

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS AND THE ENACTMENT OF MOTHERS' PENSIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

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Mothers' pensions were the first explicit welfare benefits established outside of poor relief in the United States. Contrary to established wisdom in political science, their enabling statutes spread very quickly across most states in the 1910s, with smaller, nonindustrial states often in the vanguard. Previous research concerning the predictors of state-level policy innovations has focused on a small subset of possible explanatory variables, typically economic or electoral conditions. We operationalize and test hypotheses about the influence of economic conditions, culture and ideology, electoral politics, governmental institutions and prior public policies, and the role of business, labor, and women's voluntary groups on the priority of state enactments. Our findings indicate that widespread federations of women's voluntary groups exerted a powerful influence on mothers' pension enactments even before most American women had the right to vote. We demonstrate the value to empirical political science of theories and variables referring to gender and women's politics.

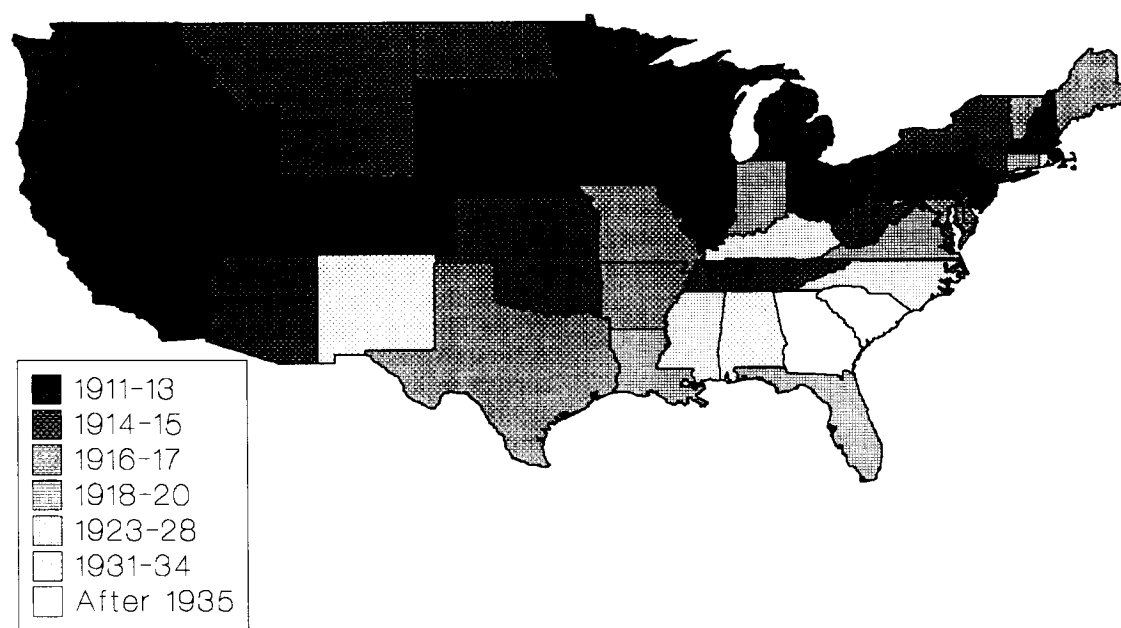
Received wisdom tells us that America's modern welfare state did not start until the Social Security Act of 1935. Although there are many problems with this view (see Skocpol 1992), its most obvious omission has to do with "mothers' pensions," the forerunner of the Aid to Dependent Children portion of Social Security and the "grandmother" of Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Forty states passed mothers' pension laws by 1920; four more, prior to the onset of the Great Depression in 1929; and two more, in the early 1930s. Mothers' pensions (sometimes called "widows' pensions") were state-level enabling statutes authorizing local governmental authorities to make regular payments directly to impoverished mothers (and occasionally other caretakers) of dependent children. Benefit payments were meant to cover at least part of the cost of raising such children in their own homes, so they would not have to be placed in foster homes or institutions such as orphanages. Mothers' pensions were the first explicit welfare benefits established outside of poor relief in the United States.

Political scientists have special reason to be curious about the origins of mothers' pensions, because the pattern of their enactment does *not* conform to established disciplinary wisdom about the spread of legislative innovations across the American states. Jack Walker (1969, 1971) created an "innovation score" for the states based on how quickly, on average, each adopted 88 different programs between the 1800s and 1965. Using this composite score, Walker argued that wealthier, more industrialized, and more urban states were usually the first to enact new programs. He maintained that the Rocky Mountain states, despite high literacy scores for their populations, were "among the slowest to adopt new programs" (1971, 359). But (as we shall see) urbanization and industrialization do not predict the relative priority of state

enactments of mothers' pensions, while more literate states tended to enact these laws earlier. Fourteen states, including Rocky Mountain and other small, nonindustrial states, enacted mothers' pensions much sooner than Walker's composite score would predict: Nevada, South Dakota, Idaho, Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Oklahoma, New Hampshire, Montana, West Virginia, and Tennessee.

Walker's approach to explaining legislative innovations was criticized by Gray (1973). She stressed wealth and electoral competitiveness as the factors differentiating the most innovative states from others and offered a "user interaction" model to explain why programs typically diffused across the states according to the S-shape of a cumulative normal curve. This model posits a gradual learning process across the states. But Gray acknowledged that mothers' pensions were an "aberrant" case for her user interaction model. After the first adoption by Illinois in 1911, 18 states adopted mothers' pension laws in 1913 (see Appendix). Both Walker and Gray agree that mothers' pensions spread across the states much more quickly than legislative innovations usually do. During the early twentieth century, it normally took two decades for the first 20 states to adopt a legislative innovation (Walker 1971, 377); but 40 states enacted mothers' pensions in less than one decade after 1910.

Why were mothers' pensions enacted so quickly across most of the states? Why did some states, including many smaller, non-industrial states, pass these statutes sooner than others? We shall present and empirically test potential explanatory arguments from a variety of scholarly literatures. A distinctive contribution of our analysis is the wide range of arguments under consideration. Some of these stress cultural and ideological influences, while others focus on business, organized labor, and the social composition of the work force. Still others hypothesize that

FIGURE 1**Mothers' Pension Laws: Dates of Enactment**

the enactment of mothers' pensions may have been affected by electoral conditions or by governmental capacities and prior public policies about schooling and child labor. In addition, we introduce and test arguments about the importance of nationwide federations of women's voluntary groups in agitating for mothers' pension legislation during the 1910s. This type of variable has not previously been included in quantitative analyses of welfare state formation or policy innovation across the states, but it proves to be very significant. We show that even before most American women had the right to vote, they were able to work through voluntary associations to set agendas of public debate over social welfare, persuading state legislatures to enact the first explicit authorizations for social spending for mothers and children.

Operationalizing the Dependent Variable

In studying the relative priority of state enactments of mothers' pension statutes, we have examined a number of different operationalizations of the pattern. These operationalizations include a dichotomous split between early enactors by 1913 and all later enactors like Gray's dependent variable (1973, 1182-83), a split between pre-1915 and post-1915 enactors, and a continuous measure of the number of years prior to 1935 that each state first passed mothers' pensions. In the end, however, we settled on a seven-part ordinal scale. The values are illustrated in Figure 1. The period 1911-13 equals 6, 1914-15 equals 5, etc. down to 0 for "after 1935.")

Our ordinal scale groups state-level enactments into meaningful temporal clusters.¹ A single chrono-

logical year of time simply does not have the same meaning throughout the 1911-35 period. During the 1910s, events having to do with social reforms moved very rapidly, and most state legislatures met on alternate years. It made a difference whether a state enacted mothers' pensions in (or before) 1913 (during the first major wave of enactments) or in the successive waves that peaked in 1915 and 1917. Thus, these waves are coded as three separate categories, even though they are close together in linear time. The next category includes states that enacted laws toward the end of, and right after, World War I, from 1918 to 1920. And the next cluster groups four states that legislated in the mid-1920s, a period that generally saw very little reform activity compared to the 1910s. Finally, we split the 1930s into two categories even though merely four laggard states are involved, because two of them (New Mexico and Alabama) enacted laws before the Social Security Act of 1935 established federal subsidies for mothers' pensions, while the other two (Georgia and South Carolina) waited until after this national incentive was created.

EXPLANATIONS FOR THE ENACTMENT OF MOTHERS' PENSIONS

We shall introduce major types of arguments that have been or might be used to explain the relative timing of mothers' pension enactments and describe the independent variables specified to operationalize these arguments. Constraints on available data made it impossible for us to use time series analysis for this

study. Often, data are available only at ten-year intervals; thus, many of our independent variables are measured at, or close to, the year 1910, right at the beginning of the period during which mothers' pensions diffused across the states. Still, wherever possible, we developed independent variables that used information for several time points during the 1910s or, better yet, that embodied ordinal measures of temporal priority during the 1910s and 1920s. Fortunately, our most important independent variable—endorsements of mothers' pensions by women's groups in the 48 states—measures temporal priority, as well as the presence or absence of endorsements.

Culture and Ideology: New Ideas about Home Life and Mother Care

Historical accounts routinely point to the 1909 White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children as the event that launched the diffusion of mothers' pensions across the states (see, e.g., Gray 1973, 1183; Leff 1973, 399; Lubove 1986, 97–98; Vandepol 1982, 230). By the early twentieth century, the argument goes, social reformers had come to believe that home care and mother love were better for children than any kind of institutional care (Ladd-Taylor 1987; Vandepol 1982). The conviction spread that orphans should be placed in foster care, rather than in orphanages, and that the children of impoverished widows should be kept at home, rather than (as before) separated from their mothers and placed in institutions. The 1909 White House conference is said to have crystallized this new valuation of home life among many settlement workers and other professional social reformers, although the relevant conference resolution (see U.S., Senate 1909, 9–10) did not call for *public* mothers' pensions. Indeed, historians agree that private charity organizations resisted public mothers' pensions as a way to operationalize the new consensus about home life, because these bodies had a stake in raising private money to aid "worthy widows" (Drew 1987, chap. 5; Lubove 1986, 101–6). Leading charity officials argued that widows and their children should be aided by kin and private charity, not by governmental benefits (see Devine 1913; Richmond 1913).

Arguments about the activities of professional reformers and charity groups are difficult to operationalize quantitatively. In the early stages of this study, we considered a range of possible variables. We examined the per capita number of delegates that each state had in attendance at the 1909 White House conference, reasoning that perhaps participants in the conference carried word of the new ideological enthusiasm about home life back to their states. More broadly, we considered possible independent variables referring to the relative numbers in each state of social settlements, settlement residents, Consumers' Leagues, and affiliates of the National Child Labor Committee (an organization that crusaded specifically for laws to help prevent child labor; see Cham-

bers 1963, chap. 2; Trattner 1970). We likewise considered measures of the organizational presence of Charity Organization Societies, which were the most active associations of private charity workers *opposed* to public social spending for measures such as mothers' pensions (Katz 1986, chap. 3). But as we examined variables referring to advocacy groups that might have either furthered or delayed the enactment of mothers' pensions, it became apparent that such measures were not working in the statistical analysis, for a good substantive reason: both charity associations and associations of progressive reformers tended to be concentrated in major northeastern and midwestern cities, and most delegates to the 1909 White House conference came from the same cities. Although historians of U.S. social welfare may be correct in arguing that ideological arguments for or against mothers' pensions were articulated most forcefully by groups concentrated in New York, Massachusetts, Illinois, and other urban-industrial states, these groups were not the ones responsible for spreading (or delaying) legislative enactments across all 48 states. Indeed, had urban reformers been the only ones involved in advocacy for mothers' pensions, it is doubtful that these laws ever would have spread across the nation during the 1910s.

The activities of elite advocacy groups aside, home life and motherhood were values celebrated and reinforced by the national mass circulation women's magazines that reached millions of middle-class readers during the early 1900s (Waller 1987; Waller-Zuckerman 1989). These magazines were successfully distributed across the entire United States, including to many small towns and farms; and during the early 1900s, their editors often sponsored campaigns for social reform causes. One of the "big six" women's magazines around 1910 was the *Delineator*, a magazine of fashion, literature, and civic affairs put out by the maker of Butterick fashions. This magazine was sold both through the mail to subscribers and in stores across the country alongside sewing patterns for ladies' dresses. The *Delineator* had a circulation of 930,600 in 1912, when it was the third-largest women's magazine (Waller-Zuckerman 1989, 737, table 2). During 1912 and 1913, the *Delineator* advocated mothers' pensions in a series of emotionally engaging and richly illustrated feature articles (for full details, see Skocpol 1992, 432–42). Articles advocating mothers' pensions also appeared in *Good Housekeeping* and *Collier's*, as well as in the Scripps-McCrae and Hearst chains of newspapers (Bullock 1915, xviii; Leff 1973, 406).

We include in our statistical analysis two variables that may measure cultural and ideological circumstances facilitating mothers' pensions. So far, we have not been able to find usable state-by-state circulation data for the early 1910s for the *Delineator* (or other magazines that promoted mothers' pensions); but we do have some state-by-state data for 1920. Using this imperfect data as a rough indication of what earlier circulation might have been, the variable *DELINEATOR* identifies the per capita number of subscribers per state. In addition, *LITERACY* measures the

proportion of each state's population over 10 years of age that could read and write in 1910. A more literate population might have been more receptive to the spread of new ideas, including the proposals for mothers' pensions advocated in the print mass media.

Modernization: Industrialization and Urbanization

Many political scientists have argued that the industrialized, urban, and wealthier states enact social policies sooner and fund programs more generously (e.g., Dawson and Robinson 1963; Dye 1966; Gray 1973; Hofferbert 1966; Walter 1969).² At the same time, students of cross-national patterns of social policy development have invoked industrialization and urbanization as key explanatory variables, arguing that these socioeconomic transformations render families more vulnerable to interruptions of wage income and simultaneously create new wealth that enables governments to address ever-more-visible social needs (Cutright 1965; Jackman 1975; Kerr et al. 1964; Wilensky and Lebeaux 1958). Although modernization arguments have been found *not* to apply to the origins of old-age pensions or social insurance in the United States as contrasted to Europe (Collier and Messick 1975; Flora and Heidenheimer 1981; Orloff and Skocpol 1984), they nevertheless might apply to the intra-U.S. origins of *mothers' pensions*, which were intended largely for the "worthy widows" and children of deceased male breadwinners. During the original campaigns for new legislation, mothers' pensions were projected to cost taxpayers no more than did existing public orphanages and outdoor poor relief (Vandepol 1982, 230). Still, supporters of modernization theories can maintain that industrial and urban states would have experienced the social problems to be addressed by mothers' pensions sooner and more acutely. Or they might argue, along with Walker (1969, 1971), that more developed, wealthier states would have had the extra resources to allow their officials to be more cosmopolitan and innovative in picking up on new kinds of legislation.

Certain cross-state and cross-national literatures thus lead us to expect positive effects on early legislative enactments from MANUFACTURING (per capita value of states' manufacturing products) and URBANIZATION (percentage of each state's population living in cities of twenty-five thousand or more). Because of inadequate data for this time period, we do not have a valid measure of overall state economic wealth.³ Nevertheless, one of the variables defined below, STATE GOVERNMENT REVENUES, could be construed as an indirect indicator of state wealth.

Business, Labor, and Work Force Composition

In recent years, most comparativists studying Western welfare states have argued that strong working-class organizations have been the primary forces behind the enactment and expansion of public social benefits. According to these *working-class-strength* theories, the relative size of trade unions and control of

government by working-class parties are key variables to explain the early enactment and fiscal generosity of social policies—which are understood to replace market income for wage earners and their families (Korpi 1980, 1983; Shalev 1983; Stephens 1979). Comparativists of this persuasion treat business interests and business organizations as opponents of the establishment and expansion of social policies.

Some scholars have suggested that U.S. businesses and other conservative interests did little to oppose mothers' pensions because the state-level enabling statutes did not include spending commitments or new taxes (Davis 1930, 581–82; Leff 1973, 404–5). Decisions about spending for mothers' pensions were left in the hands of local authorities. On the other hand, Drew argues that textile manufacturers did oppose mothers' pensions, because their businesses were major employers of female and child labor, and they therefore wanted to keep widows and their children in the labor force (1987, chap. 6). Comparativists who emphasize working-class strength have not specifically discussed U.S. mothers' pensions. Nevertheless, we do know that the major U.S. union federation of the day, the American Federation of Labor (AFL), endorsed mothers' pensions at its 1911 national convention (American Federation of Labor 1911, 357–58). Perhaps mothers' pensions fit the pattern hypothesized by working-class-strength theorists, passing first in states with many unionized wage earners and well-established trade union federations.

Given the paucity of relevant state-level statistics in this era, our explanatory variables referring to business and labor are less than ideal. The general variable MANUFACTURING introduced above could be construed as an indicator of business interests that might have opposed mothers' pensions in the various states. We also have two broader measures of socioeconomic contexts in which businesses (and other actors) might have been reluctant to see mothers' pensions enacted. These are PERCENT CHILD LABORERS (referring to the percentage of manufacturing workers who were less than age 16 in 1910) and PERCENT WORKFORCE FEMALE (referring to the percent of total gainful work force 10 years and older in 1910 who were females). In states where many women or children were employed, business owners may have opposed mothers' pensions, which were intended to keep widows at home and their children in school; and other groups may not have felt a such a pressing need to find new sources of income for widows and their children.

Before 1939, there are no state-level statistics on numbers of unionized wage earners. (Nor is it feasible to construct such statistics out of national AFL data because the constituent units of the AFL were occupationally defined unions, not state or local organizations.) We have therefore addressed the question of organized labor's possible involvement in lobbying for mothers' pensions in a different way. Labor historians have established that state-level Federations of Labor in this period often concentrated on

legislative lobbying (Fink 1973; Taft 1968). Older state federations were, arguably, more likely to have built up effective lobbying organizations and political alliances, both of which could have been used to push for mothers' pension laws during the 1910s. Our variable AGE OF STATE FEDERATION thus measures the number of years that each state labor body had been in existence as of 1912, the first full year in which state federations could have implemented the 1911 national AFL endorsement of mothers' pensions.

Electoral and Partisan Contexts

Previous research suggests that mothers' pensions "were not a central party concern [and] rarely even merited mention in party platforms of states that enacted such laws. . . . Some gubernatorial messages dealt with mothers' pensions, and some state legislators discussed their advocacy of pensions, but on the whole, politicians remained followers rather than molders of public opinion" (Leff 1973, 405-6). Mothers' pension laws passed by overwhelming bipartisan majorities in state legislatures and referenda (pp. 400-401). Their advocates "worked hard to keep the issue from becoming a party issue" by consciously invoking bipartisan themes of motherhood, efficiency, and justice (Davis 1930, 581). Yet even if mothers' pensions were not normally promoted by political parties or enacted through partisan conflicts, patterns of electoral participation and balances of power among political parties may nevertheless have created contexts that facilitated or impeded the enactment of these laws during the 1910s and 1920s. We explore this possibility in several ways.

Many political scientists believe that interparty electoral competition is the most important explanation for state-level variation in social policy innovation and spending (Cnudde and McCrone 1969; Key 1949, 1956; Lockard 1959; Sharkansky and Hofferbert 1969). They argue that greater competition induces politicians to court mass support, especially when voter turnout is high. Our index of PARTY COMPETITION represents the average level of competition for state offices between 1910 and 1916; and we use a VOTER PARTICIPATION variable for each state that measures the average voter turnout in the presidential elections of 1908, 1912, 1916, and 1920.⁴

Some cross-national researchers have argued that "leftist" parties in control of government tend to enact new social policies because they are allied with labor and other popular groups representing potential beneficiaries (Esping-Andersen 1985; Shalev 1983; Stephens 1979). But for other cross-national researchers, the strength of "rightist" parties matters more, because they may block or delay new or expanded social policies (Castles 1982; Wilensky 1981). Obviously, it is not easy to apply "left" and "right" labels to U.S. party politics in the period of interest here. Arguably, AVERAGE DEMOCRATIC PARTY STRENGTH from 1910 to 1916 is an indicator of "right party" strength on mothers' pensions, because Democrats in this period tended to enroll support from southerners

and Catholics, who might have been skeptical of this kind of enhanced governmental power. We hypothesize that this variable might have a negative relationship to early mothers' pensions enactments, regardless of region.

It makes little sense to argue that average Republican party strength is a measure of "left" influence during this period. The decade of the 1910s, however, was a time of challenges from third parties, such as Progressives, Socialists, and Prohibitionists. These parties tended to ally with reformers and with either labor or organized women, all of whom wanted greater governmental involvement in social welfare and social regulation. Republicans were often influenced to move in reformist directions in states where one or more of these third parties was strong. Thus, we test for positive effects on the enactment of mothers' pensions of AVERAGE REFORM VOTE, defined as the average percentage of presidential votes cast for the Progressive party in 1912; the Socialist party in 1912, 1916, and 1920; the Prohibition party in 1916; and the Farmer-Labor party in 1920.⁵

Electoral considerations aside, the varied rules of the game in state-level politics may have influenced the relative timing of the enactment of such reforms as mothers' pensions. The early 1900s was an era when party machines were being criticized by progressive reformers advocating new electoral routines such as the referendum, recall, and initiative (McCormick 1986, pt. 3; Shefter 1978). Although referenda were rarely used to enact mothers' pensions, states that had established some or all of these reforms might have had a "progressive political climate" amenable to other reforms, including mothers' pensions. Our variable ELECTORAL REFORMS measures the average number of years before 1930 that each state enacted these three measures.⁶

A final transformation of U.S. electoral politics in the early twentieth century might well have been more consequential than any other for the enactment of mothers' pensions (and other social policies targeted on women and children): campaigns for women's suffrage gained momentum after 1900, many states granted women the right to vote during the 1910s, and national women's suffrage was finally ensured by constitutional amendment in 1920. In the words of historian Mark Leff: "Although the more militant wing of the suffrage movement feared that mothers' pensions might damage the cause of sexual equality by glorifying the woman's place at home, supporters of women's suffrage generally favored mothers' pensions. Moreover, the legislatures that most easily and quickly approved mothers' pensions were usually those actively considering women's suffrage or chosen by a sexually unrestricted electorate" (1973, 407-8). This statement echoes the view of suffragists themselves that female voting spurred states to enact better laws for women and children (see Porritt 1917). We test Leff's arguments by examining the effect on the timing of mothers' pension enactments of FEMALE SUFFRAGE BEFORE 1920 (i.e., all states that granted women the right to vote in state

elections prior to the national constitutional amendment of 1920).

Women's Voluntary Groups

Social scientists who study "politics," especially with quantitative indicators, usually mean electoral politics. But social historians have demonstrated that this narrow definition of politics overlooks critical kinds of female political participation and effectiveness. In a pathbreaking article, Paula Baker (1984) argued that American women, who were mostly excluded from voting during a century when all white men enjoyed the suffrage (1820–1920), instead developed voluntary organizations to extend the moral values of domesticity into civic affairs, expressing special concern for conditions influencing mothers, children, and families. Higher proportions of women in the United States than in any other nation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries achieved college and postgraduate levels of education, a situation that facilitated female civic influence in local communities and in state and national policy debates (Sklar 1993; Skocpol 1992, chap. 6; Skocpol and Ritter 1991). By the early twentieth century, higher-educated, mostly single women were leaders in hundreds of U.S. social settlements and in staff-led groups like the National Consumers' League that advocated new social welfare policies (Davis 1967). Arguably even more important, across the entire nation by 1900, middle-class and elite married women had developed *federations* of voluntary associations that became involved in shaping public opinion and lobbying legislators for new social policies. The major women's federations enjoyed a weighty organizational presence simultaneously at the national, state, and local levels. They could set priorities and rapidly communicate ideas across virtually the entire United States.

Decades ago, Ada Davis argued that women's voluntary groups crucially influenced the enactment of mothers' pensions with such nonpartisan and nonelectoral methods of politics (1930, 582–84). As Leff notes, major associations of middle-class married women were active proponents of mothers' pensions (1973, 408–9). Specifically, the National Congress of Mothers, with over fifty thousand dues-paying members in 22 state branches, endorsed mothers' pensions at its 1911 convention (National Congress of Mothers 1911, 196; National Congress of Parents and Teachers 1947, 199; G. Robertson 1912); and the Congress's national and state leaders continued to push legislatures to enact and improve mothers' pensions throughout the 1910s (Skocpol 1992, 445–56 and table 9). Meanwhile, the million-member General Federation of Women's Clubs, with state federations and local clubs in every state of the union, endorsed mothers' pensions at its 1912 biennial convention; and many state federations campaigned for these laws between 1912 and 1916 (General Federation of Women's Clubs 1912, 600; Skocpol 1992, 442–45 and table 9; Wood 1912, 353).

Skocpol argues that widespread federations of lo-

cally organized groups have always had a political "comparative advantage" in U.S. social politics and that this was especially the case during the early twentieth century (1992, pt. 3). The arenas for enacting any social legislation during this period were the 48 states, which presented enormous problems of coordination for reformers. Furthermore, the major U.S. political parties of the day were often not effective programmatic promoters of new legislation. Groups like the women's federations that could create sudden, nationwide groundswells of public opinion in favor of particular kinds of legislative reforms (and at the same time had an organizational presence in many local legislative districts) could help to bring about the rapid waves of state-level enactments that characterized the most successful social policy innovations of the Progressive Era. Such rapid diffusion of enactments across the states in turn helped to counter the arguments typically made by conservatives that new regulations or higher public expenditures would hurt their state's relative economic competitiveness (see Graebner 1977; D. Robertson 1989).

For the first time in quantitative research on U.S. politics, we have developed variables to explore the impact of women's voluntary associations on the enactment of state-level social legislation. DENSITY OF WOMEN'S CLUBS, based on records about the local units in the General Federation of Women's Clubs, refers to the number of local women's clubs per capita in each state in 1910. In addition, we have developed a measure of the reported *efforts* by women's groups on behalf of mothers' pensions. Along with scattered information from other sources, we have systematically surveyed reports by the various state federations to national biennial conventions of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1912, 1914, 1916, 1918 and later, as well as the state branch reports to the National Congress of Mothers that were regularly reprinted in *Child-Welfare Magazine* during the 1910s and early 1920s. The variable WOMEN'S GROUP ENDORSEMENTS tells us whether, and how soon, one or more women's associations in each state reportedly endorsed mothers' pension legislation.⁷ (The dates used to form this variable appear in the Appendix; it ranges from 4 for states where women's groups endorsed mothers' pensions in 1912–13 to 0 for states where there is no evidence of any endorsement.) Clearly, if the scholars who argue that women's voluntary organizational capacities and lobbying activities on behalf of mothers' pensions made a telling difference are correct, then the states where official endorsements occurred and where those endorsements came earlier should have enacted mothers' pensions sooner.

Governmental Capacities and Related Public Policies

In recent years, certain analysts have moved away from seeing public policies simply as responses to socioeconomic conditions and the demands of social

groups. "Bringing the state back in" to explanations of policymaking, they have argued that the administrative and fiscal *capacities* of governments may affect the willingness of officials, politicians, and social groups to envisage and support new policies that would use, and extend, government power (see Skocpol 1985). Similarly, Hugh Heclo (1974) has argued that new policies often arise through processes of "political learning," in which officials and other political actors reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of existing policies and seek to build upon earlier policies, correcting for problems revealed by their operation. Preexisting policies, the institutional arrangements of governments, and the organizational characteristics of systems of political parties may also influence the goals, access, and alliances of officials and social groups active in politics (Amenta and Zylan 1991; Orloff and Skocpol 1984; Weir and Skocpol 1985).

We have devised variables to test a variety of state-centered hypotheses. STATE GOVERNMENT REVENUES indicates government revenues per capita as of 1913. Perhaps fiscally wealthier states enacted mothers' pensions first, as some of the political science literature on legislative innovations would lead us to expect (see Walker 1969, 1971). We also examine per capita STATE EXPENDITURES ON CHARITIES, HOSPITALS, AND CORRECTIONS. Advocates of mothers' pensions argued that these laws would save money otherwise spent on charity, so that states already spending heavily in this area might have been more prone to enact mothers' pensions. Another variable, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (as a percent of state population) indicates overall governmental administrative capacities that might have increased proclivities by either officials or social groups to support a new *public* welfare benefit.

In addition to examining the foregoing general kinds of "state capacity," we use variables referring to governmental capacities and preexisting public policies closely related to mothers' pensions. Historians have noted that juvenile court judges were early advocates of mothers' pensions in some states (see Lubove 1986, 99–100; Tiffin 1982, 122–23). What is more, Leff, Orloff, and Skocpol argue that the prior existence of juvenile courts as new, professionally run bodies established by progressive reformers reassured elite and middle-class Americans (who were generally worried about "political corruption" in the 1910s) that mothers' pensions could be administered honestly and effectively (Leff 1973, 401; Orloff and Skocpol 1984, 745). Finally, John Drew (1987) has argued that pressures for the enactment of mothers' pensions came from prior success in efforts to enact child welfare reforms, including laws prohibiting child labor, laws promoting public schooling, and laws establishing juvenile courts as agencies to deal with family problems and child misbehavior. Drew reasons that mothers' pensions "completed" this set of reforms by allowing juvenile authorities to keep fatherless children at home with their mothers, at school, and out of wage work.

We measure the AGE OF JUVENILE COURTS, the number of years each state's juvenile courts (if any) had been in existence by 1910; and our dichotomous variable CHILD LABOR LAW BY 1889? indicates those states that enacted child labor laws especially early. In addition, we draw on Ogburn (1912) for two indicators of the rigor of state-level child labor laws by 1909: AGE LIMIT for child labor in manufacturing and the LEVEL OF INSPECTION responsibility assumed by state agencies charged with enforcing child labor laws. According to Drew's (1987) argument, all variables referring to juvenile courts and child labor laws and enforcement should have positive relationships to early enactments of mothers' pensions. Drew would also expect per capita STATE EXPENDITURES ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS to be positively related to mothers' pensions, while PERCENT CHILD LABORERS (the percentage of manufacturing workers less than 16-years-old in 1910) would be negatively related to early enactments.

Finally, we consider one other variable in line with Drew's ideas. EXEMPTIONS? is a dichotomous variable indicating whether states exempted from the enforcement of their child labor laws orphans, children of widows, or children of disabled parents. If states did have such exemptions, then, arguably, widows could rely for their livelihoods on child labor; if not, then, presumably, mothers' pensions would have been more necessary to sustain widows and their non-working children.

ANALYZING ALTERNATIVE ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF MOTHERS' PENSIONS

We started the analysis of our data by constructing separate regression models, one for each category of explanatory hypotheses introduced. Table 1 lists the independent variables that we entered into the regression equations for each type of explanatory argument, and gives the statistical results for each cluster of variables.⁸ Within Table 1, Models 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 8 present results for regressions that included all of the variables within each category of explanatory argument. Models 4, 6, and 9 offer pared-down versions of models 3, 5, and 8, respectively. At this stage of discussion, we are not pitting variables from the different explanatory approaches against one another; that part of our analysis comes later. First, it is instructive to discuss what we can learn about the efficacy of each kind of argument considered apart from the others.

Contrary to much received wisdom in political science, the modernization variables we tested (both jointly and singly) did *not* end up predicting the priority of mothers' pension enactments across the states. As displayed in model 2, these negative findings about INDUSTRIALIZATION and URBANIZATION run directly counter to Walker's (1969, 1971) generalizations about "innovation in state politics." Also

TABLE 1

Models for Alternative Explanations of the Timing of Mothers' Pension Enactments

VARIABLES	MODEL 1	MODEL 2	MODEL 3	MODEL 4	MODEL 5	MODEL 6	MODEL 7	MODEL 8	MODEL 9
Culture and Ideology									
Literacy	.151** (.027)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Delineator	.001* (.001)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Modernization									
Manufacturing	—	.002 (.003)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Urbanization	—	.015 (.023)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Business, Labor, and Workforce Composition									
Percent child laborers (—)	—	—	-.183 (.109)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Age of state federation	—	—	.046* (.018)	.055** (.018)	—	—	—	—	—
Percent Workforce female (—)	—	—	-.121** (.040)	-.169** (.028)	—	—	—	—	—
Electoral and Partisan Contexts									
Voter Participation	—	—	—	—	-.001 (.019)	—	—	—	—
Average democratic party strength (—)	—	—	—	—	-1.932 (1.253)	—	—	—	—
Electoral reforms	—	—	—	—	.033 (.030)	—	—	—	—
Female suffrage before 1920	—	—	—	—	.078 (.306)	—	—	—	—
Party competition (—)	—	—	—	—	-4.076 (2.613)	-4.432** (1.466)	—	—	—
Average reform vote	—	—	—	—	8.099 (5.439)	18.417** (3.696)	—	—	—
Women's voluntary groups									
Density of women's clubs	—	—	—	—	—	—	.088* (.034)	—	—
Women's group endorsements	—	—	—	—	—	—	.758** (.098)	—	—
Governmental Capacities and Related Public Policies									
State government Revenues	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.023 (.053)	—
State expenditures on charities, hospitals, and corrections	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	-.055 (.703)	—
Government officials	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.095 (.229)	—
Age of juvenile courts	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.109 (.070)	—
Child labor law by 1889?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	-.153 (.429)	—
Age limit	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.051 (.056)	—
Level of inspection	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	-.138 (.174)	—
State expenditures on public schools	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.001** (.000)	.002** (.000)
Exemptions (—)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	-1.338* (.510)	-1.216** (.448)
Model Statistics:									
AdjR2	.639	.032	.480	.459	.601	.556	.662	.589	.624
SE	1.08	1.74	1.28	1.30	1.10	1.18	1.03	1.14	1.09

Notes: Coefficients are unstandardized. Numbers in parentheses represent standard errors.

*p < .05.

**p < .01.

counter to Walker but at the same time in line with what many historians of U.S. social welfare might argue, our measures of possible cultural and ideological influences on mothers' pension enactments (per capita LITERACY and subscribers to the *DELINEATOR* magazine in the various states) proved to be jointly significant, as indicated in Model 1. During the early twentieth century, quite a few smaller, nonindustrialized and nonurban states, including the Rocky Mountain states, both were highly literate and saw mothers' pensions enacted early. Still, more remains to be learned about how culture and literacy mattered.

Arguments about how business, labor, and the composition of state work forces might have favored or impeded mothers' pensions also receive some support from our preliminary analysis, as revealed by the results for models 3–4. Well-entrenched state federations of labor were slightly associated with earlier enactments of mothers' pensions; at the same time, state-level enactments occurred much more slowly in those states where higher proportions of the gainful work force were female. Possibly, business interests in these states were especially resistant to mothers' pensions. Yet our variable PERCENT WORKFORCE FEMALE is very general; it may simply indicate an overall socioeconomic context in which many groups were either more reluctant (or less able) to promote mothers' pensions.

Turning now to the realms of politics and government, the results displayed in models 5–9 offer considerable comfort to proponents of various explanatory arguments. The best variables referring to features of electoral politics come to the fore in models 5–6, which suggest that states with more competitive elections, as well as states with stronger reformist third parties, were more likely to enact mothers' pensions relatively early. These results conform in certain ways to the arguments about mothers' pensions suggested by Gray (1973). Also worth underlining is the fact that FEMALE SUFFRAGE BEFORE 1920 did not prove significant when pitted against other electoral variables. Women's voting, in short, was *not* a primary reason for the early enactment of mothers' pensions in certain states during the 1910s.

Yet the importance of women's voluntary politics is suggested in model 7, which has a lower standard error and a higher adjusted R-squared than any other partial model in Table 1. Models 8–9 reveal support for certain hypotheses put forward by Drew (1987). These models show that higher state-level per capita expenditures on public schools are associated with earlier enactments of mothers' pensions; and they reveals that states without child-labor-law exemptions for widows and their children were slightly more likely to enact mothers' pensions sooner. In other words, states that had both the fiscal wherewithal and the statutory regulations to keep children in school and out of the wage-labor force were likely to be receptive sooner to groups arguing that widowed mothers should be given public monies to help them keep their minor children at home.

In sum, a first-cut analysis of our data offers considerable support for several explanatory perspectives. In order to tell more about "which theories work best" or how different hypotheses might be synthesized, we must move on to regression analyses that jointly test variables from different perspectives.

OVERALL MODELS: HOW MOTHERS' PENSIONS SPREAD ACROSS THE STATES

We used two different routes of statistical analysis to synthesize variables from the various explanatory perspectives we explored. In the first route, we tested all 24 independent variables listed in Table 1. We used correlation matrices to identify pairs or sets of highly interrelated and logically overlapping variables, setting aside seven that seemed redundant and not as clearly connected as were others to specific processes having to do with mothers' pensions.⁸ Starting with 17 remaining variables, we ran successive regression models, dropping one variable at a time, until the three that remained were all significant. The result of this procedure was the same overall model (model 13) that we found using the second approach, whose steps and results are presented in Table 2. In this second approach, we tested together the ten variables that proved significant in the partial models discussed, moving through various steps (models 10–13) until all three remaining independent variables (WOMEN'S GROUP ENDORSEMENTS, STATE EXPENDITURES ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, and PERCENT WORKFORCE FEMALE) were significant. Some might argue that model 12 is a better than model 13, because the standard error is a bit smaller. The substantive results in models 12–13 are reassuringly similar. We slightly prefer model 13 as our final model, because it is more parsimonious, and all of its variables are significant.

The substantive picture presented in model 13 is clear and convincing. Early endorsement of mothers' pension legislation by one or more women's groups in a state is very significantly associated with earlier enactment of mothers' pension legislation. Moving from no evidence of endorsement to the earliest endorsement(s) in 1912–13 advances the timing of enactment of mothers' pension legislation by about 4 years during the 1910s (and by about 10 years afterward). Another significant variable in our final model shows that states where females of 10 years and older constituted higher proportions of the gainful work force were relative laggards in adopting this sort of legislation. Moving from 15% of the work force female to 59% female pushes enactments backward in time about as much as early endorsements by women's clubs push enactments forward. Finally, higher per capita state expenditures on public schools (where the children of widows were supposed to go every weekday if their mothers could afford to care for them at home and keep them out of the wage-

TABLE 2

Overall Regression Models Predicting the Timing of Mothers' Pension Enactments

VARIABLE	MODEL 10	MODEL 11	MODEL 12	MODEL 13
Literacy	.013 (.039)	.007 (.031)	—	—
The Delineator	-.000 (.001)	—	—	—
Age of state federation	.006 (.016)	—	—	—
Percent work force female (—)	-.028 (.033)	-.026 (.025)	-.035 (.021)	-.046* (.021)
Party competition (—)	.560 (1.484)	—	—	—
Average reform vote	3.640 (4.251)	3.122 (4.003)	—	—
Density of women's clubs	.046 (.036)	.036 (.030)	.036 (.028)	—
Women's group endorsements	.400** (.121)	.470** (.102)	.497** (.088)	.542** (.086)
State expenditures on public schools	.001* (.000)	.001* (.000)	.001** (.000)	.001** (.000)
Exemptions (—)	-.586 (.394)	-.534 (.366)	-.475 (.351)	—
Model Statistics				
Adj. R ²	.778	.794	.800	.794
SE	.84	.81	.79	.80

Notes: Coefficients are unstandardized. Numbers in parentheses represent standard errors.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

labor force) were also significantly associated with earlier enactments. Moving from the lowest to the highest levels of state expenditures advances enactments of mothers' pensions by about a half a year during the 1910s. The Appendix displays the values for each state of the three independent variables in our final model. These explanatory variables can be juxtaposed to the timing of mothers' pension enactments displayed in Figure 1 (and also given as exact years of enactment in the Appendix).

It is worth commenting on certain variables that were important in the partial regression models of Table 1, but dropped out of the final overall models reported in Table 2. One such variable was LITERACY. More literate states were more likely to enact mothers' pensions sooner. Not surprisingly, the more literate states were usually also the ones that spent generously on public schools. There were also more women's clubs per capita in the more literate states, and clubwomen in those states acted more quickly to promote mothers' pensions. We think that the relative literacy of adults in the various states probably did matter, even apart from public school funding; yet the effects of this variable may well have operated mainly through the existence and activities of local women's clubs.

Our most important electoral political variables,

PARTY COMPETITION and AVERAGE REFORM VOTE, were likewise no longer statistically significant when pitted against the others in the final regression runs. We think this makes sense, too. Partisan electoral politics does not seem to have played a major role in the debates about mothers' pensions in most states. There certainly was a political process involved here, but it was not partisan electoral conflict. It was the rapid communication by the organized "woman movement" of a new ideal of public action to help mothers and children. Large majorities of state legislators enacted these laws in rapid waves across most of the states soon after the major, nation-spanning women's federations took up this cause, engaging in remarkably widespread and simultaneous public education and legislative lobbying about it.

In a few states, women's groups either never took up the cause or took it up slowly; and in some states, the efforts of women's organizations on behalf of mothers' pensions took a relatively long time to bear fruit. Our evidence suggests that the states where women's groups did not take up this cause, took it up late, or made slow headway were largely states where preexisting socioeconomic conditions were not conducive to pulling widows and their children out of the wage-labor force and where governments were fiscally less generous toward public schooling. Many

(though not all) of the states that were slow to enact mothers' pensions were in the South. We checked in two ways to make sure that our final model 13 was not simply an invalid artifact of South-non-South differences among the states. When we reran our final model with a dummy variable for South-non-South, the operative variables remained significant, while the dummy variable was not significant. We also removed the 11 former Confederate states from our sample, and reran our final model for 37 northern states alone. The model remained significant (with a smaller standard error of .73). Two of the independent variables, WOMEN'S GROUP ENDORSEMENTS and STATE EXPENDITURES ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, also remained significant. However, the third independent variable, PERCENT WORKFORCE FEMALE, did *not* prove significant when the final model was run for the northern states alone. This is not surprising, because many of the southern states were among the heaviest employers of female wage-laborers, which probably helps to account for why they were laggards in the enactment of mothers' pensions. In other words, we have found an operative variable that specifies how "southernness" operated in the politics of mothers' pensions.

Women's groups in the southern and nonsouthern states that were slow to enact mothers' pensions may well have been preoccupied with toughening child labor laws and improving the public schools. Mothers' pensions may not have seemed as important or realistic a policy priority for women's groups in such states as they seemed for women's groups in states that already had fewer women and children in the laborforce and strong child labor laws and public schools. In sum, our final model points both to the key political actors—the married women's federations—that worked for mothers' pensions and to the contexts of prior public policies and socioeconomic relations that influenced how hard or how successfully the women's groups pushed for these new laws.

REPRISE: INNOVATION IN STATE POLITICS

We have pointed to 14 predominantly nonurban and nonindustrial states that enacted mothers' pension laws much earlier than Walker's (1969, 1971) "composite innovation score" would have predicted. How well do the key variables in our final multiple regression models account for the unusual innovativeness of these 14 states? The reader who consults the Appendix will see indicated in small capitals the 14 states that enacted mothers' pensions much sooner than Walker would have expected.¹⁰ It also gives the values for these states of all three of our final independent variables.

Virtually all of the states that enacted mothers' pensions unusually early in Walker's terms had relatively few females employed in the wage-labor force.

At the same time, many of these smaller and less urban and industrial states were at or above the national mean in per capita expenditures on their public schools. Most telling is the information about women's politics. Early endorsements by women's associations are the best predictors we have in our overall model about mothers' pension enactments across the 48 states. Congruently, one or more women's groups were active between 1911 and 1915 in 11 out of these 14 unexpectedly innovative states.¹¹

CONCLUSION

"The development of American social welfare policy was heavily influenced by women, who often saw themselves acting on behalf of women"—so argued Virginia Sapiro in a pathbreaking essay, "The Gender Basis of American Social Policy" (1986, 222). The empirical research we have reported here helps to support and refine Sapiro's assertion. Using innovative sources of quantitative data, we have demonstrated that the activities of women's voluntary groups were crucial in promoting mothers' pensions, early state-level statutes in the United States that authorized public welfare spending outside of poorhouses and other custodial institutions. Previous research on state-level legislative innovations has relied almost exclusively on conventional published statistics about industrialization, urbanization, and electoral and partisan factors. We have revealed that taking into account gendered variables (about women's voluntary politics and females in the laborforce) yields a very different—and more convincing—explanation of the pattern of state enactments of mothers' pensions between 1910 and 1935.

Our study also pinpoints exactly *which kinds* of female voluntary associations mattered most in the origins of mothers' pensions. Historians have often described the political activities of highly educated professionals, many of them single women, who were located in midwestern and northeastern urban social settlements and in staff-run, elite advocacy organizations like the National Consumers' League. (For a recent theoretical extrapolation based on the traditional historical wisdom, see Gordon 1992.) Yet our research on mothers' pensions suggests that the women's groups that mattered most in this case were not the professional advocacy groups but, rather, geographically widespread federations of local clubs peopled mostly by married women. The General Federation of Women's Clubs and the National Congress of Mothers were the widespread federations that figured most centrally in our data on voluntary groups. It remains for further research to show whether these same widespread women's federations were equally influential in promoting other legislative reforms of the early twentieth century (such as protective labor legislation for women workers). But we have demonstrated their centrality to the enactment of America's first explicit social welfare program for mothers and children.

The centrality of the General Federation and the National Congress in our data solves one of the key puzzles posed at the start of this article: Why did mothers' pensions spread so quickly across many of the states during the early 1910s, certainly much more quickly than either Walker's (1969, 1971) or Gray's (1973) models of legislative innovation would have led us to expect? As far-flung federations with local organizational roots in both more and less industrial (and more and less urban) parts of the United States, the General Federation and the National Congress could rapidly promote a nearly nationwide debate about the moral desirability of providing public aid to worthy widowed mothers and their children. In the parlance of today's political science, they were powerful "agenda setters" in the social politics of the early twentieth-century United States (Kingdon 1984). Even without the right to vote, American women working through these federations could spread new ideas and legislative proposals quickly. Thus, women's voluntary federations could overcome the inertia otherwise built into a U.S. political system that prior to the New Deal, left most

decisions about social legislation to male officials in 48 state capitals.

Future students of social welfare politics need to realize that political parties, elections, and bureaucratic and legislative maneuverings are not the totality of such politics. Movements and groups that can achieve widespread social communication and can use moral arguments to set agendas of public and legislative debate may matter as much as, or more than, voting and elections. This may be especially true in a polity such as the United States, where bureaucracies and programmatic political parties are comparatively weak and where multiple legislatures may have to be inspired to act.

APPENDIX

Table A-1 (see page 714) gives the values for all states of our three final independent variables and highlights in block capitals the 14 states that enacted mothers' pensions much sooner than would be predicted from Walker 1969 and 1971.

TABLE 1-A**Dependent and Independent Variables for 48 States**

YEAR OF ENACTMENT OF MOTHERS' PENSIONS	ENDORSEMENT BY WOMEN'S GROUP(S) IN STATE?	PER CAPITA EXPENDITURES ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS ^a	PERCENT WORK FORCE FEMALE ^b
1911			
Illinois	[1914-51]	\$21.05	22.7
1913			
CALIFORNIA	1912-13	24.01	22.3
Colorado	1912-13	22.99	21.1
IDAHO	1912-13	21.89	15.0
IOWA	1912-13	19.14	17.9
Massachusetts	1912-13	20.59	35.2
Michigan	1912-13	18.67	19.7
Minnesota	1912-13	20.54	22.8
NEBRASKA	no evidence	21.49	16.9
NEW HAMPSHIRE	1912-13	13.19	30.4
New Jersey	[1914-15]	22.03	27.1
NEVADA	1912-13	21.78	19.0
Ohio	1912-13	19.04	20.8
Oregon	1912-13	19.30	20.1
Pennsylvania	1912-13	17.95	23.8
SOUTH DAKOTA	1912-13	22.30	17.2
UTAH	1912-13	26.45	16.7
Washington	1912-13	26.71	19.7
Wisconsin	1912-13	16.34	21.6
1914			
ARIZONA	no evidence	15.56	20.3
1915			
Kansas	1914-15	17.61	15.0
MONTANA	1914-15	19.66	19.3
New York	1912-13	21.00	29.9
North Dakota	no evidence	27.73	18.7
OKLAHOMA	1914-15	7.11	17.0
TENNESSEE	1912-13	5.56	25.3
WEST VIRGINIA	1914-15	12.54	15.1
WYOMING	1914-15	14.73	17.1
1916			
Maryland	1916-17	10.33	28.8
1917			
Arkansas	no evidence	7.06	35.4
Delaware	1914-15	9.55	25.8
Maine	1916-17	13.35	23.8
Missouri	1914-15	14.26	19.3
Texas	1914-15	9.43	28.8
Vermont	1916-17	15.18	22.4
1918			
Virginia	no evidence	7.61	26.1
1919			
Connecticut	1918-19	16.09	30.2
Florida	1916-17	8.13	32.3
Indiana	1918-19	17.63	16.9
1920			
Louisiana	no evidence	7.78	35.3
1923			
North Carolina	no evidence	4.85	41.0
Rhode Island	no evidence	16.94	36.0
1928			
Kentucky	no evidence	7.56	20.4
Mississippi	1918-19	5.32	57.1
1931			
Alabama	no evidence	4.17	48.8
New Mexico	no evidence	5.90	16.3
Without laws in 1935			
Georgia	no evidence	5.48	44.7
South Carolina	no evidence	4.49	59.4

Note: Brackets indicate that the known endorsements by women's groups came after initial mothers' pension legislation was passed. For further information on the women's group endorsements, see Skocpol 1992, table 9 and app. 2.

^aRange = \$4.17-\$27.73, mean = \$15.17

^bRange = 15%-59.4%, mean = 25.8%.

Notes

We were generously helped by others in the process of producing this article. John Sutton (1988) shared data sets from his earlier research. Many people commented on earlier drafts, helping us to improve our analysis and arguments. For such assistance we are grateful to the members of the Workshop on American Political Development of the Center for American Political Studies at Harvard University and to Edwin Amenta, Morris Fiorina, Virginia Gray, Gary King, Eileen McDonagh, Ann Shola Orloff, William Parish, Kay Schlozman, Richard Sobel, Rick Valelly, and Sidney Verba.

1. To make certain that our final results were not distorted by the use of the ordinal dependent variable, we retested model 13 reported in Table 2 below, substituting a continuous dependent variable (the number of years before 1935 that each state enacted mothers' pensions). Reassuringly, the final model remained statistically significant, with all three independent variables significant and behaving the same way. The model using the continuous dependent variable did, however, have a standard error of 3.48, more than four times larger than the standard error of model 13.

2. Since the early studies, political scientists have refined their claims, arguing, for instance, that socioeconomic variables may be more important for distributive policies like education and less important for redistributive measures like Aid to Families with Dependent Children (Cnudde and McCrone 1969; Fry and Winters 1973; Sharkansky and Hofferbert 1969). More recently, scholars have argued that economic and political explanations necessarily complement one another. While one can find evidence of this synthesis in Lockard (1959), it did not take hold in the literature until the late 1970s (Jennings 1979; Peterson and Rom 1989; Plotnick and Winters 1985; Tomkins 1975). Although few scholars now make sweeping claims about the ability of industrialization to explain state-level variations, economic variables continue to play a major role in their models.

3. The 1910 U.S. Census did not total agricultural production by state, because of the difficulty of estimating the value of crops that farmers fed to their livestock. Thus, an approach to calculating state wealth that adds together the values of industrial and mining production with the values of individual agricultural products (e.g., milk, cotton, livestock, grains, orchard fruit) inevitably double-counts some agricultural production.

4. We computed an average PARTY COMPETITION score for each state based on the extent of competition in 1910, 1912, 1914, and 1916. For each year, the score represents an average of three numbers: the percentage of seats in the state house of representatives controlled by the major party, the percentage of seats in the state senate controlled by the major party, and the percentage of the gubernatorial vote won by the governor's party. The higher the average of these ratios, the less party competition. A score of 1.00 indicates complete dominance of electoral politics by one party. Thus, a negative slope for the regression coefficient indicates a positive correlation between party competition and the timing of enactment. Our methodology assumes that a two-party system in which one party wins 60% of the seats/votes and the other party wins 40% is as competitive as a three-party state in which one party wins 60% and the other two parties win 20% each.

5. Gray argues specifically that Progressive party strength was a good predictor of early mothers' pension enactments (1973, 1183). We tested variables referring to Progressive and/or Socialist party strength in 1912 and found that they were much weaker predictors than our overall measure of "average reform vote."

6. We also tested variables referring to each electoral reform individually.

7. The reader may wonder whether women's clubs sometimes claimed to have endorsed mothers' pension laws after they were enacted—in effect, "jumping on the bandwagon" after the fact. Available sources of data do not allow us to rule out this possibility in every single case, but we can say that

women's groups usually claimed to have endorsed mothers' pensions and started lobbying for them well before state legislatures passed these laws.

8. The variables set aside on account of high intercorrelations with other variables were: LITERACY; URBANIZATION; PERCENT CHILD LABORERS; AVERAGE DEMOCRATIC PARTY STRENGTH; ELECTORAL REFORMS; STATE GOVERNMENT REVENUES; and AGE LIMIT for child labor in manufacturing.

9. Innovation scores were computed for states enacting mothers' pension laws following Walker's (1971) normal procedure. Then, differences from his composite scores for each state were calculated. The 14 states listed in the Introduction were the only ones that were .4 or more points different from Walker's average scores (which range from 0 to 1). The states were listed in order (starting with Nevada), according to how much earlier they enacted mothers' pensions than Walker would have expected. There were no states that were extreme laggards in Walker's terms—not surprising, given that mothers' pensions spread across the states much more quickly than most of the laws Walker studied.

10. The three unusually innovative states where women's groups did not endorse mothers' pensions prior to their enactment are worth brief comment. Arizona enacted its 1914 mothers' pension law by popular referendum, and we have found no evidence of endorsements by women's groups. In Illinois, women's groups definitely endorsed mothers' pensions at least by the mid-1910s and then worked steadily for improvements in these laws. But the original 1911 law—the first in the nation, along with a county-level measure in Missouri—was enacted by the state legislature at the urging of a Chicago juvenile court judge. The third odd state is Nebraska. We have searched available records as thoroughly as we can from a distance but have found no evidence of women's group endorsements of mothers' pensions. Yet local women's clubs were unusually dense in this state. It may be that some were active on behalf of the mothers' pension law that passed in 1913, but we have not found the evidence.

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