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Editorial Note:

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Abstract

This article analyses the impact of regime voting, i.e. when voters' preferences for unified or divided government override their partisan and ideological preferences, on the French National Assembly elections in 2002. It investigates whether the surge of the political right in the parliamentary elections can be explained by a growing support for unified government. We find that regime voting adds explanatory power to traditional vote choice models using a multinomial logit set-up. Moreover, we find the strongest impact of regime preferences, i.e., preferences for unified or divided government, on vote choice for ideological moderates. Statistical simulations provide further evidence that regime considerations play a decisive role in the voting booth especially for voters who are not anchored politically. This research shows that besides preferences for divided government we should also account for the possibility of preferences for unified government that might override voters' partisan and ideological preferences to more fully comprehend the process by which voters make decisions in the political realm.

Contents

1. Introduction[*]

The super-election year of 2002 in France, where presidential and legislative elections were held within eight weeks, ended, for the time being, the last of three periods of so-called *cohabitation* (1986-1988, 1993-1995, 1997-2002). In this article we investigate the impact of what we call *regime preferences* on vote choice for the legislative elections of 2002. A regime preference is a preference alternatively for cohabitation, where a parliamentary logic prevails, or unified government, where a presidential logic is dominant. *Regime voting* occurs when regime preferences override voters' partisan and ideological preferences. We explore whether the observed surge of the parliamentary right in the legislative elections of 2002 can be explained by strong support for unified government and thus whether regime preferences played a decisive role. The impact of voters who systematically deviate from their partisan preferences to vote for a unified government have been neglected in the literature that perhaps has been too concentrated on explaining the occurrence of divided government in the US since World War II. We argue that intentionally voting for divided government reflects just one side of the coin of regime voting, while intentionally voting for unified government constitutes the other side. We take voters specific regime preferences as a starting point and derive testable hypotheses about their electoral impact.

Cohabitation is a situation of split-executive government where the President is confronted with an oppositional Prime minister based on the majority in the National Assembly. We treat cohabitation as the French version of divided government,[1] the non-cohabitationist periods are respectively regarded as unified government. Cohabitation strongly changes the way the Fifth Republic works. During unified government the President is the undisputed head of government, the Prime Minister being reduced to "chief of staff of the president of the Republic" (Duverger 1980: 171, 172). Here, a *de facto* presidential logic prevails. In times of cohabitation, however, the Prime Minister takes on far ranging decision powers and it is often spoken of a return to the words of the Fifth Republic's constitution, designed by Debré as a parliamentary regime (Knapp and Wright 2001, 59). The system thus *oscillates* between the two poles of presidential and parliamentary regime characteristics (Sartori 1994, 123). This is why we label a voter's choice for divided or unified government as *regime voting*.

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[1] This view is supported by Elgie (2001a, b), Shugart (1995) and Alesina and Rosenthal for whom the case of France even is "the closest to the United States, because the president, as well as the legislature, is directly elected by the citizens." (Alesina and Rosenthal 1995: 244). Nevertheless one could argue that cohabitation is "not a French version of divided government, as it is practiced in the United States" (Pierce 1991: 270, 271) because during times of cohabitation compromise is not a necessary mechanism to avoid gridlock. However, we find such behavioral definitions of divided government (Elgie 2001a: 7-10) difficult to operationalize in a comparative perspective and additionally believe that this perception of cohabitation underestimates the formal (Tsebelis 2000, 449) and informal veto possibilities that both sides of the French executive hold during such times. Particularly in the field of European policy-making compromise is brought about quite regularly (Leuffen 2002). In this article, we neither regard the minority governments of Rocard, Cresson and Bérégovoy, nor the 'informal cohabitation' between President Giscard d'Estaing and Prime Minister Chirac as divided government.

A non-constitutional particularity that we have to take into account when analyzing multiparty systems like France is that we have to think in political blocs, i.e., informal coalitions of parties, not simply in parties. It is generally agreed to that the French party system is characterized by a bipolarity dividing the moderate parties in a party bloc of the left and the right (Knapp and Wright 2001, 250).

In this article, we start off by briefly reviewing the French elections of 2002, focusing on the outcome of the legislative elections. We construct a model of *regime voting* and derive hypotheses about the impact of regime preferences on vote choice. We then test our hypotheses with data derived from a survey conducted after the second round of the presidential elections and before the first round of the elections for the *Assemblée Nationale*.[2] After assessing the impact of regime voting on the election outcome of 2002 we engage in a more general discussion on the relevance of regime voting for a theory of government.

2. From an "Accident" to a Breakdown of the Left in 2002

The reduction of the French president's term of office from seven to five years decided by referendum in 2000, in combination with the National Assembly's 2001 decision to reverse the electoral calendar making the presidential precede the legislative elections, can be considered a successful example of 'constitutional engineering' (Sartori 1994). The declared objective of this synchronizing and re-ordering of presidential and legislative elections was to avoid future occurrence of *cohabitation.* It was based on the assumption that French voters were unlikely to engage in split-ticket voting, i.e. to vote for candidates of different parties or at least party blocs in the first round of the presidential and legislative elections, since past Fifth Republic's *cohabitations* had only emerged at mid-term (or off-year) elections. The 2002 French elections[3] seem to confirm this assessment: In fact, after Gaullist President Jacques Chirac's re-election his UMP ('Union pour la majorité présidentielle')[4] alliance won 369 of 577 seats in the *Assemblée Nationale*. Hence, unified government was re-installed. Some puzzles remain, though. In the first round of the presidential elections scandal-troubled Jacques Chirac got the weakest result an incumbent President in France ever attained.[5] The overwhelming victory of the parliamentary right stands in stark contrast to his personal performance. Chirac has been called a 'lucky beneficiary of an electoral accident' (Bell and Criddle 2002, 663). In fact, adding up the

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[2] We used the *French Inter-election Survey 2002 – The French CSES II Study* (Schmitt and Gschwend, 2002).

[3] The French presidential and parliamentary elections didn't take place on the same day, but were separated by about a month. In 2002 the elections were held on April 21th, May 5th, June 9th, and June 16th. The same structure, presidential elections preceding legislative elections similarly resulted 1981 and 1988 in a change of the parliamentary majority in accordance with a newly elected President. However, in 1988, despite Mitterrand's successful re-election, the socialist camp did not manage to win the plurality of seats.

[4] The UMP was at first only an election alliance combining the RPR (Rassemblement de la République), parts of the UDF (Union pour la Démocratie Française) and DL (Démocratie Libérale). Only in November 2002 the alliance was transformed into a party under the new label of 'Union pour un mouvement populaire'.

[5] This observation is partly put into perspective by the fact that a record number of candidates were campaigning and thus reducing each one's potential share. Nevertheless, Chirac's result is generally judged weak. Chirac's result in the second round of the presidential elections should not be interpreted as a sign of strong public approval, since many voters of the left voted for Chirac in order to avoid the right extremist Jean-Marie Le Pen who had beaten the major candidate on the left, Lionel Jospin, in the first round.

first round votes for the left and the right, a second round between Jospin and Chirac would have become very close.[6] How can the success of the UMP in the parliamentary elections and the breakdown of the left be explained? Coattail effects (Ferejohn and Calvert 1984, Erikson 1988, 1023) do not seem to have to prevailed since Jacques Chirac had no real "pulling power" (Miller 1955, 353) as a rather unpopular presidential candidate.[7] The French electoral calendar of 2002 offers a particular interesting situation. Since voters knew the result of the preceding presidential election at the legislative election they had in addition the opportunity to choose between divided or unified government. Explaining the outcome of the elections by the electorate's desire to return to unified government would, of course, also mean that in the counterfactual case of a victory of Lionel Jospin the left should have evolved as a winner from the parliamentary elections. This raises profound questions about the structure and logic of the Fifth Republic, French voters' behaviour and the link between the two sets of elections. Can they be seen as a unity, or as one expert told us that we actually witnessed "four rounds of presidential elections in 2002"?

It indeed seems that the legislative election was framed as an anti-cohabitation election, first, ironically, by Jospin's cabinet director Olivier Schrameck who caught massive public attention by describing cohabitation as "the worst situation for our country" (Schrameck 2001, 23). After Chirac's victory the right took on this discourse in their campaigning: Chirac called upon the French people to give him "a clear and coherent majority in the forthcoming parliamentary elections" (cited in Cole 2002, 335) and Prime Minister Raffarin declared that his principal adversary was cohabitation (Libération, June 4th 2002). The socialist mayor of Paris Delanoë complained in Le Monde that the right was reducing the entire election campaign to the issue of cohabitation (Le Monde June 5th 2002). Therefore, it can be assumed that the French electorate was quite aware of the regime implications of their vote choice. However, what impact did regime considerations actually have on their voting behavior?

3. Regime Voters

No matter whether you believe that voters see the political realm through lenses of ideology or partisanship or picture voters as rational maniacs, constantly calculating policy distances, i.e. no matter whether you prefer "Columbia", "Michigan" or "Rochester", studies of political behavior from the early beginnings are based on the same assumption about the electoral decision-making process:

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[6]   A survey conducted in October 2002 by *SOFRES* for *Le Monde* has attested that a large part of left supporters regretted not to have voted for Lionel Jospin in the first round of the presidential election (Compare *Le Monde* 18/10/02). Jospin's defeat is thus explained by the fact that there were too many candidates of the left, as well as the assumption of many voters that Jospin would surely enter the second round of the elections. In fact, none of the published opinion polls forecasted the strong result of right-wing Jean-Marie Le Pen.

[7]   Usually, one would expect that on-year legislative elections fall into a President's 'honeymoon' term since the two sets of elections are only separated by about a month. This period could be considered as too short to expect occurrence of 'negative voting' (Kernell 1977). This assessment is confirmed by Shugart who claimed that "elections held early after a presidential election are likely to produce a surge in support for the new

Take a hypothetical voter, identify a set of casual factors (for this hypothetical voter) describing how she derives at her political preferences, arrange them in a theorized sequence (again, for this hypothetical voter), turn the crank - *et voilà*, you get the predicted decision-making behavior for this hypothetical voter. All traditional models of voting behavior thus predict that voters vote for the candidate or party they like most.

However, theorists of strategic voting have drawn our attention to voters who in anticipation of features of the election outcome such as the viability of certain candidates or parties, decide to cast their vote for a different than their most preferred party. Usually, in this strand of the literature the deviation from someone's most preferred party is motivated by incentives provided by the electoral system or coalition maneuvers (Gschwend 2001). Aside from useful heuristics like partisan or left-right ideological preferences,[8] which many if not all employ, we argue that some voters anticipate the election outcome, particularly in terms of its consequence for the type of government. Thus some voters might have an incentive to deviate from their most preferred party and instead cast their vote in accordance with their regime preferences. We call such a voter a *regime voter*. To us a *regime voter* is a particular type of strategic voter who does not vote for her most preferred party but, in anticipation of the consequence of an election on the type or structure of government, casts her vote in a way to determine the institutional character of the regime. Thus a preference for a type of regime is assumed to influence such a voter's decision-making process. In the US an intentional divided government voter as for example identified by Fiorina (1992a) should favor balance and control by party division across the separated institutions sharing power, a unified government voter, on the other hand, would, for example, consider an assumed gain of efficiency as an advantage. Both attitudes, however, are assumed to override partisan preferences that might cause voters to deviate from a pure partisan determined vote choice. Thus *regime voting* would comprise both, a deliberate choice for divided as well as for unified government. Unified government voting as one type of regime voting has so far been neglected in the literature.[9] This is perhaps due to the fact that most studies in this field focused on explanations of divided government in the US since WWII (e.g. Jacobson 1990, Fiorina 1992a, Petrocik 1991). The results of this research, in particular what we have learned about divided government voting behavior, have rarely been transferred to the unified government case although conceivably both cases are just different sides of the same coin. We thus propose to understand *regime voting* as an umbrella term comprising both the intentional choice for divided as well as for unified government.

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president's party" (Shugart 1995, 337). However, in our case Chirac had already been in power since 1995 and he therefore cannot really be considered to be a new president.

[8] We will not engage in the debate on whether left-right ideological attachment or party identification are stronger determinants of the French voter (Fleury and Lewis-Beck 1993a, b; Converse and Pierce 1993). Instead we use party preferences as well as ideological self-placement to determine an anchoring vote choice model.

[9] Exceptions are Sigelman *et al.* (1997) and Brady (1993).

Figure 1: Regime preferences

Regime voter alternatively prefers

divided government   unified government
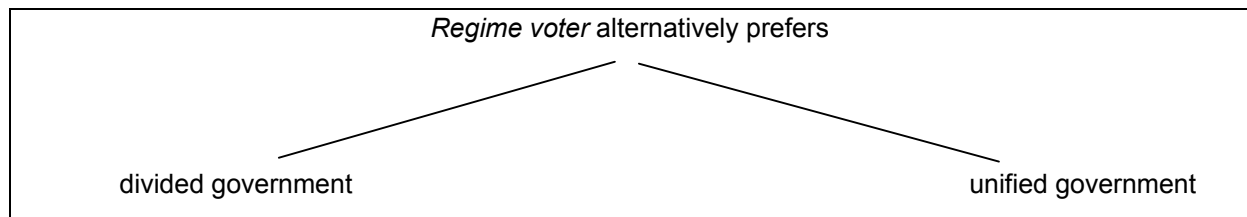
The electoral cycle in the French super election year of 2002 – 4 elections in 8 weeks - is a particular interesting case to study the impact of regime voting. Voters have not only the possibility to determine their political leaders but also to influence the type of the regime: divided or unified government. Given that Chirac is elected president, a vote for the right in the succeeding legislative election effectively does not just support the likelihood of the right to gain a majority in parliament but also helps to reinstall unified government. Similarly, a vote for the left in the legislative election does support the likelihood of the left to gain control of parliament, thus effectively helps to bring about divided government.

What is the impact of regime preferences on an individual's decision-making process? In order to assess the impact of regime preferences on voting behavior we need a reasonable baseline. According to traditional models of voting behavior the evaluative basis of an individual's decision-making process is determined by preferences about candidates, parties, ideological self-assessment and the like. Voters have to weigh these factors against one another to derive an overall preference, which we call *anchoring preference,* in order to make a vote decision. A clear preference essentially anchors every voter into the political realm. For the case of France we simply distinguish left from right party bloc preferences. If voters do not have clear preferences or their partisan preferences neutralize one another they are not clearly anchored.

The baseline expectation is that an anchored voter always supports her preferred party bloc, no matter which implications this has for the type of the regime. This implies one of at least two things: either a voter's attitude about cohabitation is essentially a "non-attitude" or she is fully constraint in a Converseian sense such that her attitude about cohabitation can be predicted by her anchoring preference. The observational consequences in both cases are the same, though. These voters seem to have no regime preferences that are expected to have an independent impact on their decision-making process. Thus, our baseline prediction is that a party supporter of the left will vote for a party of the left while a party supporter of the right will vote for a party of the right. We have no prediction, however, for unanchored voters.

A regime voter, on the other hand, will consider the consequences of her choice on the institutional structure and will vote according to her regime preference no matter what anchoring preferences she holds. Such a regime voter, to paint a picture of an ideal-type, can resist any counterinfluences arising from ideological preferences or partisan considerations. Assuming, as in the

case of the French elections in 2002, that the President is of the political right, the expectation is that at the legislative election a regime voter will cast her vote for the left if she prefers divided government and for the right if she prefers unified government. Figure 2 summarizes both, our baseline predictions as well as the expected voting behavior of regime voters.

Figure 2: Summary of Vote-Choice Predictions

Anchoring Preference Regime Preference	Left	Unanchored	Right
Divided Government	Left Left	? Left	Right Left
Unified Government	Left Right	? Right	Right Right

In two cases we cannot distinguish, whether a voter follows the regime voting model or our baseline predictions. If a voter is anchored on the political left and prefers divided government then we cannot disentangle that. The same is true for supporters of the right who prefer a unified government. Given that Chirac is President, voting for a candidate of the political left can be the result of preferring divided government or simply being anchored on the left (or both, of course). At the same time, voting for a candidate of the political right can be the consequence of preferring unified government or being anchored on the right (or both).

What happens, though, when anchoring and regime preferences are not in line with one another? In these cases, we argue, voters have to weigh their anchoring preferences against their regime preferences in order to come up with a decision. Depending on the strength of these preferences this has various consequences. Someone who has a clear partisan preference for a party of the political left but favors a unified government might vote for a candidate of the left or the right. The same holds for someone of the political right favoring cohabitation. She might also vote either way. Since partisan and regime preferences draw in opposite directions our general expectation is that they become less likely to vote for a candidate of their preferred party bloc. Unanchored voters have no clear preferences or their partisan preferences neutralize one another. Therefore, there is nothing to counter balance the impact of their regime preferences and we should observe a voting behavior that reflects their regime preferences. To sum up, we formulate the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses 1: *Anchored voters are less likely to vote for a candidate of their preferred party bloc if they hold regime preferences that stay in contrast with their partisan preferences, i.e., in the case of*

the 2002 French legislative elections supporters of the left (right) are less likely to vote for their most preferred bloc if they favor unified (divided) government.

Hypotheses 2: *Unanchored Voters are more likely to vote in accordance with their regime preferences, i.e., in the case of the 2002 French legislative elections they are more likely to vote for the right (left) if they favor unified (divided) government.*

4. Data and Measurement

Having introduced two competing models, we now turn to the case of the 2002 French elections. We conducted a survey representative of French voters that was administered right after the second round of the presidential elections and before the first round of the legislative elections. Thus, every respondent knew the outcome of the presidential election. In order to investigate the impact of regime preferences on voting behavior we use the following item to measure a voter's attitude towards cohabitation:

« S'agissant d'une éventuelle future cohabitation, de quelle opinion vous sentez-vous le plus proche ? »[10]

Then, respondents were presented the following alternatives :(a) « *une cohabitation serait une bonne chose pour la France* », or (b) « *une cohabitation serait une mauvaise chose pour la France* ».[11]

How do people generate an answer to this question? The issue of cohabitation is neither at the fringes of French politics nor of interest to only a small issue public. Instead the issue of divided vs. unified government was a prominent part of the political discourse during the campaign. That said it is nevertheless unlikely that everyone has made up her mind on that issue such that she can quickly provide an answer to this question in an interview situation. It is more likely, however, that voters have formed a broad and general outlook about the political realm during this election cycle. We assume that voters are able to form preferences about parties, which consist of long-term factors like identification with certain parties reflecting their political experiences, modified by ideological considerations and, finally updated by short-term factors like the popularity of certain party candidates and the like that anchors them politically. From research on the survey response we know that if voters cannot provide a ready-made answer about their attitudes towards cohabitation they make one up based on the 'top-of-the-head' considerations happened to be salient at that time (Zaller 1992; Zaller and Feldman 1992). It is, therefore, very likely that our cohabitation-question is encoded as a purely partisan consideration. Encoded in a partisan manner, leftists should, of course, favor cohabitation while voters on the right should not favor it given that Chirac was already elected president. In a telephone interview situation, like in our survey, we cannot reliably control for whether

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[10] Considering a possible future cohabitation, to which of these opinions do you feel closer to?
[11] a) Cohabitation is good cause for France; b) Cohabitation is bad cause for France.

respondents actually think about cohabitation as a regime issue or purely as a partisan one. There are several strategies to salvage this situation.

One way to deal with this problem is to simply exclude those respondents for which we cannot reliably disentangle constitutional from partisan interpretations of the cohabitation-question because both interpretations have observationally equivalent consequences. This strategy is problematic because we had to drop many cases from the analysis. At best, we would loose efficiency. Worst case, however, if the exclusions are non-random, we introduce a selection bias.

A second way to approach our research question is to control for partisanship and ideology in order to purge the impact of cohabitation on vote choice. Although we do not have to drop any cases from the analysis, this strategy is plagued by validity of our cohabitation measure. For those who think of cohabitation simply as a partisan issue, the cohabitation-item does simply not measure what it is supposed to measure. Their reported attitude is reducible to a predictive implication of their anchoring preferences. Since for most of the respondents we cannot disentangle anchoring and regime preferences, all analysis of causal inference based purely on this item is suspicious.

We, therefore, opt for a third strategy. It is true that respondents who might encode the cohabitation-issue in a partisan way cannot tell us anything about our research question: the impact of cohabitation as a regime issue on voting behavior. We, therefore, only regard those voters as potential regime voters whose partisan and regime preferences are conflicting. Nevertheless, we still account for all other voters in our analysis. For respondents whose partisan and regime preferences are coherent, such that we are in doubt whether these voters really interpret our cohabitation-question as a regime issue, we assume that their reported stand on the cohabitation item is based on 'top-of-the-head' considerations based on their salient anchoring preferences. The difference to strategy one is that we do not exclude them from the analysis. Returning to our regime voter matrix (matrix 1), we only define left sympathizers opposing cohabitation (i.e. favoring unified government), and sympathizers of the right favoring cohabitation (i.e. opposing unified government) as potential regime voters thereby - if at all - erring on the conservative side about the impact of regime voting. For those respondents we can be quite sure that they do not encode this item in a purely partisan way. This strategy assures not to falsely overestimate the importance of regime concerns on vote choice since, first, we do not have to drop any observations thereby biasing our estimates and, second, we preserve the validity of the cohabitation item by making sure that it might be only relevant to respondents who are likely to have encoded this issue in a partisan-free way.

Our theory predicts that attitudes towards cohabitation should have an impact under certain circumstances on casting a vote for a party of the political right or left. A dependent variable inevitably has to combine respondents' vote intention for parties into categories since there are numerous party candidates on the ballot. According to our hypotheses we have predictions for casting a vote for the right and the left. Within these two blocs the elites often coordinate on the district level which party of that bloc actually fields a candidate. This simplifies a voter's decision problem to a choice between a party candidate of the left versus the right.

Additionally, we create a residual category for non-voters and voters of extreme party candidates. Although we have not developed any hypotheses about their behavior at the polls, including those respondents in a vote choice model helps to overcome selection bias issues. Thus our dependent variable appropriately reflects our theoretical predictions within the ideological nature of French politics and has, therefore, three categories: left, right and others.[12]

Since we argue that the impact of regime preferences, i.e., attitudes towards cohabitation, on vote choice is conditional on particular partisan preferences we *a priori* divide up the electorate in four groups for which we construct dummy variables: right, left, extreme (right and left) as well as respondents without clear partisan preference in the following way. First, we derived every respondent's partisan preference order from standard 10-point party likes/dislikes-scales to find out her most preferred party. In order to construct a dummy for the political right, respondents are coded 1 if they most prefer a party of the political right, such as 'Union pour la démocracie française' (UDF), 'Rassemblement pour la république' (RPR) or 'Démocratie liberale' (DL).[13] Analogously, we construct a dummy for the political left. A respondent is coded 1 indicating that she is as a supporter of the political left if she most prefers a party of the left, such as 'Parti socialiste' (PS), the Greens, 'Parti communiste français' (PCF) or 'Mouvement des citoyens' (MDC). Now, given that we analyze standard 10-point party likes/dislikes-scales respondents might most prefer a party of the left and of the right at the same time. Hence, to construct a dummy for the group with unanchored partisan preferences, i.e., with no clear bloc preferences, respondents are coded 1 if they have tied both, a party of the left and the right, on the first rank. The excluded category consists of respondents who most prefer parties of the extreme left and right.[14] We have items for nine parties including all parties above as well as 'Front national' (FN) (extreme right) and 'Lutte ouvrière' (LO) (extreme left). In order to specify a baseline vote choice model besides partisan preferences we also control for respondents self-placement on a 10-point left-right ideology scale ranging from zero (extreme left) to one (extreme right).

According to our theory regime preferences should matter in an individual's decision-making process above and beyond these variables specifying a baseline vote choice model. Regime considerations, however, play a different role influencing vote choice for the right and the left as well as for respondents with unanchored preferences. If respondents have clear partisan preferences and their attitudes towards cohabitation stay in stark contrast to these preferences we are able to disentangle regime and partisan considerations. Since Chirac won the presidential election the political right should, of course, favor unified over divided government because of partisan or regime concerns. We cannot disentangle them. Only for respondents on the political right who also favor

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[12] The study is administered by CSA, Paris. Based on our sample we have a bias of over-reporting an intention to vote for a candidate of the left. This is, unfortunately, a tradition for election studies in France.

[13] When the survey was designed the development of the UMP was not evident and we expected the voters to still use known party labels as their political referents.

[14] Even if a respondent most prefers a moderate (left or right) and an extreme party at the same time, she is coded as an extremist. Based on respondent's placement of parties on the 10-point likes/ dislikes-scale we

cohabitation or, analogously, for respondents of the political left who oppose cohabitation we expect to detect, according to our first hypothesis, the impact of regime preferences on vote choice. Therefore we construct two dummy variables accordingly. The "Regime-Right dummy" scores 'one' if someone most prefers a party of the political right and favors cohabitation and the "Regime-Left dummy" scores 'one' if someone most prefers a party of the political left and opposes cohabitation.

Furthermore, according to our second hypothesis we expect for respondents with unanchored partisan preferences that, since presumably partisan preferences neutralize one another, they should vote according to their attitudes towards cohabitation. The "Regime-Unanchored dummy" scores 'one' if respondents with unanchored partisan preferences oppose cohabitation hence favoring a unified government strategy. If our second hypothesis is supported we should find holding everything else constant that voters opposing cohabitation to be less likely to vote for the left than for the right while, at the same time, voters favoring cohabitation to be more likely to vote for the right than for the left.

5. Regime Preferences and Vote Choice

Is it not simply asking too much of French voters to entertain ideas about the type of government they prefer whether it is divided or unified? And in doing this, how can we be so sure that they really take-off their political glasses, which they otherwise use to make sense of the political realm? In general, we find a slight majority (56 %) of the respondents of our analysis in favor of unified government. If the French voters' regime preferences were simply to follow the voters' anchoring preferences then based on that we could systematically predict their attitudes toward cohabitation. Whether we use ideology or their partisan preferences or both to predict respondents' reported stands on the cohabitation question in logit models (not reported here) still every third respondent is falsely classified. Thus, there is apparently more going on.

Moreover, we find only 5% of all respondents most preferring a party on the political right but favoring divided government, while we find about 19% of all respondents most preferring a party on the political left but favoring unified government. Thus for almost every forth respondent in our sample we find that partisan preferences and regime preferences are conflicting. We get a similar picture if we analyze the respondents' stands on ideology.[15] Here over 16% of all respondents have conflicting ideological and regime preferences, i.e., they either place themselves on the ideological left (scale values 0 to 3) and favor unified government or place themselves on the ideological right (scale values 7 to 10) and favor divided government. Most interestingly, ideological moderates (scale values 4 to 6) are more inclined to favor unified over divided government. While only 17% of all respondents are

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divide up the electorate in 50% supporters of the left, 32% supporters of the right, 7% extremists, and 11% respondents with no clear, i.e., unanchored preferences.

[15] Ideology and partisan preferences do not simply measure the same thing, particularly for partisans of the political left. Here not even two out of three respondents of the political left place themselves on the left ideological spectrum. Furthermore, one out of five respondents most preferring a party of the political right do actually place themselves not on the ideological right.

moderates preferring divided government, 24% of all respondents are ideological moderates favoring unified government. Thus, Fiorina's (1992b) idea of a balancing strategy that motivates ideological moderate voters seems to be only one part of the regime-voting story for the case of France. Ideological moderates of the left might also be motivated against their partisan preferences to cast a vote for the right to make a unified government more likely. To sum up, these descriptive results are quite comforting that besides respondents' anchoring preferences also their regime preferences, i.e. their attitudes toward cohabitation, bring something distinct to the table. Using all explanatory variables in one single model lets us finally answer our research question: What is the impact of cohabitation as a regime issue on voting behavior? Since our dependent variable has three categories we use a multinomial logit (MNL) model to estimate it.[16] Hence we present in table 1 two sets of estimates taking vote choice for a candidate of the right as a baseline category.

Table 1:   **Disentangling Regime from Anchoring Preferences:**
              A MNL Vote Choice Model of the French Parliamentary Election 2002

	Dependent Variable: Vote Choice					
	Left vs. Right			Others vs. Right		
Independent Variables	Coef.	Std. Err.	*p*	Coef.	Std. Err.	*p*
Ideology	-4.354	0.730	0.000	-1.360	0.721	0.059
Right Preference	-4.072	0.975	0.000	-4.888	0.761	0.000
Left Preference	2.221	0.945	0.019	-1.804	0.891	0.043
Unanchored Preference	-1.206	0.970	0.214	-3.260	0.867	0.000
Regime-Right	1.996	0.682	0.003	0.237	0.528	0.654
Regime-Left	-1.617	0.573	0.005	-0.990	0.626	0.114
Regime-Unanchored	-0.411	0.641	0.521	-0.641	0.600	0.285
Constant	3.366	0.938	0.000	3.950	0.892	0.000
N	710					
Percent correctly classified	80.6					

Note. *p*-values are for two tailed tests based on robust (White-Huber) standard errors.

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[16]   Hausman tests show that IIA is not a problem in our data.

Overall, the fit of our vote choice model is excellent. Based on this model we correctly classify 8 out of 10 respondents. Not surprisingly, ideology and partisan preferences are the main determinants of vote choice in France. For a decision between voting for a candidate on the left or on the right as well as non-voting or voting for an extreme candidate as opposed to a candidate on the right the higher a respondents self-placement on the left-right ideology scale the more likely she is to cast a vote for a candidate on the right. If a respondent most prefers a party on the right she is more likely to cast her vote according to her partisan preferences than for any alternative. Similarly most preferring a party on the left makes a respondent more likely to cast her vote for a candidate on the left and less likely to cast a vote for an extremist candidate or abstain as opposed to casting a vote for the right. Preferring most a party of the left and the right does not predict the choice between a candidate of the left and the right. It does, however, predict vote choice for the right as opposed to a vote for an extremist or abstention.

Interestingly, suppose supporters of the left are upset with their candidates such that no one on the political left is in their choice-set, i.e., they will not cast a vote for a candidate of the political left. Looking at the right set of estimates in table one, these voters are about six times (6.07 = 1/exp(-1.804)) more likely to vote for a candidate of the right instead of casting a protest vote for an extremist candidate or abstain in the first place. If we further assume that it is not acceptable for such voters to vote for an extremist then there is no significant difference between the likelihood of voting for a candidate of the right or to abstain.[17] Thus, such alienated supporters of the left are both more likely to vote for the right or abstain than to vote for an extremist candidate.

Nevertheless, these estimation results also show that regime preferences are neither simply a esoteric idiosyncrasy of the electoral cycle in 2002 nor partisan or ideologial preferences in a drag. Regime preferences have predictable implications on a voter's decision-making process. They matter substantively above and beyond the baseline vote choice model consisting of ideology and partisan preferences that anchor each voter. As expected, the Regime-Right coefficient is significantly positive implying that supporters of the political right are about seven times (7.36 = exp(1.996) more likely to vote for a leftist candidate at the first round of the parliamentary election if they favor divided over unified government. Since the Regime-Left coefficient is significantly negative we get the reverse picture for supporters of the political left. Supporters of the political left with unified government as opposed to divided government preferences are five times (5.04 = 1/exp(-1.617) less likely to vote for a leftist candidate. This strongly supports our first hypothesis about the impact of regime preferences on vote choice if voters have a clear partisan preference.

Since a MNL model is non-linear and non-additive the substantive interpretation of these coefficients is not straightforward. The effects of estimated coefficients depend upon values of the other variables and coefficients. To take full advantage of the information available in these estimation

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[17] The particular results are not reported here but available from the authors upon request. In order to do conduct such an analysis, one has to disentangle the 'Other' category of the dependent variable into 'vote for extremist candidates' and 'abstention'. Thus, such a dependent variable has four instead of three categories.

results and to interpret and present them in a reader-friendly manner we, therefore, run some statistical simulations to compute quantities of substantive interest based on these coefficients.[18]

How strong is the impact of regime preferences on a voter's decision-making process? One way to assess the substantive impact is through "first differences" (King et al. 2000). The idea behind this is to compare the predicted voting behavior of two hypothetical voters who only differ in a characteristic of interest. The difference of the model predictions between these two hypothetical voters represents the substantive impact of this characteristic. Take two hypothetical voters with a mean value on the ideology scale. If they have a clear preference for a party of the political right we find that favoring cohabitation makes this voter - as opposed to a voter preferring unified government - about 20 percentage points more likely to deviate from a vote for the political right and cast a vote for the left instead. Conversely, having a clear partisan preference for the political left and opposing cohabitation makes this voter compared to the same voter - but favoring cohabitation – about 16 percentage points less likely to vote for the left and on the same time about 8 percentage points more likely to cast a vote for a candidate of the political right supporting our first hypothesis. Interestingly, if partisan and regime preferences are conflicting, supporters of the political right are more likely to cast a vote according to their regime preferences for a party of the left while supporters of the left opposing cohabitation do not automatically deviate to the right in accordance with their regime preferences. They have the same propensity to cast a vote for candidates for the extremes or do not turn out to vote in the first place. These simulations show that if a voter's partisan and regime preferences stay in conflict and she is supporting the political left, the cost of casting a ballot for a candidate of the political right is, apparently, higher than the other way around. Thus regime preferences do have an independent impact on a voter's decision-making process.

As another way to assess the importance of regime preferences we simulate actual voting decisions to see whether regime preferences alone are sufficient for a particular voter to cast her vote for a candidate not belonging to her own political bloc. In order to visualize these simulations based on the actual data we employ a "ternary plot" (Miller 1977, Katz and King 1999, King et al. 2000). Since we model the decision in the voting booth as a vote-choice situation between three options every voter has a predicted probability to choose one of these options: vote for the left, the right and abstain or vote for an extremist candidate. The probabilities sum to one, of course. Suppose a voter is predicted with probability one to cast her vote for the right, hence the probability to vote for the left or the other option has to be both zero. Thus in a ternary plot this voter would be located at the right vertex. Analogously if a voter is predicted with probability 1 to cast her votes for the left, she is plotted at the left vertex. We add spokes to this triangle in order to ease interpretation of what these predicted probabilities substantively imply for vote choice. Each spoke connects the midpoint of each side to the midpoint of the triangle and, thereby, effectively divides the triangle into regions in which each vote choice option is predicted. Thus every dot in the upper part represents a voter who is predicted to cast

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[18]   We use CLARIFY (Tomz et al 2001), a set of Stata ado-files, to carry out these simulations.

her vote for an extremist candidate or chooses to abstain. Analogously, every dot in the left (right) region of the triangle represents a voter of the left (right).[19]

Since the impact of regime preferences according to our hypotheses should be different for different groups of the electorate we define interesting scenarios and simulate predicted probabilities for such voters. First, we simulated vote-choice decisions of supporters of the left with a mean value on the ideology scale. Would their vote choice be different if they oppose instead of favor cohabitation? In the first run we assume that they favor cohabitation while in the second run we hypothetically change their attitudes towards cohabitation. The predicted voting behavior is presented in figure 3.

Figure 3:   **Simulated Impact of Attitudes towards Cohabitation on Vote Choice for Supporters of the Left**
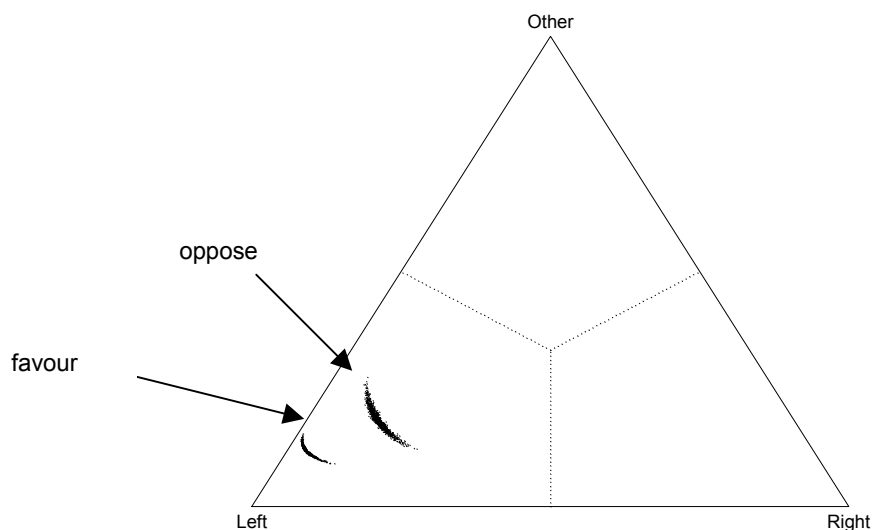

Compared to leftists who favor cohabitation we find as expected that if these voters could be persuaded to oppose cohabitation this would draw them away from the left vertex. We observe a substantial upward and a smaller rightward movement indicating that all of these hypothetical voters are substantially more likely to abstain or to vote for an extremist candidate and, on the same time are more likely to vote for the right. Nevertheless all dots still remain in the left region. We thus clearly show that changing attitudes about cohabitation is not sufficient on its own to substantially change the voting behavior for supporters of the left. However, even if left supporters were brought to abstain from the election because they were persuaded that cohabitation is a bad idea this would have had an indirect effect on the election outcome because it weakened the political left.

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[19]   Nicholas J. Cox, University of Durham, U.K. wrote a very helpful software module (Stata's - triplot.ado -) to draw such ternary plots.

Similarly, we would like to find out in a second scenario whether or to what degree supporters of the right with a mean ideology value are likely to change their vote choice according to their regime preferences. The results of this counterfactual are presented in figure 4.

Figure 4:   Simulated Impact of Attitudes towards Cohabitation on Vote Choice for Supporters of the Right
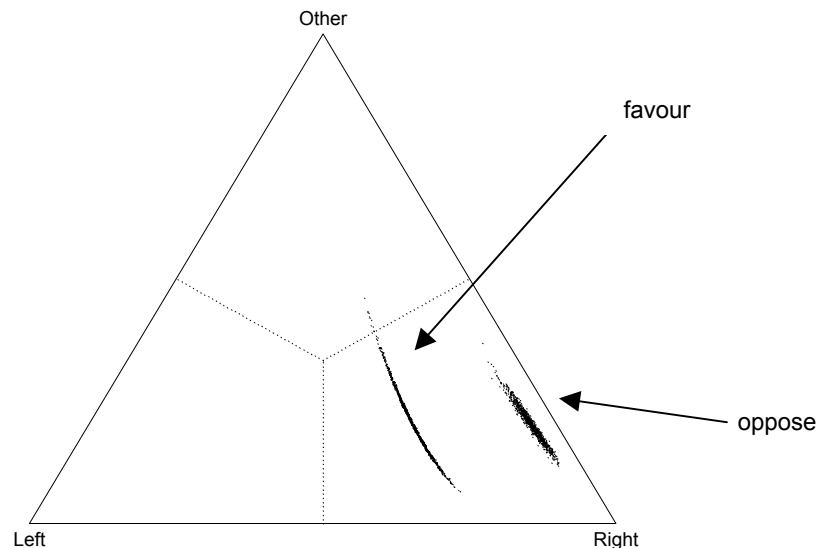
Again, we observe a movement away from the (right) vertex of the triangle if partisan and regime preferences are conflicting. Thus such supporters of the right with conflicting partisan and regime preferences are less likely to vote according to their partisan preferences. Here we see a stronger movement to the left than up. This implies that there is a stronger tendency to become more likely to vote for a candidate of the left. Interestingly, for some voters close to the dividing line between the right and the "other region" hypothetically changing their attitudes towards cohabitation from oppose to favor cohabitation would be already enough to change their original vote choice decision into abstaining or voting for an extreme candidate. The picture at the same time, of course, shows that a supporter of the right initially planning to abstain from the election might get mobilized to vote for the right, should she be persuaded to clearly oppose cohabitation during the campaign. This finding might explain the high mobilization rate for voters of the presidential party.

In order to test our second hypothesis we focus on voters with unanchored partisan preferences, i.e. respondents who most prefer a party on the right as well as a party on the left. The results of hypothetically changing their attitudes toward cohabitation are presented in figure 5.

Figure 5:   **Simulated Impact of Attitudes towards Cohabitation for Respondents with Unanchored Preferences**
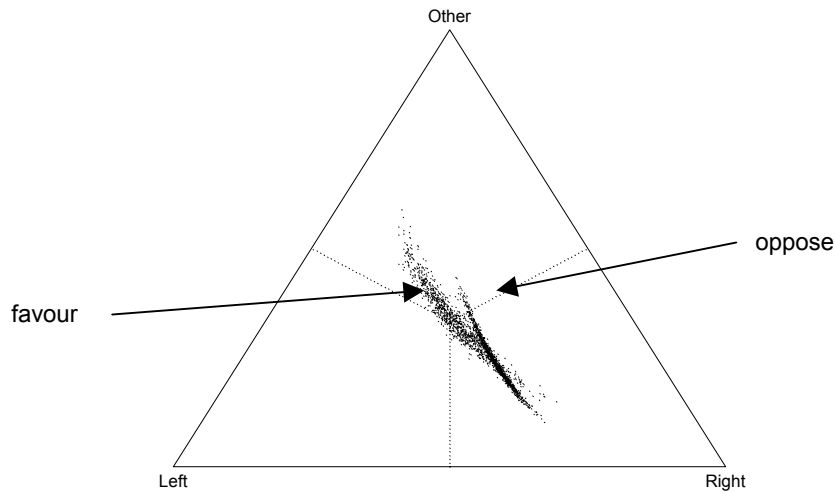

Here, we clearly see how strong the substantive impact of regime preferences becomes when conflicting partisan preferences neutralize one another. Some respondents without clear partisan preferences having a mean ideology value and favoring cohabitation are predicted to vote for a candidate of the left. Since most dots are located in the upper region our counterfactuals show that most of the respondents either will abstain or vote for an extremist candidate or cast their ballot for a candidate of the right. If they can be persuaded to oppose cohabitation, something that the campaign of the right actually emphasized, a majority of these voters will switch to a candidate of the political right. Thus, for voters with unanchored partisan preferences we clearly see the strongest substantive impact of campaigning on the issue of cohabitation. This result does support our second hypothesis. While the predicted rightward movement is not significant – as it can be formally seen in the non-significant "Regime-Unanchored" coefficients in table 1 - the little movement there is does have a strong substantive effect. Changing their attitudes from favoring toward opposing cohabitation does motivate voters to cross the line from the left or the 'other region' into the right region. Thus, many voters without clear partisan preferences are motivated to finally vote for a candidate of the right if they change their attitude towards favoring unified government.

A third way to assess the consequences of regime preferences on voting behavior is to estimate how much more likely respondents are to vote against their partisan preferences if their attitudes towards cohabitation stand in a cross-pressure situation against their partisan preferences. The effects of regime concerns for such voters are presented in the next three graphs conditional on their ideology.

Figure 6 presents the difference in probability of voting for a candidate of the right of two voters most preferring the left with different regime preferences. They only differ in their attitude towards cohabitation. While for one voter her attitude towards cohabitation is in line with her partisan preference, i.e. she favors cohabitation, the other voters' partisan preference and her attitude towards cohabitation stand in a cross-pressure situation, i.e., she opposes cohabitation. We graph the difference in predicted probability of voting for the right if a voter's regime preferences are conflicting versus non-conflicting with her partisan preferences. Since everything else is the same, this can be defined as the impact of regime preferences on such an individual's vote-choice process.

**Figure 6:   Impact of Regime Preferences on Unified Government Voting**
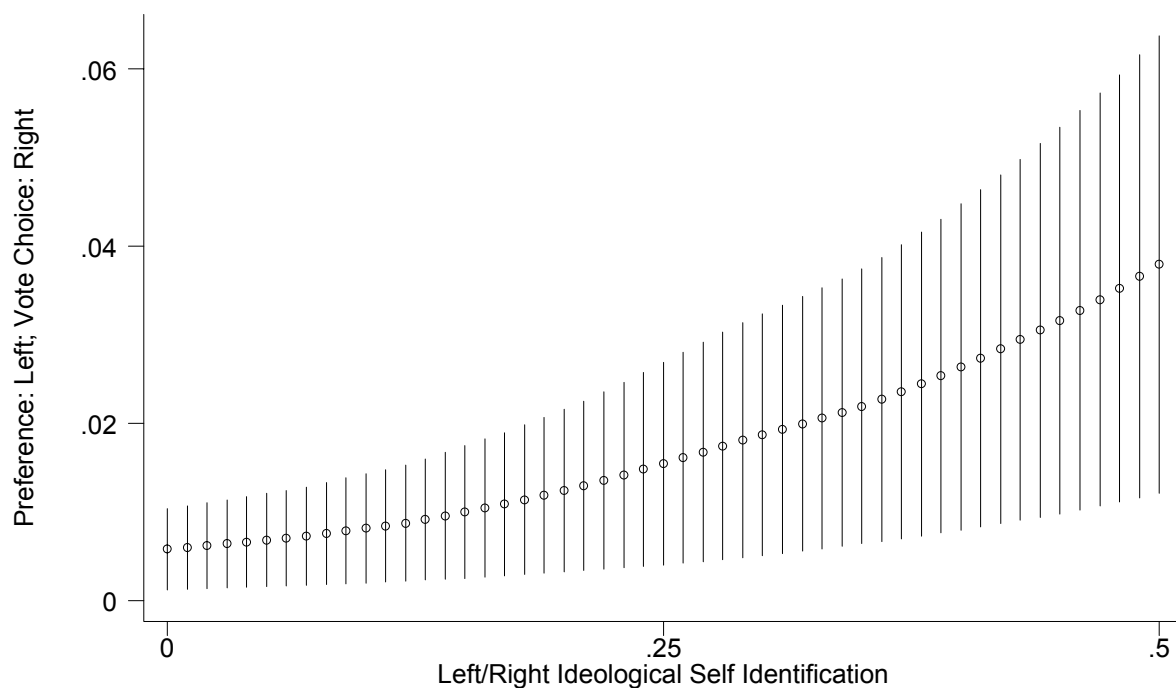
Regime preferences do matter. Across the entire range of the ideology scale voters are significantly more likely to vote for a candidate on the right if their regime preferences are conflicting than when they are in line with their partisan preferences. The above figure makes transparent that ideological hardliners on the left are a lot less likely to change their voting decision and cast a vote for a unified government according to their regime preferences than voters with a moderate ideological self-identification. The more a voter's ideological self-placement is on the right, the higher the difference in predicted probability, i.e. the stronger becomes the impact of regime concerns on someone's decision-making process in the voting booth.[20] Thus campaigning on the issue of cohabitation is likely to have

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[20]   We did not simulate the impact for supporters of the political left if they place themselves to the right of the middle position on the ideology scale because the cell sizes for these counterfactuals are rather small.

the strongest impact on moderate supporters of the left. For instance, given a middle position on the ideology scale, changing a voter's attitude towards cohabitation such that it is conflicting with her partisan preferences does make her about 5 percentage points more likely to vote against her partisan preferences. This finding is mirrored in figure 7 for supporters of the right and their predicted probability to cast a vote for a candidate on the left. The difference in predicted probability of voting for a candidate of the left if two voters only differ in their regime preferences is approximately the same for supporters of the right.

**Figure 7:   Impact of Regime Preferences on Divided Government Voting.**
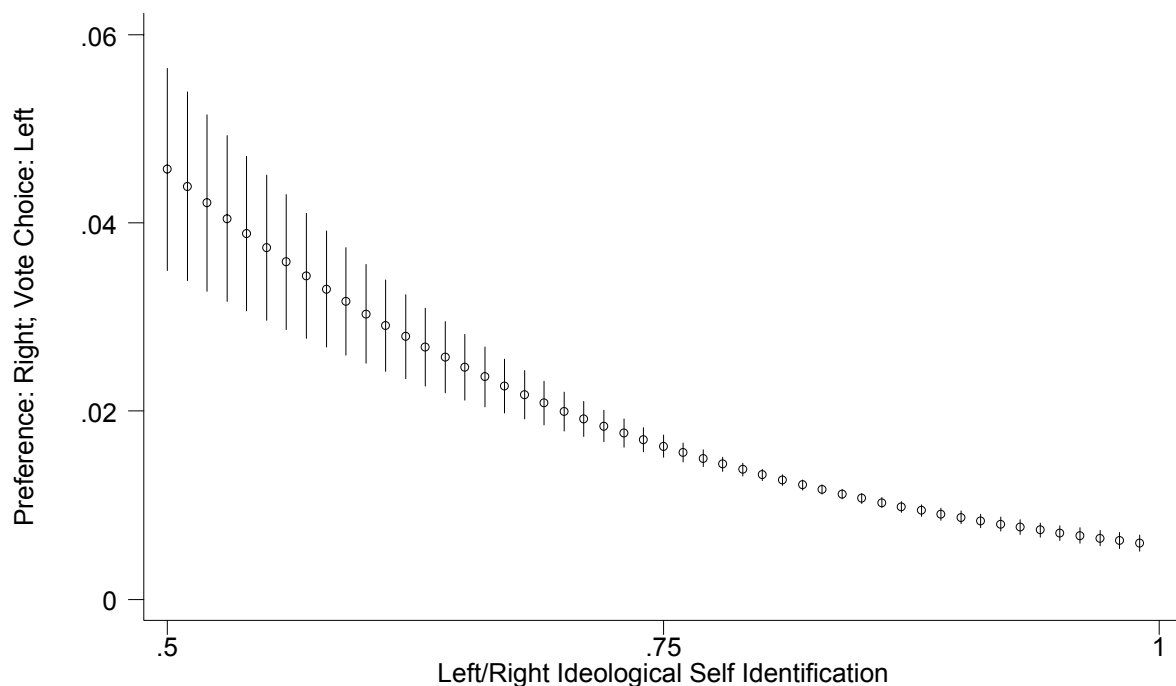
In this case, if they prefer rather than oppose cohabitation, i.e. if regime preferences are conflicting rather than non-conflicting with their partisan preferences of the political right, the predicted probability to vote for divided government is higher, the more left voters places themselves on the ideology scale. Suppose two supporter of the right with moderate ideology. If one supporter's attitude towards cohabitation is conflicting with her partisan preference as opposed to a supporter whose attitude is in line with her partisan preference she is approximately 5 percentage points more likely to vote for the left candidate.[21] To sum up, for voters with clear partisan preferences we find the strongest impact of regime preferences for ideological moderates. This does hold for both types of regime preferences, divided and unified government preferences.

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[21]   Similarly, we did not simulate the impact for supporters of the right if they place themselves to the right of the middle position on the ideology scale because of small cell size.

Particularly interesting, again, are respondents with unanchored partisan preferences because they do not have clear anchor that still keeps them within one camp. Here, we should expect the strongest impact of regime concerns on their voting decision. Figure 8 graphs the difference in predicted probabilities for such respondents to vote for a candidate for the right when they oppose rather than favor cohabitation.

Figure 8: **Impact of Regime Preferences for Respondents with Unanchored Preferences on the Probability of Voting for the Right.**
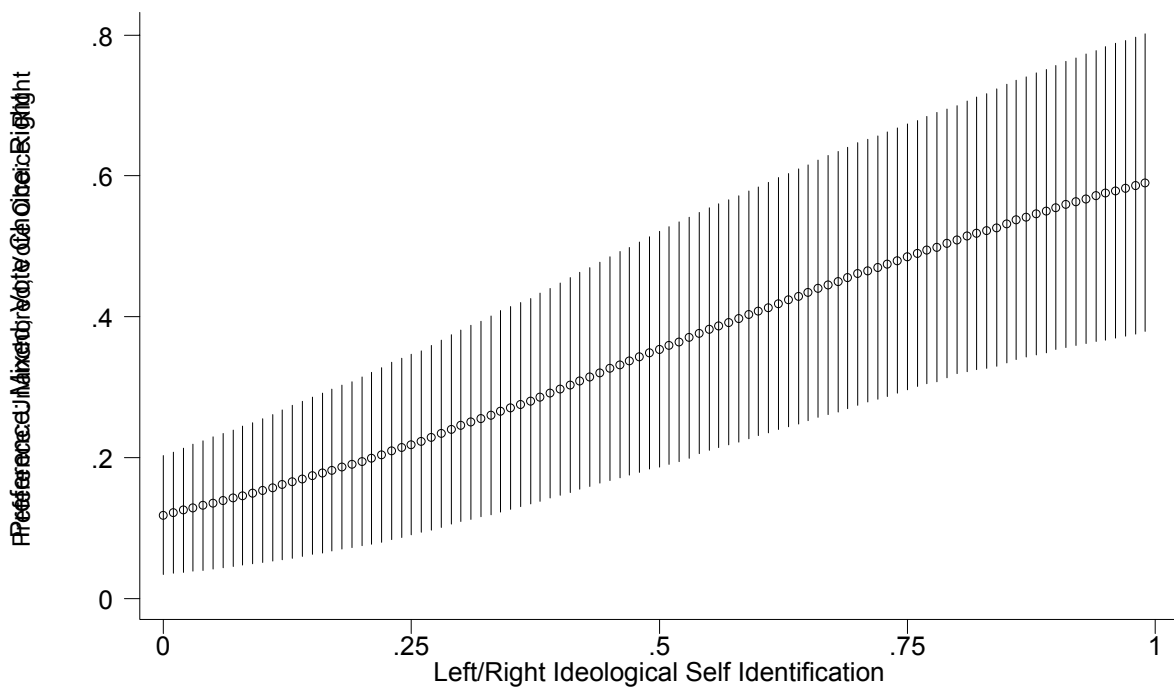
Here we clearly find that in order to vote for a candidate of the right that the more a voter is ideologically on the right, the higher the difference in predicted probability between someone who opposes rather than favors cohabitation. Thus, the more a voter places herself ideologically on the right, the stronger becomes the impact her unified government preferences on casting a vote for the political right. Compared to the two preceding graphs for respondents with clear partisan preferences on the left and on the right, the impact of regime preferences here is a lot stronger, particularly strong for someone on the ideological right. Organizing parts of an election campaign around this issue should prove to be successful for parties of both blocs because changing someone's regime preferences if she is not clearly anchored politically, increases the probability to also change her vote. Since aggregate public opinion results showed that cohabitation was seen less and less favorably the closer the election came, the effect of this might have helped the right bloc to gain some additional votes.

6. Regime Voting in 2002 and Beyond

Regime preferences did matter in the French parliamentary elections in 2002. Out there are voters who prefer a unified government and vote according to this preference as well as voters who prefer cohabitation and vote according to it. In general, voters weigh their partisan against their regime preferences. If voters' regime preferences draw in opposite direction of their partisan preferences they become less likely to vote according to their partisan preferences. However, for most respondents partisan preferences generally outweigh regime preferences. Especially for ideological hardliners partisan preferences strongly outweigh regime preferences. Only a minority of voters with a clear anchoring partisan preference actually change sides in the voting booth. They, indeed, rather flee towards absenteeism or extremist vote. This indicates that the regime dimension here has an impact on the mobilization capacity of the political parties. In our case a critical opinion about cohabitation led supporter of the left to stay at home, supporters of the right, however, were mobilized. Thus the mobilization capacity seems to create a strong link between the four electoral rounds. For voters who cannot fall back on their partisan yardstick, i.e., those who hold partisan preferences for the left and the right presumably neutralizing one another, regime preferences have a strong substantive impact. It seems that changing their regime preferences is already enough to change their actual vote decision. These voters in 2002 generally supported parties on the right if they preferred a unified government or parties on the left if they preferred a divided government, respectively. This finding is all the more interesting since it puts a new perspective on Fiorina's explanation of divided government. The moderate voters Fiorina (1992) identifies for the case of the US as potential divided government voters, are also likely to vote for unified government in France. Thus, moderate voters do not generally apply a balancing strategy. Instead, it seems that these voters are generally more likely to vote in accordance with their regime preferences, no matter whether they prefer unified or divided government. As a matter of fact, we have, however, no indication of the stability and strength of these regime preferences, how accessible they are or whether these preferences are held with great confidence. This is left for future research. Nevertheless, we present at least some evidence that regime preferences seem to outweigh in many cases counterinfluences like partisanship and ideology even if voters are clearly anchored into the political realm.

In the 2002 French elections regime voters supported unified as well as divided government, which is why we do not explain the surge of the parliamentary right by bandwagon effects. However, in 2002 public opinion towards cohabitation became more negative the closer the legislative elections appeared.[22] Until 1999 cohabitation was not conceived as a major problem (Grunberg 1999). During the campaign cohabitation was indeed blamed for all sorts of inconveniences, for example also for the rise of the extremist candidates and in particular Jean-Marie Le Pen. The right actually framed the *legislatives* as anti-cohabitation elections and seems to have been quite successful in persuading the

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[22]   Compare Louis Harris polling results about cohabitation published in Libération on March 29th 2002 with the ones published on March 7th 2002.

public.[23] Thus the tendencies we detected are likely to have been aggravated in the last weeks between our survey and the election day. When generalizing our findings on regime voting we, however, have to take into account that the 2002 French legislative elections took place in a moment of perceived crisis after Le Pen's success in the presidential elections. The shock of this event might have accentuated the regime implication of this particular election. However, further research is needed to investigate whether the importance of regime voting generally increases the more a political system is perceived to face a crisis.

Regime voting cannot entirely explain the outcome of the 2002 legislative elections in France, of course. The fact that the left did not manage to find a new charismatic leader after Jospin's resignation, the successful founding of the UMP and the role of Prime Minister Raffarin or the important issue of interior security policy on which the right was judged stronger are additional explanations. Nevertheless, we have seen that regime preferences draw voters systematically in other directions than predicted by traditional models of voting behavior. This does call for an augmentation of these models in such situations.

Our findings also have implications on the design of political campaigns. In order to find institutional as well as behavioral conditions under which people can be persuaded against their anchoring preferences to vote for divided or unified government we suggest to study the impact of regime voting, i.e. not only intentional divided government voting, in other systems as well. Particularly interesting cases would be the US or the German federal system. These findings would add to the picture drawn by other scholars on divided government and voting behavior and could contribute towards a general theory of government.

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[23] In a survey published on June 11th 2002 in Libération 26% of the voters declared to have voted to give a coherent majority to the President. However this finding is put into perspective since the respondents were able to state three reasons and right and left supporters were not differentiated.

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