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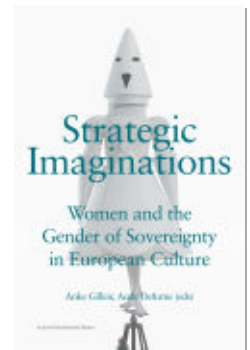
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DISCOURSES OF SOVEREIGNTY AS AN OBSTACLE TO WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE? An Essay in Comparative History

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The revolutionary waves that swept over large swaths of the globe since the last decades of the eighteenth century revolutionized the very notion of sovereignty. Before, it had been situated primarily in transcendental powers and in their royal representatives on earth, or it had been conceptualized as divided over monarchical, aristocratic and democratic powers. Even if such mixed constitutions continued and still continue to exist, the ultimate locus of sovereignty became – in theory at least – the people. Individuals and collectivities who wanted to claim their share of power in the polity, could and can feel backed by the broadly held acceptance that ‘the people’ should be sovereign, and that all members of the people should be ‘equal’. This state of affairs had the potential to change the place of women in the economy of power dramatically. The notion of ‘popular sovereignty’ contained an intrinsic and ‘natural’ feminism. Since ever more countries inscribed the notion in their constitutional settings, it would seem that women would not have to struggle for or negotiate their share of power anymore – as so many of those described in this book had done in pre-revolutionary times.

And yet, this is not how things went. Even in political regimes that presented themselves as ‘democratic’, women remained politically excluded for a long time – not only from the formal and informal theatres of power, but even from that most basic instrument of democratic

representation into which the vote was turned in the modern Atlantic world.¹ In this contribution, I want to reflect upon this paradox, and more precisely try to answer the question whether and to which degree discourses and practices of popular sovereignty were beneficial to the case of women's suffrage. Starting with a brief reflection on the difference between the dominant political discourses in nineteenth-century Belgium and the Netherlands, I will widen the scope to draw a worldwide historical panorama of the introduction of women's discourse at the national level. While doing so, I will try to discern whether specific tendencies in this history of political practices can be related to particular types of discourses and practices of sovereignty.

Discourses of Sovereignty in the Low Countries

Let me start this undertaking from a more or less randomly chosen debate, in which women's suffrage was not even at stake. It took place on 17 December 1856 in the Belgian Chamber of Representatives. While discussing a petition submitted by a group of citizens – a right which was granted to them by article 21 of the constitution – the Liberal MP De Lexhy had labelled petitioners as members of the 'ignorant classes'. In reaction to this, the Catholic MP for the Walloon city of Tournai and former leader of the revolutionary events in that same town, Bartélémy Dumortier, proclaimed indignantly: 'We are sitting here by virtue of the sovereignty of the people; when we speak of the people, we have to listen to them respectfully'.²

Dumortier's defence of the sovereignty of the people seemed to mirror a debate which had taken place in the same room less than a month before. On 27 November of that same year, the Liberal Théodore Verhaegen had protested against the Catholic Etienne de Gerlache, the former president of the Constitutional Assembly, who in a brochure had rejected what he called 'the dogma of the sovereignty of the people', that same 'sovereignty of the people in the name of which', according to Verhaegen, 'we are seated here'.³ Many other debates could be quoted to illustrate how central the notion of popular sovereignty in nineteenth-century Belgian political discourse was, on both sides of the deepening ideological divide between Catholics and Liberals with regard to the place of the Catholic church in society. Politicians of both sides presented themselves as champions of the sovereignty of the people and

tried to delegitimize their opponents by depicting them as traitors of that same notion.

An assertion as the one that was expressed in 1848 in the Netherlands in the Dutch Second Chamber by the moderate Liberal MP Jacob de Bosch Kemper would have been unthinkable – or would at least have aroused great disbelief and anger – in the Belgian Chamber. In the context of the Liberal constitutional reform of that year, De Bosch Kemper had called the sovereignty of the people ‘an absurdity that cannot exist and that, if it existed for a moment, would have the most catastrophic consequences – as the example of France shows us’. Fortunately, thus, he continued, the new constitution did not consecrate this principle, since ‘the king and the members of the States General swore the oath not to govern according to the popular will, according to what the often erring popular masses say, but according to what their conscience tells them what is good for the fatherland’.⁴ Defences of the democratic notion of popular sovereignty can barely be found in the proceedings of the Second Chamber of the Dutch States General for almost the entire nineteenth century. Somehow paradoxically, the very principle was often rejected on democratic grounds. As one of the members of this Second Chamber exclaimed in 1862: ‘Everything that tends towards popular sovereignty is disapproved of by the large majority of the people’.⁵

In none of these debates was women’s suffrage at stake. The striking difference between Belgian and Dutch parliamentary discourses with regard to popular sovereignty does, however, raise an intriguing question that proved counterfactual. If a nineteenth-century citizen would have been asked to predict in which of these two countries – Belgium or the Netherlands – women’s suffrage would first be introduced, the answer would have been Belgium. In Belgian political discourse an intrinsic closeness reverberated between the notion of popular sovereignty and the practice of universal suffrage, and it seemed only logical that Belgium would extend this basic democratic right to the female part of its population.⁶ However, the opposite happened. It was in the Netherlands that women were granted the vote at the national level first, in 1919. In Belgium that would only be the case as late as 1948. In 1919, suffrage had been granted to Belgian women on the local level and on the national level to women who had lost their husbands or sons during the war. This measure was a reward for their behaviour during the war, rather than a positive inclusion of women in the sphere of popular sovereignty.⁷

It would be easy to set this delay aside as a Belgian idiosyncrasy, as one of those many evidences that loudly proclaimed principles were seldom translated into rational political measures in this country. However, the broad and necessarily sketchy comparative history that I will offer in the next paragraphs will show that the difference between Belgium and the Netherlands in this field was part of a much broader pattern.

On Latecomers, Pioneers and Everything In-Between

Among the latecomers in the field of women's suffrage, Belgium was in the company of some other countries with a strong democratic legacy and reputation. It was preceded with only four years by France, the country in which, since the late eighteenth century, popular sovereignty had been a high-pitched ideal and national icon, famously presented as a woman.⁸ Attempts to include women in the sovereign people had been made from the very beginning by the revolutionary movement, most famously so by Olympe de Gouges, who in the *Declaration of the Rights of the Woman and the Female Citizen* (1791) asserted that 'the principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the Nation, which is nothing else than the reunion of Man and Woman', adding that 'No societal body, no individual can ever exert authority unless it emanates from it'.⁹ Nonetheless, even the democratic revolution of 1848 stopped short of expanding the vote to women. In spite of decades of sacralization and symbolic feminization of universal suffrage, of intense and often radical feminist campaigns and of several parliamentary initiatives,¹⁰ this situation did not change for almost a century. In May 1919, the French *Chambre des Députés* did pass a law introducing women's suffrage with an immense majority, but it was rejected by the Senate, after which the Chamber did not seem very eager to put it on the political agenda again (in spite of the many individual proposals to change this state of affairs during the interwar period).¹¹ While the logic of women's suffrage in the country of popular sovereignty par excellence was accepted by many, very few considered it to be an urgent necessity in need of radical change.

The situation was even worse for Switzerland. Switzerland was, and still is, often praised for its extremely democratic 1848 constitution, in which people were given the chance to steer the political process in a direct manner without recourse to representatives. Nonetheless, Swiss women had to wait until 1971 before they were given the right to vote on the federal level. Some cantons had introduced women's suffrage

roughly a decade before that, others would only do so after the federal state had set the example. Women in Appenzell have only been able to vote at the cantonal level since 1991.¹²

Switching from the latecomers of women's suffrage to its pioneers does not catapult us to the usual suspects of early democracy, such as the United States or Great Britain. In these communities women's suffrage was introduced at a national level respectively in 1920 and 1928, though British women who were over thirty years of age and who met some minimum property requirements had gained it already in 1918. Early women's suffrage brings us to New Zealand, Australia, Finland and Norway, the only countries that gave women the vote on a national level before the First World War. New Zealand and Australia were not only as far removed from 'the Western World' as could be imagined, they had not even gained full national sovereignty when they adopted women's suffrage in 1893 and 1902 respectively. The same was true for Finland, which granted women the vote in 1906, at a moment when it was still a grand duchy within the Russian Empire. Norway was somehow different. It was independent for only eight years when it gave women the vote in 1913, but even during its nineteenth-century union with Sweden, it had been able to maintain its 1814 constitution which acknowledged the notion of popular sovereignty. Nonetheless, ministers had remained answerable to the king instead of Parliament until 1884 and so the Norwegian political system was a mixed government rather than a democracy. And it certainly did not stand as a worldwide model of democratic enfranchisement.

During and immediately after the First World War, the politically inclusive system of those four pioneering countries was followed by many other European countries; in fact, these four countries were part of the general wave of democratization that took place during this period.¹³ Apart from Denmark (where, in 1906, the first conference of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance had been held), Iceland, Sweden and the Netherlands, most of these countries were newly founded independent nation states or ancient countries with an entirely new, democratic constitution in Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, women were granted the vote in the German Weimar Republic, in Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Baltic countries, in Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Once more, these were no forerunners of Western forms of political modernization and democratization. Great Britain, the country that hosted the seat of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance and that, in prognoses made by international feminists before

the war, appeared as the next in line,¹⁴ only made the same move at the end of the decade. As in France, bills and resolutions on this matter had been proposed to the House of Commons since the 1860s, but they all remained unsuccessful.¹⁵

Something similar occurred in the decades after the Second World War, when nearly all the recently de-colonized countries introduced women's suffrage immediately upon their establishment. In chronological terms, France and Belgium were part of this wave, enfranchising women almost simultaneously with countries such as Indonesia and India. Switzerland granted women the vote more or less in the same period that the last Portuguese colonies won their independence and introduced women's suffrage. Only some countries on the Arab peninsula (Qatar, Oman and Kuwait) and Brunei (where the suffrage was abolished for both men and women in 1962) would have to wait even longer.

On Preconditions and Correlations

If this general survey makes clear anything at all, it is that deeply ingrained discourses and practices of popular sovereignty were not necessarily preconditions for the introduction of women's suffrage. But what, then, were these preconditions? The first one that comes to mind is the strength of the feminist movement. An often recurring trope with regard to women's suffrage is – in the words of the Belgian feminist and former minister of emancipation Miet Smet – that 'we women have the vote thanks to the feminists'.¹⁶ Or, to quote the biographer of Emmeline Pankhurst and eminent feminist historian June Purvis: 'We owe them the vote', this 'we' being the women in Britain and 'them' being the suffragists.¹⁷ In the case of the four pioneering countries mentioned before, indeed the agency of feminist movements cannot be underestimated, an example of which is the female petitioning movement in New Zealand that preceded the constitutional reform and gathered more than 24,000 signatures.¹⁸ More generally, most historians of women's rights seem to agree that collective and even individual feminist action can account for institutional and structural change. That is why feminist historians recurrently plea for the more structural insertion of the suffragist movement in the political histories of their respective countries, as the wave of historical publications at the occasion of the centenary celebration of women's suffrage in the Netherlands showed.¹⁹

As such, the fact that the British radical freethinker Annie Besant became a leading figure in the Indian Congress Party during the First World War undoubtedly contributed to the introduction of women's suffrage in India in 1947 (even if she herself refrained from introducing it out of fear of offending traditional Hindu values), and to the fact that India has already had its first female prime minister in the 1970s, whereas many European countries are still waiting for this to happen until today (among them, not surprisingly, Belgium, France and Switzerland). In a similar vein, the actions of Eva Perón have been crucial both for the introduction of women's suffrage in Argentina in 1947 (the same year as India) and for the fact that this profoundly Catholic country has had a female prime minister (2007–2011). Apart from all these national examples, the German feminist historian Gisela Bock stresses that the transnational character of the feminist movement also enhanced its effectiveness in provoking electoral reforms.²⁰ Jad Adams's 'post-feminist' hypothesis that feminist campaigning hardly determined women's enfranchisement, therefore, appears to be more provocative than backed by historical evidence.

Still, sheer feminist agency cannot fully explain why precisely New Zealand, Australia, Norway and Finland were the first to enfranchise women. They were certainly not those with the most vibrant forms of feminist activism. Finland and Norway, let alone Australia, had no suffragette movements compared to that in Great Britain.²¹ And still, they preceded Great Britain by decades in giving women the right to vote. According to Ida Blom, the relatively calm and non-deterrent nature of feminism in Norway was one of the reasons for its success. The Norwegian example of a smooth acceptance of women's suffrage was in turn crucial for the breaking of the anti-suffragist resistance in Great Britain.²² To some degree, it might help if we extend our analysis beyond actual feminist activism to what might be called feminist cultures – or even better: cultures facilitating female political agency. This line of thought certainly helps to understand why Scandinavian countries were among the first in line. It seems to be no coincidence that women received the vote early in those countries where women were allowed to teach in elementary schools as early as 1860; where Henrik Ibsen was successful with theatre plays about free-spirited women such as *The Pillars of Society* (1877), *A Doll's House* (1879) or *Hedda Gabler* (1891); and where the other most famous authors of that period (Bjørnson, Kielland, Lie) wrote in favour of women's rights. Inversely, Switzerland is notorious for the long-lasting prevalence of conservative attitudes.²³

If this argument holds, then the question arises: what precisely accounted for the lesser or greater degree of openness for female political agency? One of the obvious answers relates to the importance of religion: in the four pioneering countries – as well in many of the countries that followed during and immediately after the First World War – various shades of Protestantism were culturally and politically dominant. Moreover, in Switzerland, women's suffrage was introduced in predominantly protestant cantons. There certainly can be found some truth in the assertion that Protestant ideals of rationality and natural equality formed a more fertile breeding ground for feminism than the hierarchical forms of thinking in Catholicism and Christian Orthodoxy. Still, the argument is not entirely convincing. If we stick to it, it is difficult to explain that the Catholic Free State of Ireland was six years ahead of the United Kingdom, from which it parted in 1922. The same holds for Poland, where a traditional form of Catholicism remained nearly undisputed but women were given the vote nearly twenty-five years before the same was done in France, where a secularist tradition had driven the Catholic Church away from the political sphere for a long time.

Against the backdrop of all these considerations that only partly explain women's inclusion in the basic mechanism of democracy, the, at first sight counterintuitive, hypothesis rises that the introduction of women's suffrage may have been actively hampered by the strong presence of discourses and practices of popular sovereignty. This correlation is less far-fetched than it may seem. Precisely because of its abstract and universalist ambitions, the notion of popular sovereignty could hide the degree to which it had internalized the premises and the hierarchies of its concrete context of origin. The white male dominance was built into this notion to such a degree that militants who claimed to defend it could use words such as 'general suffrage' or '*suffrage universel*' when, in fact, they only had the vote for adult white males in mind.

The built-in philosophical weakness of this term was further reinforced by the pragmatic or social contexts in which it was used. For decades, it was the conceptual cement between hundreds of men who gathered on a day-to-day basis in parliamentary sessions and who considered these all-male reunions as miniature versions of 'the nation'. It is no wonder that they imagined the sovereign nation itself too as homogeneously male and white and that the idea of women's suffrage was beyond the scope of the thinkable. As long as the continuity of these institutions was not shaken by intense constitutional and/or geopolitical

earthquakes, the propensity to enfranchise women was therefore very weak.

This situation was further replicated at the level of those organizations, namely political parties, that gradually started to dominate parliamentary life, especially in countries with a strong democratic tradition. Creating the missing link between parliament and society, these again entirely male organizations often presented themselves as the *true* defenders of popular sovereignty, a sovereignty that they felt to be betrayed by their political opponents. Especially in the case of the socialists, this could imply pleas to extend the boundaries of the electorate, but not necessarily to women. Though many socialist intellectuals did express feminist sentiments, most party militants adapted the abstract notion of popular sovereignty to the world they knew and/or aspired to be part of, namely one in which the male labourer was able to sustain his wife and family.²⁴ It was also suspected that if women were allowed to vote, they would do so for factions that expressed the will of the clergy or other conservative forces rather than for the people's party. These fears tied in with the general idea that women lacked the autonomy to act as responsible agents in the public sphere, as well as with broader associations between femininity and irrationality. Extensions of suffrage to women were therefore slowed down rather than accelerated in countries with a strong socialist tradition.

Yet, the presence of strong discourses of popular sovereignty did not only function as a brake on the process of introducing women's suffrage because they narrowed the political imagination of male elites. These same discourses engendered democratic practices among men and women that went far beyond the simple act of voting. As such, many women probably felt (at least indirectly) included in the sphere of popular sovereignty and therefore were not induced to ask for the vote. Some examples taken from a research project on French popular politics during the first half of the nineteenth century can help to underpin this case. In this project, Karen Lauwers and I analyzed both the content and the discursive features of several thousands of letters from 'ordinary citizens' to different French *députés*. Although only a relatively small number of them were written by women, they do inform us about their expectations towards politics and the ways they engaged in politics. There is only a small number of cases that show women as active participants at political or syndical meetings. One of these cases occurs in a letter written during the electoral campaign of the spring of 1902 by a madame Vasagnat, obviously a barely literate woman living

in the constituency of the socialist (and feminist) *député* Marcel Sembat in the eighteenth arrondissement of Paris (Montmartre). She stressed that she had been present, together with her husband, at all the political meetings organized by Sembat, and that she ‘did not see for which reason my name does not appear on your campaign poster next to those of the citizens – for you know well, citizen, that if the woman does not have the suffrage, she has a lot of influence on her husband’. Not only did she ask Sembat to make an end to that anomaly, but also

to spread her letter in all your meetings, so that all the female citizens present at these meetings can encourage their husbands if they are republicans, and, if that is not the case yet, engage them to become republicans, and understand the good of the workers’ case, so that we reach the point that we only have real republicans in power.²⁵

These expressions of outspoken political awareness prove to be rare in the women’s letters – certainly compared to those written by men. In most of these letters, as well as in personal meetings, women addressed the *député* in order to request personal favours or political measures. Even if these practices sometimes bordered clientelism, especially in countries with strong democratic traditions they nonetheless also entailed political dynamics. In very ‘micropolitical’ ways, women expressed and developed their ideas about social justice and about the contribution a *député* could make to reach it. Sometimes they tried to strengthen their cases by mentioning that their husbands or even all the male members of their families were voters of the *député*, or they even presented themselves as informal electoral agents. ‘I offered you a bouquet of votes’, the young, highly educated and unmarried Héléne Lebon wrote to Louis Marin, the right-wing *député* of the French department of Lorraine. She did so in April 1936, after having driven several crippled friars to the polls, who would have otherwise stayed at home.²⁶ Being able to take part in the electoral process in that way, she may have felt less of an urge to actively ask for the vote. In spite of their different marital statuses, social positions, ideological convictions and approaches to politics, Héléne Lebon and madame Vasagnat probably shared these creative ways of reclaiming their part in popular sovereignty without asking for the vote. In this sense, while discourses of sovereignty slowed down the inclusion of women into the electorate, they did so by engendering other forms of political agency.

Should we conclude, then, that there is a relationship of inverse proportionality between discourses of sovereignty on the one hand, and women's suffrage on the other? To the extent that historians can ever draw these types of law-like conclusions, I believe this one is only true if we limit the notion of sovereignty to that of *popular* sovereignty in its Rousseauist version, i.e. the idea that the seat of power should be situated within the 'real' people, and that this people is 'one and indivisible'. Aspirations to *national sovereignty* in the Westphalian sense, on the contrary, seem to have created a fertile breeding ground for extensions of the vote to women. As the brief overview earlier on has shown, women's suffrage was introduced most of all by political elites who strove for the creation of new independent nation states from within larger dynastic empires or on the ruins of the latter. New Zealand and Australia did so at the expense of Great Britain, most Central and Eastern European countries at the expense of the Habsburg and Russian Empires, and after the Second World War, most newly created nation states did so at the expense of their former colonial masters. In the context of setting up and fostering a 'national revolution', these national elites were eager to include as many people as possible in 'their nation', and therefore to broaden the basis of their new state. Blom stresses that this was also one of the reasons for the quick introduction of the female vote in Norway, even if it only happened eight years after the break-up of the union with Sweden. Norwegian feminists, she argues, had successfully exploited this argument by framing their struggle for women's suffrage within the national opposition against that union. One of them, Brigitta Welzin Sørensen, already in 1898, called the vote for women 'the strongest armament to stand up to our neighbors'.²⁷ In Poland, too, many feminists conflated their pleas for obtaining women's suffrage with nationalist claims. Thus artist and activist Maria Dulębianka wrote: 'We, women, if we demand the right to vote, we also demand the right to struggle for national rights, we demand that we are allowed to take our place in the rebuilding of the nation'.²⁸ Once they had obtained the vote, Polish women were explicitly asked to strengthen the nation against 'the enemy from within' – read: the Polish Jews.²⁹

In countries where national sovereignty was reached at an earlier stage, the need to widen the nation's basis appeared far less urgent. Cases in point here are Japan and Persia/Iran, countries that were never colonized and were nationally independent long before they started introducing parliamentary, let alone democratic, institutions. Around the turn of the century, in 1889 and 1906 respectively, both countries

created parliamentary institutions modelled after Western examples, with a limited and exclusively male franchise. In Japan, women's suffrage was ultimately enforced by the American occupation administration in 1945. And although the Western-inspired Pahlavi dynasty in Persia claimed to further the case of women's emancipation, it only granted women the vote as late as 1963 – in answer to a referendum. Other Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan and Syria had given women the vote immediately at their independence.

Modern discourses on collective political sovereignty originated as eminently male conceptual constructs. Male political elites also decided to which degree women were allowed to participate in political sovereignty, even if they were urged by female activists to do so. At first sight, it seems paradoxical that elites who stressed the centrality of *national* sovereignty seemed more eager to do so than those who defended *popular* sovereignty. Whereas national sovereignty is about delineating one nation from another and remains intrinsically silent about who participates in power, popular sovereignty is most often associated with notions such as democracy, inclusiveness and empowerment. And yet, wherever the notion of *popular* sovereignty took centre stage in these elites' discourses, women were refused the vote for remarkably long periods. Since the voice of the people was discursively construed as 'one and indivisible', it could not suffer a high degree of diversity. Whether male elites were blinded by the alleged universality of this concept, or whether they used it strategically to strengthen their power monopoly differs for every case. Discourses of *national* sovereignty, on the contrary, did seem supportive of the introduction of women's suffrage – at least, they were at a stage when the nation fought or defended its independence against adversaries. At these moments, 'the nation' needed the support of everyone – even women. Because of the strategic nature of this manoeuvre, women's suffrage did not necessarily imply an outspoken female political agency. Once national sovereignty was acquired, the presence of women in the body politic was easily forgotten. Almost no women were elected to parliament, and the female presence in public life remained low. This situation, to some degree, mirrored in countries where discourses of popular sovereignty continued to exclude women from the vote, but did stimulate – though not necessarily wholeheartedly – other forms of female political agency. Even in these countries, however, the ultimate introduction of women's suffrage only led to a limited presence of women in parliament on the short-term. Either with or without female suffrage, women would have

to remind the political elites of their rights through ceaseless activism that was aided less by notions of popular sovereignty than by claims for equality and individual liberty.

Notes

- 1 On the transformation of the vote from an instrument of elite selection into one of democratic representation, see, for example: Bernard Manin, *Principes du Gouvernement Représentatif* (Paris: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Gordon Wood, 'Democracy and the American Revolution', in *Democracy. The unfinished journey. 508 BC to AD 1993*, ed. John Dunn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 91–105.
- 2 *Chambre de Représentatifs. Annales* [Proceedings of the Belgian Chamber of Representatives], 17 December 1856, p; 332.
- 3 *Chambre de Représentatifs. Annales* [Proceedings of the Belgian Chamber of Representatives], 27 November 1856, 153. De Gerlache's rejection of popular sovereignty was to be found in his *Essai sur le mouvement des partis en Belgique depuis 1830 jusqu'à ce jour* (Brussels: 1852), p. 65.
- 4 *Handelingen der Staten-Generaal* ['Proceedings of the Dutch States-General'], 3 October 1848, p. 917.
- 5 Van Forreest, *Handelingen der Staten-Generaal* ['Proceedings of the Dutch States-General'], 12 November 1862, p. 13.
- 6 On the different positions of the notion 'popular sovereignty' in nineteenth-century parliamentary discourses, see: Marnix Beyen and Henk te Velde, 'Passion and Reason. Modern Parliaments in the Low Countries', in *Parliament and Parliamentarism. A Comparative History of a European Concept*, eds. Pasi Ihalainen, Cornelia Ilie and Kari Palonen (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), pp. 81–96.
- 7 For a more elaborate transnational comparison regarding this topic, see Jad Adams, *Women and the Vote. A World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). For a juxtaposition of European cases, see: Blanca Rodríguez-Ruiz and Ruth Rubio Marin, eds., *The Struggle for Female Suffrage in Europe. Voting to Become Citizens* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).
- 8 On the female representation of popular sovereignty, see Maurice Agulhon's famous trilogy on the history of symbolic figure Marianne: *Marianne au Combat* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979); *Marianne au Pouvoir* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989); *Les visages de la République* (Paris: Flammarion 1992).
- 9 For the full text, see: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/essentiels/anthologie/declaration-droits-femme-citoyenne-0>.

- 10 See, for example, the proposal by the Parisian socialist Marcel Sembat in 1909, reprinted in *Pour la R.P., discours prononcés à la Chambres des députés dans la discussion de la réforme électorale* (Paris: 1910), p. 160.
- 11 Steven C. Hause and Anne R. Kenney, *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 225, p. 333.
- 12 Nadine Boucherin, *Les stratégies argumentatives dans les débats parlementaires suisses sur le suffrage féminin (1945-1971)* (PhD dissertation, Université de Fribourg, 2012).
- 13 See Birgitta Bader-Zaar, 'Women's Suffrage and War: World War I and Political Reform in a Comparative Perspective', in *Suffrage, Gender and Citizenship: International Perspectives on Parliamentary Reforms*, eds. Irma Sulkunen, Seija-Leena Nevala-Nurmi and Pirjo Markkola (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 193–218.
- 14 See, for example, Bertha Damaris-Knobe, 'Votes for Women: an Object-Lesson', *Harper's Weekly* (25 April 1908).
- 15 See, for example, Sandra Stanley Holton, *Feminism and Democracy. Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain, 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Harold L. Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign, 1866-1928* (London: Routledge, 2010).
- 16 Miet Smet during a debate on the Flemish broadcast VRT on 5 May 2019, https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2019/05/05/zuhal-_toen-ik-een-telefoonkreeg-en-men-zei-jij-wordt-staatsse/.
- 17 June Purvis, 'We owe them the vote', *The Guardian* (10 June 2008).
- 18 See Patricia Grimshaw, *The Women's Suffrage in New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2013).
- 19 See Sophie van Bijsterveld and Hillie van de Streek, eds. *Wat komen jullie hier doen? Vrouwenkiesrecht tussen geloof, politiek en samenleving – 1883-2018* (Nijmegen: Valkhof, 2018); Mineke Bosch, *Strijd! De vrouwenkiesrechtbeweging in Nederland, 1822-1922* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2019); Mineke Bosch, *Vrouwen voorwaarts. De strijd voor vrouwenkiesrecht in Nederland en de koloniën 1850-1950*, themed issue of *Historica* 42, no. 2 (2019); Monique Leijenaar, Jantine Oldersma and Kees Niemöller, *De hoogste tijd. Een eeuw vrouwenkiesrecht* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum, 2019).
- 20 Gisela Bock, *Frauen in der europäischen Geschichte. Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Beck, 2000), p. 200.
- 21 See Ida Blom, 'The Struggle for Women's Suffrage in Norway, 1885-1913', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 5 (1980): pp. 3–22.
- 22 Sissel Rosland, 'Norway as an Example in the UK Women's Suffrage Movement', *NORA. Nordic Journal of Women's History*, 25 (2017): pp. 195–210.

- 23 Barbara Strudel, "'L'Etat c'est l'homme": politique, citoyenneté et genre dans le débat autour du suffrage féminin après 1945', *Revue suisse d'histoire* 46 (1996): pp. 357–382.
- 24 On 'Socialism's gendered horizons', see, for example, Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy. A History of the Left in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 22–24.
- 25 Papers Marcel Sembat, Paris, Archives Nationales, 637AP/142.
- 26 See Karen Lauwers, "Negotiating the Republic. Direct interactions between unorganized citizens and MPs in France, ca. 1900-1930s", unpublished PhD-thesis, University of Antwerp, 2019, p. 295. See also Marnix Beyen, 'De politieke kracht van het dienstbetoon: interacties tussen burgers en volksvertegenwoordigers in Parijs, 1893-1914', *Stadsgeschiedenis* 7(2012): pp. 74–85.
- 27 Blom, 'The Struggle for Women's Suffrage', p. 16.
- 28 Cited after Małgorzata Fuszara, 'Polish Women's Fight for Suffrage', in *The Struggle for Female Suffrage in Europe*, eds. Rodríguez-Ruiz and Rubio-Marin, p. 147.
- 29 Angelique Leszczawski-Schwerk, 'Dynamics of democratization and nationalization: the significance of women's suffrage and women's political participation in parliament in the Second Polish Republic', in *Nationalities Papers. The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 46 (2018): pp. 46–55.

