DRAFT: COMMENTS WELCOME

Voter Resentment and the Strategic Dynamics of Enfranchisement

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Abstract

Why do parties resist enfranchising new voter groups? Parties that obstruct enfranchisement often accumulate negative sentiment among the affected group, and this resentment manifests as an electoral penalty for the obstructing party if enfranchisement eventually occurs. We formalize the concept of voter resentment, and we develop a dynamic formal model to analyze when and why parties resist enfranchising new voter groups. We show that resisting enfranchisement can offer short-term protection against electoral loss, but it risks the party's long-run electoral viability. Three key findings inform how parties navigate this dilemma. (1) Increased voter sensitivity to past disenfranchisement generally incentivizes incumbent parties to enfranchise sooner. However, (2) this effect is moderated by the party's existing partisan advantage. Parties with a strong initial partisan base may become less likely to enfranchise as voter sensitivity to past obstruction rises, opting to rely on their core supporters rather than appeal to a resentful new group. (3) The precision of information regarding the new group's latent support also interacts with partisan strength; higher precision can encourage enfranchisement for electorally strong parties but deter it for weaker ones. The results offer implications for voting rights activists, whose pro-democracy movements may increase voters' sensitivity to disenfranchisement.

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1 Introduction

Why do parties in power resist enfranchising new groups of voters, even when the tide of history seems to favor broader suffrage? The decision to extend the franchise is one of the most fundamental choices a political system can make, yet it is often fraught with strategic uncertainty. For the incumbent party, enfranchisement presents a dilemma: it can be a tool to court a new electoral bloc, but it can also unleash a wave of opposition that threatens the party's very survival.

The scholarly literature has largely converged on two dominant explanations for this choice, as summarized by Przeworski (2009). The most prominent view frames enfranchisement as a strategic concession by elites to forestall social unrest. In this telling, "extensions of rights are a response of the incumbent holders of rights to revolutionary threats by the excluded" (Przeworski, 2009; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000). Elites concede the right to vote only when they fear that the disenfranchised may otherwise seize power by force. An alternative perspective argues that elites may extend suffrage voluntarily for their own strategic benefit. This can occur when a majority of the elite seeks to shift political competition away from inefficient private transfers toward the provision of public goods (Lizzeri and Persico, 2004), or as part of a state-building project to encourage military conscription, an idea with intellectual roots stretching from Machiavelli to modern analyses (Ticchi and Vindigni, 2008).

These frameworks, while powerful, tend to abstract away from the partisan competition that often precedes and shapes decisions about enfranchisement. In many historical settings, the franchise is not expanded by a monolithic elite, but by a specific political party, which may leverage the opportunity to gain an electoral advantage over its rivals. In the United States alone, the enfranchisement of poor White men, recent immigrants, and Black Americans were all fiercely contested questions, with political parties staking out clear, and often opposing, positions. Similarly, in almost all European countries, the enfranchisement of women in Europe was subject to partisan debate and campaigning (Przeworski, 2009).

This paper formalizes a crucial dynamic created by these partisan calculations: the path-dependent nature of voter allegiance rooted in voter resentment. We argue that a party's stance on enfranchisement is not forgotten once the ballot is granted. Newly enfranchised voters may remember which party championed their inclusion and which one stood in the way. This memory can translate into lasting electoral penalties. The success of a party, then, depends not only on whether a group is enfranchised but also on who enfranchised them and who resisted.

We develop a dynamic model to analyze how the strategic anticipation of voter resentment shapes a party's decision to extend the franchise. In our model, a party that obstructs enfranchisement accumulates negative sentiment among the excluded group. This resentment manifests as an electoral liability for the obstructing party if and when that group finally gains the right to vote. Blocking enfranchisement can offer a party short-term protection from an uncertain electorate, but it does so at the risk of poisoning a future well of potential supporters, jeopardizing its long-run viability.

Our analysis produces three key findings. First, as a new voter group becomes more sensitive to its past exclusion — a dynamic that may emerge from, among other things, social movements or activist campaigns — incumbent parties are generally more incentivized to enfranchise them sooner to avoid future electoral punishment. Second, this effect is powerfully moderated by the party's existing electoral strength. A party with a strong, loyal base of core voters may react to increased sensitivity in the opposite way, opting to forgo the resentful new group and entrench its position by relying solely on its traditional supporters. Third, the precision of information about the new group's latent preferences interacts with partisan strength; better information can encourage a strong party to enfranchise while deterring a weak one.

These results carry important implications for both political practice and democratic theory. For activists, they suggest that while raising the salience of disenfranchisement can pressure competitive parties toward reform, it may backfire with electorally secure incumbents. Theoretically, our model's central mechanism — voter resentment — introduces a novel dynamic of path-dependent voter allegiance into the study of franchise extension. By focusing on how a party's historical stance on suffrage endogenously shapes the future electorate, our approach moves beyond existing frameworks centered on revolutionary threats or intra-elite debates over public goods. To situate our contribution, we now turn to the literature from which our model builds and departs.

2 Related Literature

Our model contributes to a rich literature in political economy that seeks to explain the strategic logic of franchise extension. This scholarship has largely revolved around two mechanisms: conflict between social classes and competition within the ruling elite.

The canonical literature on franchise extension, most notably the work of **?**, frames the decision as a choice by a unified elite facing a disenfranchised mass. In their seminal model, elites extend the right to vote as a credible commitment to future redistribution, thereby staving off the threat of revolution. While this framework provides a powerful explanation for major democratic transitions, its focus on class conflict between a unified elite and the masses abstracts from the role of competition between political parties, which often serves as the proximate driver of institutional change.

A second major strand of literature shifts the focus from elite-mass conflict to competition within the enfranchised elite. In this vein, Lizzeri and Persico (2004) offer a compelling rationale for voluntary enfranchisement in the absence of a revolutionary threat. They argue that a narrow franchise incentivizes politicians to compete via inefficient, particularistic transfers (pork-barrel politics) that benefit only a small, pivotal segment of the elite. Expanding the franchise makes such targeted spending prohibitively expensive, forcing a shift in political competition toward the provision of public goods with diffuse benefits (such as public health infrastructure in 19th-century Britain). Consequently, a majority of the elite - specifically those not benefiting from the status quo of patronage - may rationally support franchise extension to secure more efficient and public-oriented governance.

More recent work has developed general frameworks for analyzing dynamic institutional change under uncertainty. Acemoglu, Egorov and Sonin (2013) model dynamic political transitions where the key strategic consideration is the risk of stochastic shocks shifting power to radical groups. In their framework, moderate elites might engage in preemptive actions, such as repressing other groups, to alter the political landscape and mitigate the probability of a future takeover by extremists. This focus on preemptive strategy driven by the anticipation of future political dynamics is conceptually related to our work. However, the source of the future risk and the strategic response differ fundamentally. In Acemoglu, Egorov and Sonin (2013), the risk is an exogenous shock that might empower radicals, and the strategic choice is often repression. In our model, the risk is the *endogenous* creation of voter resentment, and the strategic choice is enfranchisement itself.

Our model synthesizes these insights while introducing a novel mechanism that centers on the electoral consequences of the enfranchisement process itself. By formalizing voter resentment, we focus on how the act of enfranchisement reshapes the electoral landscape by creating path-dependent voter allegiances. Parties that obstruct suffrage accumulate a lasting electoral penalty with the very group they seek to exclude, fundamentally altering their future viability. This focus on the dynamic evolution of voter preferences as a direct function of past party strategy allows us to derive a new set of results concerning how partisan strength and informational precision mediate the strategic calculus of enfranchisement.

3 Historical motivation

The Russian Empire's brief experiment with parliamentary politics offers an example of how revoking enfranchisement can lead to catastrophic failure. After the 1905 Revolution, a cornered Tsar Nicholas II granted a legislative body, the State Duma, with a broad franchise. The first two Dumas, dominated by deputies representing newly enfranchised peasants and workers, proved too radical for the regime. In response, the "Coup of June 1907" saw the government unilaterally rewrite electoral laws, disenfranchising a huge portion of the electorate to engineer a compliant, conservative legislature. This act provided the short-term electoral insulation. However, by revoking a political voice, the regime foreclosed the path to evolutionary reform and created profound, lasting resentment. This resentment radicalized the opposition, channeling popular grievance away from the ballot box and toward revolutionary movements. When the state was weakened by World War I, the very groups disenfranchised in 1907 provided the revolutionary force that destroyed the monarchy.

Following the 1928 assassination of Croatian Peasant Party leader Stjepan Radić on the floor of the parliament, King Alexander I used the ensuing political crisis as a pretext for a royal coup. On January 6th, 1929, he abrogated the constitution, dismissed the elected parliament, and established a personal dictatorship, effectively disenfranchising the entire electorate. This was a strategic move to suppress the Croatian national movement, which had used its electoral strength to advocate for a federalized state against the Serbian-dominated centralist government. King Alexander banned all regional and ethnic-based political parties and redrew internal borders to break up historical territories, all in an attempt to forcibly create a single Yugoslav identity. However, far from unifying the country, the dictatorship created deep and lasting resentment, particularly among Croats, who viewed it as a violent imposition of "Great Serbian" hegemony.

4 The Model with Perfect Precision

We analyze a two-period game, $t \in \{1, 2\}$, between two political parties, A and B. In each period t, one party $I_t \in \{A, B\}$ is the incumbent, controlling the decision on enfranchisement of a specific group of voters. Without loss of generality, assume Party A is the incumbent in the first period.

The electorate consists of two groups: core voters, constituting a measure $1 - \lambda$ of the total, and potential voters, constituting a measure λ, where $\lambda \in [0, 1]$. The allegiance of core voters is fixed: a share γ supports Party A, and the complementary share $1 - \gamma$ supports Party B. The parameter γ thus quantifies Party A's baseline partisan strength among core voters.

In contrast, potential voters, if enfranchised, cast their vote based on a latent signal $\theta_t \in [0, 1]$, drawn i.i.d. from a uniform distribution $U[0, 1]$ in each period t. A higher θ_t indicates stronger support for Party A among potential voters. Both parties observe θ_t at the start of period t.

The state variable $E_t \in \{0, 1\}$ tracks the enfranchisement of potential voters, where $E_t = 1$ if they have been enfranchised in any period $k < t$, and $E_t = 0$ otherwise. At the beginning of the game, potential voters are disenfranchised ($E_1 = 0$). If potential voters are not yet enfranchised at the start of period t ($E_t = 0$), the incumbent party I_t decides whether or not to enfranchise them, $e_t \in \{0, 1\}$, where $e_t = 1$ represents enfranchisement and $e_t = 0$ represents non-enfranchisement. Once enfranchised, voters λ remain enfranchised in all subsequent periods. Formally, $E_{t+1} = \max(E_t, e_t)$ for $t = 0$, with $E_0 = 0$. If all voters are enfranchised in time t ($E_t = 1$), the game ends.

A core feature of our model is the development of resentment among potential voters toward parties that have historically chosen to block their enfranchisement. We model this resentment as a state variable, r_t^i, that evolves as a function of parties' enfranchisement actions. Let n_t^i denote the cumulative number of periods up to the start of period t in which the incumbent party $i \in \{A, B\}$, $I_t = i$ does not enfranchise the potential voters ($E_t = 0$ and $e_t = 0$). That is, for $i \in \{A, B\}$,

$$n_t^i = \sum_{k=1}^{t-1} \mathbb{I}_{I_k = i \wedge E_k = 0 \wedge e_k = 0}$$

with $n_1^A = n_1^B = 0$. The resentment of potential voters toward party i at the start of period t, denoted r_t^i, is the share of all historical disenfranchisement actions by party i:

$$r_t^A := \begin{cases} \frac{n_t^A}{n_t^A + n_t^B} & \text{if } n_t^A + n_t^B > 0 \\ 0 & \text{if } n_t^A + n_t^B = 0 \end{cases}$$

$$r_t^B := \begin{cases} \frac{n_t^B}{n_t^A + n_t^B} & \text{if } n_t^A + n_t^B > 0 \\ 0 & \text{if } n_t^A + n_t^B = 0 \end{cases}$$

According to this definition, potential voters do not have resentment toward either party at the beginning of the game, i.e., when $n_t^A + n_t^B = 0$. If one or both parties have disenfranchised in the past, then $n_t^A + n_t^B > 0$ and $r_t^A + r_t^B = 1$, and potential voters' resentment toward party i is equal to party i's share of the total disenfranchisement history. Note that if only one party i has disenfranchised in the past, then $r_t^i = 1$ and $r_t^{\neg i} = 0$.

4.1 Voting and Election Outcome

At the end of each period t, an election is held. The voting behavior of core voters is exogenously fixed. Potential voters participate if and only if they are enfranchised (i.e., $e_t = 1$ or $E_t = 1$). Should the potential voters be enfranchised, the share of them supporting Party A, denoted $s_t^A \in [0, 1]$, is a convex combination of their intrinsic preference and resentment-adjusted preference. This support s_t^A is a function of three factors: the realization of a latent signal $\theta_t \sim U[0, 1]$, current resentment levels r_t^A and r_t^B towards Party A and Party B respectively, and a parameter $\alpha \in [0, 1]$ capturing the sensitivity of potential voters to past disenfranchisement actions. The parameter α quantifies the weight potential voters assign to historical disenfranchisement conduct, relative to their current intrinsic preference θ_t. If $\alpha = 0$, past conduct is irrelevant, and $s_t^A = \theta_t$. As α increases, voters place greater weight on the resentment component. A higher accumulated resentment r_t^A, ceteris paribus, reduces the share of potential voters supporting Party A.

The share of enfranchised potential voters supporting Party A, s_t^A, is given by

$$s_t^A = (1 - \alpha) \cdot \theta_t + \alpha \cdot (\theta_t \cdot (1 - r_t^A) + (1 - \theta_t) \cdot r_t^B).$$

Analogously, s_t^B, is

$$s_t^B = (1 - \alpha) \cdot (1 - \theta_t) + \alpha \cdot (\theta_t \cdot r_t^A + (1 - \theta_t) \cdot (1 - r_t^B)).$$

It follows that $s_t^A + s_t^B = 1$. The entirety of the enfranchised potential voter group is allocated between the two parties. Given Party A is the incumbent in the first period, $r_2^A = 0$ if A enfranchises potential voters, and $r_2^A = 1$ if it does not. In the latter case, potential voters' support for party A is $s_2^A = (1 - \alpha) \cdot \theta_t$ and $s_2^B = 1 - (1 - \alpha) \cdot \theta_t$.

The total vote for Party A is $V_t^A = \gamma \cdot (1 - \lambda) + \max\{e_t, E_t\} \cdot \lambda \cdot s_t^A$, and for Party B is $V_t^B = (1 - \gamma) \cdot (1 - \lambda) + \max\{e_t, E_t\} \cdot \lambda \cdot s_t^B$. Party A wins the election with probability $p(V_t^A, V_t^B) = V_t^A / (V_t^A + V_t^B)$. Party B wins with probability $1 - p(V_t^A, V_t^B)$. The winner of the election in period t becomes the incumbent I_{t+1} for the next period (or determines the terminal payoff if $t = 2$).

4.2 Payoffs and Timing

Each party seeks to maximize the expected discounted probability of holding office. Winning the election yields a flow utility $R > 0$. The future is discounted by $\delta \in (0, 1)$. The total utility for party i is:

$$u_i = \sum_{t=1}^{2} \delta^{t-1} \cdot R \cdot \mathbb{I}_{I_{t+1}=i}$$

where the incumbent is determined by the outcome of the election in period t.

The timing within period t:

1. State (I_t, E_t, n_t^A, n_t^B) is known. θ_t is drawn and observed.

2. Incumbent I_t chooses $e_t \in \{0, 1\}$. If $E_t = 1$, $e_t = 1$.

3. Election is held; election winner determines I_{t+1}.

4. State variables $E_{t+1}, n^A_{t+1}, n^B_{t+1}$ are updated.

5. Payoffs for period t are realized. If $E_{t+1} = 1$, the game ends.

5 Equilibrium Characterization

The model admits a unique Perfect Bayesian Nash Equilibrium. A central feature of this equilibrium is the non-monotonic effect of increased voter resentment sensitivity, α, on the incumbent Party A's first-period enfranchisement decision ($e_1 = 1$). This effect is contingent upon Party A's initial partisan advantage among core voters, γ.

Proposition 1. *In the unique equilibrium, there exists a threshold $\gamma^*(\alpha) \in (0, 1)$ such that:*

(i) For $\gamma \leq \gamma^*(\alpha)$ (weak partisan advantage), the probability of first-period enfranchisement is increasing in resentment sensitivity α;

(ii) For $\gamma > \gamma^*(\alpha)$ (strong partisan advantage), the probability of first-period enfranchisement is decreasing in α.

Proof. See Appendix. □

The intuition underlying Proposition 1 rests on two countervailing effects of α on Party A's intertemporal optimization problem. Consider Party A's choice of first-period enfranchisement, $e_1 \in \{0, 1\}$, when it holds office in Period 1. A decision to disenfranchise in Period 1 ($e_1 = 0$) generates resentment toward Party A in Period 2 ($r^A_2 = 1$). Then, should potential voters be enfranchised in Period 2 (irrespective of the party in office), higher sensitivity α exacerbates the electoral penalty Party A incurs from resentment. This creates an incentive for Party A to enfranchise preemptively in Period 1 ($e_1 = 1$) in order to neutralize the future cost of resentment. We refer to this mechanism as the *preemption effect* of resentment sensitivity.

A countervailing dynamic, which we term the *entrenchment effect*, opposes this *preemption motive*. An increase in α magnifies the electoral penalty Party A would suffer for enfranchising a resentful group in Period 2. Thus, a α increases, the act of future enfranchisement can become so electorally damaging that it is no longer a viable option. The incumbent in Period 1 can therefore anticipate that if it disenfranchises now ($e_1 = 0$), its optimal continuation path will be to maintain that exclusion ($e_2 = 0$). The incentive to block suffrage today is thus reinforced by the knowledge that this choice commits the party to a predictable and optimal path of future exclusion.

The relative strength of Party A's core support, captured by γ, determines which effect dominates. When $\gamma \leq \gamma^*(\alpha)$, Party A cannot confidently rely on its core voters to deliver electoral success. In this case, the preemption effect prevails: securing future support from potential voters is critical, and the party seeks to avoid the electoral penalty associated with their resentment. As a result, increases in α strengthen the incentive to enfranchise in Period 1.

Conversely, for a party with a strong partisan base ($\gamma > \gamma^*(\alpha)$), an increase in α reinforces the incentive to disenfranchise. With such a strong base, Party A has a high probability of winning the Period 1 election irrespective of its enfranchisement choice. Therefore, the party's decision is primarily driven by its optimal strategy in the Period 2 continuation game. Increases in sensitivity α increase the electoral consequences of the initial disenfranchisement ($e_1 = 0$), and enfranchising them in Period 2 would be electorally ineffective due to high resentment. This removes uncertainty about the optimal future path: entrenchment ($e_2 = 0$) becomes the dominant strategy. The ex ante knowledge of this deterministic continuation play makes the initial act of disenfranchisement less costly in expectation, causing the entrenchment effect to outweigh the preemption motive.

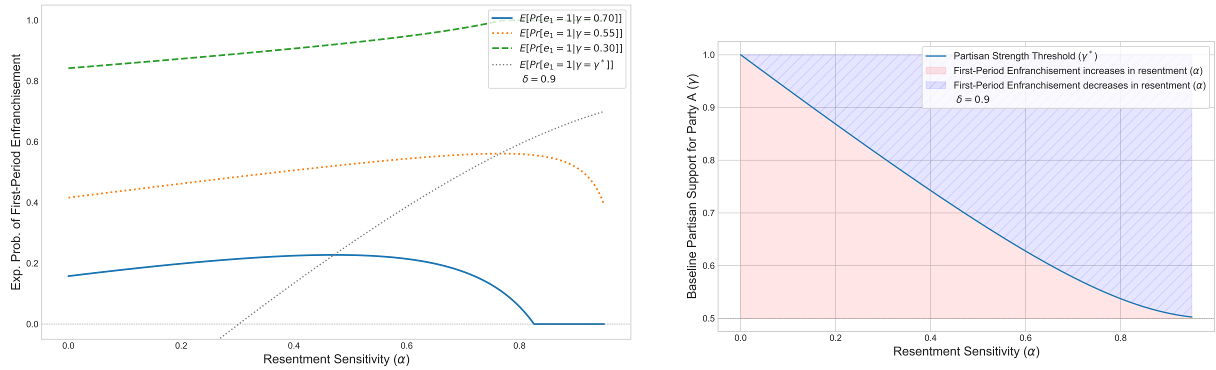
Figure 1a depicts expected probability of voters to be enfranchised ($E[Pr[e_1 = 1]]$) in the first period as a function of resentment sensitivity (α) for different values of γ. The first period incumbent Party A enfranchises potential voters that it observes signal θ exceeding this threshold. Consequently, when this threshold decreases in α probability of first-period enfranchisement increases. When this threshold increases, first-period enfranchisement increases.

Building on Proposition 1, Proposition 2 characterizes how the critical partisan strength threshold $\gamma^*(\alpha)$ varies with resentment sensitivity α. Recall that $\gamma^*(\alpha)$ characterizes the boundary between the parameter regions where the preemption effect dominates (Party A enfranchises more as α increases) and where the entrenchment effect dominates (Party A enfranchises less as α increases).

Proposition 2. *The partisan advantage threshold $\gamma^*(\alpha)$ is non-increasing in the resentment sensitivity parameter α over the interval $\alpha \in [0, 1]$. That is, $\frac{d\gamma^*(\alpha)}{d\alpha} \leq 0$.*

Proposition 2 establishes that as potential voters become more sensitive to disenfranchisement (higher α), the range of parties for whom the entrenchment effect dominates expands. This result may seem paradoxical, as one might expect a higher penalty for resentment to universally encourage preemption. The intuition, however, lies in how an increase in α disproportionately improves the strategic value of the entrenchment path. A higher α does not merely increase the electoral cost of enfranchising a resentful group; it can render that action so electorally damaging that it is eliminated as a viable option in the Period 2 subgame. This removes strategic ambiguity, cementing partisan entrenchment as the unique optimal continuation play following an initial disenfranchisement.

The downward slope of the threshold $\gamma^*(\alpha)$ is a direct consequence of this dynamic. A party at the threshold $\gamma^*(\alpha)$ is indifferent between the preemption and entrenchment paths. When an increase in α makes the entrenchment path more certain, this indifference is broken; a party at the previous threshold now strictly prefers entrenchment. In essence, as the long-term penalty for historical grievances grows, the political logic of writing off a group of voters entirely and consolidating power around one's base becomes strategically coherent for a wider, and weaker, set of political parties. Figure 1b depicts the threshold $\gamma^*(\alpha)$ as a function of α.



(a) Figure 1

(b) Figure 2

Figure 1: Figure 1a shows the resulting equilibrium probability of first-period enfranchisement, which is determined by the incumbent's position relative to this strategic threshold. Figure 1b maps the threshold (γ^*) between the preemption-dominant (red) and entrenchment-dominant (blue) strategies.

6 Uncertainty

The preceding analysis characterized the equilibrium under the assumption that parties possess perfect information about the latent partisan alignment, θ_t, of potential voters. While this allows us to isolate the core strategic incentives, political actors in reality operate under significant uncertainty, forming beliefs from imperfect signals like polling data. To explore the implications of such informational frictions, we now relax the perfect information assumption.

Specifically, assume that parties do not observe θ_t directly and instead share a common public signal η_t, which can be interpreted as the number of supporters for Party A in a survey of N potential voters. This signal is drawn from a binomial distribution $\eta_t \sim \text{Binomial}(N, \theta_t)$. Given a uniform prior for θ_t, the shared posterior belief after observing η_t is given by a Beta distribution

$$\theta_t|\eta_t \sim Beta(\eta_t + 1, N - \eta_t + 1). \tag{1}$$

This framework nests the complete-information model as a limit case: as the signal's precision increases (as N approaches infinity), the sample mean $\hat{\theta}_t := \eta_t/N$ converges to the true value θ_t.

We now show that the core strategic trade-off from our baseline model is robust to this informational friction, although its nature is now mediated by the quality of information.

Proposition 3. *In the unique equilibrium with imperfect information, there exists a threshold $\gamma^*(\alpha, N) \in (0, 1)$, such that:*

(i) For $\gamma \leq \gamma^*(\alpha, N)$ (weak partisan advantage), the probability of first-period enfranchisement is increasing in resentment sensitivity α;

(ii) For $\gamma > \gamma^*(\alpha, N)$ (strong partisan advantage), the probability of first-period enfranchisement is decreases in resentment sensitivity α.

Proof. See Appendix. □

Proposition 3 establishes that the qualitative structure of the equilibrium is robust to the introduction of informational frictions. The choice between preempting future resentment and committing to a path of partisan entrenchment persists under uncertainty. The non-monotonic relationship between enfranchisement probability and resentment sensitivity (α) remains, as illustrated in Figure 2a[1]. The key difference is that the partisan threshold, $\gamma^*(\alpha, N)$, now endogenously depends on the quality of information available to the parties. The following proposition characterizes this dependence.

Proposition 4. *There exists a threshold $\gamma^{**}(\alpha, N) \in (0, 1)$ such that the probability Party A enfranchises in Period 1*

1. *decreases in signal precision N if $\gamma < \gamma^{**}(\alpha, N)$;*

2. *increases in signal precision N if $\gamma > \gamma^{**}(\alpha, N)$.*

Signal precision (N) affects the incumbent's (Party A's) Period 1 enfranchisement decision through two opposing channels. First, there is an *immediate information effect.* Higher signal precision makes the current signal η_1 a more reliable estimate of the of the potential voters' true alignment (θ_1). It diminishes the risk of either enfranchising a group that is unexpectedly hostile or, conversely, failing to enfranchise a supportive one. By making the outcome of the enfranchisement less uncertain, higher precision increases the expected value of acting on a favorable signal, thereby creating an incentive for immediate enfranchisement (lowering θ_1^*). Second, there is a *continuation information effect.* Higher precision also implies that the signal in Period 2, η_2, will also become more accurate. This increases the expected utility of the entire continuation game that follows the choice $e_1 = 0$. Consequently, the strategic path of delaying the decision becomes more attractive, creating an incentive to choose $e_1 = 0$ in Period 1 and thus discouraging immediate enfranchisement.

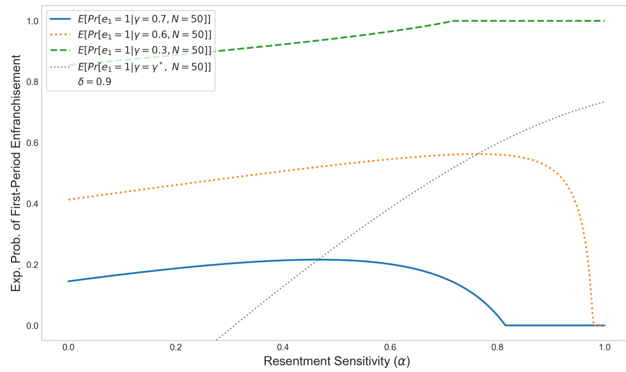
Again, the net effect depends on the incumbent's baseline partisan advantage (γ). When partisan support is low ($\gamma < \gamma^{**}$), Party A's electoral prospects are more uncertain, encouraging it to rely on potential voters. The value of making an optimal decision in the future becomes more significant. Higher precision N increases the value of the option to make an informed decision in Period 2 (based on η_2) after choosing $e_1 = 0$ (Channel 2 dominates). This makes preserving the option ($e_1 = 0$) more appealing, thus higher precision leads to less enfranchisement.

When partisan advantage is, instead, sufficiently high ($\gamma > \gamma^{**}$), Party A is likely to win the Period 1 election even without enfranchising. The decision to enfranchise ($e_1 = 1$) is primarily driven by the prospect of further increasing the win probability if θ_1 is indeed high. Higher precision N makes Party A more confident in acting on a high signal η_1, reducing the perceived risk of the $e_1 = 1$ choice (Channel 1 dominates). Thus, higher precision leads to more enfranchisement.

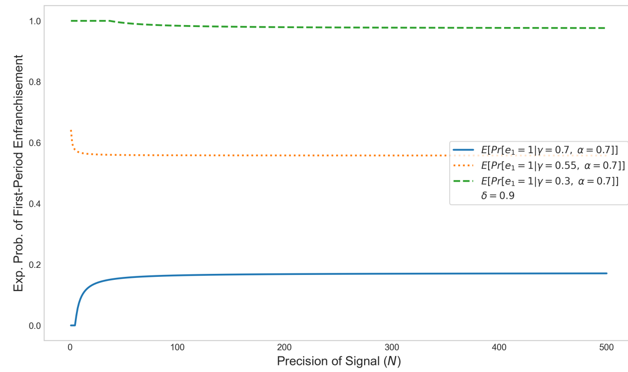
We must, therefore, anticipate parties with low partisan base to react on changes to information precision in a way opposite to those with higher partisan base. Figure 2b

[1] Figure 2a shows the probability of enfranchisement versus α for different values of γ, analogous to Figure **??** but for the model with uncertainty.

illustrates this key result, plotting the probability of enfranchisement as a function of signal precision (N) for parties with different levels of partisan advantage (γ).



(a) Figure 7



(b) Figure 8

Figure 2: Figure 2a depicts expected probability of the first-period enfranchisement ($Pr[e_1 = 1]$) as a function of the resentment sensitivity α for different values of γ. Figure 2b depicts the same probability ($Pr[e_1 = 1]$) as a function of the information precision (N) for different values of γ.

7 Discussion

This paper argues that voter resentment is a crucial, endogenous feature of the politics of enfranchisement. We developed a formal model showing that a party's decision to extend suffrage depends fundamentally on the dynamic tension between two forces: the incentive to preempt future electoral punishment and the incentive to entrench its power by relying on a loyal base. Our central theoretical contribution is to show that a party's existing partisan strength determines which of these incentives dominates. For electorally vulnerable parties, the threat of creating a resentful voting bloc encourages enfranchisement. For dominant parties, the same threat can rationalize a strategy of permanent exclusion.

The model's logic offers a new perspective on the political calculations of Southern Democrats during the U.S. Civil Rights era. For decades, the Democratic party in the South maintained a one-party state built on the mass disenfranchisement of African Americans. In the context of our model, these political actors represent incumbents with exceptionally high partisan advantage (γ). The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, through protests, voter registration drives, and by capturing national attention, dramatically raised the salience of this exclusion. This corresponds to a sharp increase in the resentment sensitivity (α) of the disenfranchised group.

Our model predicts that for an actor with such a high γ, an increase in α makes enfranchisement less likely. This provides a theoretical basis for the strategy of *massive resistance* adopted by many Southern Democrats. Faced with a disenfranchised group that was now highly activated and justifiably resentful, these politicians calculated that the electoral costs of enfranchisement outweighed any potential benefits. The model suggests their strategy was not simply an ideological reaction, but a coherent, if ultimately doomed, electoral choice. Rather than attempting to appeal to a new and hostile electorate, they chose to entrench their position by doubling down on their existing base of white voters, for whom opposition to enfranchisement was a powerful mobilizing issue.

Further, our extension with imperfect information speaks to the conditions under which this entrenchment strategy might fail. The model shows that for dominant parties, greater informational precision about the preferences of a new group can encourage enfranchisement. The passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the subsequent registration of hundreds of thousands of Black voters effectively resolved this uncertainty. It created a new political reality where the electoral power of this bloc could no longer be ignored, forcing even the most resistant political actors to adapt or face eventual defeat.

The implications of this theory extend beyond this historical case. It suggests a paradoxical challenge for modern voting rights movements. While activism that highlights the injustice of disenfranchisement can successfully pressure parties in competitive environments, it may cause dominant parties to become even more resistant to reform. When an incumbent party is secure in its electoral coalition, creating a resentful group of non-voters may be a more attractive strategy than creating a resentful group of new opponents. This highlights the critical importance of partisan competition as a precondition for the expansion of democratic rights.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Analysis of the Baseline Model

We solve the game by backward induction.

Period 2 (Terminal Period)

At the start of period 2, the state is $(I_2, \theta_2, E_2, n_2^A, n_2^B)$. Resentment (r_2^A, r_2^B) is determined by the outcome of period 1.

Case 1: Enfranchisement already happened ($E_2 = 1$) If $E_2 = 1$, potential voters were enfranchised in period 1 ($e_1 = 1$). This implies $n_2^A = n_2^B = 0$, so $r_2^A = 0$ and $r_2^B = 0$. Potential voters participate in the election. The vote shares of potential voters are $s_2^A = (1-\alpha)\theta_2+\alpha(\theta_2(1-0)+(1-\theta_1)0) = \theta_2$ and $s_2^B = (1-\alpha)(1-\theta_2)+\alpha(\theta_2(0)+(1-\theta_2)(1-0)) = 1-\theta_2$. Total votes are $V_2^A = (1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot\theta_2$ and $V_2^B = (1-\lambda)\cdot(1-\gamma)+\lambda\cdot(1-\theta_2)$. Party A wins the election with probability:

$$\begin{aligned} p(V_2^A, V_2^B) &= \frac{(1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\theta_2}{(1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\theta_2+(1-\lambda)\cdot(1-\gamma)+\lambda(1-\theta_2)} \\ &= \frac{(1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\theta_2}{1-\lambda+\lambda} = (1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\theta_2 \end{aligned}$$

The expected win probability for any incumbent i in period 1 when $E_2 = 1$ is the expected value of $p(V_2^i, V_2^{\neg i})$ over $\theta_2 \sim U[0,1]$. For $I_2 = A$, this is $\int_0^1((1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\theta_2)d\theta_2 = (1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\frac{\lambda}{2}$.

Case 2: Enfranchisement has not happened yet ($E_2 = 0$) If $E_2 = 0$, potential voters were not enfranchised in period 1 ($e_1 = 0$). Since $I_1 = A$, this implies $n_2^A = 1$ and $n_2^B = 0$. The resentment levels are $r_2^A = 1, r_2^B = 0$. The incumbent I_2 (winner of the period 1 election) must decide $e_2 \in \{0,1\}$.

If A wins election in the first period ($I_2 = A$): The state is $(I_2 = A, \theta_2, E_2 = 0, r_A = 1, r_B = 0)$. A chooses $e_2 \in \{0,1\}$. If $e_2 = 1$: potential voters participate. Vote shares of potential voters are $s_2^A = (1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2+\alpha\cdot(\theta_2\cdot(1-1)+(1-\theta_2)\cdot 0) = (1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2$. $s_2^B = 1-s_2^A = 1-(1-\alpha)\theta_2$. Total votes: $V_2^A = (1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2$, $V_2^B = (1-\lambda)\cdot(1-\gamma)+\lambda\cdot(1-(1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2)$. A wins with probability $(1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2$.

If $e_2 = 0$: potential voters do not participate. Total votes: $V_2^A = (1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma$, $V_2^B = (1-\lambda)\cdot(1-\gamma)$. A wins with probability γ.

A observes θ_2 and chooses $e_2 = 1$ if its win probability is higher with $e_2 = 1$ than with $e_2 = 0$. Recall that $\lambda > 0$ and $1-\alpha > 0$.

$$\begin{aligned} (1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2 &> \gamma \\ \lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2 &> \lambda\cdot\gamma \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

So, Party A chooses $e_2 = 1$ when $\theta_2 > \frac{\gamma}{1-\alpha}$. Otherwise, it chooses $e_2 = 0$.

Let $\theta_2^* := \frac{\gamma}{1-\alpha}$. θ^* determines the threshold above which A enfranchises potential voters in the second period.

If B wins election in the first period ($I_2 = B$): The state is $(I_2 = B, \theta_2, E_2 = 0, r_A = 1, r_B = 0)$ (as $I_1 = A$ chose $e_1 = 0$). B chooses $e_2 \in \{0,1\}$. If $e_2 = 1$: potential voters participate. Vote shares of potential voters are $s_2^A = (1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2+\alpha\cdot(\theta_2\cdot(1-1)+(1-\theta_2)\cdot 0) = (1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2$ and $s_2^B = (1-\alpha)\cdot(1-\theta_2)+\alpha\cdot(\theta_2\cdot(1)+(1-\theta_2)\cdot(1-0)) = (1-\alpha)(1-\theta_2)+\alpha$. Total votes are $V_2^A = (1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2$ and $V_2^B = (1-\lambda)\cdot(1-\gamma)+\lambda\cdot((1-\alpha)\cdot(1-\theta_2)+\alpha)$. B wins with probability $(1-\lambda)(1-\gamma)+\lambda(1-\alpha)(1-\theta_2)+\lambda\cdot\alpha$.

If $e_2 = 0$: potential voters do not participate. Total votes: $V_2^A = (1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma$, $V_2^B = (1-\lambda)(1-\gamma)$. B wins with probability $1-\gamma$. B chooses $e_2 = 1$ if its win probability is higher with $e_2 = 1$ than with $e_2 = 0$:

$$(1-\lambda)\cdot(1-\gamma)+\lambda\cdot(1-\theta_2)+\lambda\cdot\alpha\cdot\theta_2 > 1-\gamma$$

$$-\lambda \cdot (1-\gamma) + \lambda \cdot (1-\theta_2) + \lambda \cdot \alpha \cdot \theta_2 > 0$$
$$\gamma - \theta_2 \cdot (1-\alpha) > 0$$

Given $\lambda > 0$, $1-\alpha > 0$, Party B chooses $e_2 = 1$ when $\theta_2 < \frac{\gamma}{1-\alpha} = \theta_2^*$. Otherwise, it chooses $e_2 = 0$.

The expected period 2 win probability for A We can now compute the ex-ante expected win probabilities for A in the second period.

Given $I_2 = A$, $E_2 = 0$, $r_A = 1$, and $r_B = 0$:

$$\begin{aligned}
&\mathbb{E}[\mathbb{I}_{\text{A wins in } t=2} | I_2 = A, E_2 = 0] = \\
&\qquad Pr[\theta_2 < \theta_2^*] \cdot \gamma + Pr[\theta_2 \geq \theta_2^*] \cdot ((1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda \cdot (1-\alpha) \cdot \mathbb{E}[\theta_2 | \theta_2 \geq \theta_2^*]) = \\
&\qquad \theta_2^* \cdot \gamma + (1-\theta_2^*) \cdot ((1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda \cdot (1-\alpha) \cdot \frac{1+\theta_2^*}{2}) \\
&\qquad = \gamma \cdot (1-\lambda) + \frac{\lambda}{2} \cdot \frac{(1-\alpha)^2 + \gamma^2}{1-\alpha}
\end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

Given $I_2 = B$ and $E_2 = 0, r_A = 1, r_B = 0$:

$$\begin{aligned}
&\mathbb{E}[\mathbb{I}_{\text{A wins in } t=2} | I_2 = B, E_2 = 0] = \\
&\qquad Pr[\theta_2 \geq \theta_2^*] \cdot \gamma + Pr[\theta_2 < \theta_2^*] \cdot ((1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda \cdot (1-\alpha) \cdot \mathbb{E}[\theta_2 | \theta_2 < \theta_2^*]) \\
&\qquad = (1-\theta_2^*) \cdot \gamma + \theta_2^* \cdot ((1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda \cdot (1-\alpha) \cdot \frac{\theta_2^*}{2}) \\
&\qquad = \frac{\gamma \cdot ((1-\alpha) - \gamma \cdot \frac{\lambda}{2})}{1-\alpha}
\end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

Period 1

Party A is the incumbent in the first period ($I_1 = A$). The state is ($I_1 = A, \theta_1, E_1 = 0, n_1^A = 0, n_1^B = 0$). Resentment is $r_1^A = r_1^B = 0$. Party A chooses e_1 to maximize expected total utility $U_A(e_1) = R \cdot \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{I}_{\text{A wins in } t=1}] + \delta \cdot R \cdot \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{I}_{\text{A wins in } t=2}]$.

If $e_1 = 1$,

$$U_A(e_1 = 1) = R \cdot ((1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda \cdot \theta_1) + R \cdot \delta \cdot ((1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda \cdot 1/2). \tag{5}$$

If $e_1 = 0$,

$$\begin{aligned}
U_A(e_1 = 0) &= Pr[\mathbb{I}_{\text{A wins in t=1}}] \cdot (R + \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{I}_{\text{A wins in t=2}} | \text{I}_2 = A]) + Pr[\mathbb{I}_{\text{A loses in t=1}}] \cdot (0 + \mathbb{E}[\mathbb{I}_{\text{A wins in t=2}} | \text{I}_2 = B]) \\
&= \gamma \cdot \big(R + R \cdot \delta \cdot (\gamma \cdot (1-\lambda) + \frac{\lambda}{2} \cdot \frac{(1-\alpha)^2 + \gamma^2}{1-\alpha})\big) + (1-\gamma) \cdot \big(0 + R \cdot \delta \cdot \gamma \cdot \frac{(1-\alpha) - \gamma \cdot \lambda/2}{1-\alpha}\big)
\end{aligned} \tag{6}$$

Party A chooses $e_1 = 1$ if $U_A(e_1 = 1) > U_A(e_1 = 0)$. Party A chooses $e_1 = 1$ when

$$\theta_1 > \theta_1^* := \frac{2 \cdot \gamma \cdot (1-\alpha) + \delta \cdot \big(3 \cdot \gamma \cdot (1-\gamma) + 2 \cdot \gamma^2 \cdot (\alpha + \gamma) - \alpha \cdot \gamma \cdot (4-\alpha) - (1-\alpha)\big)}{2 \cdot (1-\alpha)} \tag{7}$$

and chooses $e_0 = 0$ otherwise.

Note that the threshold θ_1^* decreases in α when

$$\frac{\partial \theta_1^*}{\partial \alpha} = \frac{-\delta \cdot \gamma \cdot ((1-\alpha)^2 + \gamma \cdot (1 - 2 \cdot \gamma)}{2 \cdot (1-\alpha)^2} < 0. \tag{8}$$

Thus, θ_1^* decreases in α when $\gamma \leq \gamma^*(\alpha) := \frac{1+\sqrt{9-16\alpha+8\alpha^2}}{4}$ and increases in α otherwise.

8.2 Analysis of the Model with Uncertainty

We solve the game by backward induction.

Period 2 (Terminal Period)

At the start of period 2, the state is $(I_2, \theta_2, E_2, n_2^A, n_2^B)$. Resentment (r_2^A, r_2^B) is determined by the outcome of period 1.

Case 1: Enfranchisement already happened ($E_2 = 1$) If $E_2 = 1$, potential voters were enfranchised in period 1 ($e_1 = 1$). This implies $n_2^A = n_2^B = 0$, so $r_2^A = 0$ and $r_2^B = 0$. The vote shares are $s_2^A = (1-\alpha) \cdot \theta_2 + \alpha \cdot (\theta_2 \cdot (1-0) + (1-\theta_2) \cdot 0) = \theta_2$ and $s_2^B = 1 - \theta_2$. Total votes are $V_2^A = (1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda \cdot \theta_2$ and $V_2^B = (1-\lambda) \cdot (1-\gamma) + \lambda \cdot (1-\theta_2)$. Party A wins the election with probability $(1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda \cdot \theta_2$.

Case 2: Enfranchisement has not happened yet ($E_2 = 0$) If $E_2 = 0$, potential voters were not enfranchised in period 1 ($e_1 = 0$). Since $I_1 = A$, this implies $n_2^A = 1$ and $n_2^B = 0$. The resentment levels are $r_2^A = 1, r_2^B = 0$. The incumbent I_2 (winner of the period 1 election) must decide $e_2 \in \{0, 1\}$.

If A is incumbent ($I_2 = A$): A observes η_2 and chooses $e_2 \in \{0, 1\}$. If $e_2 = 1$: potential voters participate in the election. Vote shares are $s_2^A = (1-\alpha) \cdot \theta_2 + \alpha \cdot (\theta_2 \cdot (1-1) + (1-\theta_2) \cdot 0) = (1-\alpha) \cdot \theta_2$. $s_2^B = 1 - (1-\alpha) \cdot \theta_2$. Total votes: $V_2^A = (1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda \cdot (1-\alpha) \cdot \theta_2$, $V_2^B = (1-\lambda) \cdot (1-\gamma) + \lambda \cdot (1 - (1-\alpha) \cdot \theta_2)$. Party A expected probability to win the election

$$\mathbb{E}[(1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda \cdot (1-\alpha) \cdot \theta_2 | \eta_2] = (1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda \cdot (1-\alpha) \cdot \frac{1+\eta_2}{2+N}. \tag{9}$$

If $e_2 = 0$: potential voters do not participate in the election. Total votes: $V_2^A = (1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma$, $V_2^B = (1-\lambda) \cdot (1-\gamma)$. A wins with probability γ. A chooses $e_2 = 1$ if its win probability is higher with $e_2 = 1$ than with $e_2 = 0$:

$$(1-\lambda) \cdot \gamma + \lambda(1-\alpha) \cdot \frac{1+\eta_2}{2+N} > \gamma$$

$$\eta_2 > \eta_2^* := \frac{(2+N) \cdot \gamma}{(1-\alpha)} - 1 \tag{10}$$

So, Party A chooses $e_2 = 1$ when $\eta_2 > \eta_2^*$. Otherwise, it chooses $e_2 = 0$.

If B is incumbent ($I_2 = B$): The state is $(B, \theta_2, E_2 = 0, r_A = 1, r_B = 0)$ (as $I_1 = A$ chose $e_1 = 0$). B chooses $e_2 \in \{0, 1\}$. If $e_2 = 1$: potential voters participate in the election.

Vote shares are $s_2^A = (1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2+\alpha\cdot(\theta_2\cdot(1-1)+(1-\theta_2)\cdot 0) = (1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2$, $s_2^B = (1-\alpha)(1-\theta_2)+\alpha$. Total votes: $V_2^A = (1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2$, $V_2^B = (1-\lambda)\cdot(1-\gamma)+\lambda\cdot((1-\alpha)(1-\theta_2)+\alpha)$. Party B expects to win with probability

$$\mathbb{E}[(1-\lambda)\cdot(1-\gamma)+\lambda\cdot(1-\theta_2\cdot(1-\alpha))|\eta_2] = (1-\lambda)\cdot(1-\gamma)+\lambda\cdot(1-\frac{1+\eta_2}{2+N}\cdot(1-\alpha)) \tag{11}$$

If $e_2 = 0$: potential voters do not participate. Total votes: $V_2^A = (1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma$, $V_2^B = (1-\lambda)\cdot(1-\gamma)$. B wins with probability $1-\gamma$. B chooses $e_2 = 1$ if its win probability is higher with $e_2 = 1$ than with $e_2 = 0$, thus Party B chooses $e_2 = 1$ when $\eta_2 \leq \eta_2^*$ and does not enfranchise otherwise.

The expected period 2 win probability for A

Expected win probability for A given $I_2 = A$ and $E_2 = 0, r_A = 1, r_B = 0$:

$$\begin{aligned}
&\mathbb{E}[\mathbb{I}_{\text{A wins in } t=2}|I_2 = A, E_2 = 0]\\
&\quad= Pr[\eta_2 \leq \eta_2^*]\cdot\gamma + Pr[\eta_2 > \eta_2^*]\cdot\mathbb{E}[((1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2)|\eta_2 > \eta_2^*]\\
&\quad= \frac{\eta_2^*+1}{N+1}\cdot\gamma + \frac{N-\eta_2^*}{N+1}\cdot((1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\frac{N+\eta_2^*+3}{2\cdot(N+2)}).
\end{aligned} \tag{12}$$

Expected win probability for A given $I_2 = B$ and $E_2 = 0, r_A = 1, r_B = 0$:

$$\begin{aligned}
&\mathbb{E}[\mathbb{I}_{\text{A wins in } t=2}|I_2 = B, E_2 = 0]\\
&= Pr[\eta_2 > \eta_2^*]\cdot\gamma + Pr[\eta_2 \leq \eta_2^*]\cdot\mathbb{E}[((1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\theta_2)|\eta_2 \leq \eta_2^*]\\
&= \frac{N-\eta_2^*}{N+1}\cdot\gamma + \frac{\eta_2^*+1}{N+1}\cdot((1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\frac{\eta_2^*+2}{2\cdot(N+2)}).
\end{aligned} \tag{13}$$

Period 1

Party A is the incumbent ($I_1 = A$). If $e_1 = 1$ potential voters participate. Party A's expected utility is

$$\begin{aligned}
&\mathbb{E}[U_A(e_1 = 1)|I_1 = A]\\
&= R\cdot\mathbb{E}[(1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot\theta_1|\eta_1] + R\cdot\delta\cdot\mathbb{E}[(1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot\theta_2]\\
&\quad= R\cdot((1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot\frac{1+\eta_1}{2+N}) + R\cdot\delta\cdot((1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda/2)
\end{aligned} \tag{14}$$

When $e_1 = 0$, Party A's expected utility is

$$\begin{aligned}
&\mathbb{E}[U_A(e_1 = 0)|I_1 = A]\\
&= \gamma\cdot\Big(R + R\cdot\delta\cdot(\frac{\eta_2^*+1}{N+1}\cdot\gamma + \frac{N-\eta_2^*}{N+1}\cdot((1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\frac{N+\eta_2^*+3}{2\cdot(N+2)}))\Big)\\
&\quad+ (1-\gamma)\cdot\Big(0 + R\cdot\delta\cdot(\frac{N-\eta_2^*}{N+1}\cdot\gamma + \frac{\eta_2^*+1}{N+1}\cdot((1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda\cdot(1-\alpha)\cdot\frac{\eta_2^*+2}{2\cdot(N+2)}))\Big)
\end{aligned} \tag{15}$$

Party A chooses $e_1 = 1$ if $U_A(e_1 = 1|\theta_1) > U_A(e_1 = 0)$. There exists a threshold η_1^* such that Party A chooses $e_1 = 1$ when $\eta_1 > \eta_1^*$ and chooses $e_1 = 1$ otherwise. This threshold is

$$\eta_1^* := (\frac{\mathbb{E}[U_A(e_1 = 0)|I_1 = A] - R\cdot\delta\cdot((1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma+\lambda/2)}{R} - (1-\lambda)\cdot\gamma)\cdot\frac{2+N}{\lambda} - 1 \tag{16}$$

Denote $\hat{\theta}_1^* : \eta_1^*/N$. It reflects sample mean threshold such that potential voters are enfranchised when observed sample mean exceeds $\hat{\theta}_1^*$. We next analyze how $\hat{\theta}_1^*$ changes with α.

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\partial \hat{\theta}_1^*}{\partial \alpha} = \frac{-\delta \cdot \gamma \cdot \big((1+N) \cdot (1-\alpha)^2 + (2+n) \cdot \gamma \cdot (1-2\cdot\gamma)\big)}{2 \cdot (1-\alpha)^2} \cdot \frac{2+N}{N \cdot (1+N)} \\ = \frac{-\delta \cdot \gamma \cdot ((1-\alpha)^2 + \gamma \cdot (1-2\cdot\gamma))}{2 \cdot (1-\alpha)^2} \cdot \frac{2+N}{1+N} \\ + \frac{-\delta \cdot \gamma \cdot ((1-\alpha)^2 + 2 \cdot \gamma \cdot (1-2\cdot\gamma)}{2 \cdot (1-\alpha)^2} \cdot \frac{2+N}{N \cdot (1+N)}.\end{aligned} \tag{17}$$

The threshold $\hat{\theta}_1^*$ decreases in α when $\gamma \leq \gamma^*(\alpha, N) := \frac{1+\sqrt{\frac{9-16\cdot\alpha+8\cdot\alpha^2}{2/N+1}+\frac{10-16\cdot\alpha+8\cdot\alpha^2}{2+N}}}{4}$ and increases in α otherwise. Additionally, the threshold $\gamma^*(\alpha, N)$ decreases in α (equation 18) and increases in N (equation 19).

$$\frac{\partial \gamma^*(\alpha, N)}{\partial \alpha} = -\frac{2 \cdot (1-\alpha) \cdot (1+N)}{\sqrt{2+N} \cdot \sqrt{10 + 9 \cdot N - 16 \cdot \alpha \cdot (1+N) + 8 \cdot \alpha^2 \cdot (1+N)}} < 0, \tag{18}$$

$$\frac{\partial \gamma^*(\alpha, N)}{\partial N} = -\frac{(1-\alpha)^2 \cdot \sqrt{2+N}}{(2+N)^2 \cdot \sqrt{10 + 9 \cdot N - 16 \cdot \alpha \cdot (1+N) + 8 \cdot \alpha^2 \cdot (1+N)}} > 0, \tag{19}$$

Finally, we analyze how $\hat{\theta}_1^*$ changes with signal precision N.

$$\begin{aligned}\frac{\partial \hat{\theta}_1^*}{\partial N} = \frac{(1-\alpha) \cdot (1 - 2\cdot\gamma + \delta) - \delta \cdot \gamma \cdot (2+\alpha^2) \cdot (1+N)^2}{2 \cdot (1-\alpha) \cdot N^2 \cdot (1+N)^2} \\ + \frac{\delta \cdot \gamma \cdot (\alpha \cdot (10 + 20 \cdot N + 9 \cdot N^2) - \big(1 + \gamma \cdot (2 \cdot (\alpha - \gamma) - 3)\big) \cdot (4 + 8 \cdot N + 3 \cdot N^2))}{2 \cdot (1-\alpha) \cdot N^2 \cdot (1+N)^2}\end{aligned} \tag{20}$$

The sign of $\frac{\partial \hat{\theta}_1^*}{\partial N}$ is equal to the sign of the enumerator denote the numerator as A. Note that

$$\lim_{\gamma \to 0} A = 4 \cdot (1-\alpha) \cdot (1+N)^2 > 0;$$

$$\lim_{\gamma \to 1} A = -4 \cdot (1+N)^2 - 2 \cdot \alpha^2 \cdot (1+N)^2 + \alpha \cdot (2 + 4 \cdot N + 3 \cdot N^2),$$

both roots of the latter are outside $[0, 1]$ interval, therefore $\lim_{\gamma \to 1} A < 0$. It implies that there always exists a partition of γ space such that $\hat{\theta}_1^*$ decreases in N for some parts of this partition and increases in N otherwise. We now show that there exists a unique threshold $\gamma^{**}(\alpha, N)$ such that $\hat{\theta}_1^*$ increases in signal precision when γ exceeds this threshold and decreases in precision otherwise.

Note that A is a third-degree polynomial.

$$\lim_{\alpha \to 1} A = \gamma^2 \cdot (1 - 2 \cdot \gamma) \cdot (4 + 8 \cdot N + 3 \cdot N^2),$$

which has three roots: $\gamma_1, \gamma_2 = 0$ and $\gamma_3 = 1/2$. Next note that

$$\begin{aligned}
&\lim_{\gamma \to 0} \frac{\partial A}{\partial \alpha} \\
&\qquad = \lim_{\gamma \to 0} -4 \cdot (1+N)^2 + \gamma \cdot (14 - 4 \cdot \alpha + (28 - 8 \cdot \alpha) \cdot N + (13 - 4 \cdot \alpha) \cdot N^2) \\
&\qquad\qquad - 2 \cdot \gamma^2 \cdot (4 + 8 \cdot N + 3 \cdot N^2) \\
&\qquad = -4 \cdot (1+N)^2 < 0,
\end{aligned}$$

which implies that there exists a unique root $\gamma^{**}(\alpha, N)$.