

Title: Becoming Political: How Marching Suffragists Facilitated Women's Electoral Participation in England

Abstract: Can women's political activism spur women's electoral participation? Previous research identifies that women politicians facilitate other women's political participation. Through the study of the British suffragists, we argue that women activists paved the way for other women's political participation at the time when women politicians were virtually absent. Constructing a novel micro-level dataset of geocoded data from electoral registers, we leverage a unique historical case of the 1913 Women's Suffrage Pilgrimage. Using a Differences-in-Differences strategy that compares polling divisions based on the proximity to the Pilgrimage across England, we provide evidence that exposure to the suffragists marching for parliamentary suffrage increased registration of women eligible to vote in local elections. Analyzing contemporary news articles, we then document the pathways through which the suffragists incited other women's political interest and therefore electoral participation. These findings have implications for the realization of substantive representation after suffrage.