Topics in Economic History
Class 8: Suffrage

Jade Ponsard

University of Lyon, ENS de Lyon

An overview

- For centuries, voting rights were restricted to wealthy elites, aristocrats, and landowners
- Though history, suffrage reforms have took many forms, enfranchising a variety of group:
  - Income-Based: Extends to lower-income groups (e.g., Britain Reform Acts in the 19th century)
  - Gender-Based: Enfranchises women (many many examples)
  - Group-Based: Includes racial/religious minority (e.g., Civil Rights in the US in the 60s')
  - Age-Based: Lowers voting age, reflecting youth interests (e.g., India in 1988)
  - Geography-Based: Extends to new territories or states (e.g., US statehood or French colonies)

An overview

- Studying those reforms, the literature mainly focus on two questions:

An overview

- Studying those reforms, the literature mainly focus on two questions:
  1. Why suffrage reforms take place?

An overview

- Studying those reforms, the literature mainly focus on two questions:
  1. Why suffrage reforms take place?
     - *Modernization hypothesis* – improvements in economic conditions (e.g., income, education levels) create conditions for democratization (Moore 1993; Lipset et al. 1969; Przeworski and Limongi 1997 or Almond and Coleman 2015)

An overview

- Studying those reforms, the literature mainly focus on two questions:
  1. Why suffrage reforms take place?
     - *Modernization hypothesis* – improvements in economic conditions (e.g., income, education levels) create conditions for democratization (Moore 1993; Lipset et al. 1969; Przeworski and Limongi 1997 or Almond and Coleman 2015)
     - *Inequality* – in more unequal societies, elites lose more from the redistributive effects of suffrage expansion (Boix, 2003), while Acemoglu and Robinson (2000) claims that in this context elites extend suffrage to avoid revolution through credible redistribution promises

An overview

- Studying those reforms, the literature mainly focus on two questions:
  1. Why suffrage reforms take place?
     - *Modernization hypothesis* – improvements in economic conditions (e.g., income, education levels) create conditions for democratization (Moore 1993; Lipset et al. 1969; Przeworski and Limongi 1997 or Almond and Coleman 2015)
     - *Inequality* – in more unequal societies, elites lose more from the redistributive effects of suffrage expansion (Boix, 2003), while Acemoglu and Robinson (2000) claims that in this context elites extend suffrage to avoid revolution through credible redistribution promises
     - *Public opinion, cultural factors, and social norms* (e.g., Arnsbarger WP; Koukal 2020)

An overview

- Studying those reforms, the literature mainly focus on two questions:
  1. Why suffrage reforms take place?
     - *Modernization hypothesis* – improvements in economic conditions (e.g., income, education levels) create conditions for democratization (Moore 1993; Lipset et al. 1969; Przeworski and Limongi 1997 or Almond and Coleman 2015)
     - *Inequality* – in more unequal societies, elites lose more from the redistributive effects of suffrage expansion (Boix, 2003), while Acemoglu and Robinson (2000) claims that in this context elites extend suffrage to avoid revolution through credible redistribution promises
     - *Public opinion, cultural factors, and social norms* (e.g., Arnsbarger WP; Koukal 2020)
     - *Political alignment* – politicians support suffrage reforms when they believe new voters will align with their interests (Teele, 2019)

An overview

- Studying those reforms, the literature mainly focus on two questions:
  1. Why suffrage reforms take place?
     - *Modernization hypothesis* – improvements in economic conditions (e.g., income, education levels) create conditions for democratization (Moore 1993; Lipset et al. 1969; Przeworski and Limongi 1997 or Almond and Coleman 2015)
     - *Inequality* – in more unequal societies, elites lose more from the redistributive effects of suffrage expansion (Boix, 2003), while Acemoglu and Robinson (2000) claims that in this context elites extend suffrage to avoid revolution through credible redistribution promises
     - *Public opinion, cultural factors, and social norms* (e.g., Arnsbarger WP; Koukal 2020)
     - *Political alignment* – politicians support suffrage reforms when they believe new voters will align with their interests (Teele, 2019)
     - ... and many more, have a look at chapter 23 of the *Oxford Handbook of Historical Political Economy* if interested

An overview

2 What are the consequences of suffrage reforms?

An overview

2 What are the consequences of suffrage reforms?

- *Economic* – public goods expenditures and redistribution → non-monotonic relationship between franchise extensions and government spending (Lott and Kenny 1999; Aidt et al. 2010 or Chapman 2016)

An overview

2 What are the consequences of suffrage reforms?

- *Economic* – public goods expenditures and redistribution → non-monotonic relationship between franchise extensions and government spending (Lott and Kenny 1999; Aidt et al. 2010 or Chapman 2016)
- *Political* – voter participation, electoral competition, candidate selection process, legislative discourse, and political identity, with varying impacts across contexts (Stephens and Brady 1976; Spirling 2016 or Morgan-Collins 2021)

An overview

2 What are the consequences of suffrage reforms?

- *Economic* – public goods expenditures and redistribution → non-monotonic relationship between franchise extensions and government spending (Lott and Kenny 1999; Aidt et al. 2010 or Chapman 2016)
- *Political* – voter participation, electoral competition, candidate selection process, legislative discourse, and political identity, with varying impacts across contexts (Stephens and Brady 1976; Spirling 2016 or Morgan-Collins 2021)
- *Other* – emancipation role in the private sphere (Slotwinski and Stutzer 2023)

An overview

2 What are the consequences of suffrage reforms?

- *Economic* – public goods expenditures and redistribution → non-monotonic relationship between franchise extensions and government spending (Lott and Kenny 1999; Aidt et al. 2010 or Chapman 2016)
- *Political* – voter participation, electoral competition, candidate selection process, legislative discourse, and political identity, with varying impacts across contexts (Stephens and Brady 1976; Spirling 2016 or Morgan-Collins 2021)
- *Other* – emancipation role in the private sphere (Slotwinski and Stutzer 2023)
- Again, have a look at chapter 23 of the *Oxford Handbook of Historical Political Economy* if interested

This class

Two presentations:

1. *The Franchise, Policing, and Race: Evidence from Arrests Data and the Voting Rights Act*, Facchini, Knight and Testa (2025)
2. *Peasants into Citizens: Suffrage Expansion and Mass Politics in France*, Degrave, Lopez-Peceno and Rozenas (2024)

The Franchise, Policing, and Race: Evidence from Arrests Data and the Voting Rights Act

Facchini, Knight and Testa (2025)

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics

Motivation

- Racial bias in policing remains a major issue in the US
  - ↪ Black Americans are arrested at much higher rates than white Americans

Motivation

- Racial bias in policing remains a major issue in the US
  - ↪ Black Americans are arrested at much higher rates than white Americans
- Previous research focused mainly on police force diversity

Motivation

- Racial bias in policing remains a major issue in the US
  - ↪ Black Americans are arrested at much higher rates than white Americans
- Previous research focused mainly on police force diversity
- But we know little about the effect of enfranchising Black Americans on policing
  - Many law enforcement leaders are elected
  - Does giving Black citizens voting power change how they are policed?

This paper

- Studies the extent to which enfranchising minority groups leads to better law enforcement practices towards these populations

This paper

- Studies the extent to which enfranchising minority groups leads to better law enforcement practices towards these populations
- Exploits the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 1965, which removed obstacles to Black voter registration

This paper

- Studies the extent to which enfranchising minority groups leads to better law enforcement practices towards these populations
- Exploits the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 1965, which removed obstacles to Black voter registration
- Implements a triple differences based on a comparison between
  - i pre/post VRA
  - ii covered/uncovered counties
  - iii high and low share of Black Americans in the county population

This paper

- Studies the extent to which enfranchising minority groups leads to better law enforcement practices towards these populations
- Exploits the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 1965, which removed obstacles to Black voter registration
- Implements a triple differences based on a comparison between
  - i pre/post VRA
  - ii covered/uncovered counties
  - iii high and low share of Black Americans in the county population
- Finds that following the VRA, Black Americans arrest rates fell in counties that were both covered by the legislation and had a large number of newly enfranchised Black voters

This paper

- Studies the extent to which enfranchising minority groups leads to better law enforcement practices towards these populations
- Exploits the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 1965, which removed obstacles to Black voter registration
- Implements a triple differences based on a comparison between
  - i pre/post VRA
  - ii covered/uncovered counties
  - iii high and low share of Black Americans in the county population
- Finds that following the VRA, Black Americans arrest rates fell in counties that were both covered by the legislation and had a large number of newly enfranchised Black voters
  - ↪ Driven by arrests carried out by sheriffs – who are always elected – rather than by police chiefs – who are typically appointed
  - ↪ Driven by arrests for less serious cases

Contributions

- **The causal impact of the VRA:** (Cascio and Washington 2014; Ang 2019; Bernini, Facchini, and Testa 2018; Aneja and Avenancio-Leon 2019)
  - ↪ Study the impact of the VRA on the police treatment of Black Americans
  - ↪ Shed light on increased accountability of elected White law enforcement officers to the Black electorate

Historical background

- Following the Civil War, the 15th Amendment was ratified, which prohibited any denial of the right to vote on account of race

Historical background

- Following the Civil War, the 15th Amendment was ratified, which prohibited any denial of the right to vote on account of race
- But, by 1895, most of the southern states virtually disenfranchised Black Americans through the imposition of literacy tests or poll taxes

Historical background

- Following the Civil War, the 15th Amendment was ratified, which prohibited any denial of the right to vote on account of race
- But, by 1895, most of the southern states virtually disenfranchised Black Americans through the imposition of literacy tests or poll taxes
- In the 1950s and 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement fought to end racial segregation, discrimination, and voting restrictions

Historical background

- In 1964, violent responses to peaceful Civil Rights protests sparked national outrage, leading to the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 1965

Historical background

- In 1964, violent responses to peaceful Civil Rights protests sparked national outrage, leading to the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 1965
- Section 4 of the VRA mandated strict federal monitoring for jurisdictions that used discriminatory tests AND had voter turnout below 50% in the 1964 election
  - ↪ 7 out of 11 Confederate states were fully or partially covered

Historical background

- In 1964, violent responses to peaceful Civil Rights protests sparked national outrage, leading to the passage of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 1965
- Section 4 of the VRA mandated strict federal monitoring for jurisdictions that used discriminatory tests AND had voter turnout below 50% in the 1964 election
  - ↪ 7 out of 11 Confederate states were fully or partially covered
- As a result, Black Americans registration and turnout drastically increased (Cascio and Washington 2014; Wright 2013)

Conceptual framework

- Key policy dimension police treatment of Black Americans

Conceptual framework

- Key policy dimension police treatment of Black Americans
- Before the VRA $\rightarrow$ only White voters participate, so equilibrium policies reflect White preferences

Conceptual framework

- Key policy dimension police treatment of Black Americans
- Before the VRA $\rightarrow$ only White voters participate, so equilibrium policies reflect White preferences
- After the VRA $\rightarrow$ Black Americans vote and candidates moderate their platforms towards their preferences

Conceptual framework

- Key policy dimension police treatment of Black Americans
- Before the VRA $\rightarrow$ only White voters participate, so equilibrium policies reflect White preferences
- After the VRA $\rightarrow$ Black Americans vote and candidates moderate their platforms towards their preferences
- **H1**: This effect should be stronger in counties with a larger Black population

Conceptual framework

- Key policy dimension police treatment of Black Americans
- Before the VRA → only White voters participate, so equilibrium policies reflect White preferences
- After the VRA → Black Americans vote and candidates moderate their platforms towards their preferences
- **H1**: This effect should be stronger in counties with a larger Black population
- **H2**: When officials are appointed rather than directly elected, the link between voter preferences and policy weakens, reducing the impact of franchise extension

Data

- Data on arrests executed by local police offices between 1960-1981 at the county level from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)
  - ↪ information on arrests reported for 29 offense categories by race and age group

Data

- Data on arrests executed by local police offices between 1960-1981 at the county level from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)
  - ↪ information on arrests reported for 29 offense categories by race and age group
- UCR data are based on voluntary filing, so availability varies over time → use a balanced panel of reporting agencies for 590 counties

Data

- Data on arrests executed by local police offices between 1960-1981 at the county level from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)
  - ↪ information on arrests reported for 29 offense categories by race and age group
- UCR data are based on voluntary filing, so availability varies over time → use a balanced panel of reporting agencies for 590 counties
- Average over the 1960-1965 period to create pre-VRA arrest measures and over the 1975-1980 period to create post-VRA arrest measures

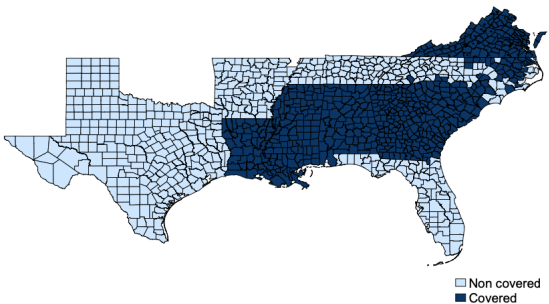
Data

- Data on arrests executed by local police offices between 1960-1981 at the county level from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)
  - ↪ information on arrests reported for 29 offense categories by race and age group
- UCR data are based on voluntary filing, so availability varies over time → use a balanced panel of reporting agencies for 590 counties
- Average over the 1960-1965 period to create pre-VRA arrest measures and over the 1975-1980 period to create post-VRA arrest measures
- To measure the share of Black Americans in the population → rely on census data from 1960

Empirical strategy I

- Triple diff: (i) before and after the VRA, (ii) between covered and uncovered counties among the Confederate States and (iii) between counties with different 1960 Black population shares

Figure 1: Coverage in 1965



Empirical strategy II

$$\Delta \text{ArrestRates}_c = \mu \text{Black}_{60} + \theta \text{Black}_{60} \times \text{Cov}_c + X_c\beta + I_s + \epsilon_{rc}$$

- $\Delta \text{ArrestRates}_c$: Change in the arrest rates from pre-VRA to post-VRA for Black or White individuals in county c (in log)
- Black_{60}: Share of Black Americans in county c in 1960
- Cov_c: equal to 1 if county c was covered under Section 4 of the VRA in 1965, and 0 otherwise
- X_c: Set of pre-VRA county economic and political characteristics
- I_s: State fixed effects

$\Rightarrow$ Whether the change from pre- to post-VRA differs between covered and uncovered counties, and whether this difference is larger in counties with a higher share of the Black population in 1960

Identifying assumption

- "In the absence of federal intervention, covered and noncovered jurisdictions—sharing a similar history of discrimination and disenfranchisement—would have experienced the same trends in the racial patterns of arrest rates"

Identifying assumption

- "In the absence of federal intervention, covered and noncovered jurisdictions—sharing a similar history of discrimination and disenfranchisement—would have experienced the same trends in the racial patterns of arrest rates"

$$y_{ct} = \sum_{n \neq 1960} \gamma_n D_n^t \, \text{Black}_{1960} + \sum_{n \neq 1960} \theta_n D_n^t \, \text{Black}_{1960} \times \text{Cov}_c + X_c' \beta + I_{st} + I_c + \varepsilon_{ct}, \quad (1)$$

- y_{ct} is the natural log of arrest rates (of either race) in county c at time t
- $Black_{1960}$ is the 1960 Black population share in the county
- Cov_c is an indicator equal to one for counties covered by the policy in 1965 and zero otherwise
- D_n^t is an indicator equal to one if n = t
- X_c', pre-VRA county-level controls that include population and unemployment
- I_{st}, state-year fixed effect
- I_c, county fixed effect

Results

TABLE 1—OLS MODELS. DEPENDENT VARIABLE: SHERIFFS AND POLICE, LONG-RUN DIFFERENCE IN ln(ARRESTS RATES), BY RACE (1960–1981)

	Black (1)	White (2)	Black (3)	White (4)	Black (5)	White (6)	Black (7)	White (8)	Black vs White (9)
Percent Black,	−0.016	−0.009	−0.016	−0.009	−0.017	−0.005	−0.018	−0.001	−0.018
1960 × coverage	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Percent Black, 1960	0.022	0.009	0.022	0.008	0.024	0.007	0.024	0.007	0.024
	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.007)
White × percent Black, 1960 × coverage									0.017
									(0.007)
Basic controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other controls	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coverage × controls	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
State trends	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adjusted R^2	0.09	0.01	0.09	0.01	0.12	0.03	0.10	0.02	0.09
Observations	551	589	551	589	486	521	486	521	1,007

Notes: Robust standard errors clustered by judicial divisions in parentheses. Basic controls: population, unemployment rate. Other controls: percent family below the poverty line, percent unskilled, percent rural, cotton suitability, farms with 700 acres or more, pro-Black protests, anti-Black protests, Black police, green book establishments, lynching.

- Black Americans' arrest rates are growing more slowly in covered areas with significant Black populations
- An increase in the Black share of the population by 10 pp leads to a 16– 18 percent reduction (columns 3 and 7) in the growth of the arrest rate for Black Americans in covered counties compared to the others

Pre-trends – Event-study results

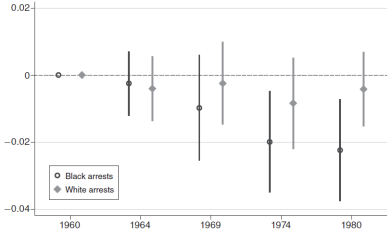


Figure 2. Difference in the Gradient in Black and White Arrest Rates in 1960 Percent Black between Covered and Noncovered Counties

Notes: Estimated parameter: Black share 1960 × coverage. Controls: population, population × coverage, unemployment rate, unemployment rate × coverage, state-year interactions, and county fixed effects. Omitted interaction: 1960. Bars represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

- During the pre-VRA period, covered counties with larger shares of Black Americans do not exhibit different patterns in arrest rates by race

Pre-trends – Event-study results

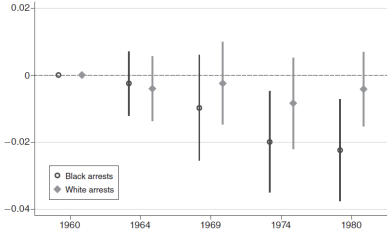


FIGURE 2. DIFFERENCE IN THE GRADIENT IN BLACK AND WHITE ARREST RATES IN 1960 PERCENT BLACK BETWEEN COVERED AND NONCOVERED COUNTIES

Notes: Estimated parameter: Black share 1960 × coverage. Controls: population, population × coverage, unemployment rate, unemployment rate × coverage, state-year interactions, and county fixed effects. Omitted interaction: 1960. Bars represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

- During the pre-VRA period, covered counties with larger shares of Black Americans do not exhibit different patterns in arrest rates by race
- After the passage of the act Black arrests in covered counties grew less than in comparable counties not covered by the federal legislation

Pre-trends – Event-study results

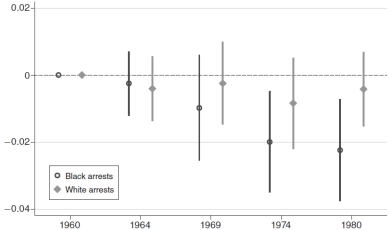


Figure 2. Difference in the Gradient in Black and White Arrest Rates in 1960 Percent Black between Covered and Noncovered Counties

Notes: Estimated parameter: Black share 1960 × coverage. Controls: population, population × coverage, unemployment rate, unemployment rate × coverage, state-year interactions, and county fixed effects. Omitted interaction: 1960. Bars represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

- During the pre-VRA period, covered counties with larger shares of Black Americans do not exhibit different patterns in arrest rates by race
- After the passage of the act Black arrests in covered counties grew less than in comparable counties not covered by the federal legislation
- For White arrests, by contrast, there is not a significant decline

Pre-trends – Event-study results

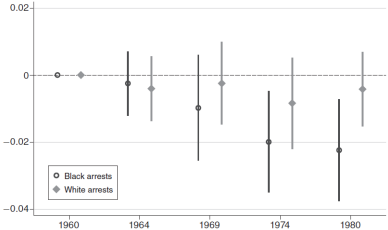


Figure 2. Difference in the Gradient in Black and White Arrest Rates in 1960 Percent Black between Covered and Noncovered Counties

Notes: Estimated parameter: Black share 1960 × coverage. Controls: population, population × coverage, unemployment rate, unemployment rate × coverage, state-year interactions, and county fixed effects. Omitted interaction: 1960. Bars represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

- During the pre-VRA period, covered counties with larger shares of Black Americans do not exhibit different patterns in arrest rates by race
- After the passage of the act Black arrests in covered counties grew less than in comparable counties not covered by the federal legislation
- For White arrests, by contrast, there is not a significant decline
- But ... may not capture the evolution of more extreme forms of police violence

Pre-trends – Extreme form of violence

Table A3: OLS models. Pre-VRA trends in civil right activism, political participation, racial attitudes and crime

	(1) Force	(2) Lynching	(3) KKK	(4) NAACP	(5) Turnout	(6) Republican
Percent black, 1960 x Coverage	–0.0008	0.0067**	–0.0072	0.0014	–0.0021	–0.0003
	(0.0017)	(0.0032)	(0.0093)	(0.0038)	(0.0017)	(0.0046)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Trends	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adj. R-Square	0.00	0.03	0.30	0.17	0.65	0.77
N	590	590	590	590	581	579

Robust standard errors clustered by judicial divisions in parenthesis. ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% levels, respectively. Controls: percent black, population, unemployment rate. All controls are inteacted by coverage

Pre-trends – Extreme form of violence

Table A3: OLS models. Pre-VRA trends in civil right activism, political participation, racial attitudes and crime

	(1) Force	(2) Lynching	(3) KKK	(4) NAACP	(5) Turnout	(6) Republican
Percent black, 1960 x Coverage	–0.0008	0.0067**	–0.0072	0.0014	–0.0021	–0.0003
	(0.0017)	(0.0032)	(0.0093)	(0.0038)	(0.0017)	(0.0046)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Trends	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adj. R-Square	0.00	0.03	0.30	0.17	0.65	0.77
N	590	590	590	590	581	579

Robust standard errors clustered by judicial divisions in parenthesis. ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% levels, respectively. Controls: percent black, population, unemployment rate. All controls are inteacted by coverage

- negative pre-trends for lynching, indicating possible negative selection into treatment

Pre-trends – Economic and demographic factors

Table A4: OLS models. Pre-VRA trends in demographic and economic characteristics

	(1) Black Share	(2) Population	(3) Rural	(4) Unemp	(5) Unskilled	(6) Poor	(7) Cotton Yield
Percent black, 1960 x Coverage	0.007	0.003**	0.201***	–0.003	0.027	0.032	–0.002
	(0.020)	(0.001)	(0.071)	(0.010)	(0.023)	(0.044)	(0.002)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls x Coverage	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Trends	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adj. R-Square	0.14	0.41	0.41	0.40	0.12	0.22	0.19
N	590	586	586	585	590	590	559

Robust standard errors clustered by judicial divisions in parenthesis. ***, **, and * indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% levels, respectively. Controls: percent black, population, unemployment rate.

- pre-trends in population growth and in the percent rural

Police *vs.* Sheriff

- As hypothesised, counties in which law enforcement agents are elected rather than appointed should drive the results
- Exploits the fact that in the South
  - sheriffs are always elected
  - municipal police chiefs are mostly appointed

Police *vs.* Sheriff

TABLE 2—OLS MODELS. DEPENDENT VARIABLE:
SHERIFF VERSUS POLICE LONG-RUN DIFFERENCE IN ln(ARRESTS RATES), BY RACE (1960–1981)

	Sheriff sample		Police sample		Sheriffs versus police	
	Black	White	Black	White	Black	White
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Percent Black, 1960 × coverage	−0.034	−0.012	−0.005	0.006	−0.034	−0.012
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Police × percent Black, 1960 × coverage					0.029	0.018
					(0.016)	(0.014)
Adjusted R^2	0.05	0.03	0.13	0.18	0.13	0.16
Observations	246	278	354	369	600	647

Notes: Robust standard errors clustered by judicial divisions in parentheses. In all our specifications, we include the full set of controls of columns 7 and 8 of Table 1: their interaction with coverage status and state trends.

- The only statistically significant effect of coverage → arrests of Blacks by sheriffs (column 1)
- Differences are small and statistically insignificant for Blacks arrested by municipal police (column 3) and for Whites arrested by both sheriffs (column 2) and municipal police (column 4)

Additional results

- The passage of the VRA mainly affected arrests for less serious crimes, where police have more discretion

Additional results

- The passage of the VRA mainly affected arrests for less serious crimes, where police have more discretion
- The sheriff/police analysis could identify something else as rural/urban
  - ↪ exploit places where police chiefs where elected and not appointed and show similar arrest reductions

Mechanisms

- Elections may affect arrest rates through:
  - Changes in incumbent CLEOs' behavior
  - Changes in the identity of elected CLEOs

Mechanisms

- Elections may affect arrest rates through:
  - Changes in incumbent CLEOs' behavior
  - Changes in the identity of elected CLEOs
- Assess which channel explains the post-VRA decline in Black arrest rates

Mechanisms

- Black elected CLEOs are extremely rare during the period

Mechanisms

- Black elected CLEOs are extremely rare during the period
- Thus, changes in arrest rates are unlikely to be driven by the election of Black sheriffs

Mechanisms

- Black elected CLEOs are extremely rare during the period
- Thus, changes in arrest rates are unlikely to be driven by the election of Black sheriffs
- Test for changes in sheriff turnover using an event-study design

Mechanisms

- Black elected CLEOs are extremely rare during the period
- Thus, changes in arrest rates are unlikely to be driven by the election of Black sheriffs
- Test for changes in sheriff turnover using an event-study design
- No significant change in incumbency in covered counties

Mechanisms

- Black elected CLEOs are extremely rare during the period
- Thus, changes in arrest rates are unlikely to be driven by the election of Black sheriffs
- Test for changes in sheriff turnover using an event-study design
- No significant change in incumbency in covered counties
- Consistent with behavioral change among incumbent White sheriffs

Robustness checks

- Address the following alternative explanations and find no evidence:

Robustness checks

- Address the following alternative explanations and find no evidence:
  - In municipalities, police forces is more likely to be unionized may limit elected CLEOs' ability to discipline officers

Robustness checks

- Address the following alternative explanations and find no evidence:
  - In municipalities, police forces is more likely to be unionized may limit elected CLEOs' ability to discipline officers
  - Changes in migration, schooling, or labor market conditions for Black Americans

Robustness checks

- Address the following alternative explanations and find no evidence:
  - In municipalities, police forces is more likely to be unionized may limit elected CLEOs' ability to discipline officers
  - Changes in migration, schooling, or labor market conditions for Black Americans
  - Black arrests could have increased in the period pre-VRA, i.e., during the Civil right Movement

Take away

- Political rights matter for public service delivery
  - i Voting Rights Act reduced discriminatory policing against Black Americans
  - ii Effect stronger where electoral incentives exist (elected sheriffs *vs.* appointed police chiefs)

References I

Acemoglu, D. and Robinson, J. A. (2000). Why did the west extend the franchise? democracy, inequality, and growth in historical perspective. *The quarterly journal of economics*, 115(4):1167–1199.

Aidt, T. S., Daunton, M., and Dutta, J. (2010). The retrenchment hypothesis and the extension of the franchise in england and wales. *The Economic Journal*, 120(547):990–1020.

Almond, G. A. and Coleman, J. S. (2015). *The politics of the developing areas*. Princeton University Press.

Boix, C. (2003). *Democracy and redistribution*. Cambridge University Press.

Chapman, J. (2016). Democratic reform and opposition to government expenditure: Evidence from nineteenth-century britain.

Koukal, A. M. (2020). Leader-induced cultural change: How vatican ii triggered female enfranchisement. *Unpublished manuscript*.

Lipset, S. M. et al. (1969). *Political man*, volume 960. Heinemann London.

References II

Lott, Jr, J. R. and Kenny, L. W. (1999). Did women's suffrage change the size and scope of government? *Journal of political Economy*, 107(6):1163–1198.

Moore, B. (1993). *Social origins of dictatorship and democracy: Lord and peasant in the making of the modern world*. Number 268. Beacon press.

Morgan-Collins, M. (2021). The electoral impact of newly enfranchised groups: The case of women's suffrage in the united states. *The Journal of Politics*, 83(1):150–165.

Przeworski, A. and Limongi, F. (1997). Modernization: Theories and facts. *World politics*, 49(2):155–183.

Slotwinski, M. and Stutzer, A. (2023). Women leaving the playpen: The emancipating role of female suffrage. *The Economic Journal*, 133(650):812–844.

Spirling, A. (2016). Democratization and linguistic complexity: The effect of franchise extension on parliamentary discourse, 1832–1915. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(1):120–136.

Stephens, H. W. and Brady, D. W. (1976). The parliamentary parties and the electoral reforms of 1884-85 in britain. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, pages 491–510.

Teele, D. L. (2019). *Forging the franchise: The political origins of the women's vote*. Princeton University Press.