

Candidate 1 evidence

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14.	<p>The 19th century and at least early 20th century saw women leading lives of domesticity and inferiority. Men and women operated in separate 'spheres' with a women's place being largely the home. While many laws had been passed before 1918 which enfranchised more men, it was not until 1918 when some women got the vote nationally. The reasons why women were extended the vote is a topic of debate, with factors like changing attitudes to women in society, women's war work, the work of the suffragists and the work of the suffragettes. This essay will argue that changing attitudes to women in society were not the most important factor, believing instead war work was the strongest proponent, therefore the view is invalid.</p> <p>The view of women in Britain had been changing between the 19th and 20th century. The 1894 local government act enfranchised some women</p>

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to stand and vote in local elections. If women could 'handle' the vote on a local level, then why should they not be extended the national vote. Women had also been growing increasingly politically motivated. They made up 99% of the Conservative Primrose League. This eroded the societal stereotype that women were uninterested in politics, ~~however~~ and didn't want the vote. However, there were still many societal challenges women faced. They were still not awarded university degrees and expected to leave their jobs once married - this suggests attitudes towards women still had not changed remarkably, not enough to give them the vote alone. Overall, while changing attitudes to women were important, war work was more important still as it involved a far greater number of women. Women only comprised 13.7% of the municipal

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electorate in the 1890s - whilst war work involved millions of the country's women all helping in a period of national importance. This suggests women's contribution to the war effort was far more important.

As men were conscripted to fight abroad, women stepped in to fill their roles. 23,000 women made up the women's land army. They formed the Land and provided a vital domestic food supply during the war. This contribution kept Britain fed and warranted a great reward - enfranchisement - as a thank you. Over 900,000 women were involved in the munitions industry by the end of the war. They suffered yellow skin due to chemical exposure and there were deaths from explosions. Such dangerous work, in line with the sacrifice of male soldiers, deserved enfranchisement comparable to men and proved women were patriotic. Moreover, the

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women who were excluded the vote initially were largely over 30. The women who were doing the war work were primarily in their 20s, taking credibility away from the theory that suggests women were enfranchised due to their war work.

The ~~suffragists~~ ~~was~~ National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), also known as the ~~suffragists~~ suffragists, was formed in 1897 by Millicent Fawcett. They used pragmatic demands, like only enfranchising some women and appealing to conservative ideals like religion and morality to earn favourability with the conservative party. This rational and measured campaigning earned the Suffragists a majority for their bills in the commons and earned support for 'votes for women' from MPs. The NUWSS gathered over 250,000 signatures for a petition supporting women's suffrage. This ~~can~~

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demonstrated there was widespread appeal for women's voting rights and suggesting women could be organised - contrary to the opinion of the time. However, while the NUWSS could get majorities for their bills in parliament, they were unable to get these bills passed into law, suggesting their peaceful techniques were too easily ignored to be effective in gaining women the vote. Overall, the NUWSS were somewhat useful in gaining women the vote, war work was more important as it only took a handful of years of women's war contribution to extend the franchise. This is contrary to almost two decades of suffragist activity that had no major gains in women's voting rights to show for it. This suggests the suffragists were easily ignored and the importance of war work was a far stronger provocation.

Emmeline Pankhurst, frustrated with slow progress of prior movements, formed

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the WSPU, more commonly known as the Suffragettes to attempt to extend the franchise^{in 1905}. They used militant tactics like Window smashing and even bombing the summerhouse of PM, David Lloyd George, to bring attention to the cause. This made them impossible to ignore by the governments, with commons forced to take action and discuss the issue of votes for women in a way they hadn't had to before. When imprisoned for their military, they ~~go~~ would hunger strike. The government embarked on a program of force-feeding to combat this, which they were widely condemned for. This widespread public disapproval of their actions earned sympathy for the cause of votes for women - earning them public support. However, some historians believe they were counter-productive. H. I. Peacock writes; ~~they~~ In general they did little to further the cause. They annoyed

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and embarrassed the government who's support they had to win.' This is evidence of suffragette militancy alienating ~~potential~~ potential supporters of the cause and compromising women's chance at getting the vote. Overall, while the suffragettes were somewhat useful in securing women the vote, war work is more useful, as when the WSPU suspended campaigning during the war, women got the vote in just a matter of years. The WSPU assisted by running campaigns like the white feather campaign - which shamed men into enlisting. We see that when the WSPU assisted with the war effort instead, women got the vote soon after, suggesting war work was of greater importance.

Whilst changing attitudes towards women were useful in gaining women the vote, as women gained greater social and political mobility, war work was more useful as it involved a far greater

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number of women. Making ~~changing~~ ~~attitudes~~ ~~not~~ the view that changing attitudes to women in society a reason for many women getting the vote invalid. The suffragettes were of greater importance, as their militant tactics were hard to give but war work was more important as it united all women's campaign groups. The suffragists were more important still, as they proved women were rational and could 'handle' the vote, but war work was more important still as the contribution to ~~women's~~ ^{the} war effort made by women demanded a thank you. This makes women's war work the greatest reason for the extension of the franchise, as the patriotism and sacrifice of ~~some~~ ^{many} women proved them vital national contributors who deserved a say in national affairs.