Democratisation of Chief Executive Candidate Selection and Party Discipline in Parliamentary Democracies

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Abstract

The opening of candidate and leadership selection processes to broad selectorates tends to be seen as a normative good. Nevertheless, the evidence regarding the consequences of political parties allowing grassroots members and non-members to participate in selecting their candidates for public office is mixed. Highly participatory candidate nomination processes have been shown to lead to less inclusive and representative legislative institutions and highly undisciplined political parties. This paper argues that the democratisation of chief executive selection might produce similar effects as far as party discipline is concerned. Inclusive selectorates for chief executive candidates can widen the gap between the ideal policies of leaders and rank-and-file legislators creating the incentive to dissent. Executive leaders whose positions no longer coincide with the party establishment may also have limited access to ex post constraints on rebel legislators. These implications are tested in a case study of backbench rebellions in the 2012-2017 term of the French National Assembly. To assess the link between intra-party preferences and discipline, a dataset containing deputies’ endorsements in the open primary contest organised by the Socialist Party (PS) to select their candidate for the 2012 presidential election was collected. The statistical analysis of roll call data suggests that the further away the preferences of PS backbenchers were from the winner of the primary contest, the more likely they were to rebel during the next legislature.

Introduction

During the course of their career, legislators take decisions that involve trade-offs between their office, policy, and electoral goals (Müller and Strøm 1999). Political scientists have drawn attention to the impact of regime types, parliamentary institutions and electoral rules on legislative behaviour and party unity (Huber 1996a, 1996b; Hix 2004; Carey 2007; Kam 2014). The work and behaviour of elected representatives is shaped not only by their career ambitions, but also by the structural incentives of electoral systems and candidate selection procedures (Høyland et al. 2014). Moreover, although ideological preferences play an important role in the legislators’ decision to toe the party line (Krehbiel 1992, 1999), they only partially explain why some legislators vote against their parties. Depending on the extent to which party leaders can use candidate selection and ballot access rules as ex-post screening devices on incumbent legislators, internal party democracy can also directly impact legislative party discipline (Kam 2014: 411–2). Thus, party rules and intra-party politics also explain why some legislators are more inclined to dissent than others (Kam 2001, 2009).

This paper investigates the extent to which democratising the selection of chief executive candidates may affect partisan discipline. An increasing number of parties across established democracies are opening the selection of their leaders and candidates for chief executive positions not only to grassroots members, but also to the wider electorate. For example, this system is nowadays used by the French Socialists, Republicans, and Greens, as well as by the Greek Socialists, the Democratic Party in Italy and the Liberal Party in Canada (Kenig et al. 2015: 31–2). The “presidentialization” thesis set out by Poguntke and Webb (2005a) singles out the introduction of direct leadership elections by the party rank-and-file and open primaries as one of the factors contributing to the leaders’ growing autonomy from the dominant coalitions of power within the party (Poguntke and Webb 2005b: 9; Lisi 2010: 131). Moreover, party organizational changes affect not only the balance of power between the “three faces” of parties (Katz and Mair 1993), but also the relationship between chief executives and their parliamentary parties. The more “independent” the mandate obtained by political leaders, the greater their incentive to govern past their party and legislative majority (Poguntke and Webb 2005b: 10; Kenig et al. 2015: 38). This is, however, only half of the story, as the enhanced sense of autonomy cuts both ways: “while the leader is more independent of the party, the party in the legislature might also feel more independent of the leader, and therefore more prepared to rebel” (Webb et al. 2012: 81). Particularly in times of political and electoral disadvantage, rank-and-file legislators may be more inclined to ignore the leadership. Thus, the democratisation of party leadership selection, which presents party leaders and chief executives with increasing degrees of autonomy from their own legislative parties than it is usually expected of parliamentary party leaders (Webb et al. 2012: 80–1) can potentially strain the relationship between chief executives and their parliamentary parties.
Empirically, the paper focuses on backbench rebellions in the French National Assembly (2012-2017) following François Hollande’s selection as the Socialist Party’s presidential candidate in the 2011 open primary and the ensuing victory of the Socialist Party in the 2012 presidential and general elections. To determine the extent to which the legislators’ propensity to rebel can be traced back to the ideological polarization exposed by the 2011 open primary, an original data set containing the endorsements of rank-and-file legislators for the six candidates who contested the primary election was collected. Preliminary results show that the ideological distance between legislators and the winning candidate turned chief executive explains their tendency to break the party line even when one accounts for the legislators’ re-election and career advancement goals.

Democratisation of chief executive candidates’ selection and party discipline

International actors concerned with democracy promotion endorse internal party democracy as a normative good and a necessary component of statewide democracy (Katz and Cross 2013: 7). Across established democracies, political parties strive to counteract the decline in party democracy with reforms aimed to involve grassroots members and sympathisers in key decision-making processes, such as candidate and leadership selection (Biezen et al. 2012). The scholarly literature on intra-party democratisation reforms also highlights the transformation of party organizations towards granting grassroots members and sympathisers greater influence in both candidate and leadership selection (Kenig 2009a, 2009b; Lisi 2010; Cross and Blais 2012a, 2012b; Cross and Katz 2013; Seddone and Venturino 2013; Cross and Pilet 2014; Sandri et al. 2015). These works provide systematic cross-country evidence about the factors leading parties to use inclusive candidate selection procedures, the characteristics of new rules of intraparty election procedures and their effect on party mobilisation, participation, competitiveness, and membership appeal.

The evidence regarding the consequences of internal party democratisation is mixed. Hazan and Rahat (2010) draw attention to the adverse effects of more inclusive methods of candidate selection on the quality of representation and show that going too far in opening up candidate selection to a wide selectorate may result in less inclusive legislatures. Inclusive methods of candidate selection also influence the behaviour and type of work that legislators carry out once elected. Candidate-centred electoral rules, where voters are involved in the selection of candidates and/or can exercise preferences for individual candidates at election times, provide incentives for legislators to cultivate support within their constituencies independently of their party (Carey and Shugart 1995; Stratmann and Baur 2002; Bawn and Thies 2003; Crisp et al. 2004). As a result, parliamentary party discipline is higher among legislators elected in party-centred electoral systems, where party lists are closed and under the control of party leaders, than among legislators elected in electoral system where party lists are open and voters exercise more control over the legislators’ re-election prospects (Hix 2004; Carey 2007, 2009; Depauw and Martin 2009; Sieberer 2010). Moreover,
legislators elected in party-centred systems are likely to participate and engage more in day-to-day legislative activities valued by political and party leaders than legislators elected in candidate-centred systems who need to devote greater attention to their constituency (Høyland et al. 2014). The likely result is weaker parliamentary parties, as legislators are more inclined to break ranks with the party line to increase their re-election odds, and less professional legislators able to translate policy programmes into policy outputs.

The growing involvement of rank-and-file party members and sympathisers in candidate selection is increasingly matched by the adoption of equally inclusive rules for the selection of party leaders and candidates for chief executive positions. The one-member-one-vote leadership election method is nowadays used by political parties in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Taiwan and the UK (Kenig et al. 2015: 30–2). Moreover, the Greek Socialist Party (PASOK) and Italy’s Democratic Party and have organized primaries open to all citizens for the election of their leaders and prime minister candidates since 2003 and 2007 respectively. Ahead of the 2017 French presidential election, the Socialist, Republican, and Green parties selected their presidential parties in open primaries as well.

The opening of party leadership recruitment to grassroots members can have important consequences for executive-legislative relations. According to the cartel party theory, the empowerment of the rank-and-file members and even non-members in leadership elections at the expense of party and parliamentary elites allows political leaders to legitimise themselves both inside and outside the party (Katz and Mair 1995: 21). Opening up leadership selection to non-members strips power away from activists who act as delegates in party institutions and have stronger ideological motivations than the grassroots members below and the elite above (Kenig et al. 2015: 38).

The appeal to expanded selectorates increases the power resources leaders enjoy within the executive and their autonomy from their legislative parties, as Poguntke and Webb (2005a) argue in the “presidentialisation” of politics thesis. The corollary of the chief executive’s independence of the party is, however, that legislative parties can also be freer to ignore the leadership, especially when the leader’s electoral support begins to falter (Webb et al. 2012: 95). Thus, intra-party tensions appear more likely when legislators and executive leaders are selected by and appeal to different selectorates. The Labour backbench rebellions during Blair’s premiership illustrate the legislators’ concern that the party policy on core issues was being altered for the sake of maximizing re-election chances (Cowley 2002, 2005). Moreover, Labour backbench rebellions under Jeremy Corbyn as Leader of the Opposition highlight the tension that may emerge between the parliamentary party and its leader when the party rank-and-file is given the last word in leadership elections.

The existing evidence about the consequences of party primaries for candidate and party divergence is mixed and predominantly focused on legislative behaviour in the U.S. Congress. Extending Downs’ (1957) model of party competition to include a two-stage process with a primary and a general poll, a number of studies predict
systematic nonconvergence of party positions (Owen and Grofman 2006; Adams and Merrill 2008). In other words, the expectation is that primary elections are likely to draw candidates away from the median voter’s ideal point, thus increasing the potential of partisan polarisation in congressional roll call voting. Other studies have found little evidence of a direct connection between party primaries and polarization in the U.S. Congress (Hirano 2010; Peress 2013) or a direct link between the openness of a primary election and legislative extremism (Mcghee et al. 2013). More generally, Serra (2015) argues that rational inter-party competition drives all candidates to converge to the median voter’s ideal policy even if they have to go through a nomination process within their own parties. That said, whether the use of different nomination systems for the designation of party representatives in parliament and the party’s candidates for national executive positions is likely to strain executive-legislative relations is a matter that needs to be studied empirically.

The combination of open primaries for leadership and/or chief executive positions and closed primaries for party representatives can affect inter-branch relationships if the different primary contests increase the distance between the ideal policy positions of the two types of candidates. From a Downsian perspective on strategic electoral behaviour, chief executive candidates in open primary contests need to locate themselves closer to the median voter of the entire electorate than to the median voter of their own party in order to win (Lemennicier et al. 2011). On the other hand, it is also possible that open primary elections return candidates from the relative extremes of political groupings, as the 2016-2017 left- and right-wing primary elections in France have shown. At the same time, party representatives selected in closed party primaries or more centralised candidate selection processes are likely to be positioned closer to the median voter of the party and/or to the party elites’ ideal policy. Thus, leadership selection rules that empower non-members at the expense of party militants may increase the distance between the ideal policies of chief executive, party elites, and rank-and-file legislators potentially leading to voting dissent. In other words, the more inclusive the selectorate for party leadership selection, the more accountable the leader becomes to the wider selectorate and more likely to neglect the preferences of party factions relatively distant from the global median voter but which may still be represented among local activists and the parliamentary group.

Significant distances between the ideal policy positions of executive leaders and representatives may also make it more problematic for the former to enforce discipline when backbenchers disagree about the direction of party policy. Models of intra-party politics are built on the assumption that backbench legislators and political leaders must reach a bargain over policy, office, and votes when they disagree about party policy (Kam 2009). Policy preferences aside, the key factors explaining the legislators’ strategic use of dissent are electoral security and career advancement opportunities (Kam 2009: 32). The extent to which party leaders hold the monopoly over these goods and can manipulate their provision determines whether MPs see it in their advantage to break the party line. Thus, party-driven models of legislative behaviour draw attention to the range of parliamentary and intra-party mechanisms
that leaders can use to induce discipline. Three mechanisms stand out (Kam 2014: 410–1): the extent to which electoral rules induce legislators to seek personal votes independent of the party label; the degree to which party leaders can use candidate selection and ballot access as ex post constraints on legislators; and the extent to which leaders control the pathways to the range of executive and legislative offices that allow backbenchers to achieve policy and office goals. Control over the second discipline-enforcing mechanism is a particularly valuable if the party leadership can credibly threaten to deny the backbenchers’ renomination as party candidates. However, executive leaders who no longer represent the ideal point of the party establishment may find it more difficult to exploit this last-mover advantage.

To sum up, this paper studies the extent to which the democratisation of chief executive candidates’ selection affects legislative behaviour. In this context, party leadership selection rules are important because they directly influence the distance between the ideal policies of executive leaders and rank-and-file legislators and may also affect the former’s ability to take advantage of party sanctioning devices. That said, whether legislators end up breaking the party line should depend not only on policy disagreements with executive leaders, but also on the extent of their electoral security and constituency representation. The following section introduces the French case, emphasising the change from the initial central role played by the party leadership in the designation of presidential candidates, to the selection of a party ‘outsider’ who is better placed to win over the electorate at large but is no longer able to count on the support of a loyal party majority once elected.

The French Case

The development of party primary contests in France for the selection of party leaders and presidential candidates has gone hand-in-hand with greater internal democracy and, similarly to the Italian left-wing parties, has been the legacy of bitter factional infighting (Bucur and Elgie 2012; De Luca and Venturino 2015). As a result of intra-factional disputes in the Socialist Party, the one-member-one-vote method for the selection of the presidential candidate was included in the party statutes in 1978 (Lefebvre 2011: 24). However, it was not before the 1995 presidential election that this practice was activated because of the competition to succeed François Mitterrand. Lionel Jospin took advantage of Jacques Delors’ withdrawal from the 1995 presidential race to force the organisation of a closed party primary for the selection of a new candidate and defeated Henri Emmanuelli, the incumbent party leader, with a confortable majority. Had he taken the standard route of advancement on the party ladder, Jospin’s double bid for the presidential nomination and the party presidency would have been most likely unsuccessful given his marginalisation in the party after losing both his cabinet portfolio and his parliamentary seat between 1992 and 1993. Thus, the increase in the Socialist party’s internal democracy was Jospin’s only chance to win the party leadership without having to negotiate with the courants.
The second primary-like contest for the selection of a presidential candidate was organised in 2006. Ségolène Royal, a relative outsider, competed against Laurent Fabius, a former Prime Minister and former party leader, and Dominique Strauss-Kahn, a former Finance Minister. Ségolène Royal’s victory against key courant leaders was put down to her ability to reconcile public opinion with the party establishment and grassroots members (Dolez and Laurent 2007). She led a quasi-outsider candidacy and went at great lengths to avoid building a coalition among the party courants or being associated with one of them during the electoral campaign that followed her designation as the PS presidential candidate (Clift 2007). Overall, this episode demonstrated that nation-wide popular support and favourable opinion polls were the most important ingredient of a successful PS campaign (Sawicki 2013: 108).

The decision to organise open party primaries in 2011 was the result of the highly conflictual Reims congress of November 2008, marked by the clash between Martine Aubry and Ségolène Royal over the party leadership post (Dolez 2015: 72). Although Martine Aubry was narrowly elected, her image was badly affected by the factional in-fighting of the 2007-2008 period (Sawicki 2013: 110). As a result, she had little choice but to give in to the pressures advanced by Ségolène Royal and Arnaud Montebourg for the organisation of open party primaries. Therefore, like the previous two contests, the 2011 primary was another compromise solution designed to resolve leadership in-fighting (Dolez 2015: 71).

Following the surprising exit of Dominique Strauss-Kahn from the competition after the May 2011 events in New York, six candidates entered the primary race: Arnaud Montebourg and Manuel Valls, representing the left and right wings of the party respectively; Martine Aubry, the party leader; François Hollande, the previous PS secretary during 1997-2008; Ségolène Royal, the 2007 candidate; and Jean-Michel Baylet, the candidate of the small Left-radical Party, the only other left-wing party that accepted to take part in the PS primary. Once DSK was out of the race, François Hollande was seen as the Socialist Party’s best chance to win against UMP’s Nicolas Sarkozy. He was credited with the chance to lose fewer votes to far-left candidates in the first round and to pick up more centre-right support in the second round than all other Socialist candidates (Lemennicier et al. 2011: 304–5). That said, Hollande’s position among the other PS candidates in terms of left-right positioning was consistently located slightly left of Manuel Valls, but on the right of Montebourg, Aubry, and Royal. As a result, his victory against Martine Aubry, the party leader, in the second round of the primaries was interpreted as a victory against the majoritarian faction. Consequently, his autonomy with regard to the Socialist Party was reduced and his leadership was weakened (Dolez 2015: 73).

The circumstances of François Hollande’s designation as the PS presidential candidate have affected his relationship with his party and the parliamentary majority. To start with, his role in the intra-party negotiations preceding the 2012 general election was rather marginal. Martine Aubry took centre stage in the negotiation of the electoral agreement between the PS and the Greens and she also prevented a coalition with François Bayrou’s Democratic Movement in the second round of the election.
Thus, Hollande’s ability to shape the future parliamentary majority and his autonomy with regard to his party seemed weak starting from the electoral campaign (Dolez 2015: 74). The party primary also influenced the composition of the next government, dominated as it was by François Hollande’s main supporters in the primary campaign (although some of Martine Aubry’s supporters in the primary, such as Benoit Hamon, did make it into the cabinet, and so did Arnaud Montebourg and Manuel Valls). Overall, though, the composition of the Ayrault government reflected the majority that had been formed between the first and the second rounds of the primary instead of the party majority that had been forged at the 2008 Congress in Reims (Dolez 2015: 75).

The government reshuffles that followed Montebourg and Hamon’s departure and Ayrault’s replacement with Manuel Valls as prime minister in 2014, followed by Emanuel Macron’s appointment as finance minister signalled a shift towards a social-liberal centre that hardly took into account the balance of power within the Socialist Party. As a result, the government’s economic policies have been faced by unprecedented dissent in the PS parliamentary group. Notable rebellions were registered in September 2014, when PM Valls narrowly won a confidence vote by 269 votes to 244, compared with 306 votes five months later. No fewer than 32 PS deputies abstained, compared with the first confidence vote in April 2014 when only 11 rebel votes were registered. Moreover, in February 2015, PM Valls was constrained to use the package vote procedure under article 49.3 against his own majority to force the adoption in the first reading of a set of business-friendly economic reforms, known as the Macron Bill. The same measure was used in June 2015 to pass the second reading stage. Another bill that was forced through the parliament using the 49.3 article was the controversial labour reform bill in May 2016. The PS backbenchers responded to these extraordinary measures by trying to table their own no-confidence motion against the government, which collected 56 out the 58 required signatures. These are obvious signs that dissent among Socialist backbenchers runs far deeper than an analysis of roll call votes would be able to capture (Proksch and Slapin 2015), not least because of the rationalised parliamentary procedures available to the government under the Fifth French Republic.

Data and variables

Data on the voting positions of the Socialist Party deputies were collected from the recorded roll call votes, which are published online on the website of the French National Assembly and in the Official Journal of the French Republic. Two types of roll call votes are typically recorded: official public votes (scrutins publics solennels), and ordinary public votes (scrutins publics ordinaires). The scrutins solennels are recorded after a request has been initiated by the Board of Party Presidents and approved by a majority of its members. As the Board includes the President and Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, the presidents of the parliamentary groups, as well as the presidents of the permanent and special commissions, and the general rapporteur of the finance commission, its composition is usually tilted towards the government majority. As a
result, most votes are controlled by the government, similarly to the whipped divisions in the Westminster systems (Godbout and Foucault 2013: 312).

In general, the scrutins solennels are demanded on the final votes of the most important bills and are compulsory for government declarations and confidence and censure motions. In contrast, the scrutins public are a more common occurrence during floor debates and can be demanded by one of the presidents of the parliamentary groups, the president of the session, a government representative, or the commission in charge of the bill on debate. However, as opposed to the scrutins solennels, which list the names and voting positions of all deputies, the scrutins ordinaires were aggregated by party until May 2014. Before this date, the roll calls showed the voting position of the largest number of deputies for each parliamentary group without naming the deputies and list alphabetically the names of the deputies who have adopted a different voting position. Thus, only the deputies who adopted a different position than the majority of their group were individualised. For this reason, the present analysis is limited to the scrutins solennels.

The fact that the scrutins solennels are recorded only for the most important votes cast on the legislative floor and that their selection is controlled by the government raises several problems for the analysis of voting behaviour in the French National Assembly. To start with, the number of recorded roll calls is rather small compared with the European Parliament, the American Congress, or the British House of Commons. Between 1958 and 2012, the number of publicly recorded votes in each legislative term varied between 18 and 204 (Godbout and Foucault 2013: 313), with 144 votes recorded during the 2012-2017 term. This sample presents an obvious selection bias problem.

The extent to which these votes can provide a good measure of voting behaviour and party cohesion is another important question. On the one hand, party leaders, who dominate the selection process, can be expected to use the calling of votes as disciplinary instruments to induce unity (Carrubba et al. 2008). On the other hand, final passage votes, which predominate in this sample, may not provide an accurate reflection of parliamentary conflict, as most conflictual aspects could have been ironed out during earlier phases of the legislative process (Hug 2010). Either way, both scenarios lead us to expect higher voting unity than it might usually be the case. That said, the existing pressures towards higher voting unity in this sample confers dissenting votes an even higher strategic utility: dissenting votes are expected to be rare events but also strong indicators of intra-party conflict. Thus, the analysis of voting behaviour in the French National Assembly may be a difficult test for intraparty conflict, but all the more valuable.

The type of issues that come up for a vote may also affect decisions to dissent. Indeed, Godbout and Foucault (2013: 321) found that the issues with the highest potential to split governing coalitions during the precedent 13 legislative terms were related to foreign policy and European integration. To account for this possibility, the topics of the scrutins solennels were first coded according to the 27 categories of public policies defined by the Comparative Agendas Project (Baumgartner et al. 2006) and
then merged into the seven principal topics proposed by Godbout and Foucault (2013): economy, foreign policy, welfare, environment, political institutions, law and human rights, and a residual category. Figure 1 presents the distribution of topics among the 144 scrutins solennels.

*Dependent variables*

The dataset consists of 33,726 individual voting decisions cast by 340 members of the Socialist, Républicain et Citoyen (SRC) parliamentary party group in 144 roll calls recorded between July 2012 and February 2017, when the last session of the 14th Legislature officially closed. At the beginning of the 2012 term, the SRC group counted 295 deputies out of the total number of 577 Members of the National Assembly (MNAs), including 16 deputies who joined the group under the apparenté or associated status. However, as some of the deputies were promoted to government during the course of the legislature and were replaced by their alternates (suppléants), the total membership of the SRC group increased over the five years. The average voting turnout during the 14th term was about 90%, a similar figure compared to previous legislative terms (Godbout and Foucault 2013: 313).

Two dependent variables are used in the analysis. The first one measures the loyalty of individual MNAs towards their group (i.e. individual party loyalty scores). The AN voting records indicate whether the MNA voted Yay, Nay, Abstained, or was a “Non-Votant”. The latter typically applies to the President of the National Assembly and/or the president of the session, who are not allowed to vote but were present in the room. MNAs who did not participate in the vote are considered absent. All votes are aggregated into group majority votes, one for each voting opportunity, to determine how many dissenting votes were cast. A deviating vote is recorded when a deputy casts a different vote than the majority of the SRC group. To account for the variable periods of time deputies spent in office (i.e. some of them left office early, while others came to office later as replacements or after winning by-elections), the number of dissenting votes is normalised with respect to the number of a deputy’s voting opportunities into the party loyalty variable. This measure does not take into account absences. To account for the possibility that deputies resort to intentional absenteeism as a popular means of avoiding votes on unpopular issues (Kam 2009: 95), a second measure of party loyalty is estimated with absences considered as dissenting votes. The difference between the two measures of party loyalty can be seen in Figure 2, which presents the percentage of deviating votes for each deputy in the data set. On average, only 3.2% of the votes cast by Socialist deputies go against the party line (with a standard deviation of 5.1%). Average dissent increases to 12.7% if absences are also taken into account (standard deviation of 6.7%). As expected, dissent is not regularly practiced by MNAs but there appears to be sufficient variation in the data to warrant in depth investigation.

The second dependent variable records whether a member of the SRC group was officially invested as a Socialist Party official candidate in the next general election.
(or tacitly approved as candidates by not officially running an alternative candidate in their constituency). The data for this binary variable comes from the Socialist Party’s official list of 2017 investitures. The party renomination indicator allows us to investigate the extent to which a record of voting loyalty or dissent affect the deputies’ chances of running under the same party label in the next election. Thus, this variable is used to test the second implication of growing intra-party preferences, which is whether executive leaders can effectively use the last-mover advantage of candidate selection to sanction rebel legislators by blocking their renomination as a party candidate.

**Independent variables**

The independent variable is a proxy for intra-party preferences. To measure how the distance between the ideal policies of backbenchers and chief executives impacts the likelihood of dissent, a measure of ideological preferences is needed. Estimating the incumbent deputies’ policy preferences is notoriously difficult. Scaling techniques, commonly used to estimate deputies’ policy preferences from their past votes in the US Congress (e.g. Poole and Rosenthal 1997), are rather problematic to use in parliamentary systems (see Kam 2009: 77–8). Additionally, given that almost 57% of the PS deputies had never been elected before 2012, this method would be of practical limited use. As an alternative, the incoming deputies’ policy preferences has been estimated from pre-electoral candidate surveys (Kam 2001, 2009). Similar to candidate surveys conducted before elections, linking policy preferences to support pledged during competitive party primaries with more than two candidates has the advantage of being exogenous to subsequent parliamentary behaviour and to the mechanisms that party leaders may be using to induce voting unity (Kam 2009: 78–9). During the campaign for the 2011 PS primary, the programmes proposed by the six candidates who competed in the first round were often analysed in terms of their economic content and ranked ideologically from left to right by leading left- and right-leaning newspapers like Le Monde7 and Le Figaro8. In addition to policy programmes, other studies used polling data to calculate how close the various Socialist candidates were to the left-wing median voters and the overall median voter (Lemennicier et al. 2011). As a result, the candidates’ ideological position can be transferred to the deputies based on the latter’s endorsements during the party primary.

This data was collected from a range of sources. Information on incumbent PS legislators was easy to find due to the surveys published in the newspapers of record, such as Le Monde and Libération9. High-profile members, such as mayors, presidents of general and regional councils, and members of municipal, general, and regional councils, often used their web pages to campaign for one of the candidates.10 Additional information was collected from the online archives of PS local branches, which provided information about the endorsements and the candidates’ campaign staff on local level.11 Moreover, many of the incoming PS deputies in 2012 were holding locally elected offices and were preparing to stand for election in candidate primaries
organised soon after the presidential primary. As a result, most of them were eager to lend their support to the prospective presidential candidate and published support statements on their personal web pages. Figure 3 presents the distribution of the endorsements pledged by PS deputies before the first round of the open primary held on 10 October 2011. This information is not available for 59 out of the 340 deputies under analysis for various reasons. Some of them refused to take any side in the primary, while others entered the National Assembly long after the primary contest took place through by-election. The complete list of PS deputies and their endorsements during the 2011 open primary is available upon request from the author.

**Controls**

The analysis considers several factors that have been shown to influence the legislators’ motivation to dissent. Personal characteristics, such as age, gender, alternate status (suppléant), and the number of votes cast during the legislative term are used as proxies for the influence of on-going socialisation on legislative behaviour (Cowley and Childs 2003; Kam 2009). Re-election is often the most important goal of a deputy’s career and has been shown to drive legislative behaviour (Mayhew 1974). Previous studies have found that MPs are likely to use dissent strategically depending on its expected electoral return (Cowley 2005; Kam 2009). The analysis takes electoral vulnerability into account by controlling for the size of each legislator’s winning majority in their constituency (as France uses the two-ballot system in single-member constituencies for general elections).

The adoption of single-member constituencies at the start of the Fifth French Republic has generally provided the incentive of constituency-oriented deputies (Thiébault and Dolez 2000: 58). The candidate selection process in the PS is relatively decentralized, as constituency candidates are voted upon by the local party members (Thiébault 1988; Murray 2010). Occasionally, though, the central party leadership does bypass decisions of local federations in order to impose high profile candidates instead of local figures or when electoral agreements with smaller left-wing parties like the Left Radicals and the Greens need to be enforced. The ties between deputies and their constituencies is also strengthened by the typical French practice of the accumulation of local and national mandates (known as the *cumul des mandats*). In fact, local mandates play an important role in the French deputies’ behaviour, as a national mandate is regarded as instrumental to meeting locally orientated goals (Huber 1996b: 89). At the beginning of the 2012 legislature, almost 80% of PS deputies held more than one elected office. The Socialist Party had made historic gains in all second-order elections held after 2007 and achieved an unprecedented dominant position in local politics (Gougou and Labouret 2013). Nevertheless, following the victory of the left-wing parties in the 2012 presidential and general elections, the pendulum swung again to the right and the PS lost most of the gains it had made since 2008 in the 2014-2015 municipal, departmental, and regional elections. As a result, at the end of the 2012-2017 legislature, almost 20% of the PS deputies had lost their local mandate (in
addition to those deputies who had voluntarily resigned their local responsibilities to comply with the Socialist Party’s policy to limit multiple office-holding).

To incorporate the local connection and its impact on the electoral returns of dissent, a dummy variable indicates whether a deputy held a local mandate at the end of the 2012-2017 term. The deputies’ executive, parliamentary and party experience is controlled for as well. Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for these variables. The importance of holding a local office stands out among all types of political experience, as almost two thirds of the deputies were involved at some level of local government, while one-fifth of them played a local “executive” role as mayors, deputy mayors, or (vice)presidents of departmental or regional councils or other intercommunal bodies. Comparatively, over 90% of the deputies had never held executive office and well over half of them had never been elected to parliament before 2012.

Additional controls for constituency characteristics are included in the analysis, such as urbanity, professional occupations, and unemployment rate. A deputy is considered to represent a rural constituency if there is no town above 100,000 inhabitants in their electoral district (Lazardeux 2005: 273). This variable was calculated using the 2012-2013 census data and the administrative division of electoral districts provided by the French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE). The census data was also used to calculate the unemployment rate of each constituency and the proportion of manual workers and professional and managerial occupations among the active population aged 15-64.

Analysis and results

Patterns of dissent in the Socialist parliamentary party groups, 1958-2017

Before moving on to the analysis of backbench rebellions in the most recent French legislative term, it is useful to compare the level of dissent among PS deputies in the 14th Legislature with general patterns of dissent in previous legislative terms of the Fifth French Republic. These trends are presented in Figure 4. Voting records of all official roll calls (scrutins solennels) were used to determine patterns of dissent in each legislative term between 1958 and 2017. The estimations for the first 13 terms were carried out on data generously shared by Jean-François Godbout and Martial Foucault (see Godbout and Foucault 2013).

The patterns of dissent presented in Figure 4 compare the frequency, extent, and depth of backbench rebellions over the 14 legislative terms. The frequency of rebellions indicates the percentage of scrutins in which at least one Socialist MNA broke the party line. This is a rather crude statistic, as it does not say anything about the gravity of dissent. In order to evaluate the latter, the extent and depth of rebellions were calculated (Cowley 2005; Kam 2009: 40–1). The former indicates the percentage of Socialist MNAs who cast at least one dissenting vote during a term, while the latter indicates the mean number of backbenchers involved in rebellions over the course of a term. This figure is standardised across the size of the Socialist Party group over time.
to provide appropriate comparative statistics. As a further characteristic of the depth of rebellions, the percentage of dissenting votes cast by the ten most rebellious deputies in each parliamentary term is also included.

Figure 4 demonstrates that the frequency of rebellions (blue line) varied significantly by legislature. For most terms, a clear trend predicting an increase or decline of dissent over time is hard to find. Under these circumstances, the spike in the percentage of scrutins witnessing divisions stands out in the last legislature where it reached 63% (almost double the percentage in the 2007-2012 term). Similarly, the extent of rebellions (red dotted line) has rather abruptly increased since the mid-1990s (when the PS organised the first party primary contest to select their 1995 presidential candidate). Compared to pre-1997 rebellions, which generally saw less than one fifth of the deputies casting a dissenting vote, more than three quarters have done so at least once in the last two legislatures. In other words, the number of disaffected backbenchers has grown steadily over time, even though few deputies rebelled at the same time. Indeed, as the depth statistics indicates (orange line), the size of backbench rebellions in the Socialist group rarely surpassed 5-7% of the total number of deputies. This means that the PS leaders have hardly had to fear losing control over the legislative agenda. That said, the increase in the number of rebellious deputies (green line) indicates that dissent in the Socialist party is not monopolised by just a few isolated mavericks and that more deputies are willing to defy the party line at any one time. This trend is apparent in Figure 5, which details the number of dissenting votes cast by the PS deputies during the last legislative term. There is an obvious ascending trend, as the frequency and depth of rebellions clearly increases over time.

**Backbench rebellions in the Socialist parliamentary party group, 2012-2017**

This section presents the statistical analysis of PS rebellions. As the dependent variable of individual loyalty scores is bounded between 0 and 1, fractional logit regression is a better modelling strategy than OLS, as it implicitly constrains the output to stay within the desired bounds. Table 2 presents five models that estimate the impact of policy preferences, constituency links, and political experience on the likelihood of dissent. Using the PS candidacy nominations for the 2017 election as the dependent variable, the final model in Table 2 estimates the extent to which loyalty scores, which is now used as the key independent variable, affects the likelihood of obtaining the party’s renomination.

Model 1 present a basic test of the relationship between preferences in the 2011 open primary and voting unity, controlling only for a limited number of personal characteristics. Due to the small number of preferences expressed for Manuel Valls and Jean-Michel Baylet (3 and 2 respectively), these categories were merged with their nearest ideological neighbour (i.e. François Hollande). Preferences are ranked ordinally using support for François Hollande as the reference category.

Among the personal characteristics, only age reaches statistical significance, lending support to the expectation that ongoing socialization has a positive effect on
voting unity (Kam 2009: 37). As expected, preferences for the two leftmost candidates with respect to Hollande emerge as strong predictors of dissent. For a more straightforward interpretation, Figure 6 presents predicted probabilities of dissent according to the five type of preferences ranked on the horizontal axis from left to right (for convenience the unknown preference category is placed at the rightmost of the x-axis) and the topic of the bill that comes up for a vote. Across all topics, Montebourg supporters are predicted to dissent in 10.7% of the votes, compared to only 4.5% for Aubry supporters. These results are also statistically significant. In contrast, Ségoléne Royal’s supporters, as well as François Hollande’s and deputies lacking a clear preference are likely to dissent in less than 2% of the votes, but these results are not significant. Similar predictions are obtained for the separate six topics presented in Figure 6. Unsurprisingly, economy-related bills trigger the highest level of dissent.

Models 2-3 add electoral vulnerability and constituency representation into the analysis. Model 2 interacts the representatives’ winning majority in the 2012 general election with their status as local officials at the end of the current legislature. The substantive effects of this interaction are presented in Figure 7, which shows that deputies who hold a local office are more likely to dissent compared to deputies who do not hold a local office as their 2012 winning majority increases. Thus, dissent is not a viable strategy for deputies who are electorally vulnerable, but it increasingly becomes so as their re-election chances improve in view of their larger margin of victory in the previous general election. Specifically, deputies who were elected by less than a majority of the votes are likely to toe the party line, while those who were elected with a majority higher than 60% are considerably more likely to rebel. The constituency link plays an important role in this context not only because of the chain of accountability established but also due to the central role that local members play in candidate selection.

As constituency-oriented representatives, French deputies are also linked to constituents for specific policies (Huber 1996b: 89). To determine the impact of their ideological preferences on the likelihood of dissent in this context, Model 3 interacts support for François Hollande in the open primary with the local official status and winning margin at the 2012 election. The substantive effects of this interaction are illustrated in Figure 8. According to these results, the voting unity of Hollande supporters is not affected by the link between deputies and their constituencies regardless of their level of their electoral circumstances. In contrast, deputies who pledged support for a different candidate than President Hollande in 2011 and hold a local mandate are more likely to break the party line, but only under favourable electoral conditions. Low levels of electoral support are still likely to induce party loyalty even when backbenchers disagree about party policy, while deputies who are certain of their electoral strength are more inclined to voice their opposition.

The legislators’ behaviour in parliamentary systems has been linked not only to re-election goals, but also to their desire to gain higher political office and influence policy (Depauw and Martin 2009). Thus, institutional and intraparty mechanisms that grant party leaders control over the allocation of higher executive office, especially
where most opportunities to influence policy are vested in a small set of such executive positions, provide incentives for strong loyalism in legislative activities (Kam 2014: 211). However, the literature has drawn attention to the existence of a threshold beyond which legislators can be expected to start discounting office benefits (Kam 2009: 36). In the words of Jean-François Copé, the president of the UMP parliamentary group during the 2007-2012 legislature, legislators can be grouped in three categories: “former ministers, those who dream of becoming ministers, and those who have understood that they will never be ministers” (Copé 2009: 119). Therefore, the expectation is that the more time legislators spend in parliament without having been promoted to cabinet, the more likely they are to dissent. This expectation is tested in Model 4, which interacts ministerial experience and time spent in parliament. Additionally, we also look at the behaviour of deputies who were demoted or promoted to cabinet during the 14th legislative term (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics of ministerial promotions and demotions). The results indicate that while the lack of ministerial experience and time spent in parliament increase voting loyalty, their interaction has a negative effect. The substantive effects presented in Figure 9 indicate that deputies who have never held ministerial office are highly loyal at the beginning of their parliamentary career, but are increasingly more likely to break the party line as their careers begin to decline. The loyalty strategy does seem to pay off, though, as the positive and significant coefficient on “Cabinet promotion” indicates that loyal deputies are more likely to be promoted to higher office. As expected, party executives stand out among loyal deputies.

Model 5 tests the impact of preferences in the 2011 open primary against all previous explanations of voting behaviour. The results confirm the robustness of previous findings, as all variables retain their expected signs, magnitude, and statistical significance. Thus, policy preferences appear to play an important role in the deputies’ strategies of dissent, even after taking their constituency and electoral concerns into account. Figure 10 plots the predicted probability of a rebellion by supporters of the four main candidates in the 2011 PS open primary, keeping all other variables at their mean. As the figure indicates, ideological distances in the party primary do seem to make a difference to legislators’ behaviour even after controlling for all other alternative explanations of dissent: deputies who endorsed candidates situated at François Hollande’s left are significantly more inclined to rebel than deputies who supported the president or a candidate closer to his position (such as Ségolène Royal), or did not formally endorsed a candidate.

Model 6 explores the determinants of backbenchers’ renominations as party candidates in the 2017 general election. The key test is whether rebel legislators were denied renomination as a punishment for their dissent record. The main independent variable is the proportion of dissenting votes cast during the legislative term. Additional factors that may explain decisions not to run for re-election are also considered, such as age, number of terms spent in parliament, electoral security, local implantation and holding an executive local mandate. The latter factor is particularly relevant, as a new law passed in 2014 banning the simultaneous exercise of a national
and executive local mandate enters into force after the 2017 election. Thus, PS notables must choose between their legislative mandates and positions in local administration.

The results in Model 6 suggest that dissent did not play a significant role in renomination decisions. This result must be interpreted with the caveat that the PS investiture process is still ongoing. That said, the preliminary evidence seems to confirm that the party leadership was unable to exploit the last-mover advantage of party renomination to extract loyal behaviour. Thus, in addition to not being able to count on a loyal majority, the Hollande administration seems to have been deprived of the most important ex-post control mechanisms that can be used to punish disloyal behaviour. As a matter of fact, the party leadership’s inability or unwillingness to take disciplinary sanctions against the “frondeurs” stood out during the 2012-2017 term and especially after no fewer than 56 PS deputies signed a motion of censure against the Socialist government in May 2016, which only needed two more signatories to reach the floor.

Figure 11 explores the marginal effects of the additional factors that might explain why some deputies were renominated while others were not (or decided not to stand for re-election). Advanced age, two or more previous legislative mandates, and holding an executive local mandate had a powerful negative effect on renominations. Given the negative forecasts for the Socialist Party in the 2017 election, deputies opted for a secure local executive mandate rather than a risky bid for re-election. On the other hand, being well established in a legislative district seems to matter for re-election prospects, as deputies who still held a local mandate as municipal, departmental, or regional councillors at the end of the legislative term were more likely to obtain the renomination of their local constituency. Surprisingly, strong winning majorities in the previous election seem to have a positive but rather small effect on renomination decisions. Another striking result is that party executives were not more likely to be renominated than rank-and-file legislators.

**Concluding remarks**

Internal party democracy and the opening of candidate and leadership selection processes to broad selectorates tends to be seen as a normative good. However, empirical evidence regarding the consequences of political parties allowing grassroots members and non-members to participate in selecting their candidates for public office is mixed. Highly participatory candidate nomination processes have been shown to lead to less inclusive and representative legislative institutions and highly undisciplined political parties (Hazan and Rahat 2010). Additionally, the involvement of large selectorates in candidate selection appears to involve a trade-off between better known or more accountable politicians and more dedicated and professional legislators (Høyland et al. 2014). By and large, parliamentary parties seem to be paying a high price in terms of cohesion and discipline for their internal democratisation.

This paper argues that the democratisation of leadership selection is likely to produce similar effects as far as party discipline is concerned. To be successful in party
primary contests, candidates for party leadership and executive positions need to move closer to the overall median voter, that is away from the median voter of their own party. Thus, the more inclusive the selectorate for party leadership selection, the more accountable the leader becomes to the wider selectorate and the more likely to neglect the ideological preferences of extreme factions among local activists and backbenchers once elected. These dynamics are likely to fuel the legislators’ use of dissent as a means of communicating their policy stances to voters.

These expectations were tested by studying backbench rebellions in the French Socialist Party during the 2012-2017 legislature, following the selection of President Hollande in an open primary contest in 2011. Subsequently, the Socialist Party went on to win both presidential and general elections in 2012. The patterns of voting behaviour revealed by the empirical results support the expectation that the legislators’ propensity to rebel increases with the ideological distance between chief executives and their backbenchers. While electoral concerns and constituency representation do moderate the effect of policy disagreements on voting unity, preferences expressed in the 2011 primary have been shown to have an independent and strong effect on the strategic use of dissent. While more comparative work is needed, these results offer preliminary evidence regarding the potential effects of the opening of leadership selection processes to the wider electorate at the expense of party activists. To paraphrase Abbé Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, it looks as if open primaries may be superfluous if they result in mere coronations, but mischievous if the candidate elected in these contests can no longer count on the support of her parliamentary majority.
Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Distribution of topics among the roll call votes

![Bar chart showing the distribution of topics among roll call votes. The categories and their respective counts are as follows: Economy: 40, Welfare: 21, Foreign: 10, Environment: 7, Institutions: 23, Law: 40, Residual: 3.]
Figure 2. Percentage of deviating votes for each MNA during the 14th term of the French National Assembly (2012-2017)

Circles represent individual deputies
dissenting votes excluding absences
dissenting votes including absences
Figure 3. PS deputies’ (2012 election) endorsements during first round of PS open primary (October 2011)
Figure 4. Dissent in French Socialist Party, 1959-2017

Source: Author’s estimation. Voting data on I-XIII Legislatures provided by Jean-François Godbout and Martial Foucault (Godbout and Foucault 2013).
Figure 5. Number of dissenting votes cast by members of the Socialist, Republican and Citizen (SRC) Parliamentary Group in roll call votes (scrutins publics solennels) during the course of the 14\textsuperscript{th} term of the French National Assembly (2012-2017)
Figure 6. Predicted probabilities of dissent for Socialist Party MNAs per topic bills (Model 1). MNA characteristics at mean. 95% C.I.
Figure 7. Constituency connection and electoral vulnerability (Model 2)

Marginal effect of local mandate on voting unity
(Shown over winning margin in 2012 election; 95% CI)
Figure 8. Constituency connection, electoral vulnerability, and policy preferences (Model 3)

Marginal effect of local mandate on voting unity
(95% Confidence Intervals)

Support in 2011 primary: François Hollande
Support in 2011 primary: other/no candidate

Marginal effect of local mandate on voting unity
Figure 9. Promotion opportunities, socialisation, and voting unity (Model 4)
Figure 10. Predicted probabilities of dissent (Model 5)
Figure 11. Determinants of Party Investiture at 2017 General Election (Model 6)
Table 1. Descriptive statistics of PS deputies’ political experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Executive</th>
<th>Parliamentary</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Local</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No cabinet office before 2012</td>
<td>313 (92.06%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior minister before 2012</td>
<td>13 (3.82%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior minister before 2012</td>
<td>14 (4.12%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoted to government (2012-2017)</td>
<td>17 (5%)</td>
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<td>Demoted from government (2012-2017)</td>
<td>15 (4.41%)</td>
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<td>First parliamentary term</td>
<td>192 (56.47%)</td>
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<td>2-3 parliamentary terms</td>
<td>90 (26.47%)</td>
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<td>4-5 parliamentary terms</td>
<td>44 (12.94%)</td>
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<td>&gt; 6 parliamentary terms</td>
<td>14 (4.12%)</td>
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<td>Party executives (2012-2017)</td>
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<td>71 (21.39%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local mandates (2017)</td>
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<td>212 (62.35%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive local mandates (2017)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>64 (18.82%)</td>
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Table 2. Fractional logit models of individual party loyalty

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
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<td><strong>Dependent variable:</strong> Individual party loyalty score</td>
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<td>Age</td>
<td>0.02**</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>0.02*</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
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<td>(0.19)</td>
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<td>(0.20)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<td>0.65</td>
<td>(0.45)</td>
<td><strong>0.97</strong></td>
<td>(0.47)</td>
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<td>(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proportion of dissenting votes</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Support in 2011 PS primary (ref: Hollande)</strong></td>
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<td>Montebourg</td>
<td>-1.90***</td>
<td>(0.30)</td>
<td>-1.82***</td>
<td>(0.33)</td>
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<td>Aubry</td>
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<td>(0.23)</td>
<td>-0.85***</td>
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<td>Royal</td>
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<td>-0.48</td>
<td>(0.47)</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
<td>(0.27)</td>
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<td><strong>Electoral &amp; constituency connection</strong></td>
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<td>Winning majority</td>
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<td>(0.01)</td>
<td><strong>0.06</strong></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
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<td>Local mandate (end of term)</td>
<td><strong>3.67</strong></td>
<td>(0.93)</td>
<td><strong>3.80</strong></td>
<td>(1.18)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High executive local mandate (end of term)</td>
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<td>Winning margin x Local mandate</td>
<td>-0.06***</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>-0.07***</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Hollande</td>
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<td>(1.83)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Local mandate x Sup. Hollande</td>
<td>-4.22**</td>
<td>(2.24)</td>
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<td>-0.05*</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
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<td>Winning margin x Local mandate x Sup. Hollande</td>
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<td>Urban constituency</td>
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<td>(0.24)</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
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<td>Unemployment</td>
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<td>(2.48)</td>
<td>-0.96</td>
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<td>Manual workers</td>
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<td>1.62</td>
<td>(3.59)</td>
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<td>(2.64)</td>
<td>-0.97</td>
<td>(2.70)</td>
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### Political experience

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<th>Std. Error</th>
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<td>No cabinet experience</td>
<td>3.53***</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>4.70</td>
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<td>Terms in parliament</td>
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<td>-0.83***</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>-4.09</td>
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<td>First parliamentary term</td>
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<td>0.19</td>
<td>-3.13</td>
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<td>Party executive (2012-2017)</td>
<td>0.52**</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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### Cabinet appointment during term (ref: none)

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<td>Cabinet promotion</td>
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<td>Cabinet demotion</td>
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### Constant

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<td>N</td>
<td>2.56***</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>3.10</td>
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### Log Likelihood

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<td>Log Likelihood</td>
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<td>AIC</td>
<td>109.3</td>
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<td>BIC</td>
<td>143.76</td>
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</table>

* *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01 (two-tailed tests).
Notes

1 The Fifth French Republic provides an exception to this rule. The cohesion of government supporting parties has improved with the passing from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic, despite the change from an indirectly elected president to a president elected by universal suffrage and the adoption of a single member district electoral system (Sauger 2009).

2 For the full list of roll call votes recorded during the 14th legislature see: http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/scrutins/liste/(offset)/100/(legislature)/14/(type)/SSO/(idDossier)/TOUS.

3 Following the 2008 revision of the Constitution, the control of the legislative agenda is handed over to the opposition and minority parliamentary groups one day every month. Although in principle the opposition can take advantage of this provision to request scrutin solennels, the government has preserved the right to reject such demands (Godbout and Foucault 2013: 326).

4 Claude Bartolone is excluded from the analysis due to his election as President of the National Assembly, a position which prevented him from voting throughout the 14th Legislature.

5 Most of the associated members are dissident party members who competed in election under the “divers gauche” label for different reasons. This is the case of Marie-Françoise Bechtel, Christian Hutin et Jean-Luc Laurent from Jean-Pierre Chevénement’s small faction Republican and Citizen Movement (MRC) that split from the PS in 1993; but also of PS members who ran in the 2012 under the DVG label because their constituency was reserved for a Green candidate as part of the PS-EELV pre-electoral contract. Some of the members who stood for election as dissidents or DVD, such as Dominique Baert, were excluded from the PS in 2012 and readmitted later on during the term.

6 Source: http://www.parti-socialiste.fr/liste-candidats-aux-legislatives-investis-ps/. This variable will continue to be updated until the candidate selection process within the Socialist Party will be officially finalised in May 2017.


Such as Christophe Council, departmental councillor in Sarthe http://www.ch-council.com/article-pourquoi-j-ai-decide-de-soutenir-la-candidature-de-francois-hollande-78411497.html


Some candidates may be elected with less than a majority of votes in the second round, because all candidates who win more than 12.5% of the votes in the first round are permitted to stand in the runoff.

The data is available online from INSEE http://www.insee.fr/fr/.

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