Endogenous Institutions:
The Origins of Compulsory Voting Laws

Gretchen Helmke
University of Rochester
Department of Political Science
hlmk@mail.rochester.edu

Bonnie M. Meguid
University of Rochester
Department of Political Science
bonnie.meguid@rochester.edu

under review

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Abstract

Between 1862 and 1998, 20 democracies adopted compulsory voting laws, the majority in Western Europe and Latin America. Although there is a broad literature on the effects of compulsory voting on voter turnout, far less is known about when and why compulsory voting has been adopted. Using an original cross-national dataset on compulsory voting laws combined with in-depth historical analyses of out-of-sample cases, we find evidence that strategic considerations – whether parties believe they will benefit or be harmed electorally under compulsory voting rules – shape the decisions to adopt such laws. More generally, our paper aims to contribute to the emerging literature on the adoption of electoral systems by examining the degree to which electoral institutions are the result of party strategy and, thus, are endogenous to party competition.

The perennial question posed by electoral reforms is why incumbents who win under one set of rules, adopt another. In the case of enacting compulsory voting laws, the historical evidence appears particularly puzzling: the Right was often behind the adoption of CV, but the Left ultimately tended to benefit electorally. Why, then, did politicians risk upsetting the rules of the game, particularly when doing so could lead to negative consequences?

To date, most of the literature on compulsory voting (CV) has simply ignored such questions, concentrating instead on its effects. Empirical scholarship has firmly established that CV increases both voter turnout (Powell 1986; Jackman 1987; Jackman and Miller 1995; Franklin 1999; Kato 2007; 2008) and the incidence of spoiled ballots (Power and Roberts 1995; Mackerras and McAllister 1999). Informed by these findings, scholars and citizens have long debated the merits of making voting obligatory (Lijphart 1997; Hill 2006). But systematic answers about why political parties adopt CV remain in short supply (cf. Birch 2007).

This paper proposes an explanation for the origins of compulsory voting rooted in the logic of electoral competition and vote maximization. The idea is simple: parties compare the likelihood of their own voters versus their competitors' supporters turning out under two possible states of the world: the status quo, in which voting is optional, and compulsory voting, in which voting is mandatory. Parties have little interest in making voting compulsory if they believe that their opponent's supporters are less likely than their own supporters to turn out under the status quo. Conversely, parties that fear that their own voters are more likely than their opponents' to abstain under the status quo are more likely to push for CV. A handful of historical case studies on compulsory voting in Western Europe suggest precisely this sort of rationale (McAllister 1986; Devoto and DiTella 1997; Malkopoulou 2007; Pilet 2007). Our goal here is to explore

whether this argument can be extended to account for patterns in the adoption of compulsory voting laws more generally.

At first glance, compulsory voting would hardly seem to fit with a strategic-based account of institutional choice. Skeptics rightly claim that institutions are often devised under conditions of extreme political uncertainty, effectively turning political leaders into "strategic fools" (Andrews and Jackman 2004). This charge appears all the more apt if compulsory voting laws did, in fact, in the long term undermine the very parties that adopted them (cf. Przeworski 1991). Yet, even if political actors do not understand fully the consequences of their choices or ultimately make the wrong calculations, this hardly rules out the possibility that they behaved strategically. Just as rational choice accounts are open to the charge of functionalism or tautology when they infer actors' motives from outcomes that benefit them, one cannot simply dismiss the claim that actors had strategic motives when outcomes ultimately do not benefit them.[1] Showing that politicians make correct calculations may have great intuitive appeal, but it is neither necessary nor sufficient from a strategic perspective. The key is whether political actors make choices consistent with a strategic account based on the information and beliefs that they had at the time.

In the next section, we develop an informal argument about the strategic origins of compulsory voting and derive several testable hypotheses. We then present a series of alternative hypotheses drawn from various arguments in the literature. The second part of the paper turns to empirics. We evaluate our approach against others using an original cross-national dataset on voting rules. Unlike other studies, which tend to draw inferences about the sources of CV by looking only at countries with CV, our research design builds in variation on

the dependent variable by also considering countries without CV. Descriptive and multivariate

analyses provide support for our strategic account: parties adopt CV when faced with an electoral

threat. Qualitative analysis of three out-of-sample cases provides additional support for our core

mechanism. Using a mix of methods, this analysis provides a compelling and original account of

the conditions leading parties to turn to compulsory voting laws.

A Strategic Account of Compulsory Voting

In extending the strategic approach to the adoption of compulsory voting laws, we follow

Boix's (1999) lead and develop our argument in three sequential stages: (1) the consequences of

CV, (2) the strategic calculations of politicians, and (3) exogenous changes to the political

environment.

Consequences of CV

Like any institution, compulsory voting laws have multiple, and sometimes disputed,

consequences. In addition to being linked to a higher incidence of spoiled ballots, CV has been

associated with (1) more so-called "Donkey Ballots," in which voters merely select the candidate

listed first (Power and Roberts 1995; Jackman 2001); (2) allegedly higher quality political

campaigns (Lijphart 1997); and (3) higher levels of party identification (Mackerras and

McAllister 1996). Other possible consequences include reducing the socio-economic bias in

voter turnout (Lijphart 1997), producing social democratic-leaning policies (McAllister and

Mughan 1986; Nagel 1988; Pacek and Radcliff 1995 all cited in Jackman 2001, though also see

Norris 2004), pulling politicians toward the median voter (Kato 2007), and – in line with the

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[1] A related argument is that as long as incumbents believe CV will maximize their electoral power – whether by
allowing them to maintain control of the government or by minimizing their future seat or vote loss – adopting CV

argument developed here – minimizing parties' mobilizational efforts with regard to their voters (McAllister 1986).

The clearest and most direct consequence of compulsory voting laws, of course, is that they increase voter turnout. Numerous studies of advanced industrial democracies estimate that CV increases turnout anywhere from seven to sixteen percentage points (Powell 1986; Jackman 1987; Jackman and Miller 1995; Lijphart 1997 cited in Jackman 2001). Similarly, studies on Latin America find that CV increases turnout anywhere from eleven to seventeen percentage points (Fornos et al. 2004).

The mechanism by which CV increases turnout is relatively straightforward. Compulsory voting laws make abstention costly to individual voters. Depending on the particular sanctions leveled, compulsory voting effectively overcomes the so-called "paradox of voting" identified by Downs (1957) and others (see Riker and Ordeshook 1968; Ferejohn and Fiorina 1974). As noted by Kato (2008), an individual will vote under a compulsory voting regime as long as the following holds:

$$pB - C + D > \text{-}S$$

where p is probability that the voter decides the election and thus receives her electoral benefit, B; C is the cost to the individual voter of voting; D is the so-called "Duty Term" or benefit independent of the outcome that the voter receives from the act of voting; and S is the sanction of abstention. We know that the benefits of voting are either infinitesimally small, as is the case with pB, or they are dubious, as is the case with the D term. And CV rules are usually associated with lower costs of voting (e.g., elections are not held during the work week, registration is simplified, etc.). With the left side of the equation at or close to zero, the non-zero cost of abstaining under compulsory voting laws is likely to make an important difference in a voter's

is a rational strategy.

calculus and to encourage turnout. Thus, the first building block of our account is that CV is

expected to change mass electoral behavior by increasing voter participation.

Strategic Calculations

The second building block of our account begins with the common assumption that

institutions have distributional effects (Knight 1992; Benoit 2004). Here, this assumption is

supported by the fact that, under a regime of voluntary voting, *which* members of the electorate

abstain is not purely random, but rather is a function of class, social status, location, education,

etc. (Lijphart 1997).

To the extent that different parties appeal to different groups of voters, parties will derive

different benefits from introducing compulsory voting. Parties representing voters that tend to

abstain under voluntary voting will stand to gain more than parties whose voters already turn out.

Thus, assuming that parties seek to maximize votes, a party will favor compulsory voting over

the voluntary voting status quo as long as the anticipated boost in turnout is expected to accrue

more to its own candidates than to the opposition's candidates. Specifically, a party's decision to

support CV hinges on whether a party simultaneously believes that (1) some sizeable portion of

its natural base of voters is abstaining under the status quo and (2) the opposition's natural base

is either not abstaining under the status quo or, if the opposition's base is abstaining, it is not as

large as the party's own base.

While this account suggests that any party may prefer compulsory voting to voluntary

voting, CV will only be adopted if that party also has the capacity to change the rules of the

game. In other words, the *ruling party* must come to believe that its own natural base of support

is increasingly under-mobilized relative to the opposition's in order for it to implement CV. The

more incumbents fear that they are losing the ability to get their own voters to the polls, the more appealing an antidote compulsory voting will be. With this general logic of party preferences in place, the next question we turn to is what types of conditions lead incumbents to hold these beliefs.

The Electoral Environment

Strategic accounts require establishing what actors' beliefs and expectations are at the time at which choices are made. Thus, our third building block begins with the observation that, in the late 19th and early to mid 20th century, when compulsory voting laws began to be adopted, the electorate in Western Europe and Latin America was in a state of flux. The expansion of suffrage dramatically shifted the size and composition of the voting population. At the same time, industrialization swelled the ranks of the working class and created new political identities (Przeworski and Sprague 1986; Collier and Collier 1991; Collier 1999).

As several scholars have noted, the political incorporation of workers and the emergence of Socialist parties profoundly changed the calculus of incumbent elites, particularly on the Right (e.g. on Western Europe see Boix 1999; on Latin America see Collier and Collier 1991; also see Acemoglu and Robinson 2005). During this period, the Left's organizational ability to mobilize its potential voters was increasingly perceived as unmatched by other parties (Przeworski and Sprague 1986). With electoral outcomes dependent in part on the ability of a party to turn out its supporters, the strong organizational capacity of the Left was threatening to Right parties. Rightist governments were not defenseless, however. If the Right still had a sufficiently large base of untapped supporters, CV could serve as an antidote to its own organizational weakness and help to counter a rising Left electoral threat.

Qualitative accounts of the period suggest that non-Leftist parties indeed feared the organizational heft of the Left and that this led them to consider CV. For example, Pilet (2007) writes of late 19th century Belgium that the introduction of suffrage gave rise to the concern that only Leftist extremists would show up at the polls. Pilet reports that these fears were a central motivation behind the adoption of CV:

> Conservatives were worried that most moderate voters will not turn out and vote while the most radical ones will be more mobilised and will actually vote. The consequence would be a relative rise of radical parties, and in particular of the POB [workers' party]. Their concern was that 'the most conservative persons, in a broad sense, will abstain; they are brave persons, indifferent, or shy. They don't realize that by not voting they open the way to radicals, excessive and violent citizens who don't have to be pushed to vote' (Dupriez 1901:119 cited in Pilet 2007: 4).

Likewise, in debates leading up to the adoption of compulsory voting in Greece, references to offsetting the influence of the Socialists figure prominently. Malkopoulou (2007: 5-6) writes,

> The main argument of the proponents of compulsory voting pointed at its inclusiveness. For, a measure like that would encourage to the polls, all social strata, *especially the wealthy members of the upper bourgeoisie.* In the committee's own words, it would contribute 'to countering the wide, unfortunately observed especially among the developed classes, inexcusable neglect, through which they wrong the polity and themselves.' These bourgeoisie voters were usually holders of moderate or flexible political opinions and could in any case *be expected to create an obstacle or minimum balance to more radical voting preferences*" [emphasis added].

To summarize, we posit that compulsory voting is pushed by parties when they expect that the electoral benefits of compulsory voting will accrue to them more than to other parties. In our view, incumbents adopt CV as a way of countering the increasing ability of the opposition to get its supporters to the polls. The more incumbents believe that the opposition has already mobilized its supporters, the less risky the strategy appears. CV, in other words, is based on the incumbent's wager that abstaining voters are the equivalent of untapped supporters. While

theoretically any political party could hold these beliefs, historically, the evidence suggests that the Right was more likely to have these expectations than the Left.

Based on this logic, we thus propose the following set of testable hypotheses:

H1   The more the electoral strength of the Left increases, the more likely a government of the Right is to adopt CV.

The rationale behind this expectation is simply that the Left's rising electoral strength is a sign to the Right that the Left's capacity to mobilize supporters is increasing. Thus, conditional on the Right being in power, CV will be adopted to counteract the threat of the Left. The second hypothesis, in turn, captures the Right's beliefs about the size of its own electorate. The basic idea is that the more natural supporters the Right believes it can tap into by making voting obligatory, the more likely it is to turn to CV as a way to offset the opposition.

H2   The larger the natural constituency of the Right, the more likely a Right government is to adopt CV.

Whereas the rise of the Left meant that CV was largely a defensive strategy chosen by the Right in government, CV would generally have been an offensive move for a Left in power.[2] That is, the Left would have tended to view CV as a strategic measure that was worth the risk only when its own mobilization efforts were falling short. If the assumption that the Left was generally better at mobilizing its voters is true, then the Left would have been particularly sensitive to the danger that CV would instead mobilize the opposition. This leads to the following two hypotheses:

H3   Left incumbents should be less likely to adopt CV than Right incumbents.

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[2] Note that the framing of all of these hypotheses is historically contingent on the assumption that the Left is the "new and upcoming" political force and that the Right is thus in a more defensive position. We believe that this assumption is well-founded for the earlier and middle cases of CV adoption, but is may be more of a stretch in the later cases.

H4   The more the electoral strength of the Left increases, the less likely a Left government is to adopt CV.

The logic behind H3 is straightforward: if the Left was generally better than the Right at getting its supporters to the polls, then CV would offer fewer benefits to the Left and carry more risks. The idea behind H4 is that while the Left was not immune to bolstering its support via CV, as long as it was gaining in electoral strength, it saw no need to run the risk of bringing the so-called "rich and content" into the voting booth.

Alternative Hypotheses

Whereas we have argued that the adoption of CV is a strategic decision made by a party seeking to increase its electoral strength, it might instead be that CV is adopted simply as a means to increase the public's political participation (e.g., Lijphart 1997). Such an explanation invokes the normative argument that citizen involvement is critical to the functioning of a democracy and, therefore, is valued as an end in and of itself.[3] If governing parties are motivated simply by the belief that full turnout is a desirable outcome for ensuring the health of a democracy, the following hypothesis should hold:

H5: CV is more likely to be adopted when turnout in the previous election is low.

A different set of alternative hypotheses relates the likelihood of adopting CV to a country's cultural and historical background. Based on the idea that participation may be seen as a "moral obligation," Massicotte et al. (2004: 37) suggest a relationship between a country's degree of Catholicism and the adoption of CV. Perhaps because of this association, they (2004:

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[3] This hypothesis could also be applicable to non-democratic countries. In these cases, the concern would not be the health of the democracy, but rather the signaling of the legitimacy of the regime (Norris 2004: 168).

38) also draw a connection between having a Spanish, as opposed to a British, colonial heritage and CV. This suggests the following two additional hypotheses:

H6:   CV is more likely to be adopted by Catholic countries.

H7:   CV is more likely to be adopted by countries with a Spanish colonial heritage than a British colonial heritage.

A third possible factor linked to the adoption of CV is a country's population size. Giraud (1931) suggests that it is easier to implement and enforce compulsory voting laws in smaller countries. In contrast, Birch (2007: 21) finds evidence in support of a positive relationship between population size and CV adoption; she observes that the majority of the countries with CV have current populations greater than that of the median state.[4] Although the logic underlying both correlations remains to be better specified, this adds two more hypotheses:

H8a: CV is more likely to be adopted in countries with small population sizes.

H8b: CV is more likely to be adopted in countries with large population sizes.

That most (though not all) cases of CV are clustered in Latin America and Western Europe and that many occurred in the inter-war period suggests another possible explanation based on the idea of diffusion. In contrast to the other alternative hypotheses discussed above, diffusion has not, to our knowledge, been offered to explain why CV is adopted. Rather, it is part of a broader approach to institutional adoption that emphasizes the tendency of reforms to cluster across time and space (Huntington 1991; Elkins and Simmons 2005; Brinks and Coppedge 2006). The specific mechanisms underlying diffusion range from countries in a particular region or time period responding to a common trigger, to countries imitating one another, bandwagoning, or responding to information cascades (Elkins and Simmons 2005).

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[4] Birch compares countries with CV to countries without CV using population data from 2005.

Indeed, the common-trigger mechanism is entirely compatible with our account. That is, the rise of the Left occurring more or less concurrently across different regions triggers a common response from the Right. The second set of mechanisms, however, suggests that causal factors outside of our strategic story play a role in an elite's calculus. For example, it could be that the adoption of a reform by one country independently increases the probability that another country will adopt the same reform (*Ibid.*). To begin to explore whether diffusion operates independently of strategic motivations in the case of CV, we propose the following hypothesis:

H9 **All else equal, a country will be more likely to adopt CV if other countries in the region have already done so.**

Data and Case Selection

The focus of this paper is on explaining variation in the adoption of compulsory voting laws in democratic countries.[5] Our dependent variable is simply the adoption (or not) of compulsory voting laws, where compulsory voting laws are defined as laws that require registered voters to cast a vote in a national election.[6] We recognize that not all countries enforce these laws to the same degree. However, for our examination of the original adoption of these laws, we are not interested in the subsequent redefining of the laws surrounding CV's enforcement.

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[5] Consistent with our view of CV as an electoral strategy, we restrict our analyses to democracies. Following Przeworski et al. (2000), we employ a minimalist definition of democracy focusing on electoral competition. With Przeworski et al.'s (2000) data unavailable before 1950, we used the *xrcomp* variable from the Polity Dataset. Democracies were identified as those regimes in which either the executive is chosen by competitive election (coded 3 for the *xrcomp* variable) or there are dual executives (one of which is chosen by competitive election) or the regime is undergoing a transition from selection to competitive elections (coded 2 for the *xrcomp* variable) (Marshall and Jaggers 2004). These codings were verified against other sources, including Boix (2003) and Collier and Collier (1991).

[6] In most countries, there are exemptions to CV laws for particular sets of voters (e.g., citizens living in a foreign country; elderly citizens; citizens who are mentally incapacitated; prisoners). That said, there is a qualitative difference between a government mandating voting for (most) citizens, and one not. Moreover, some of the groups

Patterns in the Adoption of CV

As shown in Figure 1, CV was adopted by 20 democracies between 1862 and 1998.[7]

Three countries – Czechoslovakia (in 1938),[8] the Netherlands (in 1971), and Venezuela (in 1993)

– later abolished CV during this period.[9] Two or perhaps three distinct clusters of adoptions

appear in the data, an observation roughly consistent with a diffusion argument. Eleven

countries implemented CV before or during the interwar period, five did so between 1948 and

1970, and an additional four adopted the laws in the last thirty years of the century. Western

European countries were more likely to adopt the laws earlier in the century (or in the previous

century, as the cases of Liechtenstein and Belgium indicate) than countries in Latin America.

Similarly, older developed democracies were more likely than developing countries to adopt CV

earlier in the 20th century – a pattern that is also consistent with, but not identical to, the

geographic pattern discussed above.

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of people exempt from voting under CV laws are also not eligible to vote in countries with voluntary voting schemes.

[7] An additional 14 non-democratic countries adopted compulsory voting rules. We explore the rationale behind why authoritarian regimes mandate voting in another paper.

[8] The year 1938 marks the end of Czechoslovakia's pre-WWII democratic regime and, thus, the end of its period as a democratic country with CV.

[9] Italy is a possible fourth case of CV repeal, but there is no consensus on this information within the literature. The Inter-Parliamentary Union database notes that Italy currently does not have CV, but it does not provide a repeal date. Its information is not independently verified by any of the other sources on compulsory voting.

Figure 1: Timeline of the Adoption of Compulsory Voting Laws
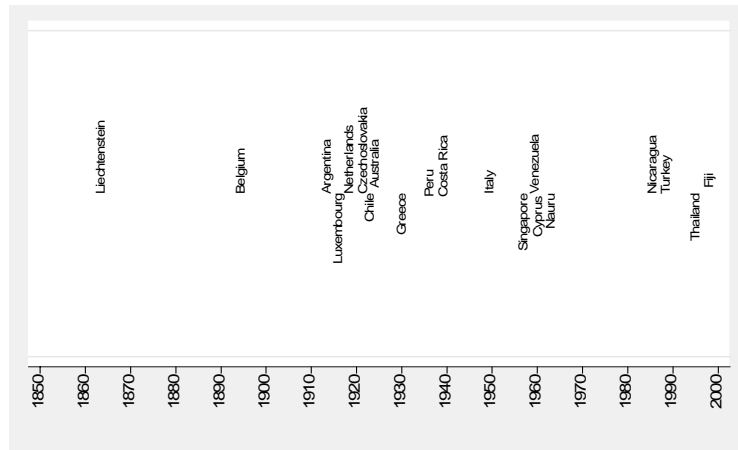
To test the hypotheses about CV adoption, we have assembled a cross-national dataset

with 69 countries – the 20 that have adopted compulsory voting and an additional 49 countries

that do not have CV laws. These countries were selected following the case-control sampling

technique recommended by King and Zeng (2001a; 2001c) for rare events. We include all cases

of CV adoption in democratic countries plus randomly drawn non-cases from the universe of

country-years in democratic countries from 1900 to 2004, the period during which 90% of

democracies with CV adopted those laws (see Figure 1). This approach allows us to include

both instances and non-instances of CV adoption, thereby avoiding the problems of inferring

causal relationships about the origins of these institutions based solely on countries with CV

laws. Moreover, randomly drawing non-cases from the appropriate universe of all democracies

allows us to reduce the costs inherent in conducting statistical analyses of rare events while still

producing consistent and efficient statistical results.[10]

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[10] Collecting data on our strategic explanatory variables is challenging, and, as noted by King and Zeng (2001: 137), "the marginal contribution of the explanatory variables' information content for each additional zero starts to drop as the number of zeros passes the number of ones."

Explanatory Variables for the Strategic Account

Our strategic account of the adoption of CV requires information on the nature (identity

and fortunes) of the parties in government and opposition. To test propositions H1-H4, we thus

need to identify the party or parties that were responsible for the adoption of CV laws and their

general political ideology. Using a variety of sources on election results and party histories, we

have coded the ideology of the party or parties elected to government in the last election prior to

the adoption of CV.[11] In presidential systems, the ideology of the president's party was coded,

whereas in parliamentary systems, we coded the ideology of the majority party or party coalition.

Where possible, we used secondary sources to confirm that the parties in power were responsible

for the passage of CV laws during the governmental term in question. The ruling parties are

separated into four categories: Left, Right, Center, and Coalition of Left and Right, based on

their broad ideological positions on the economic dimension. To explore whether Rightist

parties are more likely to adopt CV, we then created the variable *Right in Government,* coded 1 if

the ruling party is Rightist and 0, otherwise.

Our hypotheses about the Right's adoption of CV rest on the electoral threat posed by the

political Left. To capture this, we focus on the change in the Leftist party's or parties' support in

the two elections prior to the adoption of CV, where Δ*Left Support* is defined as the percentage

point change in the vote share of Leftist presidential candidates in presidential systems or in the

seat share of Leftist parties in parliamentary systems between those two elections. Consistent

with our argument's focus on the organizational capacity and threat of the Leftist *movement* as

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[11] Sources include Caramani 2001; Coppedge 1997; Geddes 2003; Nohlen 1999, 2001, 2005. Full details on the
sources used for the coding of the variables are available from the authors.

opposed to a Leftist party, this variable captures changes in the strength of all Leftist parties –

e.g., communist and social democratic parties – competing in these two elections.[12]

From these two variables, we create an interactive term, *Threat*.[13] This variable captures

the conditional relationships implied by our first and fourth hypotheses. If our first hypothesis is

correct, a Right governing party is more likely to adopt CV when the Left is gaining as opposed

to losing support. The fourth hypothesis, in turn, predicts that a Left governing party will be less

likely to adopt CV when the Left is gaining support. That the decision of the governing party to

enact CV is conditional upon the electoral support of itself or others follows from the idea that

compulsory voting is not costless; while CV will lead more of the governing party's voters to

polls, it will also have that effect on the opponent's voters. Thus, the party in government should

only adopt CV when it is necessary for improving its relative electoral strength.

Our strategic approach also underscores the importance of capturing parties' beliefs about

the size of their potential electorate. According to our theory, the Right should be more likely to

adopt CV if it believes that the size of its untapped constituency is larger than that of its

opponents. Building on the conventional wisdom that the Right's support base during this period

would have come largely from the non-industrialized sectors (Przeworski and Sprague 1986;

Kitschelt 1994),[14] we use the percent of the working population employed in industry as an

admittedly crude, negative indicator of the Right's natural constituency to test H2.[15] Of course,

no quantitative measure can tap fully into actors' *beliefs* about their electoral positions. But

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[12] Therefore, it follows that the Δ *Left Support* variable could be based simultaneously on the support of Leftist parties in government and Leftist parties in opposition.
[13] This claim that parties base their institutional decisions on the threat posed by political opponents is similar to the argument made in Boix (1999). However, unlike in Boix's analysis, our assessment of the effects of electoral threat explicitly includes the identity of the party in government.
[14] This received wisdom about the Right is based on the fact that, during the late 19th and early to mid-20th centuries, Leftist parties were largely workers' parties, where the workers were typically associated with the industrial sector (Przeworski and Sprague 1986; Kitschelt 1994).

precisely because parties in the 1800s and early-mid 1900s (and even later in many developing democracies) would not have had precise information about the size of their natural constituencies, let alone the number of unmobilized voters within those electorates (Przeworski and Sprague 1986), it is not entirely unreasonable to use broad indicators like the percentage of workers in industry as a rough proxy for parties' expectations.

By the above logic, the smaller the percentage of industrial workers, the more likely we expect a Right government to adopt CV. Another possibility, however, is that the percentage of industrial workers is capturing the potential strength of the Left, in which case, expectations about when the Right will adopt CV can potentially cut both ways. On the one hand, if the Right is confident that industrialized workers are already fully mobilized, then our expectations should be reversed: more industrialization should increase the likelihood of the Right adopting CV. On the other hand, if the Right is not confident that industrialized workers are already fully mobilized, then such a strategy may well boomerang, drawing more untapped Leftist voters to the polls than Rightist ones. In this case, the Right should be less likely to adopt CV as the percentage of industrial workers increases. This latter possibility highlights the risks involved with adopting CV, particularly under circumstances in which electorates are rapidly changing and information is relatively scarce. Given the time periods in which democratic countries were adopting CV, it seems more realistic to assume an environment of uncertainty than full electoral information. Thus, we return to our expectations spelled out in H2: if the Right is in power, CV should be negatively related to the percentage of industrial workers.

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[15] These data were collected from International Historical Statistics. If the data were not available for the year of the observation, information from the closest year was employed.

Explanatory Variables for Alternative Hypotheses

We construct several additional variables to test alternative hypotheses. To examine the hypothesis that CV is adopted to improve "unacceptably" low turnout, we examine voter turnout in the last national legislative or presidential election (depending on whether the country has a parliamentary or presidential system) before the adoption of CV, as a percentage of registered voters. Tests of Massicotte et al.'s (2004) hypotheses require measures of a country's Catholicism and colonial history. We operationalize the former as the percentage of a country's population that is Roman Catholic using data from Barrett (1982) and Barrett et al. (2001). We test the latter set of hypotheses with two dummy variables, one indicating a Spanish colonial heritage and the other indicating a British colonial heritage.[16] We test Giraud's and Birch's competing hypotheses about the effect of a country's population size on its likelihood of adopting CV by including a variable measuring population size (in thousands).[17] Finally, to test the diffusion argument, we construct a dummy variable coded 1 if at least one other country in the region adopted CV within the past decade.[18]

Explaining Variation in the Adoption of CV across Democratic Countries

Clues about the origins of compulsory voting laws emerge from initial analyses of the data. Restricting our attention first to cases of CV adoption, Table 1 presents the ideology of the

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[16] Data from the CIA World Factbook.

[17] Data from International Historical Statistics. As with the percent of industrial workers variable, if data were not available for the year of the observation, data from the closest year were employed.

[18] Following the literature on the diffusion of ideas, we grouped countries by their geographic area into the regions of Africa, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North America, and the Pacific. There were two exceptions: Australia and New Zealand were located in the European category as opposed to in the Pacific because of their cultural connections to Britain. We also created a second diffusion dummy variable with different regional categories to test the robustness of our findings to the coding classification. In *Diffusion2*, we grouped countries by their geographic area into more focused categories: Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, Asia, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Central and South America, Caribbean, North America and the Pacific. As we report later, the variable specification does not affect our results.

party adopting CV. Consistent with our view that CV is an antidote to the Right's poor

organizational capacity, we find that the vast majority of parties adopting CV are from the Right.

Of the seventeen countries for which we have data on the identity and ideology of the party in

government at the time of CV adoption, thirteen, or 76% are Rightist; one, or 6% is Leftist; one,

or 6% is a coalition of Left and Right; and two, or 12% are Centrist. Thus, contrary to the

conventional wisdom shaped by the extensive literature on the *current* effects of CV on party

fortunes, compulsory voting was often not a decision made by the Left, but rather was a rule

implemented largely by the Right.

Table 1: Ideology of the Party Adopting CV

	Frequency	Percent
Right Parties	13	76%
Left Parties	1	6%
Coalition of Left and Right Parties	1	6%
Center Parties	2	12%
Total	17	100%

This relationship holds when we consider the combined sample of cases and non-cases:

the observations of those countries that did and those that did not adopt CV.[19] As shown in the

bivariate correlations in Table 2, the presence of a Rightist party in government is positively and

significantly correlated with this institutional adoption. Also consistent with our story of CV as

mainly a Rightist weapon against a growing Leftist threat, CV adoption is positively correlated

with the change in Left support, although the relationship is not statistically significant. Perhaps

surprisingly, the bivariate correlations reveal that the percentage of workers in industry is

positively related to CV adoption. However, not only is the correlation very weak and not

statistically significant, but it must be remembered that our expectations about the effect of the

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[19] Due to data availability problems, the number of observations in the regressions and thus the number in the bivariate calculations in Table 2 is 59 (It is 49 for the model and correlation including percentage of workers in industry and 57 for the model and correlation including the turnout variable).

Right's natural constituency on CV adoption are conditional upon the identity of the party in power: a high percentage of industrial workers (and thus a low percentage of potential Rightist supporters) is expected to decrease the likelihood of CV adoption, but only when the Right is in government.[20]

Table 2: Bivariate Correlations Between CV Adoption and Independent Variables

	Adoption of CV (1 = yes, 0 = no)
Strategic Variables	
Right in Govt	0.2697**
Δ Left Support	0.0862
Percentage of Workers in Industry	0.0236
Alternative Variables	
Turnout	0.0911
Catholic	0.1483
Spanish	0.1469
British	-0.0879
Population	-0.0878
Diffusion	-0.2360*

*** $p \leq .01$; ** $p \leq .05$; * $p \leq .1$

Whereas more nuanced statistical analyses are thus needed to test properly our strategic hypotheses, the alternative explanations of CV adoption proffer simple relationships which should be easily detected by bivariate correlations. The relationships in Table 2 reveal little initial support for CV adoption as a normative reaction to low turnout rates. Nor does it seem that the colonial heritage or religion of the country are strong predictors of CV adoption. While there is a negative correlation between a country's population size and its adoption of CV, as suggested by Giraud (1931), the relationship is very weak and not statistically significant. The only statistically significant finding runs counter to the alternative hypotheses. In contrast to the

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[20] Of course, the bivariate correlation between Right in government and CV also does not distinguish between a Right facing a losing or a gaining Left. The same holds true for the correlation between change in Left support and CV adoption. Multivariate analyses are necessary to confirm our strategic story.

implications of the diffusion literature, CV seems be *less* likely to be implemented when it was

recently adopted elsewhere in the region. This finding is robust to different specifications of the

diffusion variable.

The bivariate correlations provide some hints about the explanatory power of the strategic

and alternative hypotheses. But there are still several unanswered questions. Specifically, how

does the electoral strength of the Left affect the Right's likelihood of adopting CV? And how

does it affect the Left's probability of enacting these laws? In terms of the alternative

hypotheses, the bivariate correlations have shown that diffusion variables are negatively related

to the adoption of CV. But, are these relationships just reflecting the relative rarity of CV around

the world, or do they capture a deeper set of relationships that hold when other variables are

introduced? We next turn to multivariate analyses to answer these questions.

Multivariate Logit Analyses

Table 3 presents the results of our logistic analyses of CV adoption, with the predicted

signs of the explanatory variables listed in column two. The lack of available data for some of

the independent variables – most notably *ΔLeft Support* and *Percent of Workers in Industry* –

accounts for the smaller number of observations in each regression than in the original dataset.[21]

In light of the case-control sampling method we employ, we follow the advice of King and Zeng

(2001a; 2001b; 2001c) and apply a prior correction to the model to correct for the difference

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[21] The list of the country-year observations in the analyses is presented in Appendix Table A1.

between the percentage of CV adoption in the regression sample and in the population of

country-year cases.[22]

Table 3: Logit Regression Models of the Adoption of Compulsory Voting Laws

| Dependent Variable: Adoption of CV Laws	Expected Sign	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V	Model VI	Model VII	Model VIII
Right in Govt	+	1.54** (0.78)	2.38 (1.57)	1.87** (0.88)	1.54* (0.80)	1.67* (0.88)	1.77** (0.80)	1.60** (0.81)	1.88** (0.80)
Left Gaining	-	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.45 (0.28)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.02* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.1 (0.1)
Threat (interaction term)	+	0.06** (0.03)	0.50* (0.28)	0.05** (0.03)	0.05* (0.03)	0.09** (0.03)	0.08** (0.03)	0.05** (0.03)	0.06** (0.03)
Percent of Workers in Industry	-		0.001 (0.10)						
Turnout	-			0.01 (0.02)					
Diffusion	+				-1.25 (0.83)				
Catholic	+					0.02 (0.01)			
Spanish Col. Heritage	+						2.00* (1.04)		
British Col. Heritage	+							-0.66 (0.97)	
Population (thousands)	- (Giraud) + (Birch)								-0.00002 (0.00001)
Prior-Corrected Constant		-1.87*** (0.61)	-2.91 (2.44)	-3.05 (1.99)	-1.30* (0.67)	-2.77** (1.13)	-2.31*** (0.71)	-1.73*** (0.60)	-1.67*** (0.63)
N		59	49	57	59	59	59	59	59
Pseudo R²		0.1323	0.2865	0.1718	0.1810	0.1848	0.1852	0.1430	0.1750

Note: Estimates from logit models with robust standard errors and prior-corrected constants. The dependent variable is coded "1" for country-years in which compulsory voting laws were adopted and "0" in all other. Standard errors are in parentheses. *** $p \le .01$; ** $p \le .05$; * $p \le .1$

Our basic strategic theory of CV adoption is modeled in column three (Model I) of Table 3. Recall that in regressions with interactive terms, the effect of each constituent variable in the interactive term is conditional upon the level of the other (Friedrich 1982; Braumoeller 2004; Brambor, Clark and Golder 2006). The coefficients for *Right in Government* and *ΔLeft Support* presented in Table 3 only capture the effect of these variables in the special cases in which the other variable is zero. To demonstrate the conditional nature of the effects of the strategic variables, we need to calculate the coefficient of each variable at different values of the other variable. The individual logit coefficients are not particularly interesting to us in isolation; rather, the key to testing our hypotheses is to compare the relative effects of moving from one state of the world to another.

The conditional coefficients derived from Model I offer support for our strategic story. Figure 2 shows how the effect of the Right in Government on CV adoption varies with changes in the electoral support of the Left. Consistent with H1, the likelihood of a Right government adopting CV (as depicted by the solid line) increases as the Left gains support. This effect is statistically significant at $p=0.1$ for values of *ΔLeft Support* greater than -4.1.

FIGURE 2: The Effect of a Right Government on CV Adoption Conditional Upon Change in
Left Electoral Support, with 90% Confidence Intervals
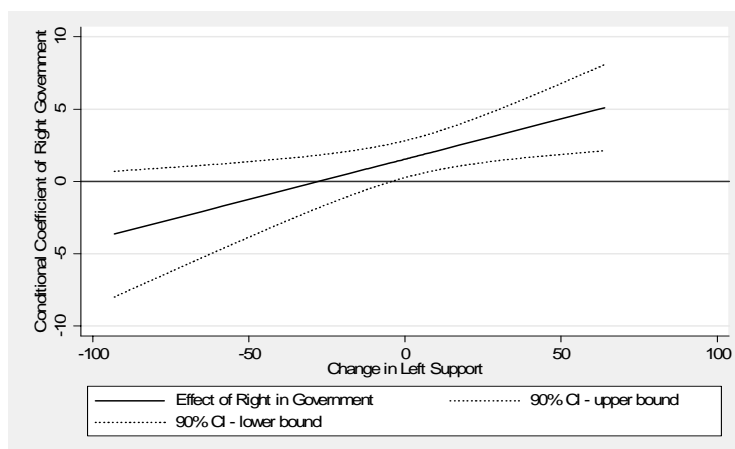
A comparison of the effects of *ΔLeft Support* under different governmental conditions likewise supports our strategic story. Because the *Right in Government* variable only takes on two possible values (0 and 1), we can describe the complete range of its conditional effects on Leftist support by simply calculating the coefficient of *ΔLeft Support* under two discrete scenarios. When there is a non-Right government (i.e., *Right in Govt*=0), the coefficient of *ΔLeft Support* is -0.0089, statistically insignificant at $p < 0.1$. However, when the Right is in government (*Right in Govt*=1), the effect of *ΔLeft Support* is 0.0467, statistically significant at $p=0.06$. In other words, the effect of a growing or weakening Left on CV adoption depends on the identity of the governing party or parties. In line with H1 and H4, a positive relationship emerges under Rightist governments and a negative, albeit insignificant one, emerges when non-Right parties govern.

Taken together, these results highlight the strategic nature of CV adoption. They suggest that the Right may be more motivated to implement CV, but it is especially motivated when the Left is gaining strength. Conversely, non-Right governments are far more reluctant than Right governments to adopt CV when the Left's electoral fortunes are rising.

The strategic model presented so far, however, has not included measures of the political

parties' natural constituencies. The Right, we argued in H2, would be more likely to adopt CV

when faced with a threatening Left *if* the Right had a large, untapped natural constituency that

could be mobilized by the CV laws. This hypothesis suggests that the effect of these three

variables are conditional upon each other, and that a triple interactive term is necessary.

Unfortunately, the limited number of observations and, thus, degrees of freedom prevent us from

directly modeling this specification.[23] In light of this limitation, we add the percent of industrial

workers term to the basic model to capture at least the independent effect of natural electorate

size on the likelihood of CV adoption.

The results of Model II reveal little support for the importance of the industrial workers

variable in CV adoption; the coefficient is substantively unimportant and statistically

insignificant. This finding is perhaps not surprising given that the hypothesized conditional

relationship is not directly modeled and there is some ambiguity about the inherent meaning of

the measure.[24] The addition of this variable does alter the magnitude of the effects of the other

strategic variables, but the power of the strategic story remains largely the same. As revealed by

Figure A1 in the Appendix, the effect of a Rightist government on CV adoption continues to

increase as the Left gains support; this effect is statistically significant at levels of *ΔLeft Support*

less than -13.2 and greater than +2.3. Calculations of the conditional effect of government

ideology on *ΔLeft Support* not shown here reveal that the effect of changing left support on CV

adoption increases as one moves from having a non-Right government to a Right government,

although unlike in Model I, this effect is not significant in either case. Given that the percent of

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[23] The use of one triple interaction term – xyz – necessitates the inclusion of seven separate variables: x, y, z, xy, xz, yz, xyz.

[24] Unfortunately, the data for more direct cross-national measures of parties' natural constituencies simply does not exist.

industry workers variable is statistically insignificant and that its presence results in a loss of 10 observations – 17% of the total observations – from the regression due to missing data issues, we are cautious about putting too much emphasis (positive or negative) on this specification.

Consideration of Alternative Hypotheses

As shown above, the basic strategic model is largely robust to the addition of a variable used to capture the natural constituency of the Right parties. The strategic model is also robust to the addition of the variables indicated by the alternative hypotheses. Table 3 includes the results of models in which the alternative variables are added individually. As we might have expected from the bivariate analyses, turnout, British colonial heritage and population variables are not statistically significant; see Models III, VII and VIII, respectively. In addition, the diffusion variable proves not to be statistically significant when other variables are controlled for. The presence of these four variables does not alter the effects of the strategic variables in any meaningful way.

Catholicism also does not prove to be statistically significant predictor of CV adoption, but its addition does further boost the statistical power of our strategic model, as shown in Model V in Table 3. Whereas the effect of *ΔLeft Support* is positive and significant when there is a Rightist government, as was the case with the basic strategic models, now the negative conditional effect it has on CV adoption under a non-Rightist government is also statistically significant. This finding provides more evidence in support of H4, that the more support the Left gains, the less likely a non-Right government is to adopt CV. Indeed, goodness of fit tests confirm that Model V is slightly closer to the true specification of CV adoption than the basic strategic Model I.

The models offer support for one alternative hypothesis. Consistent with the conclusions of Massicotte et al. (2005), having a Spanish colonial heritage is a positive and statistically significant predictor of CV. While this background strongly increases the likelihood of a governing party adopting CV laws, the addition of the variable does not erase the power of our strategic story of CV adoption; the strategic variables remain statistically and substantively significant with the correct signs.

Illustrating the Mechanism: Out-of-Sample Case Studies

Having found consistently strong statistical support for our theory, we now more closely examine the mechanism behind it by exploring direct historical evidence in three out-of-sample cases of CV adoption: Argentina (1912), Luxembourg (1919) and Singapore (1959). Focusing on out-of-sample cases reassures us that our theory extends to those countries that adopted compulsory voting but were excluded from our quantitative analysis because the electoral data required to measure the rise of the Left are unobtainable or nonexistent. In our dataset, we face this challenge with ten of the countries that adopted compulsory voting laws (Liechtenstein, Argentina, Luxembourg, Czechoslovakia, Chile, Peru, Singapore, Venezuela, Cyprus, and Nauru).[25] Thus, our aim in this section is to supplement our quantitative analysis with qualitative evidence from precisely such cases. To the extent that historical analyses of out-of-sample cases reveal the same pattern that we established in the quantitative data – i.e. a Right incumbent government choosing to adopt compulsory voting to counteract a growing Leftist threat – we are further reassured that ours is the right theory.

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[25] Not surprisingly, we tend to encounter missing data among the earliest adopters of compulsory voting (Liechtenstein, Argentina, and Luxembourg), newly independent countries (Czechoslovakia, Singapore and Nauru), small countries (Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Nauru), and developing countries (Chile, Peru, and Nauru). That said, the missing cases do not correlate in any way with the theoretical variables of interest.

By honing in on cases as different as Argentina, Luxembourg, and Singapore, we maximize the reach of our theory across time and space. Indeed, although the specific settings could hardly be more different – democratization at the turn of the century in Argentina, the end of foreign occupation during World War I in Luxembourg, and de-colonization in Singapore – the logic we uncover is strikingly similar. The details differ, but in each case the story remains the same: An incumbent conservative government facing an emerging political opposition with superior mobilization capacity strategically adopted compulsory voting to minimize electoral losses.

Argentina 1912. At the beginning the twentieth century, the Argentine political system was still in the hands of the conservative oligarchy, but the situation was far from stable. A massive influx of immigration from Europe fueled industrialization and created one of Latin America's strongest and most militant labor movements (Collier and Collier 1991:93). Although the Socialists were not entirely successful in electorally mobilizing the trade unions during this period (Collier 1999:46), the Argentine Socialist party was the largest in the region. At the same time, the growing middle classes served to revitalize the centrist Radical Party (Rock 1987). Particularly after 1905, Conservative incumbents faced a formidable organizational challenge as local Radical political clubs transformed into a disciplined and extensive hierarchical chain of party committees (Rock 1987:186).

The historical evidence that Conservatives saw compulsory voting in strategic terms could hardly be clearer. In the 1904 elections, the issue of electoral participation was already a serious concern for Conservatives. Of the roughly 8% of those eligible to vote, only 21% turned out to cast a ballot (Devoto et al. 1997: 169). A local Argentine newspaper reported that, rather than voting, many elites had spent the day either at the race track in Mar del Plata or were

enjoying themselves at the beach or in the countryside instead of exercising their civic duties (*Ibid*: 168).

In 1910, in his opening speech to Congress, Conservative President Sáenz Peña put as much importance on the issue of compulsory voting as on the extension of suffrage, prompting a series of parliamentary debates over which citizens would be mobilized if mandatory voting were to be enacted. Paraphrasing a representative of the Lower House, Devoto et al. (1997: 176) note that "the people the law was trying to get to vote were the comfortably off, who supposedly were the ones who never got near the ballot box." A year and half later, a minister of the government expressed a similar set of views when the issue was debated in the Buenos Aires Legislature. Devoto et al. (1997: 170) summarize the minister's view of compulsory voting as a kind of crude and self-interested strategy, "aimed at mobilizing the 'rich and content' and [as] a stabilizing factor over an otherwise unknown and dangerous mass, which might be moved by passing emotion."

By contrast, while the opposition clearly clamored for universal suffrage, we simply find no evidence that the non-Right had any desire to adopt compulsory voting. Moreover, although certainly some Conservatives did worry that adopting CV would save the opposition the "thankless task of mobilizing their own voters" (*Ibid*. 170), most realized that the traditional political machines had been woefully ineffective at getting their own voters out to the polls. Granting universal male suffrage without adopting compulsory voting thus ran the risk that elite voters would simply continue to stay home (or engage themselves in more leisurely pursuits) while the newly enfranchised groups would turn out in droves.[26]

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[26] Interestingly, the fact that most of the working class were not yet citizens and, therefore, not eligible to vote meant that the risk of getting the calculation wrong was also somewhat mitigated.

Luxembourg 1919. In Luxembourg, the Right was also increasingly on the defensive. Here the details take us to the Great War and its aftermath. At the outset of the war, Germany invaded and occupied Luxembourg, but kept the constitutional monarchy intact. Prior to the war, the cabinet had been controlled largely by the Liberal party, but in 1915, the staunchly conservative Grand-Duchess Marie-Adélaïde replaced the entire cabinet with Conservatives. Although the minority Conservative government would only remain in power for a year before entering into a new coalition government with the Liberals, this set the stage for increasing political tension between parties on the Right and the emerging Left. In 1917, a disastrous potato harvest combined with growing unemployment, and spiraling inflation bolstered popular support for the Leftist opposition. During this same year, the miner's strike, which was brutally suppressed by the German occupation, only added to the Left's base of support.

Once the war was over, the Right, now in coalition with the Liberals, remained in power, but the Left continued to gain strength. In the post-war context, the Socialists in particular had a unique claim to represent the national interest. As the only large party not involved in government during the war, they could tout their long-standing opposition to the now extremely unpopular German occupation. Indeed, in a testament to the threat the Left posed, the Socialists and Communists managed to briefly seize power from the Conservatives in 1919 and proclaimed a republic, causing the abdication of Marie-Adélaïde (Thewes 2003).

Although the Conservatives in Luxembourg quickly regained power, as in Argentina, they ultimately relented before the growing chorus of demands for political inclusion by extending universal suffrage in 1919. But, here too, Rightist incumbents sought to counter the opposition's expanding electoral support base by implementing compulsory voting. That a

strategic rationale underlay the Right's adoption of compulsory voting laws in Luxembourg is captured clearly in the following historical account:

> The original reason for the introduction of compulsory voting was to counteract attempts of some [Left] politicians, which had been observed following the introduction of universal suffrage, to especially keep the rural population—by means of service in pubs—from using their right to vote (Translation, Schoen 1986: 26).

Singapore 1959. In Singapore, the rise of the Left and the adoption of compulsory voting by the Right were also embedded in a larger context of foreign occupation. From 1824 until the Japanese invasion in 1942, Singapore had been under British colonial rule. During the Japanese occupation, the Left emerged out of a split between those who were willing to accommodate themselves to Japanese rule and those who opposed it. The latter organized into the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). As in Luxembourg, the Left in Singapore stood to reap the benefits of having been on the right side of history once the Japanese occupation ended. The twist added by colonialism, however, meant that once the Japanese retreated, it was the British who sought to counter the challenge posed by Singapore's increasingly powerful Left.

Both outside and inside the electoral booth, the Left posed a clear threat to Britain's goal of creating an independent Singapore immune to communism. In 1945 and 1946, following Japan's defeat, the Left organized a series of successful strikes. As violence and left-wing agitation spilled over into neighboring Malay, the British responded by declaring a state of emergency and cracking down on the Communist Party (Leitch Lepoer 1989; Haas 1999). At the same time, plans were set in motion to hold democratic elections in 1955 and eventually to establish a new constitution based on self-government. In the run-up to the elections, several parties across the political spectrum formed, including the leftist Labor Front, the center-left People's Action Party (PAP), and the pro-colonial, conservative Progressive Party. To the

dismay of the British, the Labor Front won by a wide margin, taking 10 of the 25 seats (Leitch Lepoer 1989).

Once in power, however, the new Left government quickly began to unravel as the Communists staged another round of strikes and violent riots. After the government fell, the British supported the PAP's crackdown on the Communists, but also pushed for electoral reforms – including compulsory voting – that would deal with the threat of the Left in a more peaceful fashion. During the subsequent constitutional reform process, the Center-Left PAP was in office, but the British government, which was led by Conservatives, exercised the real power. Thus, the fact that compulsory voting was ultimately adopted during the reform process is fully in line with our theory. Indeed, although the British eschewed compulsory voting at home, historical evidence suggests that they were its main proponents during the constitutional negotiations in Singapore (Leitch Lepoer 1989). This makes perfect sense given the general British predilection for democracy, but also the particular British Conservative aversion to democracy governed on the Left.

Discussion

Parties only win seats if their supporters turn out. Based on this simple fact, our paper develops a strategic account of why compulsory voting laws are enacted. Our core claim is that CV offers an attractive, albeit risky, tool for politicians who fear that the opposition is able to better mobilize its supporters. This helps make sense of the empirical regularity that the Right historically has been more prone to adopt CV than the Left. But our story also hints at reasons why the Right was sometimes proved wrong and punished electorally after adopting CV. Either the Left's support base was not always fully mobilized under voluntary voting, or the Right had

fewer "rich and content" supporters than it thought. Indeed, the danger of precisely these sorts of miscalculations undoubtedly helps explain the global fact that CV was rarely adopted at all.

Taken together, our empirical analyses provide clear evidence for our theory of compulsory voting. Multivariate analyses based on our original dataset reveal both that parties on the Right were more likely to adopt CV, and that they were especially likely to do so when they were faced with a strengthening Left. Moreover, just as the flip side of our theory predicts, we find consistent statistical support for the view that non-Rightist parties were less likely to turn to CV when the Left's efforts to get out the vote were successful. Qualitative evidence based on three out-of-sample cases supplements our statistical results and provides direct support for the core mechanism in our story. Across remarkably different historical contexts, we find the same general pattern: the Right adopted compulsory voting as the Left's electoral fortunes waxed. Direct historical evidence further underscores that the Right indeed viewed compulsory voting explicitly as a strategy for countering the superior mobilization capacity of the opposition.

Our analyses also highlight the limits of several alternative explanations. We find little consistent support for hypotheses based on the normative considerations, country size, or diffusion. *Pace* Massicotte et al. (2005), we find that former Spanish colonies are more likely than former British colonies (and countries with other colonial backgrounds) to adopt CV, but we are skeptical of the causal mechanism that these scholars identify. In their view, the relationship reflects a connection between the Catholicism prevalent in these countries and the "moral obligation" of Catholics to vote. However, the Catholic Church's tragic record of supporting dictatorship in much of Latin America, not to mention the insignificant relationship between Catholicism and CV found in our Model V, clashes with this logic.

More generally, our study extends the strategic literature on endogenous electoral institutions beyond whether to adopt proportional representation or majoritarian systems (e.g. Boix 1999; Benoit 2004; Andrews and Jackman 2005; also see Cusack, Iversen and Soskice 2007). In broadening the focus to other types of electoral rules, we highlight a new and important element shaping the incumbent's calculi: the capacity of their opponents to mobilize their constituency. While the historical evidence suggests that the Left was generally better able to mobilize its supporters, our theory generalizes to contexts where the Right has the organizational advantage. Future research thus should focus on gathering data directly on each party's mobilization capacity, such as data on the strength of labor unions or religious organizations.[27]

Yet at the same time, our study also suggests a new set of questions for scholars of institutional reform to tackle. For instance, under what conditions do political actors combine various types of institutional reforms? While we, as others, have focused here on the conditions that lead to the adoption of one political institution, empirically we know that compulsory voting and proportional representation rules were sometimes, but not always, adopted together. Our findings suggest the importance of incumbents' beliefs about the relative size and organization of their own constituency for determining the combination of institutions required to maximize their political welfare. Our conclusions about the adoption of compulsory voting in democracies also raise questions about institutional reform in non-democratic settings. Fourteen authoritarian states have formally adopted compulsory voting laws since 1900. Although the exact electoral logic advanced here is unlikely to be at work in these non-democratic settings, the strategic use of institutional reforms is not necessarily foreign to dictators. CV could be construed as

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[27] Some measures already exist for Leftist organizational strength in Western Europe (see Bartolini 2000), but they are neither available for Rightist parties in that region nor available systematically for parties in other countries.

insurance, not against the mere loss of seats as in a democracy, but rather against the complete loss of power should a regime change occur. Such questions and propositions await future research.

Appendix
TABLE A1: Cases and Non-Cases of CV Adoption in the Analysis

Country	Observation Year	CV Introduced?
Australia	1923	No
Australia	1924	Yes
Belgium	1893	Yes
Botswana	1989	No
Canada	1967	No
Colombia	1940	No
Colombia	1993	No
Costa Rica	1936	Yes
Czech Republic	1993	No
Czech Republic	1998	No
Denmark	1935	No
Denmark	1954	No
Denmark	1958	No
Denmark	1972	No
Denmark	1990	No
Denmark	1999	No
Estonia	1922	No
Fiji	1998	Yes
Finland	1969	No
France	1950	No
France	1962	No
Germany	1990	No
Germany	1995	No
Germany	1999	No
Greece	1932	Yes
Ireland	1967	No
Ireland	1970	No
Ireland	1978	No
Italy	1948	Yes
Jamaica	1983	No
Lebanon	1944	No
Lebanon	1959	No
Lithuania	1997	No
Mali	1995	No
Mongolia	2000	No
Netherlands	1917	Yes
New Zealand	1955	No
New Zealand	1978	No
Nicaragua	1984	Yes
Nigeria	2003	No
Norway	1979	No
Norway	1987	No
Spain	1937	No

Sri Lanka	1977	No
Sweden	1931	No
Sweden	1999	No
Switzerland	1954	No
Switzerland	1957	No
Taiwan	1997	No
Thailand	1997	Yes
Trinidad	1975	No
Trinidad	1990	No
Turkey	1987	Yes
United Kingdom	1972	No
USA	1974	No
USA	1991	No
USA	1993	No
West Germany	1989	No
Zambia	1993	No

FIGURE A1: The Effect of a Right Government on CV Adoption Conditional Upon Change in Left Electoral Support, with 90% Confidence Intervals
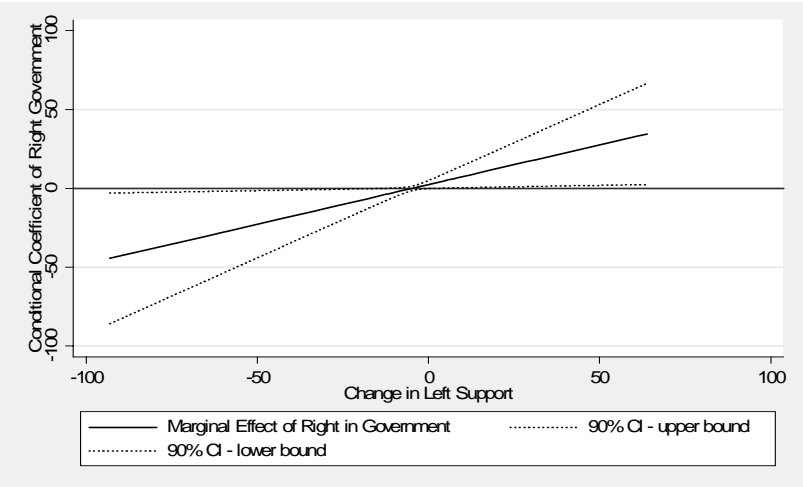
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