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Urbanization and the Change in Political Elites ^{*}

Raphaël Franck[†] Victor Gay[‡]

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Abstract

This study argues that urbanization changed the relationship between the occupation of candidates running in parliamentary elections and their electoral success. To identify local-level variation in urbanization, we leverage exogenous changes to the boundaries of electoral constituencies in the 1928, 1932, and 1936 French parliamentary elections. The results suggest that urbanization was detrimental to the electoral success of lawyers but beneficial to that of employees and workers. This electoral effect of urbanization was especially felt on the left of the political spectrum, whereby left-wing employees and workers crowded out left-wing lawyers.

Keywords: Elections, Political Representation, Urbanization.

JEL classification: D72, K16, N44, N94.

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1. Introduction

In many democracies, members of specific elite groups have kept on winning elections, thereby securing their hold to power and shaping public policies to their benefit and that of their supporters (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008; Martinez-Bravo, Mukherjee and Stegmann, 2017). As can be seen in the cases of landowners in Latin America and of tribal chiefs in Sub-Saharan Africa, informal connections and personal attributes play an important role in the ability of elite members to mobilize voters and win elections (Baland and Robinson, 2008; Acemoglu, Reed and Robinson, 2014; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2015). Nevertheless, other elite groups have been unable to preserve their political rents over time. Historically, lawyers represented the professional group that dominated parliamentary representation in many countries at the turn of the twentieth century. Their importance began to decline after the First World War at the expense of candidates with other occupations, notably employees and workers as well as businessmen and civil servants. This is best exemplified by the two countries that had established universal male suffrage in the late nineteenth century, i.e., France and the United States. In 1876, lawyers respectively held 68 and 36 percent of seats in the Lower Houses of the US and French parliaments. However, these shares declined to 60 percent in 1936 and 38 percent in 2012 in the United States, and to 21 percent in 1936 and 6 percent in 2012 in France.¹ Likewise, lawyers represent less than 15 percent of representatives in the current Lower Houses of Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom (Kintz, 2010; McGuinness, 2010; Petersen, 2012).

In this study, we analyze the declining importance of lawyers in parliamentary representation. More specifically, we focus on the 1928, 1932, and 1936 elections to the Lower House of the French Parliament because of two institutional features of interwar France. First, this period was characterized by the stability of electoral rules, in the form of a two-round majority single-member district

¹“Lawyers” in the United States are individuals with a *Juris Diploma*, i.e., jurists but not trial lawyers in the strict sense as in Western European countries. This difference in definition explains why the share of “lawyers” in the House of Representatives remains higher than in Western European parliaments.

system (Gaudillère, 1995; Marty, 2013; Ehrhard and Passard, 2020).² Second, the legal and political institutions substantially limited the ability of candidates in parliamentary elections to manipulate the boundaries of electoral constituencies, even when they were incumbents. In fact, the few modifications to the electoral geography that occurred during this period were ultimately enacted by the members of the Upper House and by the relevant *préfets*, i.e., civil servants appointed by the central state.

Commentators of French politics during the interwar period sought explanations for the rising dominance of lawyers at the expense of landed aristocrats in Parliament during the early years of the Third Republic as well as for their decline after the First World War.³ Thibaudet (1927) and Halévy (1930) provided cultural explanations that cannot however account for the decline in lawyers' electoral success in countries other than France.⁴ Later on, Gaudemet (1968) argued that the declining dominance of lawyers might have instead resulted from increased opportunities offered by legal practice during the period—although the number of lawyers remained stable at 160 per million inhabitants between 1876 and 1936. Furthermore, Gouault (1954) suggested that peasants voted for lawyers instead of landed aristocrats because they came from the same social background and differed only in their educational attainment. In this perspective, the structural transformation and special-interest politics might have led to changes in political representation: employees and workers from the private sector voted for members of their own occupational groups rather than for lawyers, whom they viewed as less likely to implement their preferred policies (see also Duverger, 1954).

²Throughout this period, all men aged 21 could vote and those aged 25 were eligible, while literacy was not a voting requirement. In any case, literacy was nearly universal in France after the First World War. For instance, the census of 1926 reports that more than 95 percent of adults French males could read and write.

³Other studies analyzing politicians and their occupations during the Third Republic include Dogan (1961) on military professionals, Ellis (1990) on doctors, Charle (1994) on university professors, Garrigues (1997) on businessmen, and Marnot (2000) on engineers.

⁴Thibaudet (1927) suggested that the three leaders of the government that emerged from the elections of 1924 were not lawyers because of the cultural change within the leadership of the dominant party at the time, the center left-wing *Parti Radical et Radical-Socialiste*, which he attributed to the Dreyfus affair that divided France across political and religious lines between 1894 and 1906 (Thomas, 1978).

In this article, we argue that the historical decline in the share of lawyers in parliaments can be explained by upward trends in urbanization. Our argument holds that voter mobilization is a key factor in winning electoral contests: candidates can only be successful if they run a political machine with operatives able to canvass their constituencies to rally voters (Stokes, 2005; Larreguy, Marshall and Querubin, 2016). In Third-Republic France, political parties were not developed enough as national organizations to sustain political machines that could canvass all the constituencies to mobilize voters (Kreuzer, 2001).⁵ As a result, candidates had to rely on their own pre-existing professional networks to muster votes across a country that was predominantly rural at the turn of the century. In this respect, lawyers had a comparative advantage over other candidates because their professional networks of clients was essentially rural: through their professional activities, lawyers knew middlemen, i.e., men of importance in rural villages upon whom they could rely to mobilize voters (Le Béguec, 2003). However, with the increase in urbanization during the interwar period, the electoral advantage of the lawyers’ professional networks declined.⁶

Our analysis explores the causal relationship between the rising trends in urbanization and the declining electoral success of lawyers – and conversely, the increasing success of employees and workers – by leveraging two novel sources of historical data. First, through archival work, we collect information on the occupations of both successful and unsuccessful candidates. Second, we use an original historical geographic information system of French electoral constituencies to ascertain their precise boundaries during the interwar period and compute the density of registered voters therein as well as various constituency-level characteristics (Gay, 2021).

Since the process of urbanization and the electoral outcomes of candidates with specific occupations could be related to simultaneous changes in local polit-

⁵The dominant political parties of the Third Republic were only “officially” founded at the turn of the twentieth century: the *Parti Radical et Radical-Socialiste* and the *Alliance Démocratique* held their first congress in 1901, the *Fédération Républicaine* in 1903, while the various socialist groups agreed to unite in 1905 as the *Section Française de l’Internationale Ouvrière* (SFIO). In 1920, the majority of socialist activists formed the *Section Française de l’Internationale Communiste* which would soon be renamed *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF).

⁶According to census data, the share of the urban population rose from 31 percent in 1872 to 47 percent in 1926 and 52 percent in 1936.

ical and economic conditions such as productivity growth or improvements of urban amenities (Rauch, 1993; Glaeser and Saiz, 2004; Duranton and Puga, 2014), our identification strategy takes advantage of legal reforms that altered the electoral geography. Inside the administrative divisions of the French territory known as *départements* – whose borders did not change throughout the period – these reforms generated exogenous variations in the boundaries of electoral constituencies, and ultimately, in the density of voters. These reforms enable us to compare within-département electoral outcomes of candidates with the same occupations in the constituencies whose borders were modified to those in constituencies that did not experience such boundary changes.

In support of our identification strategy, we run balance tests and Stable Unit Treatment Value Assumption (SUTVA) tests to show that urbanization and re-districting were not correlated with various economic, political, and institutional factors. These tests notably show that industrialization, firm size, and wages in various sectors were not correlated with the density of registered voters. They also show that the number of registered voters was not significantly different between the départements encompassing modified constituencies and those encompassing unmodified constituencies, thus suggesting that migration did not have a significant effect on urbanization, which instead resulted from the local growth of the population.

Our results imply that the increasing density of registered voters depressed the share of lawyers in the Lower House while it increased the share of employees and workers, the two most common occupations among candidates. Namely, a one-standard deviation increase in the density of voters within a constituency decreased the average electoral probability of success of lawyers by 4.2 percentage points, while it increased that of the employees and workers by 6.6 percentage points. We further find that urbanization was also detrimental to doctors, an occupational group whose professional networks were similar to those of lawyers—although doctors constitute a smaller set of politicians than lawyers or employees and workers with only 6 percent of candidates and 4 percent of winners between 1928 and 1936. In addition, our results indicate that the effect of urbanization on electoral outcomes was concentrated on the left of the political spectrum, whereby left-wing employees and workers crowded out left-

wing lawyers. Our interpretation of these quantitative results is supported by the individual biographies of the elected employees and workers in our sample constituencies.

A series of robustness checks supports the validity of our baseline results. First, we consider “counterfactual” reforms, i.e., the modifications to electoral constituencies which were debated in the Parliament but ultimately not adopted. We find no effect of changes in voter density on the electoral success of lawyers or of candidates with other occupations in these constituencies, suggesting that our results are not driven by unobservable factors that could have entailed both boundary changes and variation in voter density over time. Second, we account for alternative measurements of the treatment variable by considering the share of urban population rather than voter density and by discretizing the continuous measure of voter density. Third, we use alternative econometric specifications, i.e, we use a more stringent procedure for clustering standard errors, run seemingly unrelated regressions, employ pre-treatment voter density measures, and verify that no département – as well as the city of Paris – drives the estimates. Our results are robust to all these alternative strategies.

As such, this study pertains to two strands of the literature but tries to provide a different perspective. First, it is related to studies analyzing the ability of candidates to run in elections and win them. Previous studies (e.g., Gehlbach, Sonin and Zhuravskaya, 2010; Dal Bo et al., 2017) have shown how economic circumstances condition the ability of candidates with a specific occupation to win electoral contests, alongside other factors such as the type of electoral rules (Beath et al., 2016), the level of wages once in office (Gagliarducci and Nannicini, 2013; Fisman et al., 2015; Cerina and Deidda, 2017), the size of public budgets (Brollo et al., 2013), or personal characteristics including gender, family connections, or intrinsic motives (Dal Bo, Dal Bo and Snyder, 2009; Gagliarducci and Paserman, 2012; Dal Bo et al., 2017).

Second, this study is motivated by the important role that the occupation and education of national political leaders play in their countries’ macroeconomic performance, redistribution patterns, as well as corruption and clientelism (Diermeier, Keane and Merlo, 2005; Jones and Olken, 2005; Besley, Montalvo and Reynal-Querol, 2011; Martinez-Bravo, 2014). In this respect, it does not

necessarily contradict previous research showing that lawyers are more likely to become political leaders (Besley and Reynal-Querol, 2011). It however suggests that changing circumstances had an impact on the lawyers' ability to win parliamentary elections but did not prevent them from becoming leading politicians within parliaments.⁷

In the remainder of this article, Section 2 discusses the nature of the reforms entailing boundary changes to electoral constituencies in the interwar period. Section 3 presents the data while Section 4 discusses our empirical strategy. Section 5 analyzes the results, and Section 6 concludes.

2. Boundary Changes to Electoral Constituencies in 1928–36

In this section, we describe the institutional context of the elections to the Lower House of the French Parliament in 1928, 1932, and 1936. Section 2.1 provides an overview of the administrative organization of France's territory into *départements*, *arrondissements*, and *cantons*, and how it shaped the geography of electoral constituencies. Section 2.2 then discusses the two types of legal processes that enabled the boundary changes to electoral constituencies we leverage for identification: electoral reforms and territorial reforms. Finally, Section 2.3 discusses the counterfactual reforms we use in a series of robustness tests, i.e., electoral reforms that were debated in the Parliament but ultimately not enacted.

2.1. Administrative divisions and electoral constituencies

The administrative organization of France's territory that was in place during the interwar period dated back to the aftermath of the 1789 French Revolution (Ozouf-Marignier, 1989), long before the formal establishment of the Third Republic in 1875 (Gros, 2014, pp. 307–35). *Départements* represented the upper level of territorial administration. They were initially designed to

⁷It is beyond the scope of this study to explain the lawyers' comparative advantage within parliaments. We can speculate that lawyers benefit from the connections that they share with one another, their oratory skills, or the comparative advantage that their legal studies gives them in parliament since the bulk of parliamentary work involves writing laws. See, e.g., Diermeier, Keane and Merlo (2005) and Mattozzi and Merlo (2008) on the characteristics of politicians with successful legislative careers.

be small enough so that it would take at most a day by horse to reach its administrative center, the *préfecture*. The *préfecture* was headed by a *préfet*, a high-level civil servant appointed by the central government to implement its policies and manage the local administration of the *département*. He was assisted by several *sous-préfets* who headed each *arrondissement* of the *département* at the *sous-préfecture*—*départements* were divided into three *arrondissements* on average. Each *arrondissement* was in turn divided into *cantons* – eleven on average – which were territorial divisions without administrative prerogatives beyond centralizing electoral results and transmitting them to the *sous-préfecture*. Appendix Figure A.1 displays this territorial organization over all three territorial divisions (Gay, 2021). Finally, below *cantons*, the territory was organized into *communes*, which were managed by a municipal council and headed by a mayor. In 1928, France had 90 *départements*, 279 *arrondissements*, 3,024 *cantons* and 38,014 *communes* (Gay, 2021).⁸

Throughout the Third Republic, the boundaries of electoral constituencies closely followed the administrative divisions of the territory described above (Gaudillère, 1995; Marty, 2013; Gay, 2021). First, electoral constituencies were confined to *départements*, whose borders were not modified between 1928 and 1936. In other words, no electoral constituency spanned several *départements*. Second, boundaries of electoral constituencies followed those of *arrondissements* and *cantons*.⁹ Third, electoral constituencies had to encompass contiguous territorial divisions, preventing the existence of disjointed constituencies and enclaves. As such, while changes to electoral constituencies were feasible, politicians’ ability to manipulate their shapes for electoral gains was limited by the pre-existing administrative structure. Consequently, the 593 electoral constituencies of mainland France in 1928 were relatively homogeneous, small and compact, as shown in Appendix Figure A.2. They had on average a territory of 931 km² with a standard deviation of 676 km².¹⁰

⁸In 1928, the average territory of *départements* was 6,094 km² (std. dev. 1,674 km²), that of *arrondissements*, 1,966 km² (std. dev. 995 km²), that of *cantons*, 179 km² (std. dev. 90 km²), and that of *communes* 14 km² (std. dev. 15 km²).

⁹As noted in Appendix C, the boundaries of several *arrondissements* and *cantons* experienced minor modifications between 1928 and 1936. These *arrondissements* and *cantons* are not part of our analysis since these boundary changes did not modify the limits of electoral constituencies.

¹⁰These sets of rules imply that redistricting in interwar France substantially differed from that

2.2. Types of boundary changes to electoral constituencies

Boundaries of electoral constituencies were modified in two ways: either explicitly through “electoral” reforms that were *in fine* approved by members of the Upper House or implicitly through “territorial” reforms that were *in fine* approved by the département’s préfet. Between 1928 and 1936, 34 electoral constituencies experienced changes to their boundaries. These electoral constituencies spanned 11 départements, which also encompassed the 113 other constituencies whose boundaries were not modified, as shown in Appendix Figure A.3. In Table 1, we provide a summary of the boundary changes that we leverage for identification. In Appendix D, we discuss each of these changes in detail and provide their type, legal rationale, parliamentary support, archival sources, and how we integrate them in our dataset.

2.2.1. Electoral reforms

Members of the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament could initiate direct modifications to the boundaries of electoral constituencies through amendments of the electoral law which regulated the upcoming election. In the electoral laws of 1932 and 1936, they enacted seven electoral reforms to the boundaries of electoral constituencies. In four cases, changes aimed at balancing the size of electorates across constituencies—two of them resulted in the creation of new constituencies and two of them involved the transfer of several cantons across constituencies. In three other cases, boundary changes involved the re-establishment of former constituencies that had been abolished before the 1928 parliamentary elections. For illustration purposes, Figure 1 displays the division of the constituency of Gaillac-Lavaur in the département of Tarn into two constituencies, while Figure D.1 shows the creation of the constituency of Sedan in the département of Ardennes following the division of the constituencies of Vouziers and Mézières-1. Figures D.3–D.7 further display the other five boundary changes

of the United States of America currently, where gerrymandering for partisan advantage has been a major determinant of changes to electoral constituency boundaries (for a survey, see McGhee, 2020). An additional reason for this difference lies in the nature of the French party system during the Third Republic, which was both in its infancy and highly fractionalized (Kreuzer, 2001).

that were entailed by electoral reforms.

Several institutional features of electoral reforms made it unlikely that members of the Lower House could strategically manipulate the boundaries of electoral constituencies. First, changes to electoral boundaries were *in fine* approved by members of the Upper House of Parliament, who had a *de facto* veto power in the matter (Berstein, 2014). In this respect, Upper House members were subject to different electoral incentives than their counterparts in the Lower House. They were elected under different electoral rules, as their constituencies were at the *département* level, under indirect suffrage as voting rights were restricted to politicians with a local political mandate (such as town mayors), and under a different electoral cycle as they held a nine-year term with a Upper House that was renewed by a third every three years. Moreover, members of the Upper House exhibited little connivance with their counterparts in the Lower House and they were often in opposition (Berstein, 2014). Second, there was not only *ex-ante* uncertainty about which amendment would pass, but the timing between the adoption of the law and the first round of the elections was also short. Overall, only 7 out of the 19 proposed electoral reforms were ultimately adopted in the electoral laws of 1932 and 1936, and they were enacted only six weeks before the first round of the elections.¹¹ These institutional features made it unlikely that supporters of specific candidates could swiftly and massively move to a given area to alter the composition of the electorate to win the election. Third, there is no historical evidence that Upper House members sought to promote one or several occupational groups at the expense of others. Even if Upper House members were aware of the declining success of lawyers in parliamentary elections, they would have likely attributed it to the cultural explanations which were popular during the interwar period rather than to urbanization (Thibaudet, 1927; Halévy, 1930). In this respect, it is worth noting that changes to boundaries of electoral constituencies resulted from the joint efforts of parliamentarians with various occupations and across the political spectrum, as discussed in detail in Appendix D.1. For instance, the constituency of Sedan displayed in Appendix Figure D.1 was

¹¹The electoral laws, which were respectively adopted on 25 March 1932 and 20 March 1936, regulated the parliamentary elections whose first rounds were respectively held on 1 May 1932 and 26 April 1936.

established through the joint efforts of four Lower House members from the left to the right of the political spectrum, none of whom was a lawyer or a worker.

2.2.2. Territorial reforms

Territorial reforms modified electoral constituencies because the transfer of one or two communes across cantons ultimately changed the boundaries of electoral constituencies that followed those cantons' limits. Between 1928 and 1936, seven boundary changes to electoral constituencies occurred through territorial reforms.

A careful reading of the administrative reports motivating territorial reforms suggests that they emanated from the municipal councils of the communes directly affected by the transfer, with the objective of increasing their geographic proximity to the administrative center of their canton. These changes were then enacted by the local préfet in agreement with high-level civil servants of the Ministry of the Interior. Therefore, the local nature of these territorial reforms made it highly unlikely that they were driven by politicians' constituency-level strategic electoral motives.

2.3. Counterfactual reforms

During the drafting of the electoral bills of 1932 and 1936, 12 amendments proposing electoral reforms to the boundaries of 28 constituencies spanning 10 départements were debated but ultimately not adopted, as shown in Appendix Figure A.4. While these proposals were initiated by members of the Lower House, they were ultimately rejected by their counterparts in the Upper House.

We summarize these counterfactual boundary changes in Table 2 and provide more details in Appendix D. For instance, Appendix Figure D.8 displays the proposed – and ultimately rejected – creation of the constituency of Decazeville in the département of Aveyron through the division of the constituencies of Rodez and of Villefranche-de-Rouergue. Appendix Figures D.9–D.17 further display the other counterfactual boundary changes. We use these counterfactual reforms in some of our robustness tests to ascertain the validity of our empirical strategy.

3. Data

In this section, we present the main variables of our analysis. Section 3.1 discusses the density of registered voters while Section 3.2 focuses on the candidates' occupations and electoral results. Section 3.3 presents the constituency-level controls we include in our regressions. Appendix Tables B.1–B.2 report summary statistics for the whole sample, while Appendix Tables B.3–B.8 provide them separately for each election. Appendix E provides additional information on the multiple sources of our historical data and on the panel of constituencies which we construct for the analysis.

3.1. Density of registered voters

Our main explanatory variable is the (log) density of registered voters per square kilometer in each electoral constituency and election. To compute the area of a constituency, we use Gay (2020; 2021)'s *Third-Republic France Geographic Information System* shapefiles, which we complement by drawing the precise boundaries of infra-municipal constituencies. For each constituency, we collect the number of registered voters from the archival records of official results (Lachapelle 1928; 1932; 1936).

In the 147 electoral constituencies we study, the average number of registered voters was stable throughout the period, between 20,000 and 21,000, while voter density remained between 3,200 and 3,500 per square kilometer. This apparent stability however hides large disparities over space entailed by boundary changes. For instance, while the density of the constituency of Saint-Denis-12 in the département of Seine decreased by 39 percent between 1928 and 1936, that of the constituency of Caen-1 in the département of Calvados increased by 89 percent over the same period. These large disparities are also apparent when comparing changes in (log) voter density between elections across treated and untreated constituencies in Appendix Table B.9, as the change in the standard deviation of this variable was nearly four times larger in treated constituencies (0.23) than in untreated ones (0.06).

In a robustness check, we use data on the urban population in each electoral constituency. For this purpose, we rely on the censuses of 1926, 1931, and 1936 to

collect information on the *population agglomérée* (agglomerated population) for each of the six thousand communes that make up the 147 electoral constituencies of our baseline sample. We then classify as urban the population of communes that counted at least two thousand inhabitants in their agglomerated population, following the definition of urban population used in the French censuses since the mid-nineteenth century (Le Mée, 1972; Dupeux, 1974; Roncayolo, 1987). This urban population included individuals residing in the direct vicinity of the commune’s center – generally defined as the neighborhood of the city hall – as opposed to the *population éparsé* (sparse population) that resided in hamlets located in the outskirts of a commune’s center.

In the perspective of our study, the density of registered voters from election returns remains a better measure of urbanization than the share of the urban population from the censuses. First, it measures the spatial distribution of registered voters at the precise moment of the elections. In contrast, information on the urban population is not synchronized with elections: when using the share of urban population, we are constrained to rely on the census of March 1926 for the elections of April 1928, on the census of March 1931 for the elections of May 1932, and on the census of March 1936 for the elections May 1936. Second, the density of registered voters is an objective measure that does not depend on some arbitrary classification of the population into urban and rural categories, however stable over time.

3.2. Candidates’ occupations and electoral results

There were 2,350 candidates in the 147 constituencies we analyze in the elections of 1928, 1932, and 1936. Using the archival records of official election results, we collect the number of votes and vote shares for each candidate in each round (Lachapelle 1928; 1932; 1936). We also collect the political affiliations of all candidates in our sample, which we then match to their occupation using Robert and Cougny’s (1889) and Jolly’s (1960) dictionaries of French parliamentarians. Information on the candidates’ occupations in these dictionaries is based on their political manifestos, which we complement with different secondary sources which are listed in the Appendix.

Based on these archival records, we classify each candidate into one of 12 occupations: artists, businessmen, clergymen, doctors (including pharmacists and veterinarians), engineers (including scientists other than doctors), workers (including employees in the private sector), mid- or low-level civil servants, high-level civil servants, judges, journalists, landowners, lawyers (including solicitors), professors (including primary school teachers), and notaries.¹² Appendix Table B.2 shows that in our sample of 2,350 candidates, the most common occupations were lawyers (448 candidates) and employees and workers (700 candidates), representing respectively 19 and 30 percent of all candidates. Businessmen (372 candidates) and journalists (271 candidates) were also frequent occupations, representing respectively 16 and 12 percent of all candidates. Doctors represented 6 percent of all candidates. Moreover, 69 percent of candidates were on the left of the political spectrum.¹³

As for the 439 elected candidates in our sample, Appendix Table B.2 shows that lawyers (111 candidates) and employees and workers (79 candidates) were also the most common occupations among winning candidates, representing respectively 25 and 18 percent of all winning candidates. Businessmen (98 candidates) were relatively successful as they represented 22 percent of all winning candidates, while journalists and doctors represented only 7 and 4 percent of them. 58 percent of winning candidates were on the left of the political spectrum.

It is also interesting to examine the distribution of occupations among candidates and winners for each election in our sample. Appendix Tables B.6–B.8 show that the share of lawyers among candidates slightly increased from 17 percent in 1928 to 21 percent in 1936, although their share among winners declined from 29 percent to 20 percent, in line with national-level trends. In contrast, the share of employees and workers among candidates declined from 33 percent in 1928 to 28 percent in 1936 but their share among winners increased from 12 percent to 29 percent. Overall, these trends suggest that lawyers were replaced

¹²Military professionals on active duty could neither vote nor run in elections. However, a few retired military professionals ran for office. Given their limited number and that they usually own land, we classify them as landowners.

¹³The mapping from political affiliations to political leaning into left, right, and independent for each election is available in Appendix Tables B.10–B.12.

by employees and workers during the interwar period.

3.3. Constituency characteristics

The empirical analysis accounts for constituency characteristics which may have had an impact on the outcome of elections. These characteristics include voter turnout and the number of candidates in each constituency and election. They also include an indicator variable equal to one if an incumbent candidate ran in a given election.

In the 441 electoral contests held in 1928, 1932, and 1936 within the 147 constituencies in our sample, there were on average 6 candidates competing in the first round, with a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 12. In 70 percent of these contests, a second round took place because no candidate had obtained more than 50 percent of the votes in the first round. On average, 4 candidates competed in the second round, with a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 8. Our summary statistics also show that 15 percent of candidates were incumbents while voter turnout amounted to 84 percent of registered voters.

4. Empirical Framework

This section presents our empirical framework. Section 4.1 discusses the econometric specification while Section 4.2 provides empirical tests in support of our identifying assumptions.

4.1. Estimation strategy

To assess the effect of voter density on the electoral success of a candidate, we estimate the following regression equation separately for each of the 12 occupations:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Elected}_{i_ocrdt} &= \beta_1 \mathbb{1}_{[i=o]} + \beta_2 \text{Density}_{ct} + \beta_3 \text{Density}_{ct} \times \mathbb{1}_{[i=o]} \\
 (1) \quad &+ \beta_4 X_{ict} + \alpha_{-ocr} + \alpha_c + \alpha_{dt} + \varepsilon_{i_ocrdt},
 \end{aligned}$$

where Elected_{i_ocrdt} equals 1 if candidate i with occupation o in constituency c of département d in year t wins the election and 0 otherwise. The coefficient of

interest, β_3 , captures the interaction between the log density of registered voters in constituency c (Density_{ct}) and an indicator for whether candidate i holds occupation o ($\mathbb{1}_{[i=o]}$). We control for a set of constituency-level characteristics (X_{ict}) that includes voter turnout, the number of candidates in the election, and an indicator for whether candidate i is the incumbent.

We use the panel structure of our data and include constituency (α_c) and département-by-year fixed effects (α_{dt}) to account for common trends over time in the interaction between density and the success of a given occupation in constituencies of the same département. To ensure that our results are not driven by the supply of candidates of other occupations in a constituency, we also include fixed effects (α_{-oct}) for the set of other occupations present in a given election and constituency. We cluster standard errors at the level of electoral constituencies.

In the last part of our empirical analysis, we analyze whether the effect of voter density differs for candidates with the same occupation but from different parties. To assess such heterogeneity across political parties, we estimate a triple interaction through the following specification for each candidate i with occupation o and affiliated to party p :

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Elected}_{i_{op}cdt} &= \beta_1 \mathbb{1}_{[i=o]} + \beta_2 \mathbb{1}_{[i=p]} + \beta_3 \text{Density}_{ct} + \beta_4 \text{Density}_{ct} \times \mathbb{1}_{[i=o]} \\
 (2) \quad &+ \beta_5 \text{Density}_{ct} \times \mathbb{1}_{[i=p]} + \beta_6 \text{Density}_{ct} \times \mathbb{1}_{[i=o]} \times \mathbb{1}_{[i=p]} \\
 &+ \beta_7 X_{ict} + \alpha_{-oct} + \alpha_c + \alpha_{dt} + \varepsilon_{i_{op}cdt},
 \end{aligned}$$

where $\text{Elected}_{i_{op}cdt}$ equals 1 if candidate i from party p with occupation o in constituency c of département d in year t wins the election and 0 otherwise. All the other variables are the same as in Equation 1. We then test the average effect of voter density for candidate i with occupation o for party p based on the following null hypothesis:

$$(3) \quad H_0: \hat{\beta}_4 + \overline{\text{density}_{ct}} \cdot \hat{\beta}_6 = 0,$$

where $\overline{\text{density}_{ct}}$ is the average log density in constituency c in year t while β_4 and β_6 were defined in Equation 2. Failure to reject the null hypothesis would

imply no heterogeneity in the effects of voter density for candidate i from party p with occupation o .

4.2. Identification strategy

4.2.1. identifying assumptions

Our identification strategy takes advantage of the economic, historical, and institutional context of the Third Republic to assess the electoral impact of variations in voter density entailed by exogenous changes in the boundaries of electoral constituencies. There are however three main challenges to this identification strategy. First, the 11 départements with electoral constituencies whose boundaries were modified should not have different observable characteristics from the 79 other departments with unmodified constituencies. Second, within these 11 départements, the 34 electoral constituencies with modified boundaries should not have observable characteristics different from the other 113 unmodified electoral constituencies prior to the boundary modifications. Third, the Stable Unit Treatment Value Assumption (SUTVA) should hold: the change in population density within the 34 modified constituencies should not have a significant impact on the other economic and political characteristics of all the constituencies within each of the 11 départements.

As discussed above, the institutional context of Third Republic France makes it unlikely that changes in the boundaries of constituencies would be driven by candidates' strategic preferences or would be correlated with the characteristics of the treated départements or those of the treated constituencies. Furthermore, the historical and economic context of interwar France makes it unlikely that changes in population density would significantly alter the social or occupational composition of the voting population. In particular, a higher level of urbanization in France during the interwar period would not necessarily be correlated an increase in the share of employees and workers in the industrial workforce. Indeed, the patterns of French industrialization were historically characterized by the presence of small industrial firms in rural areas relying on water-powered engines rather than steam power, as coal was relatively scarce in France (Cameron and Neal, 2003; Franck and Galor, 2021). Even with the advent of more techno-

logically advanced steam engines that were less reliant on coal, French industries remained equally likely to be located in urban or in rural areas, and continued to be characterized by their small size. For instance, the 1931 census reports that 88 percent of industrial firms had 10 employees or less while 9 percent had between 11 and 50 employees. Only 0.07 percent of industrial firms, usually in heavy industries such as the mining sector, had more than 1,000 employees.

4.2.2. Testing the identifying assumptions

To provide some empirical support for the validity of our identification strategy, we run a series of tests that rely upon département- and constituency-level variables collected from several archival sources listed in Appendix E. We report summary statistics for variables at the département level in Appendix Table B.13 and at the constituency level in Appendix Table B.14.

In Table 3, we report balance tests showing that the 11 départements within which the boundaries of constituencies were modified were not different from the 79 other départements along a large set of economic, judicial and political characteristics. Panel A tests for differences in economic characteristics pertaining to urbanization and lawyers' economic opportunities: the number of lawyers and of registered voters, fertility and literacy rates, as well as the density of roads (per square kilometer). Panel B tests for differences in the characteristics of the départements' préfets, as they played a role in the implementation of territorial reforms: their age; whether they were lawyers, held any other specification occupation, or were members of the Lower House of Parliament before joining the civil service; and their turnover rate, i.e., the number of years they remained in the same département. Finally, Panels C and D show that there was no significant difference between treated and untreated départements with respect to the occupations and party affiliations of the sitting members in the Upper House or of the candidates to the Lower House before each election.

Next, in Tables 4 and 5, we provide tests at the constituency level over observable characteristics of the 147 constituencies within the 11 départements in our main sample. These characteristics include several measures of judicial and economic activity: the numbers of chambers, lawyers, and trials; the area covered by

mining concessions (in square kilometers); a consumer price index; a wage index across all occupations, as well as wage rates for several occupations (blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, and plumbers). Specifically, in Table 4, we provide an ex-ante comparison between the 34 constituencies whose boundaries were modified and the 113 constituencies whose boundaries were not. In these balance tests, we find that treated and untreated constituencies were not different along these characteristics. Moreover, in Table 5, we provide an ex-post comparison by testing whether changes in (log) voter density due to boundary changes – our main explanatory variable – were correlated with variations in constituencies’ judicial and economic characteristics. We find no significant correlation, suggesting that the SUTVA assumption holds as changes to constituencies’ boundaries did not modify their underlying socio-economic composition.

Overall, these tests provide support for the validity of our empirical strategy insofar as they show that treated constituencies and higher voter density were not correlated with the opportunity cost of practicing law or with the composition of the workforce. As such, they imply that our main results are not driven by changes in the characteristics of the voters or of the constituencies other than higher voter density.

5. Results

This section reports our main results. Section 5.1 presents our baseline results on the causal relationship between voter density and the electoral success of lawyers and workers while Section 5.2 assesses heterogeneity in this relationship across the political spectrum. Finally Section 5.3 provides a series of robustness checks in support of our empirical strategy.

5.1. Voter density and electoral success

In Table 6, we report results from estimating Equation 1 for lawyer as well as for employee and worker candidates. Estimates suggest that a higher density of registered voters was detrimental to the electoral success of lawyers (Panel A) but beneficial to that of employees and workers (Panel B). Quantitatively, estimates including the full set of controls in Column 3 imply that a one-percent

increase in the density of registered voters per square kilometer in a constituency decreased the probability of electoral success for lawyers by 1.6 percentage points but increased that for employees and workers by 2.5 percentage points. In other words, a one-standard deviation increase in the log density of registered voters (2.6, corresponding to 4,500 registered voters per square kilometer) was associated with a decrease in the success probability of lawyers by 4.2 percentage points, which represents about 17 percent of their average probability of electoral success (24.8 percent). Conversely, a similar increase improved the success probability of employees and workers by 6.6 percentage points, i.e., 58 percent of the average probability of employees and workers' electoral success rate (11.3 percent). These results are corroborated by estimates in Column 6, which suggest that a higher voter density had a negative and significant effect on the vote share of lawyers but a positive and significant effect on the vote share of employees and workers.

In Figure 2, we display the coefficients from Column 3 of Table 6 for lawyers and workers along those for candidates with other occupations—the full set of estimates for these occupations are reported in Appendix Table B.15. These results show that changes in voter density did not have a robust significant effect on the electoral success of candidates with other occupations except for doctors, for whom urbanization was detrimental—for them, a one-standard deviation increase in the density of registered voters per square kilometer in a constituency decreased the probability of electoral success by 5.2 percentage points, which represents about 36 percent of their average probability of electoral success (14.3 percent). Indeed, like lawyers, doctors could use their professional influence to build network in rural constituencies. They were however a relatively small group, with only 133 candidates relative to 448 for lawyers.

5.2. Heterogeneous effects of voter density across the political spectrum

In Table 7, we examine whether changes in voter density had a heterogeneous electoral impact among left- and right-wing candidates by running Equations 2 and 3. While Column 1 reports baseline estimates from Column 2 of Table 6,

Columns 2 and 3 distinguish between the effect of voter density on left- and right-wing lawyers (Panel A) and employees and workers (Panel B) within the sample of left- and right-wing candidates, respectively. Estimates imply that higher voter density had a negative effect on the electoral success of left-wing lawyers, but a positive effect on the electoral success of left-wing employees and workers. In contrast, higher voter density did not affect the electoral success of right-wing lawyers and workers. Looking more broadly across all professions (Appendix Figure A.5 and Appendix Table B.16), results suggest that higher voter density did not have a significant impact on the electoral success of left- or right-wing candidates with occupations other than lawyers and workers.

These findings lead us to further investigate whether greater voter density had heterogeneous implications for left-wing lawyers and workers depending on their political affiliations. For this purpose, we estimate Equation 2 by distinguishing between communists from the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF), socialists from the *Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière* (SFIO), left-wing centrists from the *Parti Radical et Radical-Socialiste*, and independent left-wing candidates. Results in Table 8 imply that greater voter density had a strong negative and significant effect on the electoral success of independent left-wing lawyers.¹⁴ A one percent increase in the log density of registered voters lowered their electoral probability of success by 6.2 percentage points. Before the First World War, such independent left-wing lawyers had been instrumental in passing the early reforms of the Third Republic, notably the secular transformation of the school system as well as the separation of Church and State (Franck, 2016). At a time when most voters lived in rural areas, electoral constituencies were an aggregation of isolated villages where a handful of individuals could know every potential voter on a personal basis. These individuals could then play the role of middlemen to candidates seeking to mobilize voters on the ground. Because their professional networks relied on long-term business relationships, lawyers were likely to know these potential middlemen and thereby could turn their professional networks into political machines during electoral campaigns.¹⁵

¹⁴The small sample of communist candidates who were lawyers over the 1928–36 period (four won elections out of 11 candidates) does not seem to warrant an economic interpretation of the significant and negative effect of urbanization on their electoral success.

¹⁵For instance, Louis Barthou (1862–1934), a lawyer who represented the département of Basses-

However, when urbanization intensified, the professional network of these independent left-wing lawyers, who were local magnates in their rural constituencies, was less efficient in mobilizing voters than the professional network of employees and workers. It would indeed seem that these left-wing employees and workers had invested more efforts in the organization of political machines in urban than in rural areas.

The role of unions in the electoral success of employees and workers is evident in Appendix Table B.17, which provides biographical information for the elected employees and workers in our sample of 147 constituencies. Out of those 53 elected employees and workers, 44 had a direct union affiliation while the 9 others had emerged from unions to enter the party leadership. A case in point is that of Maurice Thorez (1900–64), who became the leader of the French Communist Party in the 1930s (Robrieux, 1975). As such, our analysis also provides an explanation for the rising political dominance of employees and workers in the interwar period that culminated in the victory of the left-wing *Front Populaire* coalition in 1936.

Nevertheless, results in Table 8 also suggest that voter density did not have different effects on the electoral success of employees and workers from different parties, suggesting that their affiliation neither advantaged nor disadvantaged them in turning their professional networks into an electoral machine. This is line with the historical evidence highlighting that both the communist PCF and socialist SFIO parties had close relations with national unions that could be traced back to the origins of the labor movement in France in the late nineteenth century (Lefranc, 1968; Moss, 1976) while the leadership of the *Parti Radical et Radical-Socialiste* was more likely to co-opt the local leaders of independent professional organizations (Barzman, 1997).

Pyrénées in the Lower House between 1889 and 1922 and in the Upper House between 1922 and 1934 wrote in his memoirs: “Who has not seen outside of Paris, on a market day in a small town, the antechamber of a lawyer’s office filled with peasants who came for a yes, for a no, for nothing, cannot know how influence is patiently built, how an authority in a constituency is developed” (Barthou, 1923, p. 18) (translation is ours).

5.3. Robustness checks

This section provides a series of robustness checks that support the validity of our baseline results. We first analyze counterfactual reforms to show that our results are not driven by unobservable factors which could entail both boundary changes and variation in voter density over time. Furthermore, we show that our results are robust to alternative measurement strategies, estimation methods, and subsamples.

5.3.1. Counterfactual reforms

To ensure that the main results in Table 6 are not driven by unobservable factors that could lead to both changes to boundaries of electoral constituencies and variation in voter density over time, we account for the sample of counterfactual constituencies in the analysis. As discussed in Section 2.3, these constituencies pertain to boundary changes that were debated by members of the Lower House of Parliament but were eventually rejected by their counterparts in the Upper House.

In Appendix Table B.18, Column 1 first reports baseline estimates based on the full specification of Table 6 for reference. Then, Column 2 augments our sample with the départements that contained counterfactual constituencies. Importantly, in Column 3, we only consider départements that comprised counterfactual constituencies. This specification can be seen as a stringent placebo test: since there was no actual boundary change in this sample, there should not be any effect of (log) voter density on the electoral success of lawyers and workers. Next, in Column 4, we restrict the sample to constituencies that experienced boundary changes and to counterfactual ones. Finally, in Column 5, we restrict the sample to the 34 constituencies that actually experienced boundary changes. Overall, except for Column 3 where we do not find a significant effect as predicted, results remain similar in size and significance to those we obtain in our baseline analysis, thereby providing support for the validity of our empirical strategy.

5.3.2. Alternative measurement strategies

Here we consider two measures other than the density of registered voters to assess the robustness of our baseline results. First, we consider the share of the urban population in each electoral constituency. As discussed in Section 3.1, we build this variable by collecting information on commune-level urban population from the censuses of 1926, 1931, and 1936, which we then aggregate at the level of the electoral constituencies. Using this measure instead of the (log) density of registered voters yields similar results: as shown in Appendix Table B.19, a ten-percentage point increase in the share of urban population in a constituency decreases the probability of electoral success for lawyers by 1.2 percentage points but increases that for employees and workers by 2.3 percentage points. In other words, a one-standard deviation increase in the share of urban population (33.2 percent) was associated with a decrease in the success probability of lawyers by 4.1 percentage points. Conversely, a similar increase improved the success probability of employees and workers by 7.5 percentage points. These magnitudes are nearly identical to those found with our baseline measure, whereby a one-standard deviation increase in the log density of registered voters was associated with a decrease in the success probability of lawyers by 4.2 percentage points and an increase in the success probability of employees and workers by 6.6 percentage points. This suggests that our baseline measure is a good proxy for urbanization and that our results are not an artifact of the measurement we use.

Second, we consider an alternative specification of the voter density variable by discretizing this initially continuous measure. In Appendix Table B.20, we show that our results are robust to using an indicator variable for whether the (log) density of the constituency is above the median value in the sample.

5.3.3. Alternative estimation methods

in this section, we report tests showing that our results are robust to estimating Equation 1 with alternative econometric strategies. In Appendix Table B.21, we show that the results reported in Table 6 are robust to a more stringent clustering strategy by which standard errors are clustered two-way at the levels of constituencies and département-years.

Furthermore, by construction, electoral shares sum to one. We therefore account for the dependence across equations by re-estimating Equation 1 with seemingly unrelated regressions across occupations, where outcomes are set to zero when the candidates’ occupations are different from o . Appendix Table B.22 shows that estimates from this methodology are similar to those in Table 6.

Moreover, population density might change over time for other reasons than boundary changes, for instance due to trends in migration, fertility, and mortality. To alleviate this potential issue, we run the analysis when including the density of registered voters using data from the preceding election; i.e., before the change in constituencies’ boundaries—assigning the population of 1928 to the election of 1932, and of 1932 to the election of 1936. Given that we can only run this specification on the elections of 1932 and 1936, we reproduce in Appendix Table B.23 our baseline estimates when excluding the election of 1928 from the sample, finding similar results. Estimates in Appendix Table B.24 when using the population of registered voters in the preceding election are similar, thereby suggesting that our results are not driven by differential demographic trends in treated constituencies.¹⁶

5.3.4. *Alternative samples*

Here, we check that our estimates hold in more restrictive samples. First, no département or administrative area should drive our results. In particular, the city of Paris, a geographic area with many registered voters throughout the period, may potentially lower the estimated coefficients. Reassuringly, both Appendix Figure A.6 and Appendix Table B.25 show that neither a single département nor Paris drove the results.

Second, as we discussed in Section 2, it was unlikely that some candidates would run strategically in different constituencies across elections to take advantage of the changing boundaries of electoral constituencies, given the institu-

¹⁶Although our setting bears similarities with a difference-in-difference framework, it differs from it as our variable of interest is an interaction term between the occupation indicator variable and the voter density variable whereby the source of exogenous variation is the change in voter density entailed by electoral and territorial reforms. Therefore, we cannot implement the various robust estimators proposed by de Chaisemartin and d’Haultfoeuille (2023).

tional uncertainty and timing surrounding the reforms. In fact, this potentially strategic behavior was marginal and usually unsuccessful. In the 1928, 1932, and 1936 elections, 52 candidates ran in different constituencies within the same département and only 4 were elected, while 38 ran in different départements and none won.¹⁷ Nonetheless, to alleviate concerns that this strategic behavior was related to changes in voter density, we rerun the baseline analysis by dropping candidates who ran in two different constituencies and/or départements. Appendix Table B.26 shows that dropping these candidates provide results that are similar to the baseline estimates.

6. Conclusion

This study analyzes how economic circumstances can entail the replacement of a political elite by another in a democracy. For this purpose, it focuses on the declining share of lawyers in the Lower House of the French Parliament during the interwar period.

The results show that the rise in the density of voters negatively affected the electoral success of lawyers. Within villages that made up rural constituencies, lawyers had a professional network of clients upon whom they could rely as middlemen to mobilize voters on election day. However, that network lost its electoral value when more voters moved to urban areas. This rural exodus gave an advantage to employees and workers who could use their professional networks of labor unions to mobilize voters in cities.

As such, the results suggest that electoral success in local contests, even in those with a national character like parliamentary elections, has become less dependent upon the candidates' occupations. Instead it is better explained by the candidates' ability to organize political machines that successfully canvass urban constituencies over a long time period and mobilize voters on election day.

¹⁷Over the 1928–36 period, candidates could theoretically run in different constituencies in the first and second rounds. In our sample, this was the case for only one candidate: Ernest Perney ran in 1928 in the constituency of Saint-Denis-5 (Seine) in the first round and in the constituency of Versailles-3 (Seine-et-Oise) in the second round but lost both times.

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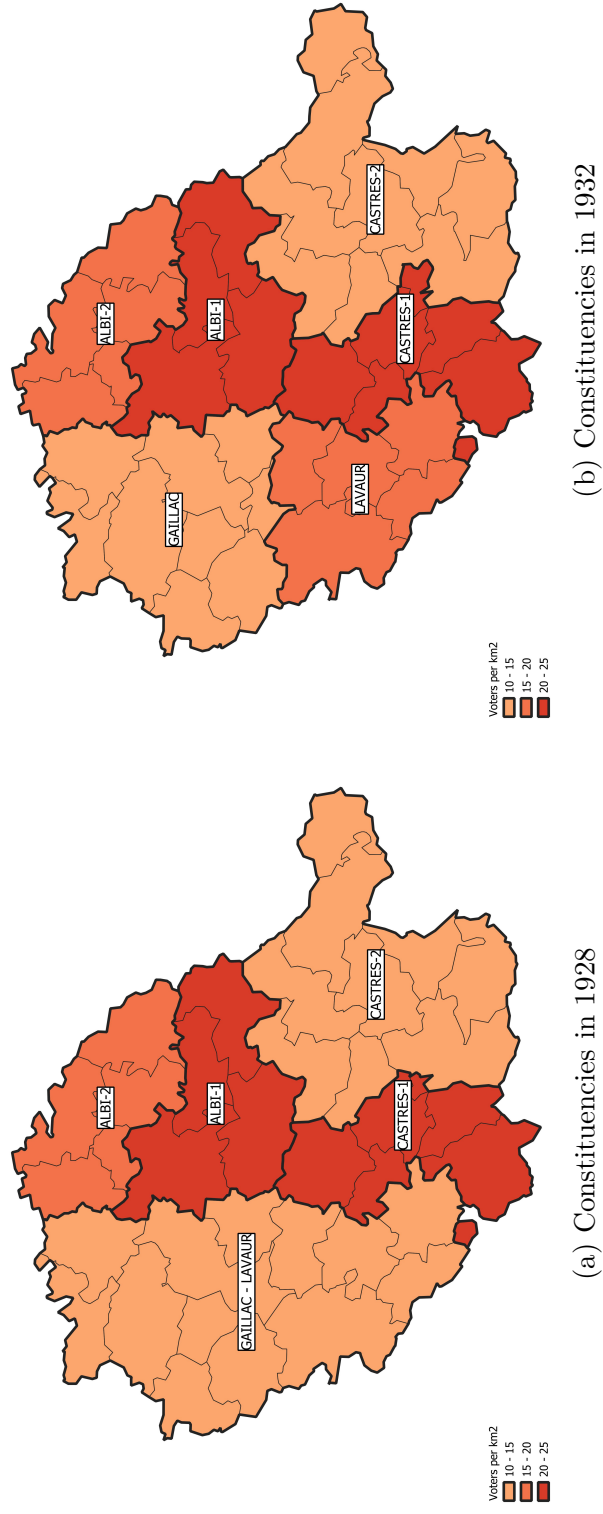


Figure 1. Boundary Change: Constituencies of Gaillac and Lavaur, Département of Tarn, 1928–1932

Notes. Thick black lines represent electoral constituencies, thin black lines represent cantons.

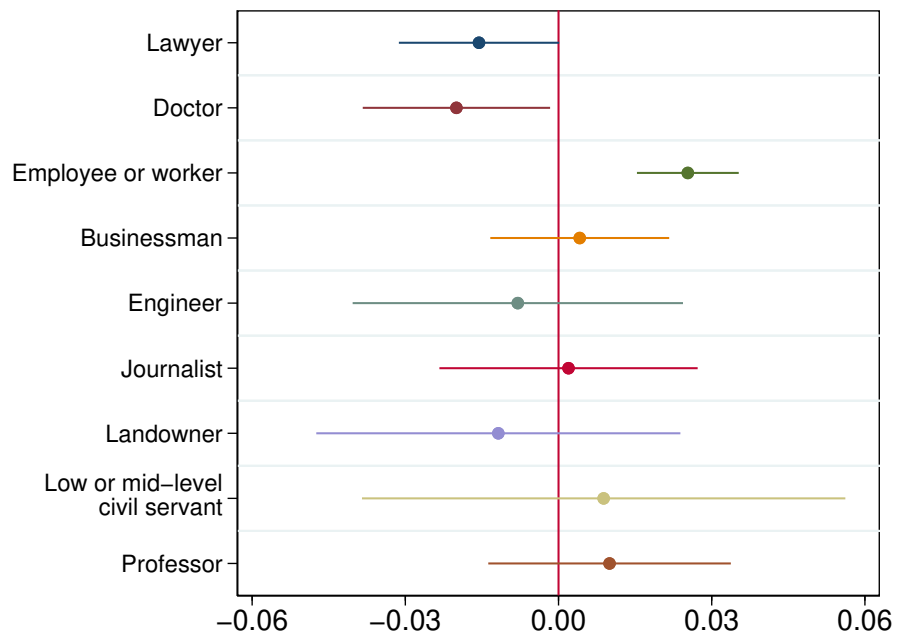


Figure 2. Voter Density and Electoral Success Across Occupations

Notes. This figure displays coefficients from estimating Equation 1 along with 95 percent confidence intervals for all occupations. Results for the 3 clergyman, 17 artist, and 31 high-level civil servant candidates not shown for readability.

Table 1. Changes to Boundaries of Electoral Constituencies, 1928–36

A. Electoral Reforms				
Date	Nature	Motive	Département	Constituencies
25-03-1932	Creation from parts of two constituencies	Re-establish former constituency	Ardennes	Sedan from Mézières-1 and Vouziers
25-03-1932	Creation from parts of two constituencies	Re-establish former constituency	Calvados	Falaise from Caen-1 and 2
25-03-1932	Creation from division of two constituencies	Re-establish former constituency	Tarn	Gaillac and Lavaur from Gaillac-Lavaur
20-03-1936	Transfer of one canton across two constituencies	Balanced populations	Loire-Inférieure	Nantes-4 and Paimboeuf
20-03-1936	Creation from parts of one constituency	Balanced populations	Seine-et-Oise	Corbeil-2 and 3
20-03-1936	Creation from parts of three constituencies	Balanced populations	Seine	Saint-Denis-5, 10, 11, and 12
20-03-1936	Transfer of two cantons across two constituencies	Balanced populations	Seine	Saint-Denis-2 and Sceaux-1
B. Territorial Reforms				
Date	Nature	Motive	Département	Constituencies
09-04-1929	Transfer of one commune across cantons	Proximity to administrative center	Seine-et-Marne	Meaux-1 and 2
25-07-1929	Transfer of one commune across cantons	Proximity to administrative center	Ardennes	Réthel and Mézière-1
31-07-1929	Transfer of two communes across cantons	Proximity to administrative center	Isère	Saint-Marcellin and Vienne-2
08-01-1930	Transfer of two communes across cantons	Proximity to administrative center	Pas-de-Calais	Saint-Pol and Arras-1
21-07-1931	Transfer of one commune across cantons	Proximity to administrative center	Côte-d'Or	Semur and Dijon-2
13-03-1932	Transfer of one commune across cantons	Proximity to administrative center	Tarn	Castres-1 and 2
08-04-1935	Transfer of one commune across cantons	Proximity to administrative center	Meurthe-et-Moselle	Toul and Nancy-1

Notes. This table summarizes the boundary changes we use for identification. It distinguishes changes following electoral reforms (Panel A) to those following territorial reforms (Panel B). See Appendix D for more details.

Table 2. Counterfactual Reforms to Boundaries of Electoral Constituencies, 1928–36

Date	Nature	Motive	Département	Constituencies
12-02-1932	Creation from division of one constituency	None discussed	Bouches-du-Rhône	Arles-1 and 2 from Arles
12-02-1932	Modification from transfers between two constituencies	Re-establish former constituency	Indre	Châteauroux-1 and 2
26-02-1932	Creation from parts of two constituencies	Re-establish former constituency	Aveyron	Decazeville from Rodez and Villefrance-de-Rouergue
26-02-1932	Modification from transfers between two constituencies	Re-establish former constituency	Loire-Inférieure	Saint-Nazaire-1 and 2
26-02-1932	Creations from division of three constituencies	Balanced populations	Seine	Saint-Denis-2, 7, and 10
26-02-1932	Modification from transfers between two constituencies	Balanced populations	Seine-Inférieure	Rouen-1 and 2
26-02-1932	Creation from division of one constituency	Re-establish former constituency	Marne	Chalons-sur-Marne-1 and 2
26-02-1932	Modification from transfers between two constituencies	Re-establish former constituency	Mayenne	Château-Gontier and Laval
17-03-1932	Creation from parts of four constituencies	Balanced populations	Bouches-du-Rhône	Marseille-9 from Marseille-1, 4, 6, and 7
17-03-1932	Modification from transfers between two constituencies	Balanced populations	Haute-Vienne	Limoge-1 and 2
17-03-1932	Creation from division of one constituency	Re-establish former constituency	Gers	Lecture, Condom, and Condom-Lectoure
12-03-1936	Modification from transfers between two constituencies	Balanced populations	Bouches-du-Rhône	Aix-1 and Aix-2

Notes. This table summarizes the counterfactual boundary changes we use for robustness. *Date* corresponds to the date of rejection of the proposed change, either in the Lower House or in the Upper House. See Appendix D for more details.

Table 3. Balance Tests: Characteristics of Départements Encompassing Constituencies with Modified Electoral Constituencies

A. Economic outcomes					
	Lawyers	Voters	Fertility	Literacy	Roads
Département with treated constituencies	-0.067 [0.090]	1.410 [0.919]	-0.067 [0.062]	0.006 [0.007]	0.070 [0.150]
R ²	0.005	0.117	0.033	0.102	0.458
Départements	90	90	90	90	90
Observations	270	270	270	270	270
B. <i>Préfets</i>					
	Lawyer	Other occupation	<i>Député</i>	Age	Turnover
Département with treated constituencies	-0.012 [0.032]	-0.029 [0.034]	-0.004 [0.004]	0.780 [0.928]	0.308 [0.437]
R ²	0.012	0.003	0.008	0.006	0.039
Départements	90	90	90	90	90
Observations	270	270	270	270	270
C. Upper House members (<i>Sénateurs</i>)					
	Lawyer	Doctor	Worker	Left	Right
Département with treated constituencies	0.052 [0.200]	0.019 [0.180]	0.287 [0.262]	0.072 [0.742]	0.601 [0.430]
R ²	0.001	0.001	0.053	0.000	0.032
Départements	90	90	90	90	90
Observations	270	270	270	270	270
D. Candidates to Lower House					
	Lawyers	Doctors	Workers	Left	Right
Département with treated constituencies	0.066 [1.349]	0.070 [0.430]	1.971 [2.282]	3.388 [4.988]	1.234 [1.356]
R ²	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.009
Départements	90	90	90	90	90
Observations	270	270	270	270	270

Notes. This table reports balance tests over observable characteristics at the département level for the départements with and without treated constituencies. The units of observations are départements in 1928, 1932, and 1936. There are 90 unique départements, among which 11 départements with treated constituencies. All specifications include election year fixed effects for 1928 (omitted), 1932, and 1936. In Panel A, *Lawyers* stands for the number of lawyers per 10,000 inhabitants, *Voters*, for the number of registered voters in 100,000, *Fertility*, for the crude birth rate, *Literacy*, for the share of conscripts that can read or write, and *Roads*, for the log kilometers of roads. In Panels B and C, characteristics respectively relate to the département's single préfet or Upper House members (*sénateurs*) at the time of each parliamentary election. In Panel D, characteristics correspond to the number of lawyers, doctors, workers, as well as left- and right-wing candidates by département at the time of each election. Standard errors in brackets are clustered at the département level.

*** $p \leq 0.01$. ** $p \leq 0.05$. * $p \leq 0.10$.

Table 4. Balance Tests: Characteristics of Constituencies With and Without Modified Electoral Boundaries

Outcome:	Chambers	Lawyers	Trials	Log Mine Area	Log Prices
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treated constituency	-0.083 [0.300]	-0.869 [3.355]	-0.340 [0.407]	-0.513 [0.456]	0.002 [0.004]
Within R ²	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.008	0.000
Constituencies	147	147	147	152	147
Observations	294	294	294	455	441

Outcome:	Log wages				
Occupation:	Index	Blacksmiths	Carpenters	Masons	Plumbers
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Treated constituency	0.004 [0.007]	0.005 [0.008]	0.008 [0.008]	0.000 [0.006]	0.006 [0.007]
Within R ²	0.001	0.001	0.004	0.000	0.002
Constituencies	146	146	146	146	146
Observations	292	292	292	292	292

Notes. This table reports balance tests over observable characteristics of treated and non-treated constituencies. One observation is an electoral constituency. There are 68 treated constituencies over 11 départements. All specifications include département and year fixed effects. *Chambers* stands for the number of chambers of each tribunal, *Lawyers*, for the number of lawyers, *Trials*, for the number of trials (in 100s), *Log Mine Area*, the log of total mining area in square kilometers, *Log Prices*, the log of a local price index over thirty commodities, and *Index*, the log of a local daily wage index over 10 occupations. Occupations in the bottom-half of the table refer to the log of the local daily wage in these occupations. Legal data are available for 1925 and 1931; wage data, for 1928 and 1932; price and mining data, for 1928, 1932, and 1936. Standard errors in brackets are clustered at the constituency-group level (125 groups).

*** $p \leq 0.01$. ** $p \leq 0.05$. * $p \leq 0.10$.

Table 5. SUTVA Tests: Voter Density and Constituency Characteristics

Outcome:	Chambers	Lawyers	Trials	Log Mine Area	Log Prices
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Log density	-0.987 [1.273]	20.240 [27.201]	1.903 [19.259]	-0.010 [0.110]	0.014 [0.011]
Within R ²	0.001	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.002
Constituencies	147	147	147	228	147
Observations	294	294	294	455	441

Outcome:	Log wages				
Occupation:	Index	Blacksmiths	Carpenters	Masons	Plumbers
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Log density	0.013 [0.017]	-0.029 [0.025]	0.005 [0.028]	0.052 [0.041]	-0.012 [0.028]
Within R ²	0.002	0.002	0.000	0.009	0.001
Constituencies	145	145	145	145	145
Observations	290	290	290	290	290

Notes. This table reports SUTVA tests showing the correlation between voter density and observable characteristics of constituencies in our sample. One observation is an electoral constituency. All specifications include constituency and year fixed effects. *Chambers* stands for the number of chambers of each tribunal, *Lawyers*, for the number of lawyers, *Trials*, for the number of trials (in 100s), *Log Mine Area*, the log of total mining area in square kilometers, *Log Prices*, the log of a local price index over thirty commodities, and *Index*, the log of a local daily wage index over 10 occupations. Occupations in the bottom-half of the table refer to the log of the local daily wage in these occupations. Legal data are available for 1925 and 1931; wage data, for 1928 and 1932; price and mining data, for 1928, 1932, and 1936. Standard errors in brackets are clustered at the constituency-group level (125 groups).

*** $p \leq 0.01$. ** $p \leq 0.05$. * $p \leq 0.10$.

Table 6. Voter Density and the Electoral Success of Lawyers and Workers

Outcome:	Elected			Vote Share		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
A. Profession: Lawyer						
Log density \times lawyer	-0.026** [0.013]	-0.015* [0.008]	-0.016* [0.008]	-1.451** [0.589]	-0.831** [0.334]	-0.866** [0.334]
Controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Other occupations FE	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Within R ²	0.012	0.249	0.249	0.027	0.418	0.419
Constituencies	147	147	147	147	147	147
Observations	2,350	2,350	2,350	2,350	2,350	2,350
B. Profession: Employee or worker						
Log density \times worker	0.037*** [0.006]	0.025*** [0.005]	0.025*** [0.005]	2.707*** [0.389]	2.094*** [0.311]	2.132*** [0.309]
Controls	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Other occupations FE	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Within R ²	0.030	0.255	0.255	0.073	0.443	0.446
Constituencies	147	147	147	147	147	147
Observations	2,350	2,350	2,350	2,350	2,350	2,350

Notes. Each observation is a candidate. All specifications include constituency and election fixed effects, log voter density, and a profession indicator. Controls include an incumbent indicator, constituency controls (first round number of candidates, first round turnout, number of rounds), and département-by-year fixed effects. *Vote share* is relative to the decisive round. Standard errors in brackets are clustered at the constituency level.

*** $p \leq 0.01$. ** $p \leq 0.05$. * $p \leq 0.10$.

Table 7. Voter Density and the Electoral Success of Left-Wing and Right-Wing Lawyers and Workers

Outcome:	Elected		
Sample:	Baseline	Left	Right
	(1)	(2)	(3)
A. Profession: Lawyer			
Log density \times lawyer	-0.016* [0.008]	-0.028*** [0.009]	-0.003 [0.014]
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Within R ²	0.249	0.164	0.266
Constituencies	147	147	140
Observations	2,350	1,616	664
B. Profession: Employee or worker			
Log density \times worker	0.025*** [0.005]	0.030*** [0.007]	-0.011 [0.023]
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Within R ²	0.255	0.171	0.265
Constituencies	147	147	140
Observations	2,350	1,616	664

Notes. Each observation is a candidate. All specifications include constituency and election fixed effects, log voter density, and an occupation indicator. Controls include an incumbent indicator, constituency controls (first round number of candidates, first round turnout, number of rounds, other candidates' occupations fixed effects), and département-by-year fixed effects. Standard errors in brackets are clustered at the constituency level.

*** $p \leq 0.01$. ** $p \leq 0.05$. * $p \leq 0.10$.

Table 8. Voter Density and the Electoral Success of Left-Wing Lawyers and Workers

Outcome:	Elected				
	Left	Comm.	Soc	Rad. Soc.	Indep.
Sample:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A. Profession: Lawyer					
Log density \times lawyer	-0.028*** [0.009]	-0.014 [0.010]	-0.038*** [0.010]	-0.046*** [0.014]	-0.021** [0.010]
Log density \times lawyer \times party		-0.153* [0.084]	0.062*** [0.018]	0.041** [0.020]	-0.041* [0.022]
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Within R ²	0.140	0.157	0.143	0.141	0.146
Constituencies	147	147	147	147	147
Observations	1,616	1,616	1,616	1,616	1,616
$\frac{\widehat{\beta}_{\text{density} \times \text{lawyer}} +}{\text{density} \times \text{lawyer}} \cdot \widehat{\beta}_{\text{density} \times \text{lawyer} \times \text{party}}$		-0.171** [0.085]	0.026* [0.015]	-0.004 [0.015]	-0.062*** [0.019]
Lawyer-party elected	43	4	3	26	10
Lawyer-party candidates	257	11	29	145	72
B. Profession: Employee or worker					
Sample:	Left	Comm.	Soc.	Rad. Soc.	Indep.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Log density \times worker	0.030*** [0.007]	0.018** [0.009]	0.035*** [0.007]	0.030*** [0.007]	0.031*** [0.007]
Log density \times worker \times party		-0.015 [0.019]	-0.018 [0.015]	-0.009 [0.022]	0.004 [0.013]
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Within R ²	0.148	0.160	0.147	0.147	0.152
Constituencies	147	147	147	147	147
Observations	1,616	1,616	1,616	1,616	1,616
$\frac{\widehat{\beta}_{\text{density} \times \text{worker}} +}{\text{density} \times \text{worker}} \cdot \widehat{\beta}_{\text{density} \times \text{worker} \times \text{party}}$		-0.018 [0.043]	-0.009 [0.034]	0.008 [0.053]	0.040 [0.029]
Worker-party elected	77	45	25	0	7
Worker-party candidates	650	344	199	6	101

Notes. This table reports regression results for left-wing lawyers and left-wing employees and workers. Column 1 reports results for all left-wing candidates; Column 2, for candidates affiliated with the communist party (PCF); Column 3, for candidates affiliated with the socialist party (SFIO); Column 4, for candidates affiliated with the center left-wing radical party (Parti Radical et Radical-Socialiste); Column 5, for independent left-wing candidates. Each observation is a left-wing candidate. All specifications include constituency and election fixed effects, log voter density, and a profession indicator. Controls include an incumbent indicator, constituency controls (first round number of candidates, first round turnout, number of rounds, other candidates' occupations fixed effects), and département-by-year fixed effects. Standard errors in brackets are clustered at the constituency level.

*** $p \leq 0.01$. ** $p \leq 0.05$. * $p \leq 0.10$.