in which Lithuanian women from different social groups, political beliefs, confessions, and educational backgrounds participated. The following resolutions were proposed and adopted: 1) a union should be established to fight for women's rights, one that would cooperate with similar unions in other countries; 2) women themselves should create unions according to their occupations for the improvement of their household conditions; 3) women's unions should act separately or together with men's unions; and 4) a ten-person committee should be elected to administer the unions. All parties supported women's organizations according to their ideological leanings.

Important as the First Lithuanian Women Assembly was for the women's movement and in the public life of the country more generally,

¹³ On February 20, 1906, new regulations of the elections to the Russian Duma endorsed by the Russian government ruled that only males above 25 years of age with the qualification of wealth set by each curia could vote for and be voted to the Duma. Women, soldiers, non-Russian speakers, and persons disqualified because of age or wealth were excluded.

however, it did not manage to unite women around the common goal of recognising equal political and civil rights for women. In 1908, the women's movement split into two groups, the democrats and social democrats, on the one hand, and the Catholics, on the other. On March 21, 1908, the Catholic movement founded the Association of the Lithuanian Catholic Women (ALCW).¹⁴ Its aim was to unite Lithuanian women in the development of cultural and economic activities, to promote Lithuanians' self-respect, to improve the morality and education of all Lithuanians, to improve the social position of girls and women, and to fight for women's political and civil rights. With the support of the priests, the association quickly expanded its activities in Kaunas and the provinces, where agricultural schools for countryside girls were established to improve their cultural life. It was also involved in charity work and gave strong support to the women's movement.

The main organization of the Lithuanian democrat and social-democrat trends of the women's movement was *The alliance of Lithuanian women*, since 1908 called *Lithuanian Women's Union*, which till 1918 acted illegally since the administration of tsarist Russia refused to register its regulations.

The Catholic, social democrat, and democrat streams of the women's movement were most active between 1908 and 1914. Each had its own organizations and programs, but all aimed at influencing Lithuanian women's attitudes and promoting their ideas on women's rights in a patriarchal society. The differences in the streams lay in the social status of their members. The Catholic stream united countryside women, while the democrat one gathered 'white collar workers' and representatives of culture (e.g., teachers, artists, etc.). The social-democrat trend was led by Joana Pavalkytė – Griniuvienė and till 1928 was too weak to act independently and joined forces with the democrat trend, especially as the representatives of both trends worked in the same organization, i.e. Lithuanian Women's Union¹⁵.

When World War I began, the activities of women's organizations were suspended in Lithuania,¹⁶ but some continued fighting for their rights in emigration in Russia. Germany occupied the country at the end of the

¹⁴ Chaired by E. Vaitkevičienė, unlike other Catholic associations of Kaunas, the council of the ALCW was not headed by priests.

¹⁵ See Jūrėnienė, *Lietuvių moterų judėjimas* 51.

¹⁶ As many Lithuanians during the war moved to Russia, in Moscow and Petersburg some Lithuanian women organizations were established to promote educational and other activities.

summer of 1915. On September 18–22, 1917, the German occupying forces allowed a Lithuanian conference to take place in Vilnius. There the Lithuanian State Council was elected, whose 20 members would negotiate with the German authorities to take over educational affairs, to restore the university in Vilnius, and to help the people who moved to Russia and other states during the war to come back to their homeland. Conference participants were not elected but convoked by members of the parties on the basis of trust. No women representatives were invited to the conference.

On February 16, 1918, the Lithuanian State Council proclaimed the independence of Lithuania and became its legislative institution from November 1918 until May 15, 1920, when the Constituent Seimas began to work. Women could not participate in the State Council or hold positions in the government of the new state, because some council members, led by the chair of the presidium, Antanas Smetona, thought that women politicians would lessen the image of the state.¹⁷ As the leader of the legislative body, Smetona had a strong influence on its decisions.

After independence, discussions began about the need to reestablish women's organizations and expand them throughout the country. As before the war, the main issues continued to be women's education and their legal and economic inequalities with men. Nevertheless, only when women became members of representative institutions were these issues effectively dealt with.

The Lithuanian State Council adopted two provisional constitutions (Framework Laws of the Provisional Constitution of the State of Lithuania). The first one (November 2, 1918) declared that all citizens, irrespective of their gender, shall be equal before the law (article 22). Article 27 specified that the Constituent Seimas shall be elected by secret vote in general, equal, and direct elections. This included women. The second

¹⁷ In autumn of 1917, when women representatives were not invited to the Conference of Vilnius where the issue of the statehood of Lithuania was also discussed, the women convened a meeting in Kaunas and applied to the chairman of the presidium of the Council of Lithuania (Antanas Smetona) with a petition, signed by 20,000 persons, requesting that the Council of Lithuania also include women representatives. Such activity of women induced constitutional consolidation of equal rights of men and women to adopt democratic laws on the elections to the parliament (Seimas). On November 20, 1919, the Council of the State of Lithuania passed an electoral law of the Constituent Seimas. It guaranteed the inhabitants the right and freedom to nominate and elect the desired representatives to the Constituent Seimas by general, equal, and secret vote according to the principles of a proportional system. By establishing and emphasizing the constitutional principle of general and equal voting, the Seimas stressed the equality of both genders.

provisional constitution of 1919 had analogous provisions. The electoral law to the Constituent Seimas was adopted in November 20, 1919. Inspired by analogous laws adopted in some neighboring countries (e.g., Finland), it ruled that elections would take place by general, equal, and secret vote according to the principles of a proportional system, and encompassing gender equality.¹⁸

All the parties that participated in the election campaign for the Constituent Seimas included women in their lists. Seven female representatives were elected (7% of the Seimas), six from the Christian Democrats' block and one from the Socialist Populist Democrats' Party and the Peasants' Party, that is, the writer Gabrielė Petkevičaitė.¹⁹ Petkevičaitė represented both these parties because they worked with the same program; only their target groups were different: the Democrats worked in towns and the Peasant Party was active in the countryside. As the oldest member, Petkevičaitė (aged 60) chaired the Seimas, while another woman (the teacher Ona Muraškaitė-Račiukaitienė, aged 24) was its secretary as the youngest representative. Women were active members of the Constituent Seimas, their main concern being that women not be left with narrowed rights under the Constitution of Lithuania and the ensuing reform of the laws inherited from Russia.

In 1920 elections to the Constituent Seimas took place and in 1922 the Constitution of the State of Lithuania was adopted, completing the process of independence.²⁰ Article 10 established that all citizens of Lithuania, men and women, shall be equal before the law. Article 24 specified that Lithuanian citizens, men and women, enjoying full rights and not younger than 21 years of age, shall have the right to elect their representatives to the Seimas, while persons not younger than 24 years of age shall have the right to be elected.

In 1926, the Christian Democrats gained political power, as parliament was dissolved and a non-democratic regime was introduced, which lasted until occupation by Soviet Union in 1940. On February 1, 1936 the Societies Act limited the freedom of political parties. All public organizations had to re-register with the government before the election. Political parties, however, were not re-registered and had to close. The Lithuanian

¹⁸ With slight amendments, the law remained valid when a democratic parliament was elected in Lithuania in 1920.

¹⁹ See *Trumpos Steigiamojo Seimo narių biografijos* (Klaipėda: 1924) 10.

²⁰ Maksimaitis M., *History of the Constitutions of the State of Lithuania* (Vilnius: 2005) 169.

Nationalist Union remained the only party in Lithuania²¹. In the elections to the fourth Seimas held in 1936, no women were elected. This was a by-product of the new Law on the Seimas Elections of 1936, which in turn was related to the Law on Local Elections of 1931, which was not favorable to women. According to this Law, candidates to local councils must come not from parties but from counties and municipal councils, which were appointed by the central government. The votes were to be cast not for party lists, but for specific individuals²². Candidates had to live in the said county for not less than six months or have real estate in it. Thus the laws that limited women's property rights influenced their chances to be elected to the Seimas. Moreover, county councils consisted of representatives of local self-government institutions with few women members. Thus although women were formally allowed to participate in politics, they were in practice virtually excluded—they could only engage in activities in the spheres of culture and charity. This encouraged women to raise the question of political equality, criticize the Law on Local Elections, and request the reform of civil laws.

Women were also active in the previously mentioned organizations that, although officially suspended, were active in social and cultural life. In 1928, the Council of Women of Lithuania was established with the objective of coordinating the women's movement. The founders of the council were representatives of democrats and social democrats. In 1937, the Second Women's Congress demanded the implementation of equality of men and women as entrenched in the constitution of 1928—that is, women's rights would not be narrowed by governmental laws and decrees, women would participate in the preparation of the civil code, and would be elected to the Seimas.²³

After the Soviet occupation of Lithuania began in 1940, the activities of women's organizations were prohibited. Women's organizations re-emerged only in 1990, when the independence of the state was re-established. During the Soviet occupation, the women's movement was not acknowledged; the socialist-communist ideology proclaimed all people to be equal and did not consider that women had to fight for their equality.

²¹ See Kamuntavičius R., Kamuntavičienė V., Civinskas R., and Antanaitis K., *Lietuvos istorija* (Vilnius: 2001) 385–386.

²² See Sužiedėlis S., *Encyclopedia Lituanica V* (Boston: 1970–1978) 101.

²³ Jurėnienė V., *1st and 2nd Congress of Women: Aims and Outcomes of the Lithuanian Women's Movement/Kaunas' History Chronicle*, vol 6 (Kaunas: 2005) 131.

Female Suffrage and Women Citizenship

Women's demands for political rights resulted from self-education. At the end of the 19th century, Lithuanian women were better educated than men. Population statistics from 1897 show that Lithuanian women's literacy in Kaunas Governorship exceeded men's—it was 8% (although women's education was usually limited to reading skills).²⁴ According to the official responsible for collecting and processing the statistical data on the population, this fact was unique in the entire Russian Empire.²⁵ Women's high literacy in Lithuania can be explained by the fact that Lithuanian noblemen wished to educate their daughters and so sent them to schools.²⁶ This tendency continued until World War II, and was confirmed in the subsequent registers of the population in 1924 and 1926. Educated women applied their knowledge in different professional fields: for example, Felicija Bortkevičienė was the editor-in-chief of the Lithuanian newspaper *Lietuva*; Magdalena Galdikienė was the principal of the girls' gymnasium in Kaunas; and Liuda Purėnienė was a leading advocate from 1915 to 1972. Beyond education, the women's suffrage movement could not be divided from the struggle for women's equal civil rights, yet Lithuanian women attained equal political rights before they had equal civil rights.

While striving for the equality of both genders, women parliamentarians (in 1920–1922, in the Constituent Seimas) developed a maximal program to be realized in the newly recovered state. The program stated: 1) family should be based on gender equality, which would allow the family to develop on a new basis of humanism, not on slavery to each other; 2) the principle of equality should be implemented in the economy as well—'really the same payment should be given for the same work, irrespective of gender';²⁷ 3) it should be declared that woman's housework and the education of the children 'equal a man's earning in keeping the family'.²⁸ Marija Galdikienė and Emilija Gvildienė proposed that the Seimas

²⁴ Aleksandravičius E. and Antanas A., *Caru valdžioje Lietuva XIX amžiuje* (Vilnius: 1996) 359.

²⁵ In 1873, only 575 girls learnt at state primary schools; in 1900, the number of women students increased to 4,313. State schools for girls functioned in Vilnius and Kaunas since 1860 and in Šiauliai since 1896. Lithuanian noblemen sent their daughters to school as well. The percentage of educated women in Russia amounted merely to 13.7%. "Lietuvos moterų judėjimai", in *Lietuviškoji tarybinė enciklopedija* (Vilnius: 1981) 179.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Steigiamojo Seimo darbai (Documents of the Constituent Seimas), March 2, 1922, Session 177, 13.

²⁸ Works of the Constituent Seimas.

implement the aforementioned program. Furthermore, women parliamentarians prepared and presented drafts to the Seimas intended to abolish prostitution regulations²⁹; on the restriction and prohibition of alcohol distribution; on the revision of the definite articles of civil laws stating the inequality of men and women; and on amendments to other laws.³⁰

Legal particularism determined by historical circumstances prevailed in Lithuania. In the southwest part of Lithuania, France's civil code of 1804 (Napoleon) was in effect, while in the Klaipėda Region, in the west part of Lithuania, the civil laws of Germany were effective between 1924 and 1939, and in the rest of Lithuania, Russian tsarist legislation was in force. The provisional constitutions enshrined the continuity of formerly valid laws when they were not in conflict with the constitutional provisions. Women in the constituent Seimas proposed amendments to the civil laws to remove the inequality between men and women in property rights and family law. The proposals were supported by all parties in the Seimas. As a result, the Law on Amending and Supplementing the Civil Laws of 1922 established the principle of separateness of the property of husband and wife, which granted each of them the right to independently make any transactions; there remained the prenuptial agreements, where one could also agree on the common management of property. The rule was enforced that the wife must contribute to the maintenance of the family and even cover for her husband if he had no property and could not earn an income. The legalization of civil marriage was discussed, but until 1940 only church marriage was legal.³¹ Women also demanded that women's surnames be shortened, so as not to reveal their civil status, but this was not legalized until the 21st century.

Despite the adoption of the Law on Amending and Supplementing the Civil Laws of 1922, the inequality of women remained, especially in family law.³² Civil and family law was influenced by tsarist Russian legislation,

²⁹ The Law on Prostitution Regulation had been effective in the Western region of Lithuania from 1807 to 1939. Following it, women prostitutes had to register with the police every week and have valid health certificates. In March 1939, the law prohibiting prostitution was passed.

³⁰ Felicija Bortkevičienė participated in the preparation of the bill on health care. The law was necessary because women started to work in various fields and needed the same legal guarantees as men in the health sector.

³¹ Though the civil registration of marriage was also assumed as legal, there were no institutional arrangements, so in the main part of Lithuania only the church had a right to confirm the legal status of marriage. Only in Klaipėda region was it possible to register marriage in administrative institutions.

³² Civil Laws. Collection of Laws. Kaunas, vol 10, 1, 26. This principle was transferred from the laws of tsarist Russia.

which was very patriarchal and was effective both before and after Lithuania regained its independence in 1918, until 1940. Thus, although the law granted women the right not to live at their husband's home, this was not implemented. The Law on Marriage of 1836 of tsarist Russia remained effective, under which a woman had to live with her husband, who would fix the place of residence. Furthermore, the law of 1922 still considered the husband to be the head of the family, specifying that 'the wife must obey, love and respect her husband, be absolutely obedient to him, do her best to please him and be affectionate as a housewife'.

The organizations belonging to the Lithuanian Women's Movement raised and discussed the issues of unequal payment for the same job to men and women; women's citizenship; and the legal inequality of illegitimate children, education, etc.—the law, for example, did not recognize equal rights to illegitimate children.³³

From 1940 to 1990, when Lithuania was occupied by the Soviet Union, the question of women's political and civil rights and activities was very much affected by social-communist ideology. The repressions of that period (including the deportation of a large part of the Lithuanian society) were equally imposed on men, women, and children. In particular, the Catholic Church was oppressed and nuns were affected by repressions. Officially, the Soviet Union guaranteed the rights and freedoms of citizens regardless of gender. Women's engagement in politics was free—to the extent that their political attitudes and lifestyle were congruent with the ideology of the Communist Party. Suffrage was never an issue. Soviet women were emancipated and well educated (many studied in universities). But there were no freely and democratically organized women's movements; all women-related issues were linked to the official ideology.

The Lithuanian Women's Movement and Political Participation after the Restoration of the Lithuanian State in 1990

Despite formal equality, and despite the fact that two women (Gabrielė Petkevičaitė and Felicija Bortkevičienė) ran for president in 1926, women were never numerous in political institutions. Women made up only as much as 5% of all Seimas members even during the peak of the Lithuanian

³³ Until the beginning of 1970, the rights of illegitimate children were not acknowledged. Such children were ignored and humiliated; they had their mother's maiden name in their birth certificates and later in their passports. It was as late as 1970 when an illegitimate child's rights were acknowledged in the Family Code.

women's movement, in the first half of the 20th century. Women's activity in the Seimas, however, was active and professional.

The Soviet occupation that began in 1940 blocked the development of the state of Lithuania and its law. When Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, the women's movement was reborn. In reaction to long years of Soviet repression, numerous women's organizations began to flourish in a variety of fields. In 1992, the Lithuanian Women's Association was established by various women's organizations and served as a platform for the Lithuanian Women's Party. The Women's Party's main aims are to improve women's representation in state institutions at all levels, while trying to introduce and strengthen the values of political morality.³⁴ In 1998, the party was named the New Democracy/Women's Party, and in 2000 it changed its name once again to the New Democracy Party. In 2002, it conjoined with the Peasant's Union to form the Union of New Democracy and Peasant's Parties.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, equality is no longer a legal problem. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania of 1992 consolidates the equality of men and women. Special laws and legal mechanisms have been created to ensure the effective implementation of the equal rights of men and women in political, economic, and social life.

In 1998, the Law on Equal Opportunities was passed and the office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson was established, its main task being the investigation of complaints on different discrimination issues. This institution receives many complaints from women who experience some form of discrimination in the labor market.

Women representatives in parliament are not numerous. In 2004, 31 women were elected to the 9th Seimas (out of 141 members) and 27 women were elected to the 10th Seimas (2008–2012) which corresponds to about 19%. In 2004, the Women's Parliamentary Group was established and includes all female members of the Seimas (31 in total). There are no parliamentary gender quotas. Five women (out of 13) were elected to the European Parliament in 2004. A woman also represents Lithuania in the European Commission—in the year 2004, Dalia Grybauskaitė, the former minister of finance, was appointed to the office of the commissioner of the European Union budget.

Women are also few in the executive branch, where there are usually between one and three out of thirteen female ministers. Only once has a

³⁴ Any man or woman could enter the party. At the end of 1995, the party included more than 1,000 members.

woman held the office of the prime minister—Danutė Kazimiera Prunskienė (1990–1991). And, even though women judges make up more than half of the entire corps of judges, they usually work in the lower levels of courts; only a few are justices of the Supreme Court of Lithuania,³⁵ the Supreme Administrative Court of Lithuania, or the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania.

Nevertheless, women's professional activities are increasing. Moreover, during the last elections of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, held on 17 May 2009, Dalia Grybauskaitė was elected as the first female President of the Republic by the impressive majority of votes: almost 70 percent of those who participated in the elections, over 50 percent of voters.

To conclude, the issue of women's equality with men in Lithuania is still important in most fields of professional activity and politics, especially considering career advancement to senior positions. One of the few attempts to explore women's discrimination in Lithuania, a study on the advancement of women in sciences and high technologies, carried out by a network of Baltic scientists, shows that women do not achieve anything significant in traditional 'male' sciences such as mathematics, or physics, which hinders their advancement to senior positions in some Lithuanian academic institutions.³⁶ Although discrimination on the grounds of gender (and other grounds) is forbidden by law, in practice the question of women's and men's equality still deserves special attention.

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³⁵ Since June 2008, 8 out of 37 judges of the Supreme Court of Lithuania are women.

³⁶ BASNET, *Women in Sciences and High Technology in the Baltic States: Problems and Solutions. Fp6 Basnet Project Results* (Vilnius: 2007) 300.

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WINNING WOMEN'S VOTE: EXPERIENCE FROM LATVIA

Aija Branta

Historical Context

Men and women in Latvia were fully enfranchised simultaneously at a relatively early stage, in 1918. The struggle for women's suffrage cannot be separated from the development of men's political rights and was deeply connected to the national liberation movement. Because of this connection, as we shall see, the main actors in the Latvian story of female suffrage were political parties rather than the women's movement.

In 1795, the territory of Latvia (three separate provinces named Baltic Province) was part of the Russian Empire. The prevailing state system was an authoritarian one, in which the autocracy refused to deal with social problems or to give the people a role in governing the country. It had no constitution or parliament and restricted basic freedoms, such as freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly and association. Moreover, a chauvinistic ethnic policy granted special privileges to Russians and promoted 'russification' in the educational system, state activities, and municipal institutions.

During the second half of the 19th century, the traditionally agrarian Baltic societies gradually embraced modernity, including its characteristic economic and social model, lifestyle, and values. Modernization included such features as industrialization, urbanization, commercialization, new social structures, the division between the public and private spheres, the secularization of consciousness, and the development of literacy. People's attitudes toward society changed. As liberalism and a sense of personal freedom started to spread, people became conscious of themselves as individuals and as participants in social, political, and cultural life.

At that time, during a period known as the National Awakening, a major national movement known as the *Jaunlatvieši* (Young Latvians) commenced its activities. The movement raised national consciousness and supported political reform, advocating the idea of a unified Latvian people ruling its own destiny in its own land. To this end, the *Jaunlatvieši*

focused on education and enlightenment and promoted the development of national political organizations.¹

The most important ideological and political movement in Latvia, however, was the *Jaunā Strāva* (New Current). This movement, which began to develop in the late 1880s, united young, democratically minded Latvian intellectuals. It revolved mainly around the newspaper *Dienas Lapa* (Daily Page) and legally permitted societies, but it also carried out extensive underground activities. Advocating civil liberties and parliamentary governance and spreading information about democratic experiences abroad, the movement's activists laid the foundation for Latvia's democratic tradition, made socialist and Marxist ideas influential, and stimulated the struggle for democracy.

Neo-nationalism emerged at the end of the 19th century in protest against what was regarded as the cosmopolitanism and national nihilism of the *Jaunā Strāva*, based on an uncritical adherence to the Marxist idea of proletariat internationalism. Neo-nationalists paid greater attention to the economic achievements, education, and enlightenment of Latvians. Nevertheless, socialist ideas spread rapidly in Latvia. Both urban factories and rural areas became fertile grounds for numerous underground social democratic organizations. As we shall see, these organizations, as well as those established in later years, played an important role in the national liberation movement and the fight for female suffrage.

World War I led to great changes in Europe's political geography, including in Latvia. The 1917 revolution and the fall of the Russian Empire and the political defeat of Germany propitiated the creation of the independent democratic state of Latvia on November 18, 1918.

Winning the Right to Suffrage

Until the beginning of the 19th century, women could not participate directly in any organized social activity as individuals, but only as members of their family (i.e., as wives, mothers, or sisters).² Participation in charity organizations was an exception.³ Women involved in charity were

¹ Following Western European ideas, Young Latvians combined elements of liberalism and nationalism, directing Latvian history on a course towards democracy. Due to the political situation, however, it did not consistently voice democratic demands, but oriented its activities to bring about a slow process of liberalization.

² Zelče V., *Nezināmā. Latvijas sievietes 19. gadsimta otrajā pusē* (Rīga: 2002) 117.

³ The first one was founded in 1817.

mostly educated and wealthy women seeking to enhance their social esteem and appreciation. Philanthropic enterprises were intended both to help the beneficiaries to become self-sufficient and to give their organizers practical experience in administration and public life. In 1869, the first mixed charity society, in which women took an active part, was created in Riga.⁴ The largest religious confessions in Latvia—Lutheran and Catholic—joined in charity activities, supporting the opening of several Latvian schools and contributing to Latvians' political awakening.⁵

Aside from charity, however, women were excluded from public life. According to the 1866 Law on Parish Administration in Baltic Province, for example, local parish meetings were to be formed by every male land owner in the parish and every tenth landless parish inhabitant.⁶ Tsarist Russia's 1892 Municipal Government Act on municipal elections granted the right to vote and be voted for only to men who met high property qualifications.⁷

From the 1880s on, women's social status was broadly discussed in Latvia. The *Jaunā Strāva* movement, established in the 1880s, supported women's emancipation and encouraged them to get involved in social life more actively. It was the first social movement in which women took an active part. Indeed, it created the preconditions for women's wider political involvement at the beginning of the 20th century. Some women⁸ were brought to trial for their participation in the movement's activities. The most prominent women, such as Elza Rozenberga (Aspazija), Doroteja Pliekšāne, Anna Ulpe, Klāra Kalniņa, and others, presented their views on the importance of education and civil rights in women's lives in *Dienas Lapa*, the movement's newspaper. The *Jaunā Strāva* supported women's right to university education and to access public employment, and acknowledged women's equality with men more generally, thus working to erode the stereotypes of women as members of a lower class. Indeed, the movement had a socialist-oriented ideology. Socialists believed that

⁴ Invaluable was the contribution of Katrīna Dombrovska, who after her husband's death became the only manager of a big enterprise. Her business activities were successful at a time when this was not in tune with society's views of women's abilities and lifestyle.

⁵ The role of Catholic priests in Latgale is noteworthy. Latgale was part of the Russian province Vitebsk, not a part of the Baltic province. Catholic priest Francis Trasūns made it his life duty to join Latgale with other historical districts of Latvia.

⁶ Kalniņš V. and Apsītis R., *Latvijas Valsts un Tiesību Vēsture II* (Rīga: 1978) 23.-24.

⁷ 20. Gadsimta Latvijas Vēsture I, *Latvija no gadsimta sākuma līdz neatkarības pasludināšanai 1900–1918* (Rīga: 2000) 84.

⁸ For example, Klāra Veilande, Austrā Čikste.

wives and husbands were equal, comrades at home and outside it, and strove to overcome the image of women as minors or as lower in status than men. They also believed that the involvement of educated and sufficiently trained women in public life would benefit society, as a higher number of public figures would increase competition among them, and stimulate both men and women to try and improve work in favor of society. By advocating women's equality with men, their civil liberties and participation in parliamentary governance, and their equal rights in other fields of life, and by involving women in the *Jaunā Strāva's* activities, socialists contributed to changing society's attitude towards woman's role. Women's successful activities in different fields—education, literature, art, pedagogy, and charity—would contribute to this change.

The socialism of *Jaunā Strāva* contrasted with the position of neo-nationalists and their supporters vis-à-vis the role of women in family life and in society. Neo-nationalists believed men and women to have different, naturally given functions in the world, and that both had to be respected and honored. The greatest right of a woman was to be a wife and mother; women were the genesis of family life, and their intelligence and education could make a family either happy and strong or miserable and weak. In the interests of the nation, they warned against getting carried away by women's 'liberation' movements. Neo-nationalists predicted the collapse of the family and social disorders if women were given a role outside the home. They associated the women's question, as did the largest denominations—Lutherans and Catholics—with the destruction of the existing social order.

Due to political restrictions in the Russian Empire, some Latvian organizations were established at émigré social democratic centers in the United States, Britain, and Switzerland. These included the Latvian Social Democratic Union in Boston (1898), the Western European Latvian Social Democratic Union in London (1899), and the Latvian Social Democratic Union in Zurich (1903). This last one played a most important role in developing the idea of Latvian statehood—that is, moving from autonomy to independent democratic state. Its program envisaged the toppling of the tsarist autocracy, replacing it with a republic based on a democratic constitution that would recognize civil liberties for all citizens.

Some underground social democratic organizations were also created in Latvia. In 1901, the Courland Social Democratic Group was established in Jelgava. Several social democratic groups in Riga, Ventspils, Liepaja, and Talsi joined, and in 1902 they formed the Baltic Latvian Social Democratic Worker's Organisation. In 1904, social democrats were strong enough to

establish the Latvian Social Democratic Worker's Party, which included in its program objectives analogous to those of its Swiss counterpart.⁹ This party appreciated women's participation in the national liberation movement and supported men and women's equal political rights. Some women were party members.¹⁰ Later, however, this party would change its position to follow the Russian Bolsheviks, who subordinated women's rights to the struggle for the creation of a socialist state and the proletariat dictatorship.¹¹

Following the Tsar decree of February 1905 regarding necessary electoral reforms, and at the initiative of the Latvian Social Democratic Worker's Party, the women's committee of the society *Auseklis*¹² submitted a petition to the Tsar, demanding women's rights. The demands included, for the first time, equal suffrage rights for women. Suffrage, however, was not women's central claim. They mostly demanded elementary legal rights—such as separate passports, freedom of residence, freedom to access higher education, freedom to manage their own property, greater rights to divorce, and equal salaries as men for equal work. Indeed, women's approach to suffrage rights was mostly instrumental, based on the view that gaining the vote could help to repeal old laws and pass new democratic ones to ameliorate women's position in all spheres of life.¹³

The Law on Elections to the Russian Duma passed in August 1905 excluded women and required high property qualification for voters. In response, the Latvian Social Democratic Worker's Party agitated for a boycott of the elections. At a number of parish meetings, it was decided that elections would be boycotted until all people aged 21—both men and women—had the right to vote in general, direct, and secret elections.

The Manifesto on the Improvement of the State Order, issued on October 17, 1905 by Tsar Nicholas II, addressed the social unrest known as the 1905 Russian Revolution. It pledged to grant civil liberties to the people based on the inviolability of the person and on freedom of conscience,

⁹ Bleiere D. et al., *History of Latvia: The 20th Century* (Rīga: 2006) 60.–61.

¹⁰ Klāra Kalniņa was one of the founders of the Courland Social Democratic Group in 1901. She was an active social democrat. From 1944 on, she lived in Germany and Sweden.

¹¹ Shukman H. (ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of the Russian Revolution* (Oxford: 1988) 35.

¹² Established in 1891, its main purpose was to favor women's intellectual development. It mainly acted as a charity organization, opening several reading rooms and granting scholarships to studying women.

¹³ Pīpiņa B., *Sieviešu kustība Latvijā. Latvija desmit gados: Latvijas Valsts dibināšana un viņas pirmo 10 gadu darba vēsture. Jubilejas komisijas izdevums* (1928) 532.

speech, assembly, and association, and broad participation in the Duma with the introduction of universal male suffrage. This triggered the creation of more political parties. The Latvian Constitutional Democratic Party (*cadets*) was created in Riga in 1905, with a program envisaging autonomy, the use of the Latvian language at schools, courts, and state institutions, and male franchise based on property qualification. Women's political rights were not included in the program. In 1905, the Latvian Democrats Party was established in Riga. Its program included the unification of territories where Latvians resided, extensive rights and authority on cultural and economic issues, and women's political rights.¹⁴

The Latvian Social Democratic Worker's Party summoned two revolutionary forums in Riga in 1905, the congress of primary school teachers held on November 10–14 and the congress of Latvian parish representatives held on November 19. Both demanded a constituent assembly to be formed on the basis of democratic elections. They insisted that all people in the empire participate in the elections, regardless of property status, sex, etc. The congress of Latvian parish representatives decided to form parish local governments immediately and until the Russian Constituent Assembly would be summoned. Parish residents' meetings were organized and local parish governments were elected. Women took an active part in the meetings and in the elections. Indeed, during the 1905 revolution women became conscious of themselves as part of the national liberation movement and claims for female suffrage became stronger. Some women¹⁵ defended women's ethical supremacy and working capacities. They argued that women in power would stop corruption, larceny, and libertinism, that their mother's hearts would bring social justice into the world. If women held power, there would be no wars, since mothers would not let their sons, husbands, or fathers get killed. As a result, slightly over 5% of women were elected to the new parish institutions.¹⁶ However, the newly elected local governments were not long-lived, as the Tsar's military troops arrived in the territory of Latvia in January and February 1906.

The 1905 revolution was repressed and endless trials and reprisals were held against participants. After the repression, underground revolutionary parties became significantly weaker, while legal parties were unstable groupings that worked rather like interest groups.¹⁷ During this

¹⁴ 20.Gadsimta Latvijas Vēsture I, *Latvija no gadsimta* 357–358.

¹⁵ Among them was Elza Rozenberga.

¹⁶ 20.Gadsimta Latvijas Vēsture I, *Latvija no gadsimta* 367.

¹⁷ Dišlers K., *Ievads Latvijas valsts tiesību zinātnē* (Rīga: 1930) 52.

reactionary era, women's main public activities involved participation in charity organizations and trade unions, which were legally permitted but placed under strong police supervision. To be sure, new women's associations were established: the Baltic Women's Union in 1909 and the Women's Work Union in 1911. Their demands, however, focused on acute social problems, such as low pay, dangerous working conditions, appalling housing, poor diet, ill health, alcoholism, and prostitution.

During World War I, in 1915, Germany military troops occupied almost all Latvian territory. Some women volunteered for war work in military hospitals. Some replaced men in jobs. In 1917, the Latvian Refugees Supply Committee was established in Petersburg by well-known public figures and writers¹⁸ of both sexes. It organized educational and cultural activities for Latvians.

In February 1917, the Russian Revolution gave rise to the issue of Latvia's national statehood. Several socialist parties (Latvian Social Democrats, Party of Latvian Revolutionary Socialists (*Essers*), People's Party) were active in the non-occupied part of Latvia, and new parties were created in the spring of 1917 (Latvian Peasantry Union, Latvian Radical Democratic Party, Latvian National Democratic Party, Republican Party, and many other smaller groups). Well-known female politicians¹⁹ began actively participating in their parties' work. Most political parties formed at the beginning of the 20th century appreciated women's role in the national liberation movement and included universal suffrage in their programs, based on the idea that a democratic state is one in which all citizens are equal and enjoy equal political rights.²⁰ The first active women politicians were nominated by non-party public workers,²¹ and some women were elected to their party central committee.²² On November 17, 1918, the Latvian People's Council—an interim legislative institution—was created. This was not an elected body. Rather, its 40 members were nominated as a result of an agreement among eight democratic political parties

¹⁸ For example, Anna Brigadere, Kārlis Skalbe, Jānis Akurāters, Jānis Čakste, Arvēds Bergs, etc.

¹⁹ For example, Klāra Kalniņa, Aspazija, Berta Vesmane in the Latvian Social Democratic Worker's Party, and Apolonija Laurinoviča and Valerija Seile in the Latgales Peasant Party.

²⁰ The Latvian People's Party and the Latvian Constitutional Democratic Party were exceptions.

²¹ Zelma Cēsniēce-Freidenfelde and Berta Pīpiņa.

²² Zelma Cēsniēce-Freidenfelde, Berta Pīpiņa in the non-party group, Valerija Seile, E. Albertiņa in the Latgales Peasant Party, and Krista Baumanē in the Latvian Democrats Party.

and in cooperation with representatives of the Latgale Land Council (each party had a certain number of seats in the council). The only woman in the People's Council was the social democrat Klāra Kalniņa.²³ The People's Council passed the so-called Political Platform, which became the first Constitution of the Republic of Latvia.

On November 18, 1918, the People's Council proclaimed the independent democratic Republic of Latvia, serving as its interim legislative institution until April 30, 1920, when the Constitutional Assembly began working. The People's Council adopted the Law on Elections to the Constitutional Assembly and the Law on Citizenship, which provided that a Constitutional Assembly be elected by general, equal, direct, and secret ballot based on proportional representation. Citizens of both sexes aged 21 and over and residing in Latvia had the right to vote and to stand for the elections.²⁴ Analogous provisions were stipulated for local elections.

Because of World War I, elections to the constitutional assembly could not be held until April 17 and 18, 1920.²⁵ There were 57 candidate lists covering five constituencies, and 16 of the lists won seats in the Assembly. Some parties included women in their lists. Six female representatives were elected.²⁶

The *Satversme* (Constitution) of the Republic of Latvia was adopted in 1922. It was determined that the *Saeima* (Parliament) shall be elected in general, equal, direct, and proportional elections by secret vote (Article 6). Full-fledged Latvian citizens over 21 years of age were granted the right to vote and to be elected (Article 8 and 9). Article 82 of the *Satversme* declared all citizens equal before the law and courts.

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Women's Legal Status Before and After Winning Suffrage

At the beginning of the 19th century, children were mostly educated at home. According to the population census of 1897, 78% of the population

²³ Pīpiņa B., *Sieviešu kustība Latvijā* 513.

²⁴ Dišlers K., *Ievads Latvijas valsts tiesību zinātnē* 91–94.

²⁵ At the end of 1918, Latvia was threatened by Russia and by German troops. The latter were expelled only at the end of 1919, while the Peace Treaty with the Soviet Russia was signed at the beginning of 1920.

²⁶ Aspazija, Klāra Kalniņa, and Berta Vesmane from the social democrats, Zelma Cēsniece-Freidenfelde from the non-party group, Apolonija Laurinoviča and Valērija Seile from the Latgale Peasant Party.

were literate persons, 77.9% of whom were women. Literacy was favored by the practice of the Lutheran Church of denying Confirmation to illiterates. However, the official educational system reflected the dominant view in Latvian society that a woman's main role was to be a wife, a mother, and a preserver of the home. Only boys were trained in secondary schools that opened the door to higher education. The training programs in grammar schools for girls (the first one was founded in 1805) were narrower and geared towards the acquisition of the practical skills needed for women's everyday life.

The fight for equal education, therefore, was one of the basic objectives of the first women's societies. Those societies organized educational lectures, opened reading rooms, founded schools for girls, arranged additional classes for free, and allocated scholarships to support women's studies. In the second half of 19th century, several Latvian women began studies in higher educational establishments, mainly in Western Europe. They generally studied medicine, pedagogy, and music.²⁷ In 1917, women also registered in the Riga Polytechnic Institute (seven women entered that year).

Mandatory education in six-grade schools was introduced only in 1919. Children's education began at a two-year school (for children aged 7 to 8), followed by six years of primary school, including four mandatory grades for all children aged 8 to 14 and two years of additional training that prepared children for secondary education. Schools also existed for children over the age of 14 who had not previously attended school. Mandatory education was provided for free. In 1919, the University of Latvia was founded, and in that year was the leader in Europe in the number of female students enrolled (39 female students per 100 male students).

Women attained equal political rights before they had equal civil rights. Indeed, the question of civil rights conditioned women's involvement in the struggle for suffrage. According to family law in force in the 19th century, minor girls were subject to their fathers. After coming of age (at 21), women were permitted to start an independent life with parental permission only. Married women were placed under their husband's guardianship. The husband decided on the common children and on his wife's activities and personal belongings. Married women also faced discrimination in the labor market—they needed their husband's consent to sign a

²⁷ For example, Dora Pliekšāne, Klāra Hibšmane, and Lonija Treigūte studied in Zurich, and Anna Ulpe studied in Sorbonne.

labor contract. Around 1888, the first female doctors began working in Latvia, but received a lower salary, as they were employed in less remunerated positions or worked as assistants to male doctors.

Women's associations²⁸ established after the Republic of Latvia was proclaimed made great efforts to improve women's position, and in many fields made progress. In 1921, the Law on Marriage was passed, providing that divorce would be executed by courts and recognizing the rights of a divorced spouse to receive support from the former spouse who was blameable for the divorce. In 1922, women's working day was limited to eight hours, women's night work was forbidden, and additional payment for extra hours at the amount of 50% and two weeks vacation were provided. Women were also granted 12-week childbirth leaves. It was prohibited to give pregnant women a warning notice or to employ them in unhealthy work. In 1923, women were provided with an eight-month child allowance amounting to 25% of their wage. Mother and children with no supporters were granted an allowance in 1935. The laws adopted between 1920 and 1922 provided for pensions for the families of disabled soldiers of World War I, for families of state officials and their servants.

Unfortunately, equality between women and men was not achieved in civil and family law. Despite proposals submitted by the Association of Latvian Academically Educated Women,²⁹ the civil law adopted in 1937 contained legal provisions that discriminated against women, especially married ones. Thus, husbands alone had the right to manage the property of their wives—both the property they had before marriage and that gained during marriage. Similarly, on parental rights the father had the last word.

After Soviet occupation began in 1940, the equality of men and women was officially proclaimed, but was not made visible. Women, on average, had higher levels of education than men, but they worked in low-paid services and jobs in the Soviet system and earned less than men. Because of their low salaries, nearly all women worked full-time jobs; they were subjected, in addition, to the so-called 'double burden', as most domestic

²⁸ Thus, the Association of Latvian Academically Educated Women and the Latvian Women's National League. The latter, founded in 1917, organized its work by sections and had a Legal Section that followed legislation so that no laws discriminating against women were passed.

²⁹ Association of Latvian Academically Educated Women (LAISA) was founded in 1928. It was admitted to the International Federation of University Women (IFUW) in 1929 in Geneva. There were several sections. For example, the Legal Section, Section of History, etc.

work was done by women.³⁰ Moreover, the Soviet totalitarian regime banned the activities of women's organizations and confiscated those organizations' property. Many public figures emigrated;³¹ many others³² were exiled to Siberia and died. Some women's associations were established, but they endorsed the official ideology and could not be regarded as democratic.

After the restoration of independence in 1990, the *Satversme* of the Republic of Latvia (adopted in 1922) was restored and amended. The *Satversme* consolidates the equality of men and women. Since then, Latvia has ratified many international human rights instruments prohibiting any form of discrimination, including discrimination against women in all its social, economic, and political manifestations. The new laws secure women's equal rights in the economic, social, cultural, and civil—or any other—fields. The Labour Law includes a provision preventing employers from enquiring whether potential female employees are pregnant, and provides that pregnant women or women with children under the age of three cannot be dismissed. The social security system guarantees equality in social services regardless of gender. Regulations on unemployment benefits, parental leave, and other parental benefits do not discriminate on the basis of gender—parents can choose who enjoys them. Protection mechanisms are established for cases of rights violations.

Equality of men and women exists in many professional fields. At present, there are about 76% female judges at all levels of courts and 58% in the highest court. Almost all chief-judges at all levels of courts are females. Two women are among the seven judges of the Constitutional Court. About 49% of lawyers and about 64% of leading specialists in the media are female. Many newspapers and magazines have female editors—among them the largest national daily, *Diena*, and the evening newspaper *Rīgas Balss*.

³⁰ Eglīte P., "Development of the Gender Equality: The Case of Latvia" (paper prepared for "Women's World 99: The 7th International, Interdisciplinary Congress on Women", June 20–26, 1999, Troms, Norway).

³¹ Klāra Kalniņa, social democrat, deputy of the Constitutional Assembly; Elza Kezberē, publisher; etc.

³² Berta Pīpiņa, leader of the Latvian Women's National Leagues, deputy of the 4th Saeima; Berta Vesmane, social democrat, deputy of the Constitutional Assembly; Emīlija Benjāmiņa, publisher; etc.

The Question of Political Equality

After women won suffrage in 1918, their participation in politics was not significant. Six women were elected to the Constitutional Assembly in 1920, and the first woman became a member of the government in 1921.³³ Yet no woman was elected to the *Saeima* until 1931. The situation in local governments did not differ much.³⁴

During the 1930s, the strength of the women's movement resided in the Latvian Women Organization Council, which united six women's organizations. The Council pushed for women to participate at all levels of power. In 1934, it organized a conference to discuss, among other issues, women's legal position and their participation at state and local levels of government. The Latvian Women's National League³⁵ was one of the associations that actively participated in agitation work for female candidates. During the elections in 1925, it submitted a demand to set up a special ballot box for women, in order to investigate which parties and candidates were preferred by women.

Under Soviet occupation, women's organizations were prohibited. The official ideology preached complete equality between men and women, and no formal obstacles existed for women's participation in public life. Women were granted at least one third of elected posts at all levels. However, neither female nor male deputies could influence political decisions. Elections at all levels were formalities, because only one list of deputy candidates was put forth—the one composed by the Communist Party and submitted to the people for formal confirmation only. The work of parliament (the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR) and that of local governments was also a formality. Members of the Supreme Council fulfilled their duties without ceasing their professional activities, as the body simply approved decisions that had been prepared in advance by the Communist Party.

Since the restoration of independence, the percentage of women in the *Saeima* has increased but has never exceeded 21%. Data show the growth

³³ Valentīna Seile occupied the post of Minister of Education.

³⁴ Six women were elected to the Riga City Council: Aspazija, Klāra Kalniņa, K. Grīnberģe, A. Kranalse, O. Riekstiņa; Berta Pīpiņa. In 1925 Pīpiņa became a member of the Board of the Riga City Council and led the Social Welfare Department.

³⁵ Latvian Women's National League (established in 1917, in Petrograd) restored its activity in 1922.

of women's representation also in local governments—34.4% of which now have female mayors. Nevertheless, the question of women's participation in politics has only recently been included in the political agenda, in the 6th *Saeima* in 1995. It was then proposed that gender quotas be imposed on political parties' election lists, so that no list would be more than two thirds candidates of the same gender. The proposal was rejected. Before the elections of the 7th *Saeima* in 1998, a 25% quota was proposed for women candidates in electoral lists. This proposition was rejected as well. Both propositions were criticized as unfair. On the one hand, they did not contemplate parity—that is, an equal number of male and female deputies. But, on the other hand, they were considered discriminatory against men.

The issue of women's presence in political life also became urgent in the context of the preparation of the Law on European Parliament Elections. On this occasion, arguments turned around parity. It was proposed that both genders must have a roughly equal proportion of candidates in electoral lists.³⁶ Zipper lists were proposed. It was argued that since women in Latvia form one half of society, if not more, there should be an equal proportion of the genders in the *Saeima* and local governments.

Opponents of electoral quotas or parity voiced the opinion that women's participation in the political life of Latvia is not a problem, pointing to the number of elected women in the *Saeima*, where they have been chairpersons of many parliamentary committees, including the Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Corruption and Organized Crimes. Women have also been deputy chairpersons of the Committee of Foreign Affairs and the Committee of Legal Affairs. Three times women have been speakers of the *Saeima*. Two times the State President has been a woman. Currently a woman occupies the top position at the State Audit. Women are also represented in government and three times have been Minister of Justice and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Quotas, or parity, are also opposed on the basis of a practical argument. According to the Law on Elections, voters may choose to put an '+' mark opposite the name of any candidate, indicating special support to the candidate from this voter. If, on the other hand, the voter does not support a candidate included in the ballot paper, he/she may cross out the name of this candidate. The number of votes cast for each candidate shall be equal

³⁶ The Latvian nongovernmental organization for lobby of women insisted on it.

to the number of votes cast for the list in which his/her name has been included, minus the number of ballot papers on which the name of this candidate has been crossed out, plus the number of all the ballot papers on which the voters have made a '+' mark opposite the candidate's name. The candidates who have received the largest number of votes shall be regarded as elected. Thus, a gender quota system can increase the number of women candidates, but does not ensure their election.

Statistics show that women are a large part of the electorate in Latvia, yet women seem rarely to vote for women. For instance, about 26% of women stood as candidates for 7th *Saeima*, but only 17% were elected. There were more women (about 35–45%) in small parties, which were not elected to the *Saeima*. For the 8th *Saeima*, one third of candidates were women, but only one fifth were elected. In 1998, the Latvian Social Democrat Women's Organisation participated in the elections. The party nominated 16 candidates, yet it did not receive sufficient support to get elected to the *Saeima*. There was one women's party out of the 19 lists of parties participating in elections of the 9th *Saeima*, but it was not elected. In the *Saeima* elections of October 2010, out of a total of 100 deputies, 19 women on the lists of five parties ultimately prevailing in the elections were elected to the *Saeima*, corresponding to about 20% in total. Due to their appointment to the office of the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Culture, two of them temporarily resigned their seats.

The project 'Gender and Politics in Latvia' was launched in 2002 to investigate why women prefer male candidates and why women do not get involved in political life as readily as men. The project aims to increase the number of women candidates in elections. Its task is to analyze factors that influence the participation of women in decision-making. In the last few years, different aspects of gender equality have been investigated, such as men and women in governance; the role of media in the distribution of power; and the realization of gender equality principles in local government. All data indicate that there is still some way to go before women's political equality with men is achieved.

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SUFFRAGE AND THE NATION: WOMEN'S VOTE IN ESTONIA

Helen Biin and Anneli Albi*

The Building of the Estonian Nation

In Estonia, women's path to voting rights was marked by the absence of a distinct female suffrage movement; both women and men gained the right to vote and stand for elections in 1918–1920 as part of a broader political process that led to the creation of the independent state of Estonia in 1918.¹ The issue of female suffrage arose in the context of, and was deeply interconnected with, the nationalist movement and the fight for the country's independence; the events that paved the way to universal suffrage traced back to the middle of the 19th century.

Having at various times in history been conquered and controlled by Germany, Sweden, Poland, Denmark, and other countries, Estonia was in the 19th century a part of the Russian Empire. While the Estonian and Livonian Provinces² of the Russian Empire were ruled by the Russian Tsar, they were in fact controlled by the Baltic Germans who had historically owned the estates where Estonians worked in feudal serfdom. The dominant position of the Baltic German gentry was supported and its privileges were maintained by special legislation that applied to the Baltic region, entitled the Baltic Special Order (*'Balti Erikord'*). The Baltic Special Order had been established by the Russian Tsar, Peter I, in 1710 after the Swedish Empire lost Estonia to Russia in the aftermath of the Great Northern War. According to this special legislation, the Baltic German gentry maintained its leading position in society and was thus in control of all spheres of life, including governing of towns, production, trade, church, and education. Under the legislation, only Germans or persons who spoke German could be appointed to leading positions in society,

* Sections 1–4 were written by Helen Biin; section 5 was written by Anneli Albi.

¹ As will be seen in greater detail below, Estonia gained independence in 1918, and women were allowed to vote and stand in elections in 1919; the voting rights were subsequently incorporated in the first Estonian constitution, adopted in 1920.

² Contemporary Estonia is formed by the northern part of the 19th century Livonian Province (which is now the southern part of Estonia) and the Estonian Province (now the northern part of Estonia).

and German was the language of public administration and education, with Estonians having no access to higher education and virtually no political rights.³

The second decade of the 19th century brought many important changes to the Baltic Provinces of the Russian Empire. Serfdom was abolished in Estonia and Livonia in 1816 and 1819 respectively, and Estonians were given some basic civil rights: peasants could, at least officially, conclude contracts, move within the country, and own property.⁴ However, they still remained highly dependent on the gentry. Baltic Germans owned over 90 percent of the agricultural land⁵ and hence, despite the abolition of serfdom, peasants were forced to work for estate owners in order to be able to live on their land. At the same time, rural municipalities were formed all over the Estonian and Livonian provinces and all adult men were given the right to speak and vote at meetings of rural municipality councils.⁶ Municipalities, however, were controlled by estate owners.⁷ Estonian peasants' rights to own property, to move within the country, and to make decisions about their lives in general remained very limited. The Estonian nation thus faced an enormous challenge in terms of gaining civil rights and forming a national identity.

Discontent with such an unsatisfactory situation sparked several riots in the second half of the 19th century. In addition to organizing riots, however, the peasants formed united movements and sent several pleading letters to the Russian Emperor. For example, in 1864 a letter was sent to the Tsar that included mainly economic issues, a request to liberate the councils of rural municipalities from the patronage and control of the Baltic German rulers.⁸ This letter is regarded as the first influential political achievement of the Estonian nationalist movement.⁹ The request was indeed fulfilled two years later by virtue of the new Rural Municipalities Act (*Vallakogukonnaseadus*), whereby the peasants (Estonians) were liberated from the patronage of the estate owners (Baltic Germans); they were granted the right to vote in the elections of rural government

³ Graf M., *Eesti Rahvusriik. Ideed ja Lahendused: Ärkamisajast Eesti Vabariigi Sünnini* (Tallinn: 1993).

⁴ Selirand J. and Siilivask K., *Eesti Maast ja Rahvast. Muinasajast Maailmasõijani* (Tallinn: 1996).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Graf, *Eesti Rahvusriik*; Selirand and Siilivask, *Eesti Maast ja Rahvast*.

⁹ Graf, *Eesti Rahvusriik*.

councils and to send their representatives to these.¹⁰ The estate owners lost their previous right to veto the decisions of the rural councils.¹¹ Even though the newly acquired right to vote and to stand for elections only applied to adult men who owned property,¹² it was nevertheless a dramatic leap forward, providing Estonians the much-needed opportunity to gain first-hand experiences in political activity.

The nationalist movement began to develop in the second half of the 19th century, first on the cultural level and later evolving into a movement that sought political rights for Estonians. It was strongly influenced by political events and social trends in the Russian Empire and the world in general. In particular, in its early days the movement was inspired by a number of civil reforms in the Russian Empire through which Estonians gained better access to education and the right to move to towns. The national movement was subsequently influenced by the 1905 and 1917 Russian revolutions, the emergence of the workers' movement, World War I, and the creation of independent Estonia in 1918. The women's rights movements emerged as a by-product of this Estonian nationalist movement.

Women's Suffrage and Nationalism

Considering the historical context, it was natural that the issue of women's suffrage emerged only after the Estonian nation as such had gained a certain level of civil rights. Thus, the history of women's suffrage in Estonia is inseparable from the history of the Estonian national movement and the fight for the country's independence in general. The story of the women's suffrage movement began, and can only be told together with, the story of the nationalist movement.

The nationalist movement, which was a prelude to universal political rights and female suffrage, gained momentum and became especially prominent during the last two decades of the 19th century—a period that came to be known as the 'Age of National Awakening', when a shift occurred in people's attitudes to political issues, especially among socialists and students.¹³ The beginning of the women's movement in Estonia

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Selirand and Siilivask, *Eesti Maast ja Rahvast*.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Hallik T., "Eesti Naine Poliitikas enne Iseseisvusaega: Hääleõigus ja Poliitika", in Johanson K. et al. (eds.) *Eesti Naine Sillakohtust Võrdõiguslikkuseni* (Tartu: 2001).

also dates back to the Age of Awakening, when the first voluntary women's groups were founded in order to support the creation of the first Estonian-speaking high school.¹⁴ However, the initial women's groups were first and foremost concerned with issues of nationality, i.e., obtaining civil and political rights for the Estonian people in general rather than for women specifically. Nevertheless, the suffrage movement and the debate on women's rights were not unfamiliar to women, as the first Estonian women's magazine, *Linda*,¹⁵ published several articles on such issues in 1895 and 1896.¹⁶ Inspired by women's suffrage in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, the authors of these articles pointed out the beneficial effects of women's suffrage in these societies.¹⁷

The nationalist movement peaked during the Russian Revolution of 1905, by which time both the workers who supported socialist ideas and the nationalist bourgeoisie had finally started to recognize themselves as political subjects.¹⁸ Similarly to other national peripheries of the Russian Empire, the revolution provided Estonians with an incentive actively to fight for their civil and political rights¹⁹ and motivated women to assert themselves as social actors.²⁰ Indeed, while the main activities of the revolution-inspired events in Estonia were aimed at obtaining civil and political rights for Estonians, a discussion about women's rights and suffrage also surfaced.²¹ Opponents, most prominently Jaan Tõnisson,²² argued that the traditional division of labor should remain intact: women should take care of the private sphere (family and home), while men should be active in the public realm.²³ Allowing women to enter politics was seen as tantamount to a national tragedy, since raising children and taking care of the

¹⁴ Laja R., "Women's Organizations as Part of the Third Sector in Estonia", in Maimik P., Mänd K., and Ü. Papp (eds.) *Towards a Balanced Society: Women and Men in Estonia* (Tallinn: 2000).

¹⁵ First published in 1887 in Viljandi (a small town in the southern part of Estonia) by the first Estonian feminist, Lilli Suburg.

¹⁶ Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Graf, *Eesti Rahvusriik*.

¹⁹ Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

²⁰ Mäelo H., *Naine Läbi Aegade. Naise osa Eesti Ühiskondlikus ja Rahvuslikus Arengus*, 2nd Revised Edition (Tallinn: 1957/1999).

²¹ Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

²² Born in 1868 (date of death unknown), he was one of the leaders of the nationalist movement. Having worked as a lawyer and as a politician, he served twice as the Estonian president (*Riigivanem*), December 9, 1927 to December 4, 1928, and May 18, 1933 to October 21, 1933.

²³ Mäelo, *Naine Läbi Aegade*.

'nation's soul' was perceived as women's ultimate duty.²⁴ Supporters of female suffrage were of the view that Estonian women had always worked equally with men in every sphere of life, and thus it would be unfair to ignore women's claims for rights.²⁵ Most notable among the supporters were Jüri Vilms,²⁶ Juhan Linde, and Herbert Luht.²⁷

Meanwhile women's political clubs were formed both before and during the 1905 revolution in Tallinn and Tartu²⁸ (Tallinn is the capital of Estonia, and Tartu, the second largest city, has been known as Estonia's 'university city'—the University of Tartu was founded in 1632 by the Swedish King Gustav Adolf II). A secret extreme-nationalist students' club, for example, was formed in 1902 in the Pushkin Gymnasium,²⁹ which published a handwritten magazine, *Koit* ('Dawn'), edited by Alma Ostra.³⁰ In 1904, an inter-school organization called Borba was founded in Tartu, and Ostra along with her colleagues from the Pushkin Gymnasium—Alma Ani and Amalie Unt—became its active members.³¹ The first women's political clubs in Tallinn were formed during the revolution in 1905 by Marta Lepp.³²

During the revolutionary events of 1905, several meetings were held in Tartu in which female students stood up as speakers.³³ However, as Hallik notes, this kind of political activity entailed negative consequences for these young women—they were persecuted, blamed for immoral behaviour, and even expelled from schools.³⁴ Such a response to their activity discredited women's attempts to join the political discussions and discouraged potentially active women from joining in. It is also important to

²⁴ Raud M., *Kaks Suurt: Jaan Tõnisson, Konstantin Päts ja Nende Ajastu* (Tallinn: 1991).

²⁵ Mäelo, *Naine Läbi Aegade*.

²⁶ Having lived from 1889 to 1918, he was the leader of Estonian Social Democrats, the founder of the Estonian Labour Party, and subsequently became the first deputy prime minister of the Republic of Estonia.

²⁷ Members of the Estonian National Progress Party (*Eesti Rahvuslik Eduerakond*), which was chaired by Jaan Tonisson. Their support for women's suffrage helped to include the claim for universal female suffrage in the party's program.

²⁸ Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

²⁹ A school for female students in Tartu.

³⁰ Born in 1886 (date of death unknown), she was a well-known politician, a member of the Estonian Constituent Assembly (April 23, 1919 to December 20, 1920) and of the first three memberships of the parliament (December 20, 1920 to June 14, 1929). Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

³¹ Ibid.

³² A writer and publicist who lived from 1883 to 1940.

³³ Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

³⁴ Ibid.

note that most of the women who actively participated in the meetings and demonstrations were socialists advocating the rights of the working class in general rather than being interested in women's rights specifically. Additionally, women's movements included the activities of nationalist women, which remained predominantly within the apolitical domains of life, such as discussing and learning handicraft and holding tea parties.³⁵

The debate on women's suffrage continued and was most prominent immediately after the 1905 revolution. It is important to bear in mind, however, that at the time Estonia was a periphery of the vast Russian Empire, and hence local politicians were relatively powerless in terms of introducing changes to the organization of political life. Thus, granting women universal suffrage was an issue that could and needed to be discussed, but local politicians had little if any influence on the process.

As the social climate in the post-revolutionary Russian Empire was more liberal than ever before, the national peripheries were granted more rights, including the right to form political parties. Hence, the first Estonian political party, the Estonian National Progress Party (*Eesti Rahvameelne Eduerakond*), was formed by Jaan Tõnisson in November 1905.³⁶ This was a liberal reform party opposed to the Baltic German estate owners and the Russian Tsar.³⁷ The party's members mainly came from amongst wealthy farmers and bourgeois; its main objectives included seeking autonomy and the status of National Province for Estonia and the introduction of Estonian as the language of instruction in schools.³⁸ A demand for political rights for women, including the right to vote in elections, was included in the program of the Estonian National Progress Party, despite heated debates on the issue between the left- and right-wing groups within the party.³⁹

In the meantime, the issue of women's suffrage had also been under consideration in the capital of the Russian Empire, where in August 1905 a draft act establishing the Russian parliament, the Duma, had been introduced. While the act itself contained no provisions on female suffrage, in 1906 the Duma discussed the adoption of a new draft act which—following the footsteps of Finland, where women had been granted

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Graf, *Eesti Rahvusriik*.

³⁷ Selirand and Siilivask, *Eesti Maast ja Rahvast*.

³⁸ Thus far the language of instruction in high schools had been either Russian or German. Selirand and Siilivask, *Eesti Maast ja Rahvast*.

³⁹ Mäelo, *Naine Läbi Aegade*.

political rights earlier that year—regarded men and women as equal citizens.⁴⁰ Inspired by the new draft act, the Russian Women's Union called upon all women to fight for their suffrage;⁴¹ the call was echoed in the Estonian media, where women were advised to fight for their political and economic rights.⁴² However, despite the discussions in the Russian Duma, the new act was never passed. With Estonia being but a periphery of the Russian Empire, no merit was seen in forming any further local movements for women's suffrage.⁴³

The 1905 Russian Revolution also left its impact on the print media in Estonia. Permission to publish more in national languages⁴⁴ and a media freed from rigid censorship⁴⁵ contributed to the women's movement by making it possible to publish articles and books on women's rights in the Estonian language. Newspapers, especially *Olevik* ('The Present Time'), which was published by wife and husband Marie and Karl Koppel in Tartu, became the main locus for debates on women's suffrage.⁴⁶ In addition to articles in newspapers and magazines, several books on women's issues were published in the years following the revolution—for example, August Bebel's *Women's Situation Today and in the Future* (1905), Clara Zetkin's *A Woman and Her Economic Situation* (1907), and Karl Kautsky's *Women's Right to Vote* (1907).⁴⁷ All these publications drew attention to women's situation and the importance of endowing women with civil and political rights.

The post-revolution years represented yet another important milestone on women's road to suffrage, bringing organized women's movements into existence. After 1906, however, debates on women's suffrage subsided and debates on women's rights concentrated on other issues, such as women's right to work and access to universities.⁴⁸ The Tartu Women's Society (*Tartu Eesti Naesterahva Selts*) was founded in 1907⁴⁹ with the objective of improving women's economic, moral, and educational conditions.⁵⁰ The Tartu Women's Society was first chaired by Leena Gross and

⁴⁰ Graf, *Eesti Rahvusriik*.

⁴¹ Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Graf, *Eesti Rahvusriik*.

⁴⁵ Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Mäelo, *Naine Läbi Aegade*.

⁴⁹ Laas A., "Tartu Naisselts", Master's Thesis, University of Tartu, 1992.

⁵⁰ Mäelo, *Naine Läbi Aegade*.

later by Lilli Muna, but details on the founding and early days of the organization are scarce. Even though the society was mainly concerned with non-political issues during its early days and aimed at enhancing women's moral and intellectual situation,⁵¹ it was still the first organization to openly speak about women's rights (e.g., equal pay for equal work).⁵² Interest in women's issues among the members of the society was later fostered by the sub-publication of the society's magazine *Käsitöö* ('Handicraft'), which was entitled *Naisterahva Töö ja Elu* ('A Woman's Work and Life').⁵³

Although women were not allowed to become students in universities, they were allowed to audit courses beginning in 1905. In 1911, special courses for women commenced in Tartu, with those in history and medicine taught by professor Anton Jassinski and those in biology and medicine by professor Mihhail Rostovtsev.⁵⁴ The syllabi and the professors were the same as at the University of Tartu, but women attending these courses neither received a university diploma nor enjoyed the same rights as male university students.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the introduction of these courses led to the foundation of the Estonian Female Students Society (*Eesti Naisüliõpilaste Selts*) in Tartu in 1911.⁵⁶ It could be argued that even though the first women's societies did not, at least initially, consciously pursue women's rights, their activities were important in raising the issue of those rights and in obtaining them in subsequent years.⁵⁷

However, the excitement of the 1905 revolution slowly faded away, with a corresponding slowdown in political activity. Although the revolution had brought about a number of changes and liberties, women's situation remained unchanged. As Mäelo points out, women did not have the right to vote, they were not allowed to hold certain positions, and they were refused access to universities.⁵⁸

World War I, which began in 1914, saw a partial improvement in women's position in society and in their political rights, although the crucial role here was played by events in Russia, in particular the February Revolution in 1917, rather than the war itself.⁵⁹ The February Revolution

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Laja, "Women's Organizations".

⁵³ Mäelo, *Naine Läbi Aegade*.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

⁵⁷ E.g. Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

⁵⁸ Mäelo, *Naine Läbi Aegade*.

⁵⁹ Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

had a liberating effect in Estonia and served as a wake-up call for hibernating female activists.⁶⁰ Politics became a topic of daily conversation and a passion for many women,⁶¹ raising hopes that women would finally be granted political rights despite the rather strong opposition of some leading male politicians.

The hopes raised by the revolution turned out to be justified. The political liberation and the expansion of political rights that followed the February Revolution were considered to apply to everyone, even though women's suffrage had not officially been announced.⁶² Women in the Russian Empire were granted universal suffrage by the Autonomy Act of the Provisional Government in March 1917, in the aftermath of the toppling of the Tsar. Women in Estonia had their first experience of voting and running for office during the local elections in March and June 1917, in which 13 women gained access to rural government councils.⁶³ They were also allowed to vote and run in the elections of the Provisional Assembly of Estonia (*Maapäev*) in July 1917. One female candidate was elected to office; she was later followed by another female politician as an alternate member of the Provisional Assembly.⁶⁴ These developments were echoed in the endeavours of the Tartu Women's Society, which formed a political chapter in order to increase its members' interest in women's issues and to stimulate their political participation.⁶⁵ Women were encouraged to join political parties and to stand for the elections of councils of local municipalities.⁶⁶

The February Revolution also inspired a sudden expansion of organized women's movements in Estonia. While the Tartu Women's Society had remained alone until the revolution, numerous new women's organizations were founded across Estonia in 1917.⁶⁷ In order to facilitate cooperation between the various organizations, the First Women's Congress, organized by the Tartu Women's Society, was held in Tartu in May 1917.⁶⁸ This was the first opportunity to openly discuss women's social status and civil rights in front of a large audience, in an event dedicated to this

⁶⁰ Mäelo, *Naine Läbi Aegade*.

⁶¹ Hallik, "Eesti Naine Poliitikas".

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Laas, "Tartu Naisselts".

⁶⁷ Mäelo, *Naine Läbi Aegade*.

⁶⁸ Laas, "Tartu Naisselts".

purpose. The delegates of the congress put forward a number of demands regarding women's situation and rights, including requests for unlimited political rights, the right to participate in rural government councils and in parliament, and the right to equal treatment in matters concerning ownership.⁶⁹ A number of issues regarding motherhood, child protection, vocational education, and female workers were also deliberated.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the delegates of the First Women's Congress decided to establish the Union of Estonian Women's Organizations, the mission of which was to improve women's legal, economic, educational, and health status.⁷¹

Despite their good intentions, however, women's societies had no opportunity to implement their newly established agenda due to the political whirlpool that began with the collapse of the Russian Empire in October 1917. On February 24, 1918, Estonia proclaimed its independence by adopting a Declaration of Independence. Just one day later, Estonia was occupied by the German army, with the occupation lasting until November 1918. On November 19, 1918, the Estonian Provisional Government commenced its work; however, only nine days later, the Soviet Russian army invaded and the Independence War broke out. The war ended on February 2, 1920, when the Tartu Peace Treaty was signed between the Estonian Republic and the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (SFSR), with which the latter officially recognized the former. With Estonia's Declaration of Independence being followed by such events, the elections to the first Estonian Constituent Assembly (*Asutav Kogu*) were not held until April 1919. Although the constitution, which proclaimed universal suffrage for women in the Estonian Republic, was issued in 1920,⁷² women had de facto been given all political rights, including the right to vote and stand for elections, in 1918 when Estonia gained independence; they were first able to use these rights in the elections to the Constituent Assembly in 1919. Among the many other developments that occurred in these turbulent years, it may be worth noting that women's societies gained strength as women were expected to lend a helping hand in feeding and clothing soldiers and war prisoners.⁷³

⁶⁹ Mäelo, *Naine Läbi Aegade*.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Two women participated in the creation of the constitution: Emma Asson-Peterson and Minni Kurs-Olesk.

⁷³ Mäelo, *Naine Läbi Aegade*.

By way of summary, the fact that Estonian women did not gain the right to vote and stand for elections until the end of World War I did not signify their lack of political ambition or interest in politics. However, the social and political background to women's attempts to gain political rights was important in deciding the form of women's endeavours: the fight for women's rights was peaceful, taking place in clubs and societies and on the pages of newspapers and magazines. When Estonia proclaimed its independence in 1918, women were given all political rights, including universal suffrage. Therefore, as Mäelo puts it, women had no reason to actively fight and campaign for their right to vote and stand for elections.⁷⁴ This became a distinctive aspect of the process of gaining female suffrage in Estonia.

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Women's Participation in Politics after Gaining the Right to Vote

While women in Estonia were granted the right to stand for elections at the same time as the right to vote, the level of women's participation in political decision-making bodies during the years between independence and World War II (1918–1939) remained low. There were seven women (5.8 percent) among the 120 members of the Constituent Assembly (*Asutav Kogu*) that functioned between March 1919 and February 1920.⁷⁵ The proportion of women among the 100 members of each of the following five parliaments (*Riigikogu*) was also marginal: three women in the first, one in the second, third, and fourth, and two in the fifth.⁷⁶ A new constitution was adopted in 1937 establishing a bicameral parliament; women made up 8.8 percent of the sixth, and last, parliament that preceded World War II.⁷⁷

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In June 1940, Estonia was occupied by the Soviet Union, and two months later it was officially annexed as the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). This marked the end of democratic elections until the elections of the last parliament of the Estonian SSR, the Supreme Soviet (*Ülemnõukogu*), in 1990. The number and proportion of women (or of any other socioeconomic group) in the Supreme Soviet was predetermined by the committees of the Communist Party, and suitable candidates were

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 245.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Truuväli E., *Valimisõigus ja Valimised Eestis 1917–1980. II Osa* (Tallinn: 1986).

found accordingly.⁷⁸ Women made up 24 percent of the second Supreme Soviet, a figure that increased to approximately one-third in the following parliaments.⁷⁹ Note, however, both that these numbers were achieved by implementing quotas⁸⁰ and that, as the parliament was until the late 1980s merely a token institution, women were not among the real decision-makers.⁸¹

Similarly to other post-socialist countries, women's participation in formal politics in Estonia saw a decline after the collapse of the communist regime and the accompanying abolition of gender quotas in decision-making bodies at the beginning of 1990s. In the spring of 1990, elections to the last Estonian Supreme Soviet and to the Congress of Estonia were held; the former was seven percent female members and the latter ten percent.⁸²

After the initial ebb, women's participation in decision-making bodies has begun to show a renewed increase. However, the gender gap remains significant despite women's great interest in participating in political decision-making⁸³ and their considerable participation in political parties.⁸⁴ According to the data of the Estonian National Electoral Committee, the number of women in the national parliament has grown from 12.9 percent in 1991 to 19.8 percent in 2011. The ratio of women among the candidates has grown consistently, from 14 percent in 1992 to over 20 percent in the last elections;⁸⁵ however, the proportion of both female candidates and parliamentarians remains too low to speak about genuine gender equality and balanced interests in decision-making. Furthermore, in the

⁷⁸ Raitviir T., "Participation in Politics", in Maimik P., Mänd K., and Ü. Papp (eds.) *Towards a Balanced Society: Women and Men in Estonia* (Tallinn: 2000).

⁷⁹ Truuväli, *Valimisõigus ja Valimised Eestis*.

⁸⁰ In the Soviet Union, the number of representatives from different socioeconomic groups (e.g., farmers, factory workers, women) that were supposed to be elected to the government were pre-established. In addition, the reader ought to bear in mind that until the late 1980s the elections in the Soviet Union were only token acts, with all the candidates having been pre-selected by the Communist Party, *Komsomol* (Communist Youth Organization), and the trade unions; all candidates gained office. As a rule, the candidates received 99 percent of votes.

⁸¹ Raitviir T., *Elections in Estonia During the Transition Period: A Comparative Study (1989–1993)* (Tallinn: 1996).

⁸² Raitviir, "Participation in Politics".

⁸³ Raitviir, *Elections in Estonia*.

⁸⁴ In 2002, an average of 48.1 percent of the members of political parties were female. Raitviir, T., "Eesti Naised Poliitilise Võimu Juures", *Ariadne Lõng* 1, 2 (2002) 124–148.

⁸⁵ Biin H., "Women's Presence in Estonian Parliament. The Influence of Political Parties", Master's Thesis, Central European University, 2003.

16 years since the first parliamentary elections, only two of the parliament's speakers have been female, and women rarely act as chairs or vice-chairs of parliamentary committees or factions.

As in other post-socialist countries, local government councils in Estonia are more easily accessible for women. Since 1993, the average percentage of female office-holders at the local level has risen from 24 to 29.6 in 2009, although female mayors remain rare.⁸⁶ Women are equally under-represented at the governmental level. Raitviir has noted that there have been on average two female ministers, predominantly responsible for 'soft' issues, in each government since Estonia regained its independence in 1991.⁸⁷

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*Broader Developments in Gender Equality in Estonia and
Central and Eastern Europe*

In terms of broader trends in gender equality during the post-independence years, Estonia and other post-communist countries have embarked on a striking journey: while the 1990s were marked by a complete absence of gender equality issues from the political agenda, there has been a mushrooming of gender equality related legal norms and institutional changes since 2000 in connection with European Union (EU) accession.

Across Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the 1990s were marked by an 'allergy to feminism'.⁸⁸ Socialist discourse had sought to create gender-neutral citizenship and to homogenize the male and female workforce, putting in place legislation on equal rights and a quota system to ensure a certain percentage of women in all positions; the role of 'occupational housewife' did not exist during the communist era.⁸⁹ The essence of the policy was perhaps best captured by the widely peddled poster of a female tractor driver, simultaneously celebrated as a mother and as a work hero. However, the policy of equality had largely remained a façade, failing to

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⁸⁶ Raitviir, "Eesti Naised Poliitilise Võimu Juures".

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Kovacs, cited in Snitow A., "Cautionary Tales," in Lukić J., Regulska J., and Završek D. (eds.), *Women and Citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe* (Ashgate: 2006) 288.

⁸⁹ Magyari-Vincze E., "Romanian Gender Regimes and Women's Citizenship," in Lukić J., Regulska J., and Završek D. (eds.), *Women and Citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe* (Ashgate: 2006); Snitow, "Cautionary Tales"; Fuszara M. and Zielinska E., "Women and the Law in Poland: Towards Active Citizenship," in Lukić J., Regulska J., and Završek D. (eds.), *Women and Citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe* (Ashgate: 2006).

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create substantive conditions for genuine equality. In reaction to the socialist legacy, gender became a pseudo-issue in the 1990s; political debates in CEE were not developed around women's issues, or at least did not overtly assume feminist perspectives.⁹⁰ For example, in Poland, post-1990 party election platforms hardly considered any women's questions, and the proportion of women in the public arena declined.⁹¹

Perhaps this background explains a somewhat schizophrenic situation that appears to have emerged in present day Central and Eastern Europe. On the one hand, women appear to enjoy a somewhat more advanced position than their Western counterparts, having typically been in full-time employment rather than staying at home, and having obtained solid representation in the higher echelons of the workforce. On the other hand, however, the gender pay gap and unequal distribution of domestic work persist, with vertical and horizontal segregation of the workforce increasingly becoming an issue, especially in the private sector.

Against this backdrop, the EU accession process and the obligation to transpose the rather extensive EU *acquis* on gender equality into national law represents an intriguing development. Approximation to the EU rules has resulted in the 're-legitimization of gender equality',⁹² and led to the adoption of special laws on equal treatment and the creation of relevant institutional bodies. However, the opposition to the adoption of such laws by politicians and society at large, and the considerable political stalling that occurred in the process, spoke volumes about the continued unease in CEE societies with regard to gender equality issues. In Estonia, a decision to start preparatory work towards adopting a law on gender equality was made by the government in the spring of 2000, but the Gender Equality Act was not adopted until April 7, 2004, just three weeks prior to Estonia's entry into the European Union on May 1, 2004, as a last-minute arrangement to secure the country's readiness for accession. The European Commission had previously criticized the government in its progress reports for the absence of such an act. In Poland, Fuszara has offered a telling account of the numerous failed efforts between 1996 and 2005 to adopt a law on the equal status of women and men, which equally prompted criticism from the European Commission on the lack of progress in harmonization.⁹³

⁹⁰ Magyari-Vincze, "Romanian Gender Regimes" 31.

⁹¹ Fuszara and Zielinska, "Women and the Law in Poland" 40.

⁹² Magyari-Vincze, "Romanian Gender Regimes" 22.

⁹³ Fuszara and Zielinska, "Women and the Law in Poland" 53.

The main challenges for the coming years lie in the practical implementation of the formal rules, given that general awareness of non-discrimination rights remains rather low and that relevant judicial litigation is scarce if not virtually absent. The practical implementation of the Gender Equality Act is facilitated by the creation of the post of Gender Equality Representative, an institution that issues opinions on alleged cases of discrimination and analyzes existing legislation and practices with regard to their gender equality dimension. In addition, the debates, conferences, and media interest surrounding the adoption of gender equality legislation have sparked considerable changes in the popular awareness of discrimination issues in Estonia as well as elsewhere in post-communist countries.

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WINNING WOMEN'S VOTE IN GERMANY

Ute Sacksofsky

Women's Vote in Historical Context

In Germany, women's right to vote was recognized in 1918, but the struggle for it began with the general push for democratic participation in the 19th century.¹ After the Napoleonic era, Germany was organized as a confederation of more than 30 states (*Deutscher Bund*), all of them monarchies.² The period after 1815, known as the 'Vormärz' era,³ was characterized by political repression, beginning with the Carlsbad Decrees of 1819, which restricted freedom of the press and repressed universities in an effort to suppress an incipient movement fighting for German unification and democratic representation.⁴ The freedom movement grew stronger, however, and a revolution took place in March 1848, culminating in the design of the first liberal constitution for Germany. Based on democratic principles, the Paulskirche Constitution of 1849 contained fundamental rights, but not women's vote. In any event, by the summer of 1849 the revolution had failed; the Paulskirche Constitution never entered into effect.

After 1849, the German states continued to employ different voting systems, none of them fully democratic. In Prussia, the biggest state, the legislature consisted of two chambers. The first represented the aristocracy,

¹ For brief introductions to general German constitutional history, see: Grimm D., *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte 1776–1866* (Frankfurt: 1995); Frotscher W. and Pieroth B., *Verfassungsgeschichte* (München: 2007). For historical documents, see Huber E.R., *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte* (Stuttgart: 1961–1966) vols. 1–3.

² Parliamentary representation at this time was mostly restricted to men, even though—as a relic of the feudal era—some states allowed propertied women to vote but not to be voted for or allowed women to vote if represented by a man. For details, see Rosenbusch U., *Der Weg zum Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland* (Baden-Baden: 1997) 64–65; Frevert U., *Mann und Weib, und Weib und Mann* (München: 1995) 74–83.

³ The Pre-March Era ('Vormärz') refers to the time between the Vienna Congress (1815) and the March-Revolution in 1848. It is characterized by a tension between conservative forces propounding to move back to old monarchical structures and the liberal nationalist movement towards democracy and German unification, hence by repression on the one hand and a fight against the monarchy on the other. Most activists against the monarchy belonged to 'Burschenschaften', a special type of student fraternity. With the 'Hambacher Fest' in 1832, the movement became more heterogeneous.

⁴ Protocol of the Bundesversammlung, August 13, 1819.

while the second strongly favored the propertied classes by electing its members according to the Prussian three-class election system in which people were categorized based on the taxes they paid, with each class electing one third of the representatives. Women were neither counted as taxpayers nor permitted to vote. The three-class electoral system remained intact in Prussia until 1918.⁵

Meanwhile, at the federal level things had changed dramatically. In 1867, after the Prussian-Austrian war, the *Deutsche Bund* was dissolved and the *Norddeutsche Bund* was founded, followed in 1871 by the establishment of the German Empire of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. Surprisingly, Bismarck let the voting statute of the Paulskirche Constitution become effective, granting universal male suffrage at the federal level.⁶

At the end of World War I, the revolutionary Council of the People's Deputies⁷ declared women's right to vote on November 12, 1918. Germany soon became a democracy, under the Weimar Republic. Since then, however, the country has gone through two dictatorships. In 1933, Hitler rose to power, and in Nazi Germany 'Aryan' women's role as mothers was emphasized (the reproduction of women considered 'inferior' was not encouraged) and women were driven out of the public sphere. Women kept the right to vote, but no free elections took place. After the end of the World War II, Germany was divided into two parts: the German Democratic Republic (GDR), a satellite regime of the Soviet Union, and the western-oriented Federal Republic of Germany. Both states proclaimed equal rights for men and women, including voting rights, but in the GDR the socialist dictatorship foreclosed free elections. Only since unification in 1990 have all Germans been able to enjoy their voting rights.

*The German Women's Movement and the Long Struggle
for Female Suffrage*

The struggle for female suffrage first became politically visible in the 1830s and 1840s during the *Vormärz* movement. Indeed, the revolution of 1848

⁵ In 1903, class I consisted of 3.3 percent (239,000), class II of 12.07 percent (857,000), and class III of 84.7 percent of the voters. For more details, see Kühne T., *Dreiklassenwahlrecht und Wahlkultur in Preussen 1867–1914* (Düsseldorf: 1994).

⁶ The electoral districts were so different in size that the industrialized cities, where the workers' movement was strong, carried much less weight. In 1871, the Conservatives needed less than 10,000 votes to win a seat, whereas the Social Democrats needed more than 60,000.

⁷ Government of the November Revolution in Germany from November 1918 until February 1919.

proved yet another example of women participating in revolutionary or emancipatory movements but with little consideration given to their interests thereafter. Women had played quite an important part in the revolution; some had fought and many had supported the democratic cause in various ways, but in the debates over the constitution they were only permitted to watch from the galleries and were not represented in the constitutional assembly.⁸ The constitution, though quite democratic and emancipatory for men, did not contain equal rights for men and women (including the vote). The issue of women's vote was not even discussed properly.⁹

During the repression that followed the failure of the 1848 revolution, women were explicitly targeted. In Saxony, the Press Statute of 1851 expressly forbade women to publish or edit newspapers. This statute, known as 'lex Otto', was directed against an important German feminist of the time, Louise Otto, who published the *Frauen-Zeitung* (women's newspaper), which had the motto: 'I enlist female citizens for the empire of freedom'.¹⁰ She also advocated women's political participation.¹¹ In Prussia, the Association Law of 1850 explicitly banned women, pupils, and apprentices from membership in, or attendance at programs held by, associations formed to discuss political issues.¹² Other states had similar restrictions.¹³

But women were not silenced completely. In 1865, the General German Women's Association (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein –ADF*) was founded, considered by some the birth of the German women's movement.¹⁴ The association's founders were Louise Otto and Auguste Schmidt, and it consisted mostly of bourgeois women who were reluctant to put political issues (such as the right to vote) on their agenda. Instead, its primary concerns were education, social issues, and women's right to work.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the *ADF* represented an important step for early feminism,

⁸ Gerhard U., *Gleichheit ohne Angleichung* (München: 1990) 54–59.

⁹ Rosenbusch, *Der Weg zum Frauenwahlrecht* 70.

¹⁰ Gerhard U. et al (eds.), *Die Frauenzeitung von Louise Otto* (Frankfurt: 1979).

¹¹ Gerhard U., "Grenzziehungen und Überschreitungen. Die Rechte der Frauen auf dem Weg in die politische Öffentlichkeit", in Gerhard U. (ed.), *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts* (München: 1997) 521–524; Gerhard U., *Unerhört. Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung* (Hamburg: 1996) 60–65.

¹² Huber, *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte* vol. 1, 404.

¹³ For more details, see Rosenbusch, *Der Weg zum Frauenwahlrecht* 318–319; Gerhard, "Grenzziehungen und Überschreitungen" 524–534.

¹⁴ See Bäumer G., "Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung in Deutschland", in Lange H. (ed.), *Handbuch der Frauenbewegung* (Berlin: 1901) 48; Gerhard, *Unerhört* 76.

¹⁵ Gerhard, "Grenzziehungen und Überschreitungen" 530.

especially when compared to other women's associations, of which many were founded in the 1890s.¹⁶ Until the turn of the century, voting rights were only addressed by a relatively small circle of radical feminists within the bourgeois women's movement. Hedwig Dohm was one of the few who had already argued clearly and passionately for political participation in the 1870s;¹⁷ but for 20 years her voice went unheard. Most women feared that the struggle for political rights would hurt their chances of success in other areas,¹⁸ such as education or social issues, particularly since, as explained above, women's associations were only permitted to discuss issues deemed non-political. It was also debated whether the right to vote should be the first or the ultimate goal of the women's movement. Some women argued that education should come first, with voting rights to later 'crown' the building erected by the women's movement.¹⁹

By the 1890s, the women's movement had increased in visibility and numbers. In 1894, the issue of women's suffrage captured public attention following an important public gathering and a speech given by Lily Braun.²⁰ Although there had been some earlier writings on the topic,²¹ education and social issues had remained at the forefront of the women's movement's attention. Around the turn of the century, however, more and more radicals within the bourgeois women's movement pushed women's voting rights to the front of their agenda.

In 1894, the Union of German Women's Organizations (*Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* –BDF) was founded. The BDF linked all bourgeois women's associations,²² but there was no consensus as to when to push for women's suffrage.²³ The more radical groups around Hedwig Dohm, Minna Cauer,

¹⁶ See, for instance, the so-called Lette-Verein, which was dominated by men and demanded employment for high- and middle-class women (Gerhard, *Unerhört* 83).

¹⁷ Dohm H., *Der Frauen Natur und Recht* (Neunkirch: 1986) (original Berlin: 1876).

¹⁸ See, for instance: Pape C., cited in Twellmann M., *Die deutsche Frauenbewegung. Quellen* (Meisenheim: 1972) 561; Rosenbusch, *Der Weg zum Frauenwahlrecht* 291; Greven-Aschoff B., *Die bürgerliche Frauenbewegung in Deutschland 1894–1933* (Göttingen: 1981) 141–147.

¹⁹ Hirsch J., cited in Twellmann, *Die deutsche Frauenbewegung* 556; Rosenbusch, *Der Weg zum Frauenwahlrecht* 294, 298.

²⁰ One of the more radical bourgeois female activists, she founded the association 'Frauenwohl' together with Minna Cauer and switched later to the Social Democratic Party. She delivered a speech in Berlin in December 1894 at the association 'Frauenwohl', directed by Minna Cauer. See Clemens B., "Der Kampf um das Frauenstimmrecht in Deutschland", in Wickert C. (ed.), *Heraus mit dem Frauenwahlrecht* (Pfaffenweiler: 1990) 59.

²¹ von Hippel T.G., *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber* (Frankfurt: 1977); Dohm, *Der Frauen Natur und Recht*.

²² Gerhard, "Grenzziehungen und Überschreitungen" 526–534.

²³ Clemens, "Der Kampf um" 60–63; see also Gerhard, *Unerhört* 173–75.

Anita Augspurg, and Lily Braun initiated a new, more radical and political association in 1899, the Union of Progressive Women's Organizations (*Verband Fortschrittlicher Frauenvereine*), emphasizing the importance of political participation.²⁴

The first suffrage association, the German Association for Women's Suffrage, was formed in 1902 in Hamburg by Anita Augspurg and Lida Gustava Heymann, because in 1902 Hamburg lifted its restrictions on women's associations. From there the movement flourished, especially after 1908, when restrictions on associations were lifted everywhere in Germany.²⁵ More and more local associations for women's suffrage were founded all over Germany, joining together in the umbrella organization *Verband Deutscher Stimmrechtsvereine*. From the very beginning, the German voting rights movement made contact with the international suffrage movement. In 1904, Augspurg and Heymann brought the founding Conference for the International Alliance for Woman Suffrage to Berlin.²⁶ In the following years, the German suffrage movement engaged in various activities,²⁷ including organizing meetings to educate women on political issues. Bourgeois women also extensively used the right to petition, trying to get parliament interested in their goals.²⁸ Especially during election times, suffragettes tried to interest political parties in women's vote.²⁹ They also tried to use old and nearly forgotten rights to participate at the local level.³⁰ Indeed, because local politics were connected with social issues such as health, education, and the family, which were regarded as typical 'female areas', chances for participation at the local level seemed better.³¹

The arguments for women's voting rights used by the German feminist movement were varied. Hedwig Dohm, for instance, based hers on human rights, arguing that the differences between men and women should make no difference to political rights, culminating in the famous sentence: 'Human rights know no gender'.³² Men and women represented

²⁴ Gerhard, *Unerhört* 244–248.

²⁵ Reichsvereinsgesetz, RGBl (National Law Gazette) 1908, 151; Huber, vol. 2, 251; Gerhard, *Unerhört*, 280–282; Rosenbusch, 299–302.

²⁶ Gerhard, *Unerhört* 288–89.

²⁷ Clemens, "Der Kampf um des Frauenstimmrecht" 78–85.

²⁸ Gerhard, "Grenzziehungen und Überschreitungen" 535–538.

²⁹ Rosenbusch, *Der Weg zum Frauenwahlrecht* 321–326.

³⁰ Ibid., 344–363.

³¹ Hackett A., "The German Women's Movement and Suffrage, 1890–1914: A Study of National Feminism", in Bezucha R. (ed.), *Modern European Social History* (Lexington, MA: 1972).

³² Last sentence in Hedwigs Dohm's manifest (Dohm, *Der Frauen Natur und Recht* 185).

different interests, both of which needed to be represented in parliament.³³ She also emphasized that, because the differences between men and women developed historically, they should not lead to domination by men.³⁴ Lily Braun, on the other hand, mentioned human rights but focused mostly on social issues, arguing that women's duties extended beyond the house. Voting rights seemed necessary to push for change in important social areas.³⁵ But while both Dohm's and Braun's arguments were based primarily on equality, Helene Lange³⁶ focused more on gender difference. The goal of the women's movement was, in her view, for women to create out of the male world a world that was founded on both sexes.³⁷ For her, legal equality was only a necessary precondition, not a goal in itself. Finally, Anita Augspurg³⁸ emphasized the connection between women's vote and women's education, also arguing that the role of the mother should be socially more recognized.³⁹

Thus the women's suffrage movement used arguments based on equality as well as arguments based on female difference and values (especially in referring to motherhood). Both strategies of argumentation worked together dialectically⁴⁰ and although the emphasis on equality was stronger among the radical factions, the emphasis on difference did not necessarily preclude the fight for radical change.⁴¹ Admittedly, however, arguments against women's vote focused also on (traditional or natural) differences. Thus some, most prominently members of the Association to Fight Against Women's Emancipation and Women's Vote (*Bund zur Bekämpfung der Frauenemanzipation und des Frauenwahlrechts*), founded in 1912,⁴² relied on scientific discourse purportedly proving that the house was the right place for women and that they were biologically unsuited for

³³ Bock G., "Frauenwahlrecht – Deutschland um 1900 in vergleichender Perspektive", in Grüttner M. et al (eds.), *Geschichte und Emanzipation. Festschrift für Reinhard Rürup* (Frankfurt: 1999) 95–136.

³⁴ Dohm, *Der Frauen Natur und Recht* 55–56, 122, 164.

³⁵ Braun L., *Memoiren einer Sozialistin* (München: 1985) (original 1929).

³⁶ She was the founder of the Association for Female Teachers (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Lehrerinnenverein*) in 1890 and was one of the chairwomen of the BDF.

³⁷ Rosenbusch, *Der Weg zum Frauenwahlrecht* 296.

³⁸ She had studied law in Switzerland and belonged to the more radical wing of the suffrage movement.

³⁹ Bock, "Frauenwahlrecht" 112–113.

⁴⁰ Clemens B., *Menschenrechte haben kein Geschlecht* (Pfaffenweiler: 1988) 119–130.

⁴¹ Clara Zetkin, the most famous socialist, also emphasized the importance of social recognition for motherhood (Zetkin C., *Zur Frage des Frauenwahlrechts* (Berlin: 1907) 10).

⁴² Planert U., *Antifeminismus im Kaiserreich* (Göttingen: 1998) 118–123.

politics.⁴³ The fact that women did not serve in the military confirmed and reinforced this point.⁴⁴ Particularly important was the idea of the family as a unity, headed by the husband. The husband was regarded to represent his wife's will; women's vote could lead to divisions between the spouses, potentially culminating even in murder.⁴⁵ The vote was considered to endanger the family and the state.⁴⁶ Two votes for a couple seemed inconceivable.⁴⁷

There was also a debate within the German women's movement about the scope of women's suffrage the movement was fighting for.⁴⁸ Should it be equal to men's suffrage, or would only full democratic suffrage suffice? Note that in Prussia the three-class electoral system still prevailed; many bourgeois women feared that a demand for a full democratic vote would tilt them towards the Social Democrats, their political opponents.

The Social Democrats were indeed the only German party that fought for women's voting rights around the turn of the century.⁴⁹ Other parties, such as the National Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, and the political arm of the Catholic Church (*Zentrumspartei*), advanced the Prussian three-class election system and strictly opposed women's political participation. Even left-wing liberals, who criticized the Prussian system, did not talk of women's equal political rights.⁵⁰

The Social Democrats had included women's vote as a political goal in 1891; in 1895, their leader, August Bebel, had demanded women's vote in the German parliament for the first time. Nevertheless, the feminists among the Social Democrats did not always have the full support of their companions. Clara Zetkin phrased it clearly: 'Without men's help, yes, often even against men's will, women assembled under the socialist banner'.⁵¹ Socialist women often used election times to tie support for Social

⁴³ Bader-Zaar B., "Der Ausschluss von Frauen aus politischen Rechten im 19. Jhd. Ambivalenzen und Paradoxien", in Baden-Württemberg e.V. F. and G. (eds.), *50 Jahre Grundgesetz. Menschenrechte als Frauenrechte* (Königsstein/Ts.: 2000) 101.

⁴⁴ Frevert, *Mann und Weib* 120–121.

⁴⁵ *Sammlung der Drucksachen des Preußischen Hauses der Abgeordneten (parliamentary paper of the Prussian Parliament)*, 21 Legislaturperiode (*Election Period*), 1911, Bd. VI, 7060.

⁴⁶ Ettel K., *Die Frau und die Gesellschaft. Ein Wort zur Frauenfrage* (Wien, 1890) 19, cited by Bader-Zaar, "Der Ausschluss".

⁴⁷ *Sammlung der Drucksachen des Preußischen Hauses der Abgeordneten (parliamentary paper of the Prussian Parliament)*, 22 Legislaturperiode (*Election Period*), 1918, Bd. VII, 7212.

⁴⁸ Gerhard, "Grenzziehungen und Überschreitungen" 539.

⁴⁹ Rosenbusch, *Der Weg zum Frauenwahlrecht* 303–312; Clemens, "Der Kampf um" 65–75.

⁵⁰ For more details, see Rosenbusch, *Der Weg zum Frauenwahlrecht* 315–343.

⁵¹ Speech in 1889, cited by Rosenbusch, *Der Weg zum Frauenwahlrecht* 308.

Democrat candidates to the demand for women's suffrage. On March 19, 1911, Germany for the first time celebrated International Women's Day. In many cities and towns, demonstrations took place and assemblies accepted resolutions demanding women's suffrage. This day was considered one of the milestones of the movement for women's suffrage.⁵²

At the same time, the conflict between bourgeois and social democratic women continued.⁵³ In 1913, Minna Cauer, Lida Gustava Heymann, and Anita Augspurg—the more radical wing of the suffrage movement—founded a new association, the *Deutsche Stimmrechtsbund*. Thus, at the beginning of World War I, there were four organizations fighting for women's vote: the social democratic women's movement, fighting for a general full democratic vote; the *Verband für Frauenstimmrecht*, keeping open the question of what kind of vote it supported; the *Vereinigung für Frauenstimmrecht*, fighting for women's vote equal to men's; and the *Deutsche Stimmrechtsbund*, fighting for a full democratic vote for women.

Once women's right to vote became an important issue, prior to the election of the Reichstag in 1912, antifeminist activities (especially writing newspaper articles) picked up. In 1912, the Association to Fight Against Women's Emancipation (*Deutscher Bund zur Bekämpfung der Frauenemanzipation*) was founded, most of its members also being members of a nationalistic and anti-Semitic association (*Alldeutscher Verband*).⁵⁴

Divisions within the women's movement increased during World War I.⁵⁵ Some women became radical pacifists, while others supported the war. Leading women in the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* emphasized that they were part of the nation, and the BDF dissociated itself from the international women's organizations. The fight within the suffrage movement over the war led to factionalization; but the war was also a motor for the women's movement, as women became important as workers and assumed different social functions.⁵⁶ Only in 1917 did the various factions of the women's movement agree to a joint platform demanding the vote for women.⁵⁷ One year later, during the November revolution after the war

⁵² Minna Cauer, cited by Rosenbusch, *Der Weg zum Frauenwahlrecht* 312.

⁵³ Clemens, "Der Kampf um" 100–102.

⁵⁴ For more details, see Planert, *Antifeminismus im Kaiserreich* 118 ff.

⁵⁵ Clemens, *Menschenrechte haben kein Geschlecht* 103–111; Gerhard, *Unerhört* 292–307.

⁵⁶ Gerhard U., Klausman C., and Wischermann U., "Neue Staatsbürgerinnen – die deutsche Frauenbewegung in der Weimarer Republik", in Gerhard U. (ed.), *Feminismus und Demokratie. Europäische Frauenbewegungen der 1920er Jahre* (Königsstein/Ts.: 2001) 184–186.

⁵⁷ "Erklärung zur Wahlrechtsfrage", *Die Gleichheit* 28 (1917) 42, cited by Gerhard, "Grenzziehungen und Überschreitungen" 543.

had ended, they succeeded: the Council of People's Representatives (*Rat der Volksbeauftragten*)⁵⁸ proclaimed women's right to vote on November 12, 1918.

There has been some debate as to why the German feminists were relatively late in pushing for women's vote. Some argue that early German feminists focused strongly on difference, on a specific concept of femininity as opposed to equality between the sexes.⁵⁹ As shown above, however, this was only true for some of the protagonists. The issue of respecting difference while achieving equality has always been at the core of feminist thought. The argument has taken different forms over the centuries and is still with us today.

In my opinion, the reason lies largely in the political circumstances of the times. First, there was extensive suppression of women's participation in the political process through the restrictions on women's associations. As women were only permitted to discuss issues deemed non-political, it was reasonable to focus on ones that could at least be construed as such, including education and social issues. Second, there was the fight within the women's movement. The fear of being associated with the worker's party, the Social Democrats, kept many bourgeois feminists from embracing the demand for a general vote.⁶⁰ Yet one should not condemn the more conservative strand of the women's movement as reactionary. In the second half of the 19th century, the question of how to focus political activities in the face of such severe restrictions was one of strategy and tactics.

Female Suffrage and Citizenship

Political participation for women is only possible if they are considered citizens. Around 1900, when the struggle for women's suffrage began in earnest, women automatically lost their German citizenship when they married a foreigner. Only after 1953 could such married women keep their German citizenship, but even then they could still not pass their German citizenship on to their children. Even though in Germany citizenship (in its narrow sense) has long been exclusively transferred by *ius sanguinis*, such children's citizenship would be determined by the citizenship of the

⁵⁸ After the fall of the monarchy and the proclamation of the republic on November 9, 1918, the '*Rat der Volksbeauftragten*' ('Council of People's Representatives') was established as a provisional revolutionary government.

⁵⁹ See Bock, "Frauenwahlrecht" 96–97.

⁶⁰ Gerhard, *Unerhört* 178–185; Gerhard, "Grenzziehungen und Überschreitungen" 540.

father.⁶¹ Only after a decision of the German Federal Constitutional Court in 1974 were children of German mothers married to foreigners considered German citizens.⁶² Even now that a very limited *ius soli* has been introduced, the German political establishment still regards multiple citizenship as something to be avoided.⁶³ The notion that a person can be loyal to only one country is still prevalent, and therefore one cannot really 'trust' bi-nationals. The argument of not being able 'to serve two masters' shows how strongly the concept of citizenship remains grounded in patriarchy.

Women's political status cannot be fully understood without considering all aspects of citizenship. Since T. H. Marshall's famous paper, 'Citizenship and Social Class',⁶⁴ it has become customary to distinguish between civil, political, and social citizenship. Regarding England, Marshall constructed a sequence of these dimensions: civil rights were gained in the 18th century, political rights in the 19th, and social citizenship in the 20th. For Germany, the periods are quite different, and for German women even more so.

The struggle for civil rights took place in Germany during the 19th century for both sexes. Nevertheless, the situation of women, especially of married women, was far behind that of men.⁶⁵ In 1900, the German Civil Code (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*) (BGB) went into effect. Women had fought against this codification, as it was extraordinarily patriarchal in its rules about the family.⁶⁶ According to the code, the husband was legally privileged in many ways. He was the head of the household in the fullest sense. He had the right to make all decisions in the marriage (§ 1354 BGB). His name became the family name (§ 1355). He could give notice to his

⁶¹ This is only true for married couples; the children of unwed German mothers always were German citizens by birth.

⁶² Entscheidungen des Bundesverfassungsgerichts (BVerfGE) (*Official compilation of the decisions of the German Federal Constitutional Court*) vol. 37, 217.

⁶³ See Sacksofsky U., "Mehrfache Staatsangehörigkeit – ein Irregulare?" in Grawert R. et al (eds.), *Offene Staatlichkeit. Festschrift für Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde zum 65. Geburtstag* (Berlin: 1995) 317–339.

⁶⁴ Marshall T.H., *Citizenship and Social Class* (Cambridge: 1950).

⁶⁵ In some parts of Germany, the legal institute of 'Geschlechtsvormundschaft' was active until the middle of the 19th century, meaning that women could not legally act by themselves but only if their guardian agreed. Holthöfer E., "Geschlechtvormundschaft", in Gerhard, *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts* 390–451.

⁶⁶ Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein, *Die Stellung der Frau nach den zur Zeit in Deutschland gültigen Gesetzesbestimmungen für das Deutsche Reich* (Leipzig: 1892); Stritt M., "Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung in Deutschland", in Lange, *Handbuch der Frauenbewegung*; see also Limbach J., "Die Frauenbewegung und das Bürgerliche Gesetzbuch", in Battis U. and Schutz U. (eds.), *Frauen im Recht* (Heidelberg: 1990).

wife's employment (§ 1358). The wife's property was administered by the husband; he could also use the proceeds (§ 1363). Finally, he had complete power over the children (§ 1627). This marriage regime lasted until 1957, and its last vestiges (husbands' power over their children) were only abolished after a decision by the Federal Constitutional Court.⁶⁷ The rules about the family name were the last to change.⁶⁸ Until 1991, the law required married couples to choose one name as the common family name. If they did not make a decision, the name of the husband automatically became the wife's name. Again, the Federal Constitutional Court had to intervene to ensure full formal equality.⁶⁹ Beyond the elimination of explicit gender discrimination in statutes, family (and especially divorce) law was reformed in the 1970s in an attempt to create more substantive equality.⁷⁰

Furthermore, until late in the 20th century married women had no right to their bodies. The right of a husband to have sexual intercourse with his wife lasted well into the 1970s. In 1966, the Highest Civil Court declared that it was the duty of the wife to accept sexual advances by her husband and even to show some modicum of pleasure (whether she felt it or not).⁷¹ Only in 1997 did the criminal statute forbidding rape become applicable to rape in a marriage. Until the 1990s, women's right to decide whether to bear children was severely restricted. Since then, abortion has been legal in the first trimester if women undergo a mandatory advisory session with an accepted agency. In this respect, even today women do not have full control over their bodies.

As to social rights, the situation is mixed. On the one hand, Germany was very late in permitting women to attend universities or even to have a decent school education.⁷² The fight for education was central to the women's movement.⁷³ On the other hand, while Bismarck used repression in dealing with 'the social question', he also tried to improve the situation

⁶⁷ BVerfGE 10, 59–89 (1959).

⁶⁸ Sacksofsky U., "Grundrechtsdogmatik ade – Zum neuen Doppelnamen-Urteil des Bundesverfassungsgerichts", *Familie-Partnerschaft-Recht* (2002) 121–125.

⁶⁹ BVerfGE 84, 9.

⁷⁰ Flügge S., "25 Jahre feministische Rechtspolitik – eine Erfolgsgeschichte?" *Streit 2* (2003) 52–63.

⁷¹ BGH (Federal Court of Justice, highest court for civil cases) 02.11.1966, Az.: IV ZR 239/65 (KG), *Neue Juristische Wochenschrift*, 1967, 1078–1080.

⁷² The first grammar school for girls opened in Karlsruhe in 1893; the first women's matriculation took place in 1900. See von Soden C., "Auf dem Weg in die Tempel der Wissenschaft. Zur Durchsetzung des Frauenstudiums im Wilhelminischen Deutschland", in Gerhard, *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts* 617–632.

⁷³ Gerhard, *Unerhört* 138–167.

of workers through social reform. Bismarck founded a social insurance system that insured workers against the most important risks endangering their ability to earn money: sickness, accidents, disability, and age. Some of these social reforms included special social rights for women: e.g., special protection for female workers, such as the prohibition of night work or the prohibition of certain dangerous jobs; surviving dependant's and widow's pensions; and maternity protection in employment and health insurance.⁷⁴

Still, the situation of working women left much to be improved.⁷⁵ Moreover, some social rights designed for women, such as work protection rules, have always been ambivalent. While they do 'protect' women from hard or even dangerous work, they also hinder their chances of employment and may contribute to the wage gap between the sexes. They are an expression of and reinforce the paternalistic view of women needing protection. This can also be shown for the public debate about the protection of working women in the late 19th century. The 'naturally weak woman' became one of the leading topics of this debate, one that extended well beyond the protection of women working in factories and stabilized the general idea of the role of women. One can even argue that the symbolic value of gender rhetoric was the most important factor in this debate.⁷⁶ After all, the legal rules only protected female factory workers, whereas most women at the time were working in private homes, on farms, or in small shops.

The whole system of social insurance was designed with the model of the male breadwinner in mind. Family members were included in the health insurance system, and the continued payment of (some percentage) of pay in cases of sickness, accidents, or disability reflected the necessity of continuing to earn money to support a family. The social security system helped to establish the model of the bourgeois family with separate spheres for men and women. It did improve the situation of working women, as the conditions were formulated in a gender neutral way.

⁷⁴ For more details see Hausen K., "Arbeiterinnenschutz, Mutterschutz und gesetzliche Krankenversicherung im Deutschen Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik", in Gerhard, *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts* 713–743.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 729–733; Neyer G., "Die Entwicklung des Mutterschutzes in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz von 1877–1945", in Gerhard, *Frauen in der Geschichte des Rechts* 748–754. Analyzing the bourgeois women's position: Greven-Aschoff, *Die bürgerliche Frauenbewegung* 96–102; Twellmann, *Die deutsche Frauenbewegung* 139–177.

⁷⁶ Hausen, "Arbeiterinnenschutz, Mutterschutz" 721; Schmitt S., *Der Arbeiterinnenschutz im deutschen Kaiserreich. Zur Konstruktion der schutzbedürftigen Arbeiterin* (Stuttgart: 1995).

But the system did not reflect the fact that women earned considerably less than men, which meant that their payment in cases of accidents or disability was often not enough to keep them out of poverty.

Conclusion: Female Suffrage and Citizenship Today

The right to vote was only the first step toward equality. Another milestone in women's struggle for political participation was the inclusion of the equal rights clause in the constitution. In 1949, when the current German constitution was enacted, only five members of the constitutional assembly (*Parlamentarischer Rat*) were women. Nevertheless, after a difficult fight, and with the support of the women's movement, these members were able to have a guarantee of equal rights for men and women included in the constitution (art. 3 II). Later, in 1994, the relevant article was amended to read: 'The state shall promote the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men and take steps to eliminate disadvantages that now exist'. This article has proved very helpful in bringing about changes. In numerous landmark decisions, the Federal Constitutional Court has acted to ensure the equality of men and women when the political system failed to do so.⁷⁷

Feminist theory has shown that representation in traditional political institutions is only one part of achieving gender equality. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see how women have fared in the nearly 90 years since winning suffrage. Political rights have been achieved, but only on a formal level, as numbers of women's participation show. But even that took a long time and is still far short of amounting to equality. During the Weimar Republic, five to ten percent of members of parliament were female; up until 1987, that figure did not significantly exceed ten percent. In the German parliament (*Bundestag*) today, women constitute 32.9 percent of members. But there are huge differences between the parties: whereas female members of parliament make up more than 50 percent among the Greens and the newly founded Left Party, and nearly 40 percent among the Social Democrats, the more conservative parties do not have more than 26 percent (Christian Democrats, below 20 percent; Free Democrats,⁷⁸

⁷⁷ See Sacksofsky U., *Das Grundrecht auf Gleichberechtigung*, 2nd edition (Baden-Baden: 1996); Rodriguez Ruiz B. and Sacksofsky U., "Gender in the German Constitution", in Baines B. and Rubio-Marin R. (eds.), *The Gender of Constitutional Jurisprudence* (Cambridge: 2005) 149–173.

⁷⁸ A libertarian party.

26 percent).⁷⁹ The reason for the varying representation of women in political parties is the difference in quota systems: the Greens have a strict 50 percent quota (if an uneven number has to be filled, women must fill at least half of the positions), the SPD has a 40 percent quota, and the CDU has a voluntary 33 percent quota. At the federal level, governments have averaged about 40 percent female ministers in recent years, currently six of 16. And since 2005, for the first time, Germany has been led by a female prime minister (*Bundeskanzlerin*) –surprisingly enough, a member of the CDU. To complete the three branches of government: in the top tier courts, women are still dramatically underrepresented, constituting hardly more than 20 percent of judges.⁸⁰

The institutions have not changed. And, as many women in high positions relate, the centers of power shift as soon as women reach influential positions. Thus, the analysis has to assess the factors that contribute to the difference between formally equal political rights and the gender gap in full participation in all areas of the political process. Those factors exist on three levels: institutional arrangements, socio-economic factors, and socialization (i.e., the popular attitude toward politics, values, gender issues).

As far as socio-economic factors are concerned, social citizenship is an important issue. The social system still is structured according to the typical male biography, whereas care is not rewarded. Social rights often depend on employment, preferably uninterrupted full-time employment. Since the financial situation of Germany has deteriorated, the social welfare state has come under attack. This makes it extremely difficult to improve the situation of women; it is even difficult to ensure that women are not the major losers of political changes to the social welfare system. More and more, the income of partners is taken to include social benefits such as unemployment benefits, thereby making women economically dependent on their partners. Also, if women do not receive unemployment benefits, they are excluded from all kinds of services designed to help find new employment. This tendency to support financial dependency is exacerbated by the German tax system. The state gives tax breaks to married couples if, and only if, the difference between the spouses'

⁷⁹ For comparison, women in political parties in 2004: SPD, 31.1 percent; Grüne, 37.4 percent; CDU, 25.5 percent; FDP, 22.8 percent (Niedermayer, Oskar, *Parteimitglieder in Deutschland*, Arbeitshefte a.d. Otto-Stammer-Zentrum No. 15, FU Berlin, 2009).

⁸⁰ In detail: Federal Constitutional Court, 25 percent; Federal Administrative Court, 26.76 percent; Federal Court of Justice, 21.70 percent; Federal Patent Court, 22.88 percent; Federal Fiscal Court, 20.00 percent.

incomes is sufficiently large. Thus, the rich man with a housewife is subsidized, but couples with two equal earners do not get tax breaks, nor do single mothers. Feminists have long, but unsuccessfully, demanded the abolition of this subsidy of the traditional one-earner marriage. The opposition of patriarchy in that area is particularly strong.

Winning the vote has been a major step, and the situation for women in Germany has improved significantly, but there is still a long way to go to fully achieve gender equality.

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