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The Normalization of the Far-Right:
When the Salience of Victories Matters*

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Abstract

Far-right voting is stigmatized, yet rising worldwide. Do signals of its newfound popularity embolden voters to support the far-right, even in the secrecy of the voting booth? I exploit quasi-experimental variation from the French two-round electoral system. When far-right candidates narrowly rank first in round one—a salient but purely symbolic victory—this brings them more votes in round two, held merely one week later. Evidence aligns with voters attending more to salient signals when they update second-order beliefs about the far-right's acceptability. As predicted if voters attach greater weight to more salient signals, more unusual wins have larger effects. Leveraging a large corpus of newspaper articles I scraped, I further show that these narrow wins trigger a spike in media coverage, which predicts the vote effect. Consistent with stigma erosion, this effect is specific to the far-right, larger where stigma is likely stronger, and persists in the long-term. Using administrative records on campaign funding, I document similar patterns for campaign donations—acts of support that are less secret than votes and may therefore carry larger reputational costs.

JEL Codes: P00, D72, D91

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1 Introduction

> *In the streets of Labastidette, silence reigns. No one knows anyone who voted for the RN, even though 376 out of 887 voters did. [...] In Labastidette as elsewhere, voting RN still happens in the secrecy of the voting booth, not with raised hands.*
>
> **La Dépêche du Midi, 2015**

In recent years, far-right politicians or parties have made headlines with their electoral rise—from the United States to India, Brazil, Argentina, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and France. Far-right views are historically stigmatized in many countries, causing their voters to hide their support when polled (Valentim (2021)). Yet, unexpected far-right electoral victories normalize those views and embolden their sympathizers to voice them openly (Bursztyn, Egorov, and Fiorin (2020), Valentim (2021), Giani and Méon (2021), Fages and Martínez (2024)). Does such news also increase far-right votes? Votes are important outcomes, being the basis of decision-making in many countries. An effect on future votes could further imply a self-fulfilling rise of the far-right as electoral victories could trigger future electoral victories. Whether stigma—and its erosion—should shape voting decisions is, however, unclear: the secrecy of the voting booth shields voters from reputational costs, but they may still experience guilt from engaging in stigmatized actions.

Isolating the effect of the news of those parties' wins on their future votes is challenging. Electoral victories have a myriad of consequences, which can in turn affect future votes. First, they typically bring politicians experience and resources through office, which can help them attract new voters. Second, far-right electoral victories may permanently boost the visibility of its rhetoric and gradually desensitize once-resistant voters. Third, far-right politicians may moderate their platform once in office, and thus win over new voters. A record of electoral successes may also push new—possibly more qualified—candidates to select into running for those formerly marginal parties, and thus broaden their electoral appeal. Alternatively, voters may choose "exit" (Hirschman (1972)) and vote with their feet and respond to far-right victories by selectively exiting or entering the voter pool, mechanically shifting vote shares. Voting intentions measured shortly after an election through polls should not be affected by these confounders. However, they are a poor proxy for actual voting intentions in this context, given the stigma surrounding far-right vote: an effect on reported far-right voting intentions could entirely reflect voters feeling more comfortable publicly admitting their views.

To address these challenges, I leverage a specificity of French elections. They follow a two-round

system, in which many candidates or party lists (hereafter 'tickets') compete in the first round, and a second round occurs one week later if no ticket obtained a qualified majority. Having ranked first, without a qualified majority, in round one is a symbolic 'win', in that it can receive disproportionate media coverage but does not confer access to office. Importantly, the top two tickets necessarily qualify for the runoff. This allows me to employ a Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) to compare the between-rounds change in votes for a historically controversial party, the Rassemblement National ('RN'), in districts where it narrowly ranked first in round one, to that in districts where it narrowly ranked second. Although first round support for the party is continuous at the cut-off, RN narrow first round wins receive extensive media coverage, making the party's high popularity more salient in treated districts. This setting allows me to measure the effect of RN wins on its future votes while ruling out a number of confounders. First, as those symbolic wins do not grant office access, effects cannot come from incumbency advantages such as resources or experience. Second, the one-week interval between the two rounds leaves little room for higher exposure—and desensitization—to far-right rhetoric. Further, since far-right candidates are among the top runoff contenders, exposure to far-right campaigning is likely similar in treated and control districts. Third, parties cannot nominate different candidates in round two, ruling out endogenous changes in candidate quality. Finally, electoral rules freeze the eligible voter pool between rounds, so changes in voter composition cannot drive the results.

The RN is widely viewed as particularly extreme. In repeated national surveys, over 7 in 10 French respondents placed it at 10 on a 0-10 ideological scale—firmly at the far-right extreme. Supporting the party has historically been frowned upon. In the early 2000s, only one third of RN voters admitted their vote when polled; fifteen years later, most voters still exhibited knee-jerk reactions, affirming they were 'not at all likely' to ever cast a ballot for the party. Protests against the party are regularly held and politicians from across the political spectrum often call for an anti-RN 'firewall' or ostensibly refuse to shake hands with its representatives—often justifying their stance by reminders that two of its founders belonged to the Waffen SS. However, the party has experienced a rapid electoral rise from 2011 onward.

To guide the analysis, I model voters' decision to support the party in the first and second round. I hypothesize that the RN's narrow first round 'wins' can increase the salience of its (high) popularity. RN high popularity is informative about second order beliefs: it suggests that many voters do not believe that supporting the party is morally wrong (a weak stigma). Building on Bordalo, Gen-

naioli, and Shleifer (2022)'s insight that more salient (i.e. more prominent and surprising) signals attract greater attention, I posit that voters give more weight to more salient signals when updating their belief that supporting the party is morally wrong. This belief in turn informs their actions: they only support the party if their inclination to do so outweighs the perceived moral cost.

To study the effects of the RN's symbolic wins on its future votes, I use the universe of French local and legislative election results from 2001 to 2024. This yields 2,896 district $\times$ election pairs where a second round occurred after the party ranked first or second. Of these, 361 were very close races, with the first two parties separated by less than 2% of the vote. To investigate whether the treatment increases the prominence of the RN's newfound popularity, I scraped over 100,000 newspaper articles published between the election rounds and matched them to the RN tickets they mention. To explore whether it affects other expressions of support for the party, I matched the election results to administrative data on campaign donations.

I find that, on average, RN tickets that narrowly ranked first in the first round see their votes increase by 0.7 percent more of registered voters relative to those that narrowly ranked second (corresponding to a vote share increase of 1.6 percentage points). The effect is not driven by the mobilization of voters who would otherwise have abstained, ruling out galvanization of the party's voter base. Instead, voters who would otherwise have voted for its opponents appear to switch to voting for the RN.

More surprising signals should be more salient. In line with signals' salience driving the effects, the vote effect is strongest in the early years of the party's rise: before 2017, it corresponds to 1.3 percentage points of registered voters (and to a vote share increase of 2.4 percentage points). In this period, RN first round wins received disproportionate media attention: RN tickets that narrowly ranked first in the first round were 20 percentage points more likely to be mentioned in a newspaper article immediately after the first round, and those surplus articles were also more likely to state that the party was ahead. Underscoring the role of salience of the party's popularity, this spike in media coverage predicts the effect on votes.

The evidence is in line with symbolic wins eroding the stigma against the RN. Indeed, moderate parties' symbolic wins had no effect on their votes. Additionally, the effect on RN votes was more pronounced in areas where the stigma could be expected to be stronger. The effect did not disappear by the time of the next election four to six years later, suggesting a lasting effect on beliefs.[1] Lastly,

[1]While this may seem to contradict the fact that, after 2017, RN symbolic wins had no effect on support for

stigma erosion should have a large effect on less secret acts of support. I test this with campaign donations to the RN, which are not protected by the secrecy of the voting booth—and are extremely rare compared to donations to moderate parties. As predicted, RN tickets that narrowly ranked first in round one received more donations than those that narrowly ranked second—with a marginally significant 10-percentage-point difference in the probability of receiving some donations and two- to three-fold higher donations. Like the vote effect, this pattern is absent for moderate parties and disappears after 2017. Using a classifier, I show that, in narrowly treated districts, round two RN votes under-predict donations more (relative to narrowly control districts). Consistent with stigma erosion, this suggests that donations are more responsive to symbolic wins than the more secret votes.

Lastly, I rule out strategic voting or coordination explanations. When only two tickets qualify for the second round, the only strategic decision left to voters is whether to turn out. Yet, I show that the positive effect on RN vote and the null effect on voter mobilization still hold in those districts. If the effect were driven by coordination, one would expect a stronger effect for moderate parties than for the strategically isolated RN—the opposite of what I find. Coordination would not explain why the effect is driven by the early years of the party's rise, when the party was most isolated, nor why it persists in the next election, independently of whether the party ranks first again in the first round.

My results primarily speak to the emerging literature showing that far-right politicians' victories erode existing norms, as well as the broader literature on the determinants of populism. The first literature has focused on effects on public and often survey-based expressions of support for stigmatized views—from public donations (Bursztyn, Egorov, and Fiorin (2020)) to racial bias in face-to-face surveys (Giani and Méon (2021)), reported votes and reported proximity to controversial parties in surveys (Valentim (2021)), and hate crime (Albornoz et al. (2025)). The second literature has examined a broad range of factors (see Guriev and Papaioannou (2022)), with a recent emphasis on the role of new media (Campante, Durante, and Sobbrio (2018), Guriev, Melnikov, and Zhuravskaya (2021), Tabellini, Manacorda, and Tesei (2022)) and salience of certain topics such as immigration (Barrera et al. (2020)) or minorities (Colussi, Isphording, and Pestel (2021)). My

the party, salience-weighted belief updating can reconcile those two findings. If voters neglect signals that are not surprising when updating their beliefs, early signals should receive disproportionate weight, possibly leading to a long-term divergence between districts that experienced early RN symbolic wins and those that did not. Importantly, while other mechanisms (e.g. a gradual desensitization to far-right rhetoric through sustained exposure over the years, or fully-Bayesian updating) could explain why post 2017 symbolic wins had no effect, those alternative mechanisms would predict long-term convergence.

contributions are therefore three-fold. First, while earlier work on stigma erosion mostly focused on outcomes measured through surveys, the natural experiment I leverage allows me to show that those victories not only affect public expressions of support, but also affect *actual votes*. Second, since both the treatment and the outcomes occur naturally in the setting I exploit, I show that news of those victories matters in a real-world setting. Third, I build on Bordalo, Gennaioli, and Shleifer (2022)'s characterization of salience and show that the salience of far-right politicians' popularity seems key in driving these effects. This underscores that high media coverage of populist wins may contribute to the rise in populist vote.

Next, I will train a classifier to verify whether, as predicted by salience-weighted belief updating, the effect of RN symbolic wins was larger in districts where the party's first round vote was most unexpectedly high given the district's past. I will then extend the two-round model to successive elections to derive precise conditions under which salience-weighted belief updating simultaneously predicts a null effect of late RN symbolic wins, as well as a long-term divergence between districts that were treated early and those that were not. To further explore the mechanisms, I will match the districts to geo-coded survey data. This will allow me to estimate the effect of the treatment on respondents' depiction of the party as extreme or xenophobic. This data will further allow me to investigate whether normalization is limited to the image of the party (which could happen if voters perceive its platform as ambiguous) or extends to the ideas it defends (which could happen if voters are unsure about what constitutes morally acceptable views). To this end, I will test whether exposure to the treatment increased respondents' propensity to admit holding negative views of foreigners. Further, this will allow me to test whether the treatment increased respondents' propensity to openly admit affinity with the party or its views (as one would expect if it decreased the perceived reputational cost of supporting the party or sharing its views). In particular, I will test whether the treatment made respondents more likely to admit a past (pre-treatment) RN vote, and whether it made them more likely to argue that the topic of migrants is not taboo to them—but something they are willing to discuss with family, friends, or in public. Lastly, the individual variation will allow me to speak to who are the switchers—i.e. what socio-demographic groups are most affected in terms of their beliefs and reported vote. Finally, I will estimate spillovers across districts sharing common newspapers, using the methodology in Borusyak and Kolerman-Shemer (2024) together with newspaper circulation data.

I discuss the related literature and my contributions in greater detail in section 2. To guide the

empirical analysis, I model the effect of news on party support in section 3. In section 4, I present the institutional context I leverage for identification and provide some relevant context on the RN. In section 5, I detail my main empirical specification, the data I use and the sample. I present the results and evidence on the mechanism in section 6, before concluding in section 7.

2 Related Literature

There is now ample evidence that, when voters learn about electoral successes of controversial politicians, they become more likely to publicly express support for those politicians or their views. Bursztyn, Egorov, and Fiorin (2020) thus found that persuading respondents that Donald Trump won in their area increased their propensity to make public donations to an anti-migrant organization—but had no effect on anonymous donations. Valentim (2021) similarly documented that far-right vote is under-reported in polls across European countries and found that the entry of far-right parties in parliament in those countries decreased the under-reporting of far-right vote, as well as the face-to-face to online gap in reporting of affinity with those parties. Giani and Méon (2021) highlighted that expression of racial bias in face-to-face surveys in Europe increased following Donald Trump's election. In Brazil, Fages and Martínez (2024) showed that online hate speech increased more following Jair Bolsonaro's victory in areas where his support was lower, underscoring the role of electoral surprises in shifting perceived social norms. In the United Kingdom, Albornoz et al. (2025) similarly highlighted that electoral surprises can shift the perceived social norm by showing that, after UKIP's electoral victory in the European elections and the Brexit vote, hate crime increased more in areas where the national anti-migrant sentiment was under-estimated. Following Bursztyn, Egorov, and Fiorin (2020), this literature has broadly adopted a social image paradigm to explain those effects—assuming that individuals are worried of being perceived negatively by others if they *publicly* endorse stigmatized views. Under this paradigm, one would not necessarily expect any effect on future votes, since votes may be less subject to social image concerns than publicly-held views. However, Bursztyn, Callen, et al. (2020) underscore that, in some settings, even private political actions are shaped by image concerns: they found that Pakistani survey participants were willing to forego a monetary payment to privately express anti-Americanism by refusing to anonymously check a box expressing gratitude towards the US government. The setting I leverage allows me to contribute to this literature by identifying effects on *actual votes*, and showing that such news

increase votes for far-right parties. Additionally, with the exception of Fages and Martínez (2024) and Albornoz et al. (2025), earlier work has relied on surveys for treatment delivery or outcome measurement. My results therefore complement this literature by demonstrating that symbolic wins also affect support for controversial politicians in a real-world setting.

Closely related to this paper, Lagios, Méon, and Tojerow (2025) found that anti-RN protests in France decreased RN vote in 2002. This implies that injunctive social norms can succeed in shaping behaviors even in voting booths. My results indicate that those injunctions are nonetheless fragile: their grip weakens when they are at odds with descriptive norms. Indeed, as I will discuss in section 6, when the RN narrowly ranks first in a district, this receives a considerable media attention but the media coverage of the party is, if anything, more negative—presenting the party as a threat. Despite this more negative media coverage, RN support increases, suggesting that the effect of the descriptive norm trumps those warnings.

I also contribute to the broader literature on the causes of populist vote and support. While earlier work has often focused on deep determinants (such as economic factors and immigration), recent works have shown that the media, as well as the salience of certain topics, can be important drivers of populist support.[2] Campante, Durante, and Sobbrio (2018) thus showed that access to high-speed internet contributed to higher support for the Italian Five-Star Movement, while Guriev, Melnikov, and Zhuravskaya (2021) and Tabellini, Manacorda, and Tesei (2022) found that exposure to mobile internet increased populist vote. Hinting at a possible responsibility of topic salience, Danieli et al. (2022) leverage cross-country surveys to show that voters appear to increasingly prioritize cultural questions over economic issues when choosing who to vote for. Colussi, Isphording, and Pestel (2021) and Barrera et al. (2020) focused on specific types of news, respectively showing that increased salience of ethnic minorities and of far-right anti-migration rhetoric increase far-right vote and voting intentions. I contribute to this literature in two ways. First, I build on Bordalo, Gennaioli, and Shleifer (2022)'s conceptualization of salience to derive predictions of how news should shape the evolution in populist support—assuming that the public pays more attention to more salient news. Second, I turn my attention to a different type of news, namely news about populists' electoral rise. As I find that salient news of populists' electoral wins can beget them more votes in

[2]See, e.g. for economic factors Autor et al. (2020), Algan et al. (2017), Malgouyres (2017), Frey, Berger, and Chen (2018), Anelli, Colantone, and Stanig (2019), Fetzer (2019), Abou-Chadi and Kurer (2021), Voth et al. (2020), and for immigration: Alabrese et al. (2019), Dustmann, Vasiljeva, and Piil Damm (2019), Edo et al. (2019), Schneider-Strawczynski (2021), Steinmayr (2021), Vertier, Viskanic, and Gamalerio (2023).

the future, my results indicate that part of the populist rise may be self-fulfilling.

The setting I leverage also relates to the literature on the effect of polls and expected election results on votes. Depending on the context, previous works have sometimes found a bandwagon effect—where voters coordinate behind the expected winner (e.g. McAllister and Studlar (1991), Morton et al. (2015), Granzier, Pons, and Tricaud (2023))—or an underdog effect—where they rally behind the losing candidate (e.g. Laponce (1966), Ceci and Kain (1982), Goldschmied and Vandello (2009), Chatterjee and Kamal (2021)). However, ultimately, neither of those coordination channels would explain why the effect I find persists in the next election—suggesting a change in perceptions, rather than a desire to vote for the winner or a temporary momentum around a former underdog.

Relative to other works using close election RDDs, the setting I exploit shuts down a number of channels to isolate the effect of the news of first round rankings. In particular, it shuts down the incumbency and experience channels on which the literature has often focused.[3] For the purpose of identification, the setting is also very different from primaries (leveraged for instance by Hall (2015) to understand how parties fare when they are represented by more extreme candidates). Indeed, in the case of primaries, general election outcomes are only observed for primary winners, making it impossible to measure the effect of primary wins on votes. Closer to this paper, Valentim (2021) uses a close election RDD to estimate the effect of far-right entry in parliament on under-reporting of far-right support. Relative to Valentim (2021), the setting I leverage allows a shorter time frame, helping isolate the effect of the news of the first round results relative to long-term exposure to far-right discourses, and it also allows measuring effects on actual votes. The identification strategy I employ was also used by Granzier, Pons, and Tricaud (2023) to estimate the effect of generic candidates' first round ranking on their probability of winning the election. They found that higher rankings increase the probability of election win, mostly through coalition formation—lower-ranked candidates drop out when they are ideologically close to the higher-ranked candidate—along with a small bandwagon effect whereby voters use rankings as coordination devices when candidates are ideologically close. By contrast, I uncover a large 'bandwagon' effect for a strategically isolated party—against which other politicians routinely call for a society-wide firewall. As previously mentioned, the fact that this effect persists suggests a lasting change in perceptions rather than a temporary coordination story.

[3] e.g. E. Dal Bó, P. Dal Bó, and J. Snyder (2009), Eggers and Spirling (2017), Boas and Hidalgo (2011), Folke and J. M. Snyder (2012), Fouirnaies and Hall (2014), Dano et al. (2025)

3 Theoretical Framework

In this section, I introduce a theoretical framework to guide the empirical analysis. Voters must choose whether to vote for a party in successive rounds. Guilt may stop them from doing so if they believe that voting for this party is morally wrong. Aggregate first round vote for this party acts as a signal of the party's social acceptability. After observing this signal, voters update their beliefs but under-react to signals that are not salient.

3.1 Model

Actions and Payoffs

A continuum of voters (indexed by v) choose whether to vote for a party p ($a_{v,r} = 1$) or not ($a_{v,r} = 0$) in successive rounds $r \in \{1, 2\}$.

In each round, they earn the following payoff:

$$E_{v,r}\big(U_{v,r}\big) = \begin{cases} V_{v,r} - G\hat{\theta}_{v,r} & \text{if } a_{v,r} = 1 \\ 0 & \text{if } a_{v,r} = 0 \end{cases} \tag{1}$$

Where:

$V_{v,r}$ denotes voters' private inclination to vote for p. ($V_{v,r} = W_v + \varepsilon_r$ s.t. $W_v \sim F_W,\ \varepsilon_r \sim F_\varepsilon,\ W_v \perp \varepsilon_r$)

G denotes guilt from carrying out a morally costly action. $\big(G > 0\big)$

$\hat{\theta}_{v,r}$ denotes their belief that voting for p is morally wrong. $\big(\hat{\theta}_{v,r} \in [0, 1)\big)$

I refer to p as 'stigmatized' if a positive measure of voters has a strictly positive prior that voting for p is morally wrong ($\mathbb{P}\big(\hat{\theta}_{v,1} > 0\big) > 0$).

Timing and Beliefs

Voters vote in $r = 1$ to maximize $E_{v,1}\big(U_{v,1}\big)$. They then observe the fraction of voters who voted for p in $r = 1$ (the 'signal') and update their belief on the state of the world (whether voting for p carries a moral cost) to $\hat{\theta}_{v,2}$. Their beliefs reflect the following mental model: they believe that a fraction $\lambda \in (0, 1)$ of voters learnt the true state of the world before $r = 1$, are uncertain about ε_r but know their own inclination $V_{v,r}$. They accordingly update their prior $\hat{\theta}_{v,1}$ to:

$$\hat{\theta}_{v,2} = \hat{\theta}_{v,1}\left[(1-\sigma_{v,1}) + \sigma_{v,1}\,\frac{f_\varepsilon(\bar{\varepsilon})\,f_{V|\varepsilon}\big(V_{v,1}\,\big|\,\varepsilon=\bar{\varepsilon}\big)}{\hat{\theta}_{v,1}\,f_\varepsilon(\bar{\varepsilon})\,f_{V|\varepsilon}\big(V_{v,1}\,\big|\,\varepsilon=\bar{\varepsilon}\big) + (1-\hat{\theta}_{v,1})\,f_\varepsilon(\underline{\varepsilon})\,f_{V|\varepsilon}\big(V_{v,1}\,\big|\,\varepsilon=\underline{\varepsilon}\big)}\right]. \quad (2)$$

Where:

$$\bar{\varepsilon} \text{ solves} \quad \int_0^1 a_{v,1}\,dv = \lambda\Big(1 - F_{V|\varepsilon}(G \mid \varepsilon=\bar{\varepsilon})\Big) + (1-\lambda)\Big(1 - \int_0^1 F_{V|\varepsilon}(G\hat{\theta}_{v,1} \mid \varepsilon=\bar{\varepsilon})\,dv\Big),$$

$$\underline{\varepsilon} \text{ solves} \quad \int_0^1 a_{v,1}\,dv = \lambda\Big(1 - F_{V|\varepsilon}(0 \mid \varepsilon=\underline{\varepsilon})\Big) + (1-\lambda)\Big(1 - \int_0^1 F_{V|\varepsilon}(G\hat{\theta}_{v,1} \mid \varepsilon=\underline{\varepsilon})\,dv\Big),$$

and σ denotes the salience of this signal.

Following Bordalo, Gennaioli, and Shleifer (2022), signals that are more prominent or more surprising (given the voter's recall of past elections) are more salient.[4] After updating their belief, voters choose $a_{v,2}$ to maximize $E_{v,2}\big(U_{v,2}\big)$.

3.2 Predictions

This framework yields the following predictions on how signals should affect votes:

- **Prediction 1 (stigma erosion):** Signals will affect second round votes for p iff p is stigmatized. If $\mathbb{P}\big(\hat{\theta}_{v,1} > 0\big) > 0$ and $f'_\varepsilon << 0$, higher signals will increase second round votes for p. Signals will have larger effects on the behaviour of voters for whom the moral cost is more salient (higher G).
- **Prediction 2 (surprise):** More surprising signals will have a larger effect.
- **Prediction 3 (prominence):** More prominent signals will have a larger effect.

4 Context

In this section, I introduce the institutional specificity I leverage for identification and provide some relevant context on the RN.

[4] $\sigma = 1$ would be equivalent to Bayesian updating: relative to the Bayesian benchmark, voters are assumed to under-react to signals with low salience.

4.1 Institutional Context: The 'Two-Round' Electoral Lab

All French legislative and local elections follow a two-round system, with only one week separating the two rounds. Many tickets (individual candidates or lists nominated by a party) typically compete in the first round. A second round is held in districts where the first-ranked ticket failed to obtain a qualified majority in the first round. Second rounds are very common: between 2001 and 2024, across all legislative and local elections, 60% of districts experienced a second round. The first round results determine who qualifies for the second round but, importantly, whenever a second round occurs, the tickets which ranked first or second in the first round automatically qualify for the second round (tickets ranked third or beyond can also qualify if they gather enough votes—further details on the institutional setting can be found in subsection A.9).[5] This institutional specificity sets the French two round setting apart from primaries by not only making it possible to measure the change in votes for narrow 'winners', but also for narrow 'losers'—making it possible to compare the change in votes for a ticket that ranked first to the change in votes for a ticket (of the same party) that ranked second.

Importantly, although ranking first rather than second in the first round does not carry any institutional advantage in the second round or afterwards, the media often prominently reports who ranked first (see Figure A.61 for headlines reporting that the RN ranked first in different elections and districts). Ranking first in the first round is thus a purely symbolic 'win'—but a highly visible one.

The scope for change between the two rounds is limited, making it an ideal lab to isolate the effect of the news of the first round results on voter behaviour: first, there is no scope for candidate selection as parties cannot change their candidates between the two rounds. Second, voters must register at least six weeks ahead of the first round and it is impossible for them to change district or polling station between the two rounds, making it possible to follow the same pool of voters. Finally, the short time span separating the two rounds limits the scope for rhetoric change. Additionally, using data from legislative and local elections—where the competition is at a sub-national level—makes it possible to control for national rhetoric changes using election fixed effects.

[5] Conditional on qualifying, a ticket may still decide not to run in the second round. However, in practice, whenever the RN ranks first or second in the first round, it near-universally runs in the second round—and narrowly ranking first rather than second does not impact the probability that it drops out.

4.2 Rassemblement National (RN): From Shunned to Mainstream Party

> *On the small market square of Fort-Mardyck [...] admitting that one votes for the [RN] or shares its ideas remains taboo: everyone we spoke with wished to remain anonymous. In this industrial region, many people come from the left. Like [...] this couple of Socialist voters [...] who looked disapprovingly at the [RN] leafleting on their market.*
>
> **La Voix du Nord, 2011**

> *Today, it's no longer taboo to say out loud that one votes for the RN—even in the Landes, a left-wing stronghold that is gradually crumbling.*
>
> **Sud-Ouest, 2015**

The Rassemblement National (hereafter 'RN') was created in 1972 under the name 'Front National', with a nationalist and anti-immigration focus. The party is classified as far-right by France's highest administrative court (Le Monde (2024)) and, in a nationally representative survey following French voters over three elections between 2015 and 2017 (the ENEF 2017 survey), over 70% of respondents chose the most extreme answer possible when asked to place the RN on an ideological scale (10 on a $0-10$ far-left to far-right scale)—a pattern more pronounced than for any other party (see Figure A.51, Figure A.52, Figure A.53 and Figure A.54).[6] In the early 2000s, supporting the party was very stigmatized: only one-third of RN voters admitted to voting for the party when polled (Vulpillières (2015)) and country-wide 'anti-RN' protests were held after it qualified for the second round of the 2002 presidential election (Lagios, Méon, and Tojerow (2025)). Isolated, the party regularly faces calls from across the ideological spectrum to build a 'firewall' against it to prevent the election of RN politicians (Public Sénat (2024)) or outright refusal to shake hands with its representatives (Grégoire (2024))—with its detractors often recalling, as a justification, that two of its founders were members of the Waffen SS, and sometimes going as far as calling it the 'heir' of Philippe Pétain (e.g. Le Monde (2023), Dao (2024))—the French head of state during the period of collaboration with Nazi Germany, who was later pronounced 'unworthy of the nation' and stripped of his honorific titles (Ministère de la Justice (2025)). Responses to the ENEF 2017 survey illustrate the pervasiveness of knee-jerk reactions to the RN: when asked how likely they were to someday vote for the RN, respondents were systematically over 10 times more likely to answer they were *not at all* likely to *ever* vote for the party, relative to *extremely unlikely* ('0' as opposed to '1' on a 0-10 scale—see Figure A.55, Figure A.56, Figure A.57, Figure A.58). This pattern of responses

[6] Source: Sciences Po (2024a), Sciences Po (2024l), Sciences Po (2024d), Sciences Po (2024j).

is, once again, strikingly more pronounced than for any other party, as illustrated by Figure A.59 and Figure A.60. For fear of social sanctions, RN voters are notoriously reluctant to admit their vote to journalists—keeping silent or requesting name changes—while RN activists sometimes admit refraining from campaigning during daytime 'for discretion', or from stepping in known left-wing strongholds (see subsection A.11).

In 2011, Marine Le Pen took over the party's direction and endeavored to soften its image (Marette (2021)). Previously electorally-marginal, the RN has experienced a rapid electoral rise hereafter (see Figure A.11), with its candidates often crediting this communication strategy for their successes (see, e.g. subsection A.11). Anecdotal evidence suggests that perceptions of the party have indeed changed: close to 50% of respondents of the ENEF survey argued that it was less extreme than in the past in 2017—a figure which jumps to 91% among respondents who declared having voted for the RN (see Figure A.48 and Figure A.49), while it is not uncommon for voters to declare that voting for the RN is 'no longer taboo,' or that they switched from voting for mainstream parties to voting for the RN (see subsection A.11).[7] Since 2017, the party has established itself as one of the main parties in France: it ranked second in the first round of the 2017 and 2022 presidential elections, ranked first nationally in the 2019 and 2024 European elections, and obtained the largest number of MPs in the 2024 legislative election.

5 Empirical Strategy

In this section, I first specify the empirical specification I estimate, before detailing the data I use, and finally present the sample estimation relies upon and some identification results.

5.1 Regression Discontinuity Design

I estimate the following specification:

$$Y_{i,t} = \hat{\alpha} + \hat{\tau} T_{i,t} + \hat{f}(RV_{i,t}) \quad \forall\, i,t \text{ such that } |RV_{i,t}| \leq h \tag{3}$$

[7] Source: Sciences Po (2024g), Sciences Po (2024i).

where $Y_{i,t} = RN\ support_{i,t,r2} - RN\ support_{i,t,r1}$ (or some other dependent variable)

$RV_{i,t} = RN\ vote\ share_{i,t,r1} - highest\ ranked\ opponent\ vote\ share_{i,t,r1}$

and $T_{i,t} = 1\{RV_{i,t} \geq 0\}$

i denotes a district, t an election, while $r1$ refers to the first round and $r2$ to the second round (for accuracy, I sometimes use polling-station level dependent variables). Following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014), I use an MSE-optimal bandwidth h for estimation.

The running variable $RV_{i,t}$ is the RN's first round vote margin in the district, defined as its first round vote share ($\frac{\#RN\ votes_{i,t}}{\#valid\ votes_{i,t}}$) minus the first round vote share of its highest-ranked opponent ($\frac{\#opponent\ votes_{i,t}}{\#valid\ votes_{i,t}}$), following Cattaneo et al. (2016).[8] When defining dependent variables, I take first differences whenever possible to increase accuracy: the main dependent variables is thus the between-rounds change in RN support in a district (or polling station), where RN support is defined as $\frac{\#RN\ votes_{i,t}}{\#registered\ voters_{i,t}}$.

Provided that potential outcomes are continuous, $\hat{\tau}$ is a consistent estimator of the Local Average Treatment Effect of the RN narrowly ranking first rather than second in the first round. My main specification thus relies on local linear regression with triangular kernel weights, giving more weight to observations close to the cut-off and allowing for different slopes to the left and right of the cut-off. Precise manipulation of the running variable is theoretically unlikely: first, polls representative at the local level do not exist in France and the electorate is systematically too large to easily predict the vote tally. Second, campaigning is prohibited twenty-four hours before the election and voters often report deciding who to vote for in the hours preceding the election. I verify in subsection 5.4 that there is no evidence of precise sorting around the cut-off.

Following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014), I report standard errors and p-values based on robust bias-corrected confidence intervals (which are re-centered to ensure appropriate coverage) and, when using the district as observation level, have recourse to nearest-neighbour variance estimation for its small sample properties. I systematically cluster standard errors at the district level to allow for auto-correlation over time within district.

[8] Valid votes correspond to all votes except null and blank votes, i.e. all votes cast in favor of a specific ticket.

5.2 Data

Vote

I leverage results of all 2001-2024 legislative and local elections. The data comes from the Ministry of Interior and is available at both the district and polling station level; it contains, for each round, the number of votes for the different tickets and the number of registered voters. I only use polling station-level dependent variables for increased accuracy or heterogeneity analysis of between-rounds changes as some polling stations are missing for early years and the polling station identifiers do not allow following polling stations across successive elections.[9]

Media

To measure the media coverage of RN narrow first round 'wins', I collected all French newspaper articles mentioning the elections or the RN available on Europresse and published between the first and the second round of some legislative or local election between 2011 and 2017—a sample of 105,345 newspaper articles. For each article collected, I collected the article date and full text. I matched the RN candidates who ranked first or second in the first round of an election to the articles published between those two rounds and mentioning those candidates, using fuzzy string matching to allow for spelling mistakes, before manually checking all imperfect matches and homonyms. This led to a sample of 22,070 newspaper articles mentioning some RN candidate who ranked first or second in the first round, and 1,234 district $\times$ election pairs matched to some article. This data allows me to measure whether candidates receive some media coverage following the first round results, and whether those articles contain the phrase 'the RN [is] ahead'. Additionally, I extracted all verbs, adjectives, attributes, objects and complements associated with '[RN]' in those matched articles. I then computed sentiment scores for each of those phrases before computing candidate $\times$ day average sentiment scores to compare the coverage of the RN in the articles mentioning RN candidates who ranked first in the first round to the party's coverage in articles mentioning RN candidates who ranked second.

Donations

To measure effects of symbolic wins on donations to RN tickets, I leverage administrative data

[9]Municipalities are free to close polling stations, open new ones, re-allocate voters across polling stations, or reshuffle their identifiers between elections. The mapping between polling station identifiers and voters' addresses is only available for one cross-section.

on donations, campaign spending and revenue data collected by the Commission Nationale des Comptes de Campagnes et Financements Politiques between 2012 and 2022.[10] Candidates can raise funding from the sixth month preceding the election to the tenth week following the second round—with funding received after the election potentially allowing them to close a deficit. The data includes ticket-level total campaign spending, total campaign funding, funding decomposition between donations, candidates' personal funding, party funding, and extraordinary in-kind contributions. Importantly, campaign donations are unlikely to reflect lobbying. Donations from enterprises and associations are indeed illegal, and sanctions for irregular donations range from losing the right to a partial reimbursement of campaign expenses to jail sentences. In practice, donations to RN tickets tend to be very low (see Table 1).

Table 1: Donations to First and Second-Ranked RN/Moderate Tickets

Election	RN: Donations Freq.	Mod.: Donations Freq.	Small Mod.: Donations Freq.	RN: Median Sum	Mod.: Median Sum	Small Mod.: Median Sum
2012 Legislative	2.94%	85.66%	74.63%	6630	4382.5	5736.5
2014 Municipal	33.85%	86.88%	83.33%	1050	4570	6257
2015 Departmental	3.29%	54.06%	55.56%	230	355	1565
2017 Legislative	15.97%	75.18%	74.32%	1500	2030	4735
2020 Municipal	52.17%	82.33%	59.32%	1105	4515	6737.5
2021 Departmental	4.17%	36.37%	12.00%	550	400	1300
2022 Legislative	8.25%	62.89%	77.78%	1000	9290	4160.5

Note: The table reports, for each election and separately for RN and moderate tickets, the share of first and second-ranked tickets which received some donations, as well as the median total donations in euros (among tickets which received some donations).

Perceptions

Finally, to produce descriptive statistics on the perceptions of the RN and other parties, as well as anecdotal evidence of voter switching, I draw from the Enquête électorale française 2017 (ENEF 2017), a survey collected by the Cevipof.[11] The survey is a panel consisting of 20 waves which ran from 2015 to 2017. In total, it surveyed 24,369 respondents, representative of the French population.

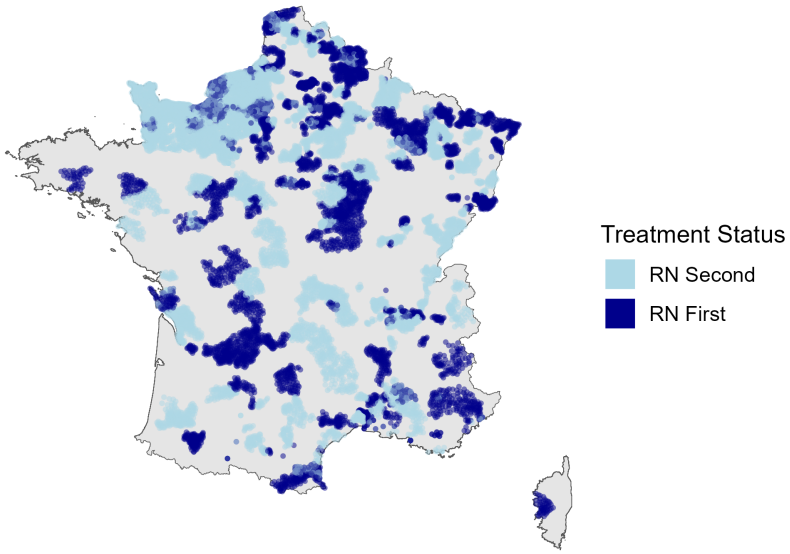
[10] I exclude the 2015 regional election due to the fact that regional elections involve few and very large districts so including this election could create some imbalance between treated and control. At the time of writing, donations, campaign spending and revenue data was not available for the 2024 legislative election.

[11] I draw from the following waves: Sciences Po (2024a), Sciences Po (2024k), Sciences Po (2024l), Sciences Po (2024m), Sciences Po (2024n), Sciences Po (2024b), Sciences Po (2024c) Sciences Po (2024d), Sciences Po (2024e), Sciences Po (2024f), Sciences Po (2024g), Sciences Po (2024h) Sciences Po (2024i), Sciences Po (2024j)

5.3 Sample

The sample consists of all pairs of district × local or legislative election where the RN ranked first or second in the first round and a second round occurred (between 2001 and 2024)—corresponding to a total of 2,896 district × election pairs.[12] Figure 1 shows that districts where the party came either close first or close second—within 2 percentage points of its highest-ranking opponent—span the French territory. In Table 2, I report some summary statistics on the first round RN support and vote share, the number of tickets running in the first round and the number of tickets qualified in the second round among the districts within 2p.p. of the cut-off. In the majority of those districts, the first round RN support ranges between 11-17% and only two tickets qualify for the second round. Among those districts, the RN ranked first in the second round in a small number of districts (5%), illustrating the party's strategic isolation. Most of the variation available in the data comes from elections held after 2010 (the number of districts where the party ranked first or second by election can be found in Table A.8).

Figure 1: Geographic Variation Within 2p.p. of the Cut-Off



[12] I do not consider municipal elections in municipalities with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants (3,500 before 2013), as election rules in those municipalities allow split-ticket voting and the data does not include party label.

Table 2: Summary Statistics Within 2p.p. of the Cut-Off

	RN Round 1 Support	RN Round 1 Vote Share	RN Support Change	RN Vote Share Change	RN First in Round 2	# Round 1 Tickets	# Qualif. Tickets
25th Pctile	11%	27%	2%	4%	0%	4	2
Median	14%	30%	3%	8%	0%	5	2
75th Pctile	17%	33%	5%	13%	0%	8	3
Mean	15%	30%	4%	9%	5%	6.23	2.3
Standard Deviation	4%	5%	3%	7%	22%	2.79	.55

Note: The table reports summary statistics for district × election pairs where the running variable is within 2p.p. of the cut-off and a second round occurred.

5.4 Identification Tests

Figure A.18 shows that there is no evidence of precise manipulation of the running variable at the cut-off: the density of the running variable does not jump at the cut-off. Table 3 further shows that there is no evidence of sorting based on pre-determined characteristics: the first round support for RN tickets (column 1) and for eliminated far-right tickets (column 2), as well as the number of qualified tickets (column 3) are not significantly different in narrowly treated and narrowly control districts. Additionally, the election-specific average first round RN support (column 4) and between-rounds change in RN support (column 5) are continuous at the cut-off. Table A.20, Table A.21, Table A.22 and Table A.23 report estimates for further pre-determined characteristics—in Figure A.14, Figure A.15, Figure A.16, Figure A.17, I plot those pre-determined characteristics against $RV_{i,t}$ bins and report 95% confidence intervals for bin averages. As a test of joint imbalance, I use all 24 characteristics to predict the treatment status—column 6 of Table 3 shows that there is no evidence of joint imbalance.

Figure 2: No Precise Manipulation

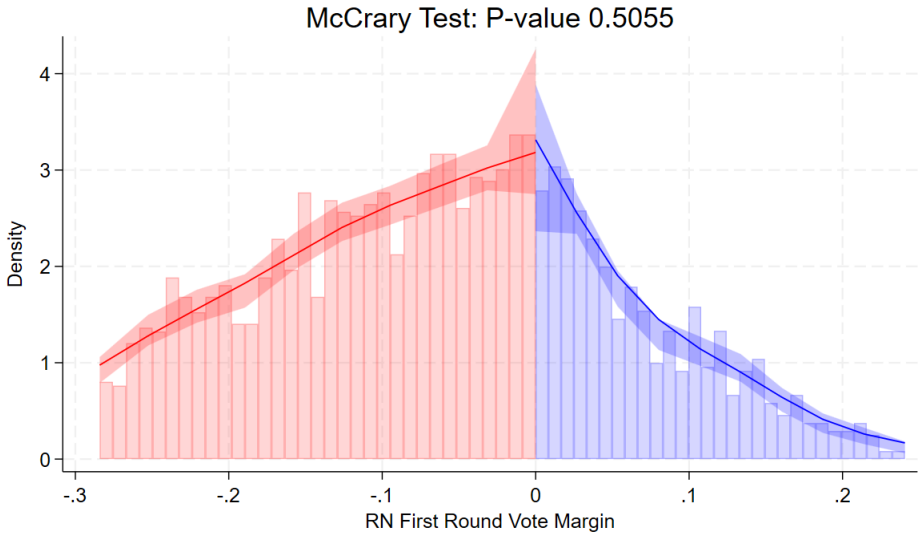


Table 3: No Jump in Predetermined Characteristics

	RN Support	Support Elim. Far-Right	#Qualified	Mean RN Support	Mean RN Support Change	Predicted Treatment
MSE-optimal estimate	–0.0021	0.0004	0.0340	–0.0004	0.0021	–0.0051
Standard error	(0.0062)	(0.0010)	(0.0771)	(0.0056)	(0.0023)	(0.0159)
Robust p-value	0.8770	0.7427	0.5511	0.8473	0.3176	0.7110
Observations left	706	719	704	727	914	611
Observations right	509	514	509	516	609	461
Bandwidth	0.0805	0.0823	0.0804	0.0836	0.1091	0.0688
Mean (left)	0.1372	0.0028	2.2599	0.1108	0.0275	0.3420

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The predicted treatment is obtained from a linear regression of treatment status on the set of all pre-determined characteristics in Table 3 (columns 1-5), Table A.20, Table A.21 and Table A.22.

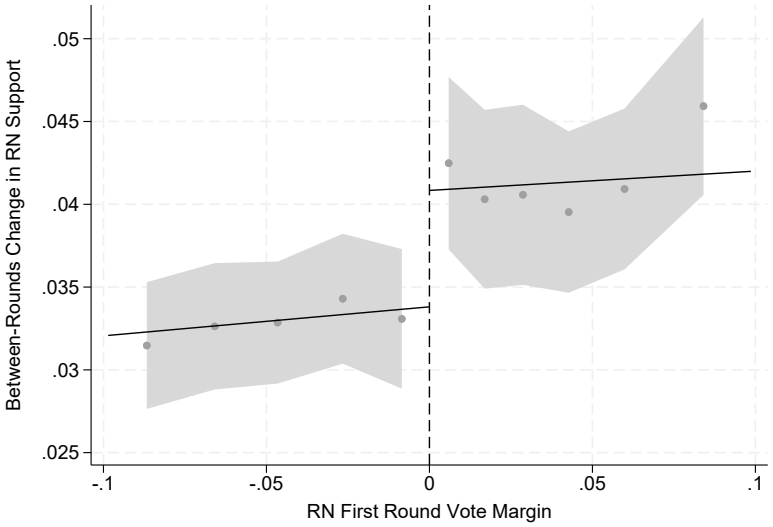
6 Results

In this section, I first report estimates of the effect of RN first round ranking on its between-rounds vote change, before turning to heterogeneity analysis and additional outcomes to test the predictions of section 3 and explore alternative mechanisms.

6.1 Increase in RN Votes

In Figure 3, I plot the between-rounds change in RN support ($\frac{\#RN\ votes}{\#registered\ voters}$) against the running variable, making it clear that, on average, RN tickets which narrowly ranked first in the first round experienced a higher vote increase relative to those which narrowly ranked second.

Figure 3: Jump in Between-Rounds Change in RN Support



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Table 4: Increase in Rassemblement National Support and Vote Share (First Difference)

	Change in RN Support	Change in RN Vote Share	Change in Turnout
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0070**	0.0161**	–0.0033
Standard error	(0.0033)	(0.0085)	(0.0047)
Robust p-value	0.0216	0.0387	0.4763
Observations left	834	961	736
Observations right	567	629	518
Bandwidth	0.0993	0.1160	0.0847
Mean (left)	0.0329	0.0844	–0.0125

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level.

In Table 4, I report point estimates of the effect of the RN ranking first on the between-rounds changes in RN support, in RN vote share and in turnout: on average, between 2001 and 2024, narrowly ranking first in the first round increased the RN's support by 0.70 percentage points and its vote share by 1.61 percentage points.[13] Column 3 highlights that RN symbolic wins do not appear to increase voter turnout—suggesting voter switching rather than voter mobilization, a point I come back upon in subsection 6.2.

Both the positive effect on RN support and the null effect on turnout are robust to alternative specifications. In Figure A.26 and Figure A.29, I report estimates obtained with a number of alternative specifications: I specify the dependent variables as levels rather than first differences, use alternative running variable denominators (the number of registered voters or the number of valid or invalid votes), higher order polynomials, alternative kernels, alternative samples (dropping ties or including RN tickets which did not rank first or second but ran in the second round) and include controls (election fixed effect and the predicted dependent variable obtained after regressing the dependent variable on relevant pre-determined characteristics).

6.2 Mechanisms

To test section 3's predictions and explore alternative mechanisms, I estimate heterogeneous treatment effects and effects on additional outcomes (media coverage, RN votes in the next election and donations to RN tickets). To estimate heterogeneous treatment effects, I apply the methodology in Calonico, Cattaneo, Farrell, et al. (2025) which relies on estimating a saturated model in which the running variable and the treatment dummy are interacted with covariate-based dummies.

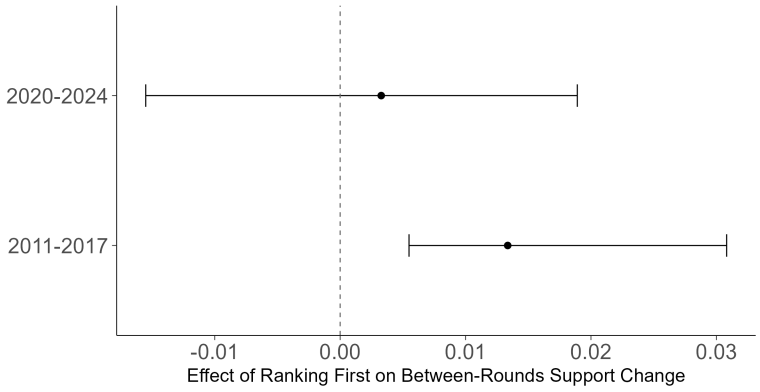
[13]Since the French electoral system allows voters to cast null or blank votes, I define turnout as the share of votes cast in favour of a ticket (as opposed to null or blank) over the number of registered voters.

Salience

As highlighted in subsection 3.2, if the effect of RN symbolic wins was caused by the election results' salience, it should be larger for more surprising wins—and therefore driven by the early years of the party's rise, when RN wins were new (prediction 2). Additionally, the effect should increase with the media prominence of the first round results (prediction 3).

In 2017, the RN ranked second in the first round of the presidential election, and hereafter imposed itself as the main opposition party in the country. Thus, after this date, one would not expect RN victories to be as surprising as earlier victories. As predicted, Figure 4 shows that the effect of RN first round ranking is driven by the early years of the party's rise: the figure plots estimates of heterogeneous treatment effects by time period and makes it evident that the effect is driven by elections up until 2017 (for transparency, I also report heterogeneity estimates including 2001-2010 in Figure A.32—estimates are virtually unchanged since it was very rare for the RN to rank first or close second prior to 2011). Between 2011 and 2017, RN tickets which narrowly ranked first experienced a 1.34 percentage points higher increase in support and a 2.39 percentage points higher increase in vote share relative to those which narrowly ranked second (see Table A.29).

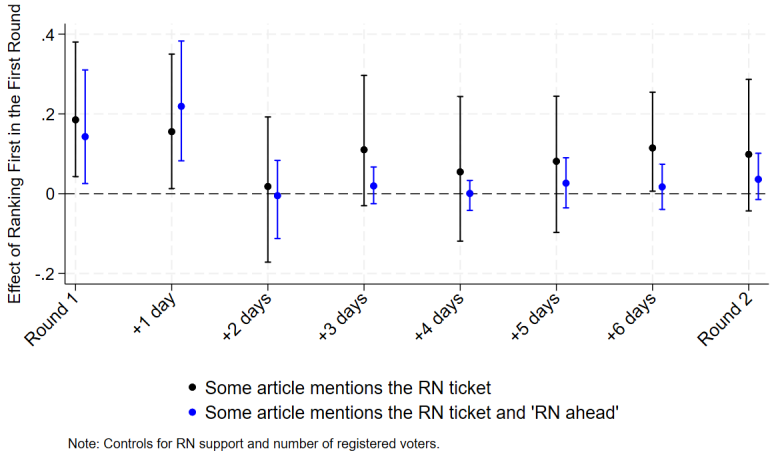
Figure 4: Heterogeneous Effects on RN Support by Period



Note: Heterogeneous treatment effect estimates and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals obtained following Calonico, Cattaneo, Farrell, et al. (2025).

The newspaper data further supports a salience channel: first round RN narrow 'wins' received a substantially larger media attention than first round RN narrow 'losses' between 2011 and 2017. Figure 5 indeed shows that, the day of the first round and the following day, RN tickets which narrowly ranked first were close to 20 percentage points more likely to be mentioned in some article—despite the fact that narrowly ranking first rather than second in the first round is a purely symbolic victory. Additionally, they were also 20 percentage points more likely to be mentioned in some article stating '[the] RN [is] ahead'.[14] Thus, although support for the party was comparable in narrowly treated and narrowly control districts, it was less visible in the latter.

Figure 5: Media Prominence (2011-2017)



[14]In Figure A.38, I plot estimated effects on measures of the google trends volume of candidates' names. Although point estimates are not significant due to the coarse nature of the data, they overall suggest that, consistent with salience, narrowly ranking first rather than second increases google searches of RN candidates' names—with a negative effect on the eve of the second round, possibly because undecided voters are more likely to look up the candidates they have not heard about.

Table 5: Effect of RN Ahead News on Increase in RN Support (2011-2017)

	Change in RN Support (Polling Station)	Change in RN Support (District)	Change in RN Vote Share (Polling Station)	Change in RN Vote Share (District)
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0338***	0.0345	0.0587**	0.0581
Standard error	(0.0120)	(0.0230)	(0.0288)	(0.0506)
Robust p-value	0.0014	0.1249	0.0292	0.2396
First stage estimate	0.3739***	0.2644***	0.3562***	0.2522***
Standard error (first stage)	(0.0818)	(0.0847)	(0.0798)	(0.0831)
Robust p-value (first stage)	0.0001	0.0008	0.0002	0.0009
Observations left	14069	260	15797	286
Observations right	11490	219	12276	234
Bandwidth	0.0453	0.0448	0.0532	0.0493
Election FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fuzzy (RN ahead news)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean (left)	0.0307	0.0288	0.0627	0.0719
Instrument mean (left)	0.4093	0.1269	0.3678	0.1189

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The instrument is a dummy equal to one if the RN ticket was mentioned in at least one article containing the phrase "the RN [is] ahead" on the day of the first round results or the following day.

In Table 5, I report the results of a fuzzy RDD where I use symbolic wins to instrument for RN tickets being mentioned in an article which states 'the RN [is] ahead'. This shows that, in line with subsection 3.2, the effect of the party's symbolic wins on its votes is predicted by media prominence: the polling station level results imply that being mentioned in at least one article which states that the party is ahead increased RN tickets' support by 3.38 percentage points and their vote share by 5.87 percentage points. Although district-level results are not significant due to a lack of accuracy, point estimates are very similar. These magnitudes are large relative to the estimated effects of other determinants of RN vote in the literature: for comparison, the effect on vote share corresponds to 14 times the effect of a one standard deviation increase in import competition found by Malgouyres (2017), 4 times the effect of municipality exposure to anti-RN protests found by Lagios, Méon, and Tojerow (2025), and over 2 times the effect of a 1 percentage point increase in immigration found by Edo et al. (2019).

Importantly, RN symbolic wins did not lead to a more complacent media coverage of the party. Table A.31 shows that, on average, phrases relating to the RN in articles mentioning a RN ticket that narrowly ranked first exhibited more fear and less joy. I report the phrases with the highest fear and joy scores within 5 percentage points of the RDD cut-off in Table A.13 and Table A.14. This highlights that phrases with a high fear score were mostly phrases presenting the party as a threat, while those with a high joy score framed the party's high scores in a positive way. Thus, when the RN narrowly ranked first, the fact that it had a large support base was more likely to receive media attention, but newspapers did not present the party under a more positive light. This suggests that salience of the party's new-found support—rather than a more complacent media discourse—drives the increase in votes.

Stigma Erosion

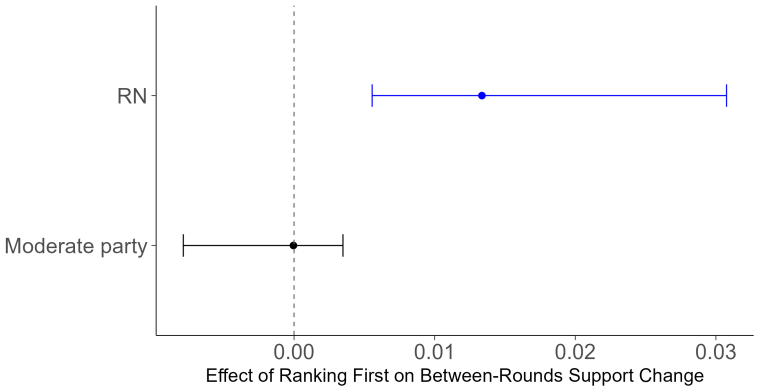
If symbolic wins' effects are due to an erosion of the belief that RN vote carries a moral cost, they should be be absent for non-stigmatized parties (prediction 1: $\hat{\theta}_{v,1} = 0 \ \forall \ v \in [0,1]$) and stronger in areas where the stigma is stronger or more salient (higher G). The effects may also persist in subsequent elections, reflecting lasting change in party image. Additionally, one should also expect an increase in non-anonymous displays of support for the party: in addition to an internal sense of guilt, the possibility of reputational costs may induce shame.

To verify that the effect is absent for non-stigmatized parties, I reproduce the analysis for parties generally classified as moderate—as ENEF survey respondents tend to exhibit substantially more knee-jerk reactions to more extreme parties (i.e. they are much more likely to say that they are unlikely to ever vote for the party, relative to extremely unlikely), suggesting a general stigma against support for extreme parties (see Figure A.51, Figure A.52, Figure A.53 and Figure A.54 for ideological classification, and see Figure A.55, Figure A.56, Figure A.57 and Figure A.58 for respondents' answers when asked how likely they would be to ever vote for the parties). I report the list of ticket labels included and excluded in subsection A.10. As predicted, Figure 6 shows that, between 2011 and 2017, when a moderate party narrowly ranked first in the first round, this did not affect its second round support. The point estimate is negative and much smaller in magnitude than the estimated effect I find for the RN, with the difference marginally significant. I also report Lee bounds estimates in Figure A.24, to account for the fact that some moderate tickets only run in the second round if they ranked first: the upper bounds remain several times smaller than the estimated

effect on RN support. To verify that the difference between the effect for the RN and for moderate parties is not driven by the fact that first- and second-ranked parties often have higher historical support than the RN, making RN wins more surprising and therefore more salient, I reproduce those results for small moderate parties in Figure A.25. Although estimates are very noisy since small parties rarely rank first or second, they are consistently smaller than for the RN.

The effect of RN symbolic wins should be stronger in areas where the stigma against the party

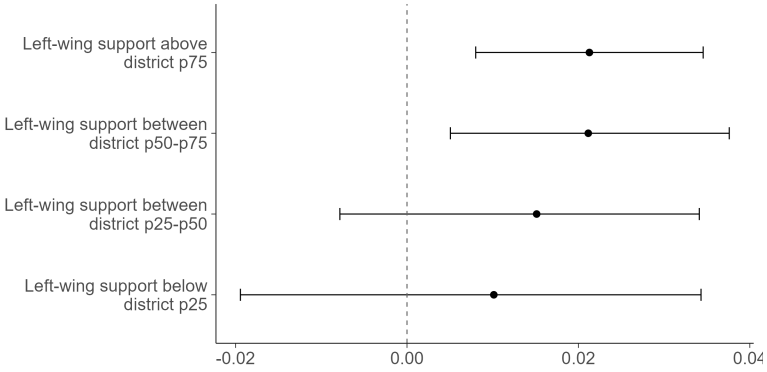
Figure 6: RN vs. Moderate Party Heterogeneity (2011-2017)



Note: Heterogeneous treatment effect estimates and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals obtained following Calonico, Cattaneo, Farrell, et al. (2025).

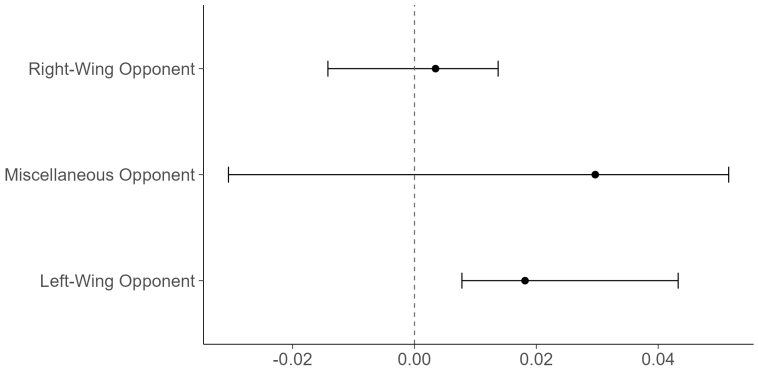
is stronger or more salient. In line with this prediction, Figure 7 and Figure 8 show that the effect of RN first round wins is more pronounced in polling stations with higher first round left-wing support relative to their district (Figure 7) and districts where the RN's main opponent was from the left (Figure 8).

Figure 7: Heterogeneous Effects on RN Support by Polling Station First Round Left-Wing Support (2011-2017)



Note: Heterogeneous treatment effect estimates and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals obtained following Calonico, Cattaneo, Farrell, et al. (2025).

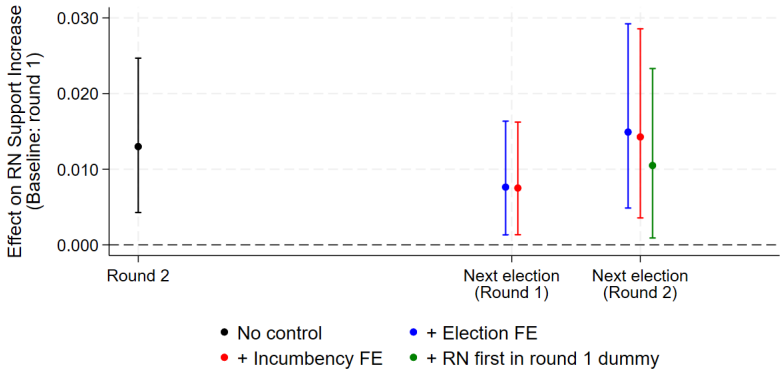
Figure 8: Heterogeneous Effects on RN Support by Opponent Ideology (2011-2017)



Note: Heterogeneous treatment effect estimates and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals obtained following Calonico, Cattaneo, Farrell, et al. (2025).

To test whether the increase in RN support persists, I estimate the effect of the party symbolic wins (in elections which took place between 2012 and 2017) on its support in the *next* election. In Figure 9, I report separate estimates for each round of the next election—i.e. the dependent variables are $RN\ support_{t+1,r1} - RN\ support_{t,r1}$ and $RN\ support_{t+1,r2} - RN\ support_{t,r1}$ (where the first subscript denotes the election and the second subscript the round).[15] The effect on RN support does not vanish over time and is present for both rounds of the next election—four to six years after the party's symbolic win. This is robust to controlling for the presence of a RN incumbent and to dropping districts with RN candidate overlap across the two elections, suggesting that the effect is not driven by a change in the image of individual candidates, but rather in the image of the party itself.

Figure 9: The Effect on RN Support Persists In the Next Election (Baseline: 2012-2017)



[15] I drop the 2011 departmental elections because re-districting between the 2011 and 2015 departmental elections makes it impossible to follow districts between those two elections. For transparency, Figure 9 thus reports the estimated effect on second round RN support when restricting the sample to elections which took place between 2012 and 2017.

If RN symbolic wins eroded the strength of the stigma surrounding the party, one should also expect an increase in acts of support that are not protected by the voting booth secrecy. This includes campaign donations: while votes are anonymous, donors have to provide their name and address which are then transmitted to the *Commission Nationale des Comptes de Campagne et Financements Politiques* and tax authorities. Additionally, donations are sometimes collected in public spaces and donors often receive a receipt proving their donation. As one could therefore expect, relative to similarly-ranked moderate tickets, first-or-second-ranked RN tickets rarely receive donations and, when they do, receive substantially smaller donations (see Table 1). As predicted, Table 6 shows that, relative to RN tickets which narrowly ranked second in the first round of an election between 2012 and 2017, those which narrowly ranked first were 10 percentage points more likely to receive some donations (significant at the 10 percent level).[16] Although noisy, the estimated difference is quite large in relative terms: it implies that RN tickets which narrowly ranked first were three times more likely to declare some donation. This result is robust to the specification used: when using as dependent variable the total donations declared by a RN ticket divided by the average total donations declared by first-or-second-ranked RN tickets of the same election, the point estimate similarly corresponds to a three-fold increase in donations; when normalizing the sum donated by the number of first round RN votes, it corresponds to a 0.06€ increase in donations by first round RN vote. The difference does not appear to be driven by increased campaigning effort: controlling for the log of candidates' declared personal funding, party funding and in-kind contributions increases the point estimates and their significance (columns 2, 4 and 6). In Table A.33, I report estimated differences for seven alternative measures of the donation intensity, highlighting that point estimates are systematically positive and sometimes significant at the 5% level.

In line with stigma erosion, Table A.35 and Table A.36 show that those effects are absent for moderate parties (prediction 1, $S = 0$). Consistent with the stigma erosion being driven by the salience of the election results, Table A.37 shows that, after 2017, there is no evidence of an effect of RN first round wins on the donations it receives (prediction 1).

[16] I drop the 2015 regional elections due to the fact that regional elections involve few—17—and large districts, potentially creating imbalances linked to the fact that, the larger the district, the more likely it is that a ticket would receive donations.
Differences cannot be directly interpreted as treatment effects as the donations correspond to the sum of all donations received by the tickets during the campaign—including donation received before the first round. However, by virtue of the design, there is no reason for pre-treatment donations to be discontinuous at the threshold, implying that the point estimates should be interpreted as a lower bound on the actual effects.

Table 6: Effect on Campaign Donations (2012-2017)

	Some Donation	Some Donation	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations over Election Average	Donations over Election Average
MSE-optimal estimate	0.1013*	0.1113**	0.0556*	0.0624**	3.1270*	3.2977*
Standard error	(0.0586)	(0.0600)	(0.0374)	(0.0392)	(2.0031)	(2.0159)
Robust p-value	0.0553	0.0351	0.0943	0.0410	0.0740	0.0596
Observations left	275	244	189	202	264	254
Observations right	228	211	175	184	222	215
Bandwidth	0.0581	0.0529	0.0394	0.0424	0.0563	0.0551
Control for round 1 support	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Control for other funding	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean (left)	0.0545	0.0574	0.0378	0.0353	1.1924	1.2393

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The dependent variables' exact definition can be found in subsection A.1. When controlling for the other funding, I include separate controls for the log of the total party funding, the log of the candidate's personal funding, and the log of exceptional in-kind contributions.

Stigma erosion should have larger effects on more visible expressions of support as, besides guilt, those may induce shame. The magnitudes of the votes and donations estimates are not directly comparable. However, if donations were much more responsive to the treatment than votes, RN tickets in narrowly treated districts would receive more donations than those in narrowly control districts with similar second round support.[17] To investigate whether this is the case, I first approximate the relation between second round RN votes and RN donations in control districts by training a classifier on control districts. I then employ the selected model to predict the donations intensity in both control and treated districts and use the difference between the realized and the predicted donations intensity as RDD dependent variables (more details on the procedure can be found in subsection A.1). Although most estimates are not significant, they are systematically positive across nine measures of the donation intensity, suggesting that, for similar second round votes, RN tickets in narrowly treated districts receive more donations than those in narrowly control districts (see Table A.40, Table A.42 and Table A.41).

Voter Switching Rather Than Mobilization

The increase in RN support could a priori come from voters who would otherwise have voted for the RN's opponents, or from the mobilization of voters who would otherwise have abstained. Consistent with the former explanation, Table A.29 shows that, between 2011 and 2017, RN symbolic wins did not increase aggregate voter turnout. To verify that this null effect does not conceal

[17] In treated districts (relative to control districts), RN second round support should over-predict pre-treatment donations (given the positive relation between RN votes and donations to the party, and the positive effect of the treatment on RN votes) but under-predict post-treatment donations.

the mobilization of some group of voters canceled out by the demobilization of another group, I report estimated heterogeneous treatment effects in Figure A.30—comparing districts and polling stations with different first round ideological leaning and turnout—and do not find any evidence of heterogeneous effects on turnout.[18] This is in line with the fact that politicians from across the ideological spectrum routinely call for a firewall against the party, making demobilization an unlikely response to RN wins. Thus, the evidence suggests that the effect on RN support is driven by voter switching rather than by a sudden mobilization of previously demobilized voters. The existence of voter switching is consistent with evidence from survey data: among respondents to the 2017 ENEF survey who eventually reported having voted for either Marine Le Pen or Emmanuel Macron in the second round of the 2017 presidential election, 15% declared less than one week before the second round that their choice could still change, and 3% declared that they would vote for the other candidate.[19] Additionally, 12% of respondents who voted for Marine Le Pen had previously declared that they would vote for Emmanuel Macron if the second round opposed Emmanuel Macron to Marine Le Pen and 63% had previously declared that they were not at all likely to ever vote for Marine Le Pen or her party.[20]

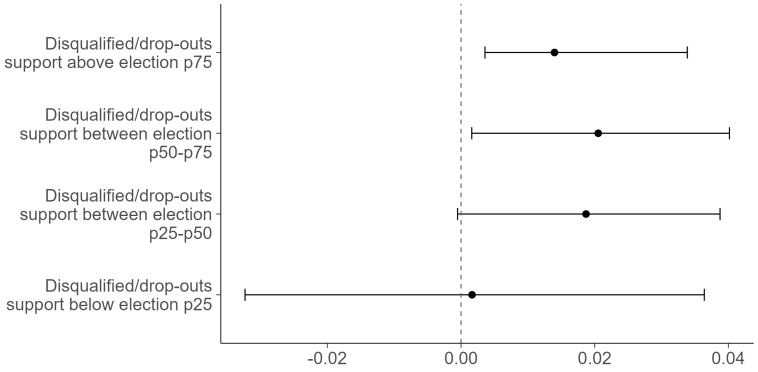
One would not necessarily expect voters who voted for the RN's second round opponent to switch sides and vote for the RN ticket only one week later. However, after the first round, voters who voted for disqualified tickets must decide how to re-allocate their votes. Figure 10 suggests that the majority of the switchers may be concentrated among this population: the effect is more pronounced in polling stations with a relatively high first round support for tickets which did not run in the second round. Importantly, however, this does not necessarily limit the external validity of the results to the two-round system: as already mentioned, the effect on RN vote is still present in the first round of the next election, suggesting that, even in the presence of a larger set of tickets, some of those newly-captured voters still choose to vote for the RN.

[18] Although none of the estimated treatment effects on turnout is significant, the district-level heterogeneity could still be suggestive of a positive effect on turnout in districts with high first round right-wing support, canceled out by a negative effect on turnout in districts with low first round right-wing support. However, in Figure A.31, I show that the estimated increase in RN support is robust to controlling flexibly for the between-rounds change in RN support—interacted with a polynomial of the first round total right-wing vote and allowing for different coefficients for control and treated observations.

[19] Sciences Po (2024h), Sciences Po (2024i)

[20] The first percentage was derived from: Sciences Po (2024d), Sciences Po (2024e), Sciences Po (2024f), Sciences Po (2024h), Sciences Po (2024i).
The second from: Sciences Po (2024k), Sciences Po (2024l), Sciences Po (2024m), Sciences Po (2024n), Sciences Po (2024b), Sciences Po (2024c), Sciences Po (2024d), Sciences Po (2024e), Sciences Po (2024f), Sciences Po (2024g), Sciences Po (2024i).

Figure 10: Heterogeneous Effects on RN Support by Polling Station First Round Support for Disqualified/Drop-Out Tickets (2011-2017)



Note: Heterogeneous treatment effect estimates and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals obtained following Calonico, Cattaneo, Farrell, et al. (2025).

Alternative Mechanisms: Strategic Voting and Coordination

Voters may not solely follow expressive motives—completely disregarding tickets' chances of winning—but may also factor in strategic motives. For parsimony, I abstracted from modeling such considerations in section 3. Yet, by signaling how *others* are voting, first round rankings could potentially affect those motives. In the following, I highlight factors and evidence at odds with a strategic motives explanation.

First, although the first round, with its many tickets, involves strategic considerations, the treatment should not affect first round decisions—by virtue of it not being known by the time voters cast their vote. In the second round, if only two tickets qualify, the only strategic decision left to voters is whether to turn out. Table A.43 shows that both the increase in RN support and the null effect on turnout are robust to restricting the sample to district $\times$ election pairs in which only two tickets qualified for the second round. This suggests that the increase in RN support is unlikely to be attributable to strategic motives.

An alternative explanation could be that first round ranking serves as a coordination device, with voters coordinating on the highest ranked party, as found by Granzier, Pons, and Tricaud (2023) for generic parties. However, as previously mentioned, the RN is strategically isolated, with leaders of other parties regularly calling for politicians and voters to form a firewall against the party. Figure A.23 shows that, while, between 2011 and 2017, moderate tickets were less likely to

run in the second round when they narrowly failed to rank first—consistent with Granzier, Pons, and Tricaud (2023)'s findings for generic parties and suggesting coordination between parties—this is not the case for RN tickets: when the RN ranks first or second in the first round, it systematically runs in the second round. If the effect were driven by coordination between indifferent voters when second round tickets are ideologically close, one would also expect it to be larger for moderate tickets relative to RN tickets—the opposite of what I find in Figure 6. Ultimately, temporary coordination between indifferent voters would not explain why the increase in RN support persists in the next election—even after controlling for RN first round ranking in the next election—nor why donations to the party increase, since indifferent voters are unlikely to be willing to incur a financial cost to support it.

An alternative coordination story could involve voters voting for the RN to send a signal of discontent. However, it is unclear whether protest vote incentives should increase or decrease after RN first round wins: on the one hand, RN symbolic wins might increase protest votes' media visibility but, on the other hand, they might also increase the perceived cost of protest votes (the risk of electing a politician whose platform one does not support). Ultimately, protest voting cannot explain the effect on donations—which are individually costly and receive little media coverage—nor why the increase in RN support persists in the next election.

Finally, another story could involve selection of tickets into running in the second round, since tickets may decide not to run in the second round even when they can (hereafter 'drop out'). However, Figure A.23 shows that narrowly ranking first rather than second in the first round has no effect on the probability that the RN runs in the second round: when it qualifies, the party near-universally runs in the second round. This rules out selection of the RN tickets. Additionally, in Table A.45, I show that the effect on RN support cannot be explained by a jump in the probability that other tickets drop out (e.g. as a result of an anti-RN coalition). Indeed, I do not find any significant effect on the number of tickets which drop out, or on the aggregate first round support of those tickets. The point estimates are not only non-significant but also very small: taking them at face value, if all first round voters of these tickets turned to the RN in the second round, this would only explain 40% of the effect on RN support. The table further shows that the effect on RN support change is very robust to controlling for the first round support of the tickets which do not run despite qualifying.

7 Conclusion

When elections reveal that controversial politicians are more popular than previously thought, voters are often emboldened to openly endorse their views. However, it is a priori unclear whether such news should affect actual votes: on the one hand, votes may be less subject to social image concerns than openly-held views. On the other hand, internalized stigma may still hold some sway in voting booths.

Identifying the effect of such news on votes is very challenging as elections traditionally have many consequences which could in turn affect future votes; voting intentions measured through polls shortly after an election would in turn suffer from biased reporting. To shut down alternative channels, I leverage the specificity of the French two-round electoral system—where ranking first in the first round is a purely symbolic (but noteworthy) 'win' and only one week separates the two rounds.

I find that, when the Rassemblement National (RN)—a historically controversial party—narrowly ranks first in the first round in a district, this attracts media attention and increases its second round votes. Importantly, the effect is driven by years when one would expect the news to be the most salient (as it was more unusual), and the effect on media coverage predicts the effect on votes. Consistent with a weakening of stigma, the effect is absent for moderate parties, driven by areas where one might expect the stigma against the RN to be the strongest, and persists in the next election. Beyond attracting new voters, RN symbolic wins increase the donations the party receives. In line with donations being subject to stronger social image concerns than votes—being less anonymous—second round RN votes underpredict the effect on donations.

When controversial parties' *symbolic wins* attract media attention, they have *tangible* consequences—increasing actual votes and donations to those parties. This suggests that their electoral successes may have a multiplier effect, leading to a self-fulfilling electoral rise. As news about such wins often goes viral, this also raises the possibility of global diffusion in formerly controversial vote. This raises an important question for future research: are those wins more contagious when they occur among perceived social or cultural in-groups?

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A Appendix

A.1 Variables Definition

Main Dependent Variables

Change in RN Support: $\frac{\#RN\ votes_{i,t,round2}}{\#registered\ voters_{i,t,round2}} - \frac{\#RN\ votes_{i,t,round1}}{\#registered\ voters_{i,t,round1}}$

Change in RN Vote Share: $\frac{\#RN\ votes_{i,t,round2}}{\#valid\ votes_{i,t,round2}} - \frac{\#RN\ votes_{i,t,round1}}{\#valid\ votes_{i,t,round1}}$

Change in Turnout: $\frac{\#valid\ votes_{i,t,round2}}{\#registered\ voters_{i,t,round2}} - \frac{\#valid\ votes_{i,t,round1}}{\#registered\ voters_{i,t,round1}}$

RN Support in Next Election

Change in RN Support (round 1): $\frac{\#RN\ votes_{i,t+1,round1}}{\#registered\ voters_{i,t+1,round1}} - \frac{\#RN\ votes_{i,t,round1}}{\#registered\ voters_{i,t,round1}}$ where $t+1$ denotes the next election

Change in RN Support (round 1): $\frac{\#RN\ votes_{i,t+1,round2}}{\#registered\ voters_{i,t+1,round2}} - \frac{\#RN\ votes_{i,t,round1}}{\#registered\ voters_{i,t,round1}}$ where $t+1$ denotes the next election

Media Coverage

Some Mention: A dummy equal to 1 if at least one RN candidate from district × election pair i, t is mentioned in at least one article published on day d. I matched the RN candidates' names to the articles mentioning them using the Python package rapidfuzz with a similarity cut-off of 85. For municipal and regional elections, I used the names of the head of list. To allow for different orders of first name and family name, I matched the articles to [first name + family name], [family name + first name], [family name of first candidate of pair + family name of second candidate of pair], [family name of second candidate of pair + family name of first candidate of pair]. I manually inspected all imperfect matches and all articles matched to the name of some RN candidate who had a homonym among candidates running in the same election.

Some 'RN Ahead' Article: A dummy equal to 1 if at least one RN candidate from district × election pair i, t is mentioned in at least one article published on day d which also contains the phrase 'le fn en tête', 'le front national en tête', 'le fn arrive en tête' or 'le front national arrive en tête' (i.e. 'the RN is ahead'). In the first stage of the fuzzy RDD, I use a dummy equal to 1 if at least one article published on the day or the first round or the following day fulfills those conditions.

Sentiment Scores: I used spaCy to extract all adjectives ('e.g. the victorious RN'), copula structures (e.g. 'the RN is victorious) and verbal predicates (e.g. 'the RN wins the first round') in which 'FN' or 'Front National' is the subject. I then removed 'FN' and 'Front National' from those phrases to

avoid introducing statistical bias, before using astrosbd/french_emotion_camembert (available from Hugging Face, MIT license), a CamemBERT-based (Martin et al. (2020) model fine-tuned for emotion detection in French text, to compute a set of phrase-specific sentiment scores (neutrality, fear, sadness, joy, anger, surprise) which sum to one for each phrase. To compute dependent variables I could use in RDDs, I then averaged each of those scores across all extracted phrases from articles matched to the same district × election pair and published on the day of the first round or the following day.

Google Trends:

Change in Candidate Name's Normalized Google Trends Volume: I used *pytrends* to collect Google trends (from eight days before the first round to the second round) for the names of all RN candidates who ranked first or second in a first round between 2011 and 2017, along with Google trends for the word 'élection' over the same period to normalize the extracted volumes and allow comparability across candidates. I then normalized all candidate-name-volumes by the google trends for the word 'élection' on the same day, before computing differences between the normalized candidate-name volume on some day relative to the normalized candidate-name volume eight days before the first round. In the case of the 2015 departmental elections where candidates ran by pairs, I treated the names of the two RN candidates as separate observations.

Donations:

The donations data contains two types of variables: donations declared by the candidates, and donations validated by the Commission Nationale des Comptes de Campagne et des Financements Politiques after audit—the two variables can sometimes differ slightly if some donations were found to be irregular or incorrectly documented. In my main results, I use the validated donations for parsimony, but I replicate the results with the declared donations in Appendix.

Some Donation: A dummy equal to one if the ticket received non-zero donations during the campaign (based on the 'approved donations' validated after audit by the Commission Nationale des Comptes de Campagne et des Financements Politiques).

Donations by Round 1 Vote: $\frac{Total\ donations\ to\ RN\ ticket\ in\ €_{i,t}}{\#RN\ 1^{st}\ round\ vote_{i,t}}$

Donations over Election Average: I divided the total donations received by each RN ticket by the average total donations received by RN tickets which ranked first or second in the first round of the same election and ran in a second round.

Donations Percentile: Following Delius and Sterck (2024), I computed the rank of the total donations received by each RN ticket—across RN tickets which ranked first or second in the first round of the same election and ran in a second round—and divided it by one plus the number of RN tickets which ranked first or second in the first round of this election and ran in a second round.

Donations above...: A set of dummies equal to one if the total donations received by a ticket is at least as high as some sum (200 €, 400 €, 600 €, 800 €, 1,000 €, 1,200 €).

Under-Predicted Donations:

To understand whether the effect on donations of RN first round 'wins' is larger than could be expected based on the second round RN votes alone, I first used tidyverse (Wickham et al. 2019) to train random forests (Breiman 2001) on the control observations alone (districts where the RN ranked second in the first round) to predict different measures of the donations intensity based on the total second round RN votes, the number of registered voters, the second round RN support and election dummies. To avoid overfitting while flexibly capturing potential non-linearities in the relation between donations and the explanatory variables, I used 5-fold cross-validation to select the hyperparameters maximizing some target metric on the held-out folds. Since donations to RN candidates are rare, I used balanced accuracy as the target criteria for binary dependent variables, RMSE otherwise. After selecting the hyperparameters, I fitted the model on the control observations and then used the fitted model obtained to predict the donations measure on both control and treated observations. I report performance measures in Table A.39. Focusing on districts within 7 percentage points of the cut-off (corresponding to the largest MSE-optimal bandwidth across Table A.40, Table A.42 and Table A.41), Table A.19 show the second round RN support in treated and control districts close to the cut-off largely overlap, limiting concerns of out-of-support extrapolation when using the model to predict donations in treated districts, while Figure A.13 provides a sanity check by showing that the predicted donations measures are overall higher for treated districts—reflecting the higher overall second round RN support. This allowed me to define the 'under-predicted' donations as the difference between the realized donation measure and its predicted value. I consider the following measures of donations intensity:

Some Donation: See above.

Donations by Registered Voter: $\frac{Total\ donations\ to\ RN\ ticket\ in\ €_{i,t}}{\#Registered\ voters_{i,t}}$

Donations Percentile: See above.

Donations Above...: See above.

Dummies for Heterogeneity Analysis:

Period: Two dummies, respectively equal to 1 if $year \in [2011, 2017]$, 0 otherwise, and to 1 if $year \in [2018, 2024]$, 0 otherwise (elections anterior to 2011 are dropped). In Figure A.32, I instead use dummies respectively equal to 1 if $year \in [2001, 2017]$, 0 otherwise, and to 1 if $year \in [2018, 2024]$.

RN versus moderate: Two dummies, respectively equal to 1 for RN tickets, 0 otherwise, and to 1 for moderate tickets, 0 otherwise.

Polling station first round left-wing support: A set of four dummies, respectively equal to 1 if the first round aggregate first round left-wing support in a polling station is: below the 25^{th} percentile of the polling station's district $\times$ election pair, between the 25^{th} and 50^{th} percentile of the polling station's district $\times$ election pair, between the 50^{th} and 75^{th} percentile of the polling station's district $\times$ election pair,above the 75^{th} percentile of the polling station's district $\times$ election pair.

Opponent ideology: Three dummies, respectively equal to 1 if the RN's highest-ranked opponent is from the left (including far-left), right (including far-right), or miscellaneous/centrist, 0 otherwise.

Polling station first round support for disqualified/drop-out tickets: A set of four dummies, respectively equal to 1 if the first round aggregate support for tickets which did not run in the second round were below the 25^{th} percentile (of that across polling stations in districts where the RN ranked first or second in the same election), between the 25^{th} and 50^{th} percentile, between the 50^{th} and 75^{th} percentile, or above the 75^{th} percentile.

Running Variables:

Main Running Variable: $\frac{\#RN\ 1^{st}\ round\ votes_{i,t} - \#opponent\ 1^{st}\ round\ votes_{i,t}}{\#valid\ votes_{i,t}}$

Alternative Running Variable 1: $\frac{\#RN\ 1^{st}\ round\ votes_{i,t} - \#opponent\ 1^{st}\ round\ votes_{i,t}}{\#registered\ voters_{i,t}}$

Alternative Running Variable 2: $\frac{\#RN\ 1^{st}\ round\ votes_{i,t} - \#opponent\ 1^{st}\ round\ votes_{i,t}}{\#all\ voters_{i,t}}$

A.2 Descriptive Tables

Table A.7: Number of First Round Tickets by Election

Election	Min.	25th Pctile	50th Pctile	75th Pctile	Max.	# Districts
2001 Departmental	1	5	6	7	14	2011
2001 Municipal	1	2	2	3	9	2717
2002 Legislative	3	12	15	17	27	577
2004 Departmental	1	5	6	7	15	2034
2004 Regional	5	7	8	9	19	26
2007 Legislative	5	12	13	15	20	577
2008 Departmental	1	3	4	5	11	2020
2008 Municipal	1	2	3	4	16	2945
2010 Regional	8	8	10	11	13	26
2011 Departmental	1	4	5	6	13	2026
2012 Legislative	5	10	11	13	23	577
2014 Municipal	1	1	2	3	11	9843
2015 Departmental	1	4	4	5	11	2054
2015 Regional	8	9	10	11	13	17
2017 Legislative	3	12	13	15	27	577
2020 Municipal	1	1	2	2	16	9989
2021 Departmental	1	3	4	5	14	2028
2021 Regional	4	7	9	11	14	17
2022 Legislative	4	9	11	12	22	577
2024 Legislative	4	5	7	8	19	577

Note: The table reports moments of the distribution of the number of tickets running in the first round for each election (columns 2-5), as well as the number of districts by election (column 6).

Table A.8: Rassemblement National First and Second Frequency

Election	RN Second	RN Close Second (5p.p.)	RN Close Second (2p.p.)	RN First	RN Close First (5p.p.)	RN Close First (2p.p.)
2001 Departmental	11	1	1	1	0	0
2001 Municipal	3	0	0	2	2	1
2002 Legislative	32	2	2	0	0	0
2004 Departmental	91	12	7	6	5	4
2004 Regional	1	0	0	0	0	0
2007 Legislative	1	1	0	0	0	0
2008 Departmental	2	0	0	0	0	0
2008 Municipal	1	0	0	0	0	0
2010 Regional	0	0	0	0	0	0
2011 Departmental	358	55	19	40	28	16
2012 Legislative	29	3	1	5	4	3
2014 Municipal	57	5	0	19	7	4
2015 Departmental	634	211	95	340	183	75
2015 Regional	2	1	1	6	1	0
2017 Legislative	99	17	4	20	12	9
2020 Municipal	23	5	2	5	1	0
2021 Departmental	497	48	20	72	30	15
2021 Regional	8	2	0	1	1	0
2022 Legislative	96	41	22	110	56	24
2024 Legislative	106	41	16	222	47	20

Note: The table reports, for each election, the number of districts where the RN ranked second or first overall (columns 2 and 5), as well as the number of districts where it ranked second or first and within 2 or 5 p.p. from its main opponent.

Table A.9: Newspapers (2011-2017)

Newspaper	# Article x Ticket Pairs
AFP	4807
La Voix du Nord	2791
Midi Libre	1620
Nord Éclair	1456
Ouest-France	1431
La Provence	1276
Le Parisien	1126
Sud Ouest	926
Aujourd'hui en France	836
Le Progrès (Lyon)	784
Le Monde.fr	755
L'Est Républicain	747
Le Figaro.fr	725
L'Indépendant	717
Le Monde	609
20 Minutes	551
Le Figaro	518
Le Point.fr	505
Le Parisien.fr	496
La Dépêche du Midi	464
Le Journal du Centre	436
Challenges	430
La Montagne	429
Les Echos	403
Libération	392
Paris-Normandie	384
Courrier picard	365
L'Express	364
Corse-Matin	323
La Nouvelle République du Centre-Ouest	322
Le Télégramme (Bretagne)	307
Le Bien Public	303
Le Berry Républicain	287
L'Yonne Républicaine	277
Nord Littoral	261
Le Journal de Saône et Loire	250
L'Obs	237

Note: The table reports the number of article × ticket pairs by newspaper or source (where the same article can be counted several times if it mentions several RN tickets which ranked first or second, and never counted if it does not mention any RN ticket which ranked first or second).

Table A.10: Newspapers (2011-2017) Cont.

Newspaper	# Article x Ticket Pairs
La Croix	224
L'Union (France)	218
l'Humanité	204
Le Maine Libre	197
Le Huffington Post - France	196
Le Populaire du Centre	195
Le Jdd	186
La République des Pyrénées	161
Atlantico	160
La République du Centre	158
Centre Presse (Vienne)	141
La Tribune.fr	123
L'Echo républicain	119
Valeurs Actuelles	115
Charente Libre	115
Le Courrier de l'Ouest	105
Rue89	100
HuffPost - France	90
Acteurs Publics	89
La Tribune (France)	85
L'Aisne Nouvelle	84
La Nouvelle République des Pyrénées	72
Presse Océan	66
Le Petit Bleu de Lot-et-Garonne	55
Le Progrès de Fécamp	54
La Gazette des communes	49
Le Point	43
ToulÉco	42
Dordogne Libre	37
Le Figaro Magazine	36
Centre Presse Aveyron	36
Europe 1	35
Le Pays Roannais	33
Courrier International	30
Le Petit Bleu d'Agen	19
La Matinale du Monde	18
La Tribune - Acteurs de l'économie	16

Note: The table reports the number of article × ticket pairs by newspaper or source (where the same article can be counted several times if it mentions several RN tickets which ranked first or second, and never counted if it does not mention any RN ticket which ranked first or second).

Table A.11: Newspapers (2011-2017) Cont.

Newspaper	# Article x Ticket Pairs
Centre Presse	14
LibéMarseille(site web)	14
LibéOrléans	14
Télérama	12
TV Mag	12
Écrans	11
L'Est éclair	11
La Tribune - Objectif Languedoc-Rous.	10
L'Éclaireur du Gâtinais	10
Lyon Plus	10
Le Journal de Gien	9
L'Usine Nouvelle.com	9
La Tribune - Bordeaux	9
La Gazette de Thiers et d'Ambert	9
Pèlerin	9
Boursier	8
La Tribune	8
L'Expansion	6
LibéLille	5
La Nouvelle République Dimanche	5
Le Régional de Cosne	5
L'Écho Charitois	5
LibéToulouse	5
Le Quotidien du Médecin	5
La Voix du Sancerrois	5
Le Figaro Étudiant	5
Le Courrier du Loiret	5
LibéStrasbourg	3
Direct Matin - Lyon Plus	3
La Vie	3
Le Havre Presse	3
L'Echo touristique.com	2
M Le Magazine du Monde	2
Chef d'Entreprise	2
NewsPress (français)	2
La Lettre de l'Expansion	2
La Lettre d'écoNormandie	2

Note: The table reports the number of article × ticket pairs by newspaper or source (where the same article can be counted several times if it mentions several RN tickets which ranked first or second, and never counted if it does not mention any RN ticket which ranked first or second).

Table A.12: Newspapers (2011-2017) Cont.

Newspaper	# Article x Ticket Pairs
Econostrum	2
Artisans	2
Profession Politique	1
Le Régional de Cosne et du Charitois	1
Collectivités locales	1
24 Heures (Suisse)	1
L'AGEFI Quotidien	1
Madame Figaro	1
Le Temps	1
Le Journal du Médoc	1
Télé Poche	1
Stratégies	1
L'Argus de l'assurance.com	1
Liaisons sociales Quotidien	1
CNews Matin - Lyon Plus	1
Havre Libre	1
Option Finance	1
Actualités Sociales Hebdomadaires	1
Tribune de Genève	1
La Tribune Hebdomadaire	1
TéléObs	1
LibéLyon	1
Les Echos Week-End	1
LSA.fr	1

Note: The table reports the number of article × ticket pairs by newspaper or source (where the same article can be counted several times if it mentions several RN tickets which ranked first or second, and never counted if it does not mention any RN ticket which ranked first or second).

Table A.13: Top 15 Actions or Qualifications by Fear Score

Phrase (FR)	Translation (EN)	Fear Score
fait encore peur	still scares	0.7400
, quand il est tout proche du pouvoir , fait peur	, when it is very close to power, is scary	0.7340
est menaçant	is threatening	0.6510
est un danger	is a danger	0.6280
menace de l' emporter	threatens to win	0.5520
menace l' UMP(AFP	threatens the UMP (AFP	0.4530
menace le vice-président	threatens the vice-president	0.3970
menace de gagner	threatens	0.3940
a frappé fort	struck hard	0.3880
a fait feu de tout bois , hier	made fire of all wood yesterday	0.3430
en appelle	call	0.2620
a tout de même créé la surprise	still created the surprise	0.2110
frappe	strikes	0.2050
défie l' Union	defies the Union	0.2040
risque d' être le premier	risks of being the first	0.1990

Note: The table reports the phrases (actions or qualifications accompanying "RN" in articles mentioning a RN ticket which ranked first or second) with the highest fear scores. The sample is restricted to articles mentioning a ticket within 5p.p. of the cut-off.

Table A.14: Top 15 Actions or Qualifications by Joy Score

Phrase (FR)	Translation (EN)	Joy Score
s' est offert ce dimanche soir une formidable poussée	offered itself this Sunday evening a formidable surge	0.9970
attend maintenant avec une certaine jubilation de voir	Now waits with a certain jubilation to see	0.9970
savoure sa première position	savors its first position	0.9960
a fait fort	outdid itself	0.9950
est devenu une grande force	has become a major force	0.9950
et UMP riaient ensemble	and UMP laughed together	0.9950
réalise de très bons scores	achieves very good scores	0.9940
est une grande force	is a great force	0.9940
a mis tous ses espoirs dans ce canton et c' est pour cela	put all his hopes in this canton and that's why	0.9930
n' avait cessé de gagner des voix et d' avoir des élus municipaux , départementaux et régionaux	did not cease winning votes and obtaining municipal, departmental and regional elected officials	0.9910
réalise son deuxième meilleur résultat	achieves its second best result	0.9910
fasse un aussi bon score et espère	make such a good score and hope	0.9910
nourrit l' espoir	nourishes hope	0.9910
réalise son plus gros score du canton de Douai dans sa commune , et cela	performs his biggest score in the canton of Douai in his town, and that	0.9900
triomphant	triumphant	0.9900

Note: The table reports the phrases (actions or qualifications accompanying "RN" in articles mentioning a RN ticket which ranked first or second) with the highest joy scores. The sample is restricted to articles mentioning a ticket within 5p.p. of the cut-off.

Table A.15: Top 15 Actions or Qualifications by Neutrality Score

Phrase (FR)	Translation (EN)	Neutrality Score
se situe à un bon niveau pour des législatives , avec Marine Le Pen en mesure de l' emporter dans le Pas-de-Calais , mais la forte abstention devrait	is at a good level for legislative elections, with Marine Le Pen able to win in Pas-de-Calais, but the strong abstention should	0.9880
est aussi en tête à Avignon mais n' a pas fait	is also in ahead in Avignon but did not "do	0.9880
se situe à un bon niveau pour des législatives , avec Marine Le Pen très largement en tête dans le Pas-de-Calais , mais la forte abstention devrait	is at a good level for legislative elections, with Marine Le Pen very largely ahead in Pas-de-Calais, but the strong abstention should	0.9880
continue sa progression en Bretagne avec 18 % des suffrages mais n' a pas dépassé	continues its progress in Brittany with 18 % of the vote but has not exceeded	0.9880
est aussi en tête à Avignon mais n' a pas " fait	is also ahead in Avignon but did not "do	0.9880
réalise un bon score , mais l' abstention lui limite	achieves a good score, but abstention limits its	0.9880
peut progresser	can progress	0.9880
dispose peut-être d' une réserve de voix et pourrait	may have a vote reserve and could	0.9880
se situe à un bon niveau pour des législatives , avec Marine Le Pen en mesure de l' emporter dans le Pas - de- Calais , mais en raison d' une forte abstention , il devra	is at a good level for legislative elections, with Marine Le Pen able to win in Pas - de-Calais, but due to a strong abstention, it will have to	0.9880
se situe à un bon niveau pour des législatives , avec Marine Le Pen en mesure de l' emporter dans le Pas-de-Calais , mais en raison d' une forte abstention , il devra	is at a good level for legislative elections, with Marine Le Pen able to win in Pas-de-Calais, but due to strong abstention, it will have to	0.9880
est en tête mais pas avec l' avance	is ahead but not with the margin	0.9870
est arrivé en tête dans plusieurs communes du corridor minier , avec des pics à Fresnes-sur-Escaut et Bruay-sur-Escaut , mais l' heure n' était pas à la fanfaronnade	ranked first in several municipalities of the mining corridor, with peaks in Fresnes-sur-Escaut and Bruay-sur-Escaut, but it was no time for self-congratulation	0.9870
se hisse à la première place avec 30 % des voix , mais où la gauche pourrait	climbs in first place with 30 % of the votes, but where the left could	0.9870
fait nettement moins bien que sa présidente au 1er tour de la présidentielle (17,9 %) , mais il peut	significantly less well than its president in the 1st round of the presidential election (17.9 %), but it can	0.9870
se situe à un excellent niveau avec Marine Le Pen en mesure de l' emporter dans le Pas-de-Calais , mais la forte abstention devrait	is at an excellent level with Marine Le Pen able to win in Pas-de-Calais, but the strong abstention should	0.9870

Note: The table reports the phrases (actions or qualifications accompanying "RN" in articles mentioning a RN ticket which ranked first or second) with the highest neutrality scores. The sample is restricted to articles mentioning a ticket within 5p.p. of the cut-off.

Table A.16: Top 15 Actions or Qualifications by Sadness Score

Phrase (FR)	Translation (EN)	Sadness Score
vit une nouvelle déception	faces another disappointment	0.9890
échoue également	also fails	0.9880
bénéficie d' une situation locale catastrophique : le Vaucluse est un département pauvre et il y a	benefits from a catastrophic local situation: Vaucluse is a poor department and there is	0.9860
(extrême droite) admet " une déception	(extreme right) admits "a disappointment	0.9860
se tasse et n' arrive	levels off and fails	0.9860
doit s' interroger sur son programme et son organisation Incontestablement , c' est une déception	must "interrogate itself" about its "program" and its "organization" "undoubtedly, it is a disappointment	0.9860
devrait pâtir	should suffer	0.9860
ne serait pas à ce niveau	would not be at this level	0.9860
voit certains de ses cadres chuter	sees some of his senior figures fall	0.9850
ne s' est clairement pas remis debout	clearly did not recover from	0.9850
de Marine Le Pen et La France insoumise de Jean-Luc Mélenchon s' effondrent	of Marine Le Pen and the France Insoumis of Jean-Luc Mélenchon collapse	0.9840
semble peiner	appears to struggle	0.9840
voit ses espoirs largement contrariés	sees its hopes largely thwarted	0.9840
essuie un nouvel échec	endures yet another setback	0.9830
a échoué à égaler	failed to match	0.9830

Note: The table reports the phrases (actions or qualifications accompanying "RN" in articles mentioning a RN ticket which ranked first or second) with the highest sadness scores. The sample is restricted to articles mentioning a ticket within 5p.p. of the cut-off.

Table A.17: Top 15 Actions or Qualifications by Anger Score

Phrase (FR)	Translation (EN)	Anger Score
qui peut déjà imposer des triangulaires au second tour dans une centaine de villes de plus de 30.000 habitants se vante d' avoir fait voler	which can already impose [three tickets competitions] in the second round in a hundred cities of more than 30,000 inhabitants boasts of having stolen	0.9140
fait mieux que l' alliance centre - droite de Claude Bachelet (4 846 voix , 35,42 %) et inflige	does better than the center-right alliance of Claude Bachelet (4,846 votes, 35.42 %) and inflicts	0.8940
fait mieux que l' alliance centre- droite de Claude Bachelet (4 846 voix , 35,42 %) et inflige	does better than the center-right alliance of Claude Bachelet (4,846 votes, 35.42 %) and inflicts	0.8940
accuse le ministre de l' Intérieur Claude Guéant de " manipuler	accuses the Minister of the Interior Claude Guéant of "manipulating	0.8340
lui a siphonné son électorat	siphoned off its voters	0.8280
progresse mais pas du tout avec la même insolence	progresses but not at all with the same insolence	0.7980
très haut bloque l' UMP	very high blocks the UMP	0.7560
arrache 10 sièges	snatches 10 seats	0.7270
s' insurge	protests strongly	0.7040
fasse mieux	does better	0.6180
est le seul mouvement qui fait baisser le PS et c' est que nous avons révélé	is the only movement that is bringing down the PS and it is that we have revealed	0.5930
réclamant l' instauration	demanding the creation	0.5350
Collard en tête , appelle le candidat UMP à se désister	Collard ahead, calls upon the UMP candidate to withdraw himself	0.5300
porte plainte	files a complaint	0.4940
devrait imposer	should impose	0.4920

Note: The table reports the phrases (actions or qualifications accompanying "RN" in articles mentioning a RN ticket which ranked first or second) with the highest anger scores. The sample is restricted to articles mentioning a ticket within 5p.p. of the cut-off.

Table A.18: Top 15 Actions or Qualifications by Surprise Score

Phrase (FR)	Translation (EN)	Surprise Score
s' invite quasiment partout au second tour et surprend	invites itself almost everywhere in the second round and surprises	0.8470
crée la surprise et se qualifie	creates the surprise and qualifies	0.8280
impressionne	impresses	0.8120
a créé la surprise	created the surprise	0.7910
surprend	surprises	0.7860
crée la surprise	creates the surprise	0.7780
ferait un tel score et je ne pensais	would obtain such a score and I didn't think	0.7740
, qui misait sur les élections municipales pour enraciner et crédibiliser sa formation , a fait sensation	, which banked on the municipal elections to entrench and legitimize its movement, has made a splash	0.7440
en tête ne surprend pas le maire	ahead does not surprise the mayor	0.7370
a tout de même créé la surprise	still created the surprise	0.7070
a réalisé dimanche au premier tour des municipales des scores au-delà de ses espérances , en tête dans plusieurs villes et remportant	obtained Sunday in the first round of the municipal elections scores beyond its hopes, ahead in several cities and winning	0.6930
a réalisé dimanche au premier tour des municipales des scores au-delà de ses espérances , en tête dans plusieurs villes selon les premières estimations et gagnant	obtained Sunday in the first round of the municipal elections scores beyond its hopes, ahead in several cities according to the first estimates and winning	0.6450
a réalisé hier au premier tour des municipales des scores au-delà de ses espérances , en tête dans plusieurs villes selon les premières estimations et gagnant	obtained yesterday in the first round of the municipal elections scores beyond its hopes, ahead in several cities according to the first estimates and winning	0.6080
, qui présentait des candidats là où il savait pouvoir obtenir de bons résultats , a réalisé une spectaculaire poussée	, who presented candidates where it knew it could obtain good scores, achieved a spectacular surge	0.5870
balaye les acquis et défie	sweeps past achievements and defies	0.5730

Note: The table reports the phrases (actions or qualifications accompanying "RN" in articles mentioning a RN ticket which ranked first or second) with the highest surprise scores. The sample is restricted to articles mentioning a ticket within 5p.p. of the cut-off.

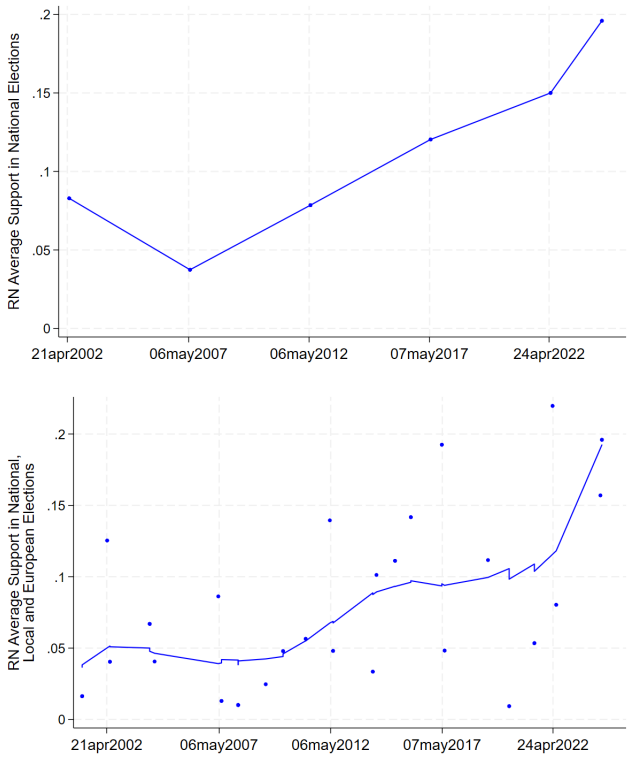
Table A.19: Distribution of Round 2 RN Support Within 7p.p. of the Cut-Off (2012-2017)

Percentile	RN Round 2 Absolute Support (Control)	RN Round 2 Absolute Support (Treated)	RN Round 2 Support (Control)	RN Round 2 Support (Treated)
Min	842	1122	.0890252	.1069006
p1	1307	1416	.1055535	.1177108
p5	1560	1768	.1248223	.1395786
p10	1773.5	2255	.1320684	.147896
p25	2289	3057	.1504865	.1685935
p50	3627.5	4362.5	.165825	.1889407
p75	5465	6228	.1894148	.2129137
p90	9592.5	9114	.2130547	.2396918
p95	14375	12766	.2222704	.258159
p99	17230	19905	.2466291	.2776822
Max	21093	22780	.2959119	.3156032

Note: The table reports moments of the RN round 2 total votes and votes over registered voters (used to compute predicted donations), separately for treated and control districts within 7p.p. of the cut-off. It highlights that the support of both variables largely overlap for treated and control districts close to the cut-off.

A.3 Descriptive Figures

Figure A.11: Increase in RN Support Over Time



Note: The top figure plots country-wide RN support when averaging over both rounds of the presidential and legislative elections (set as missing when the RN does no run). The bottom figure reports the country-wide RN support (averaging over both rounds) separately for local, national and European elections, and plots an overall time trend obtained with lowess smoothing.

Figure A.12: Geographic Variation Within 2p.p. of the Cut-Off (2011-2017)

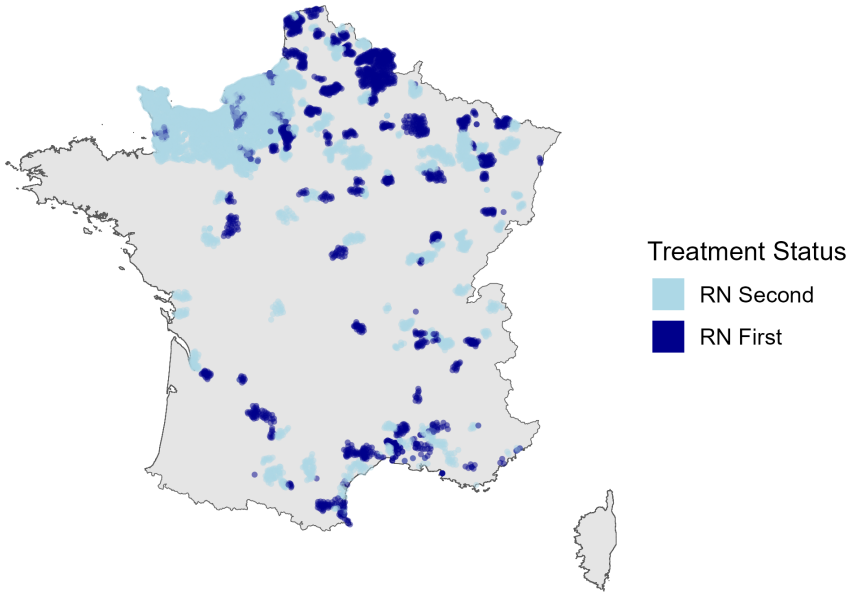
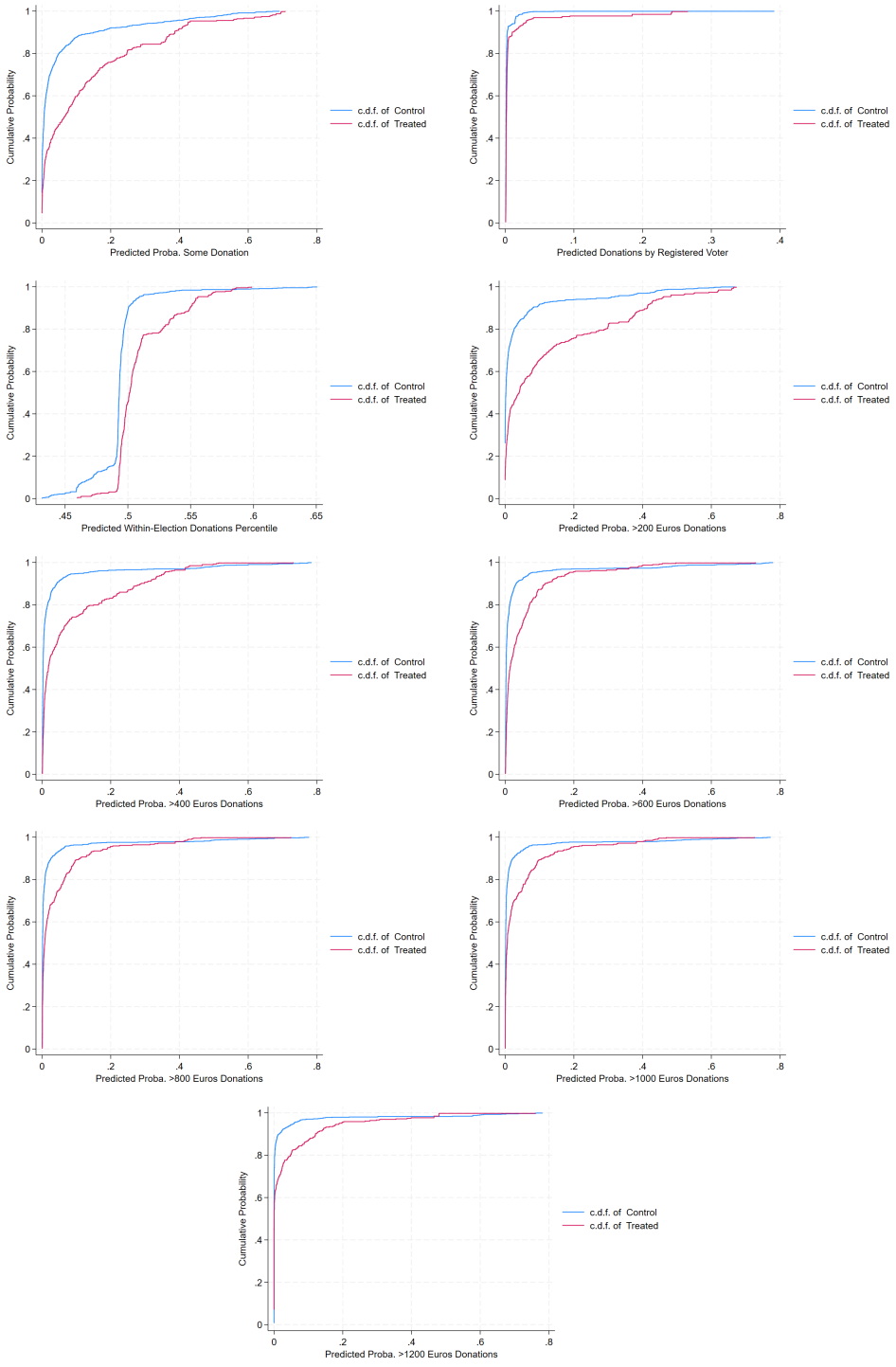


Figure A.13: Cumulative Distribution Function of Predicted Donation Intensity Measures Within 7p.p. of the Cut-Off (2012-2017)



A.4 No Sorting: Tables

Table A.20: No Jump in Predetermined Characteristics: First Round Support for Eliminated Candidates

	Sov. Right	Center-Right	Centrist	Center-Left	Far-Left	Misc.
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0000	0.0058	–0.0005	–0.0058	0.0044	0.0037
Standard error	(0.0007)	(0.0055)	(0.0038)	(0.0068)	(0.0034)	(0.0029)
Robust p-value	0.9446	0.2490	0.8616	0.3120	0.1201	0.1494
Observations left	845	1070	724	696	786	771
Observations right	575	671	514	503	548	538
Bandwidth	0.1008	0.1299	0.0829	0.0787	0.0921	0.0896
Mean (left)	0.0020	0.0409	0.0087	0.0549	0.0236	0.0094

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level.

Table A.21: No Jump in Predetermined Characteristics: First Round Support by Ideology

	Far-Right	Sov. Right	Center-Right	Centrist	Center-Left	Far-Left	Misc.
MSE-optimal estimate	–0.0021	–0.0004	–0.0101	0.0132*	0.0054	0.0042	0.0018
Standard error	(0.0063)	(0.0008)	(0.0083)	(0.0084)	(0.0084)	(0.0050)	(0.0031)
Robust p-value	0.8622	0.5125	0.1978	0.0747	0.3900	0.2864	0.4257
Observations left	702	870	870	731	741	736	802
Observations right	506	583	583	516	522	518	553
Bandwidth	0.0796	0.1035	0.1034	0.0843	0.0853	0.0847	0.0950
Mean (left)	0.1401	0.0021	0.1282	0.0299	0.1299	0.0276	0.0122

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level.

Table A.22: No Jump in Predetermined Characteristics: Trends

	Candidate Already Ran	Treatment Lagged	RN Support Trend	RN Incumbent	Opponent Incumbent Ideology
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0633	–0.0600	0.0157	–0.0217	–0.0034
Standard error	(0.0613)	(0.0874)	(0.0110)	(0.0523)	(0.1087)
Robust p-value	0.2458	0.4023	0.1052	0.6729	0.8378
Observations left	541	387	387	357	305
Observations right	351	204	204	200	185
Bandwidth	0.1199	0.1056	0.1056	0.0958	0.0825
Election FE	No	No	No	No	No
Mean (left)	0.1460	0.2145	–0.0164	0.0252	0.6852

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level.

Table A.23: No Jump in Predetermined Characteristics: Trends (Election FE)

	Candidate Already Ran	Treatment Lagged	RN Support Trend	RN Incumbent	Opponent Incumbent Ideology
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0732	0.0039	0.0021	–0.0189	0.0403
Standard error	(0.0612)	(0.0693)	(0.0048)	(0.0555)	(0.1073)
Robust p-value	0.1810	0.9140	0.6955	0.6812	0.5275
Observations left	511	371	285	308	307
Observations right	331	202	175	185	185
Bandwidth	0.1130	0.1023	0.0783	0.0835	0.0830
Election FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean (left)	0.1429	0.2210	–0.0162	0.0292	0.6873

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level.

Table A.24: No Jump in Predetermined Characteristics (2011-2017)

	RN Support	Support Elim. Far-Right	#Qualified	Mean RN Support	Mean RN Support Change	Predicted Treatment
MSE-optimal estimate	–0.0053	0.0004	0.0118	–0.0055	0.0012	0.0033
Standard error	(0.0057)	(0.0005)	(0.0853)	(0.0040)	(0.0023)	(0.0209)
Robust p-value	0.2535	0.2391	0.8611	0.1007	0.4742	0.7399
Observations left	418	244	437	393	398	298
Observations right	291	208	293	284	287	240
Bandwidth	0.0708	0.0414	0.0738	0.0674	0.0684	0.0524
Mean (left)	0.1393	0.0004	2.2403	0.1126	0.0248	0.3687

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The predicted treatment is obtained from a linear regression of the treatment status on the predetermined characteristics in Table A.24 (columns 1-5), Table A.25, Table A.26 and Table A.27.

Table A.25: No Jump in Predetermined Characteristics (2011-2017): First Round Support for Eliminated Candidates

	Sov. Right	Center-Right	Centrist	Center-Left	Far-Left	Misc.
MSE-optimal estimate	–0.0004	0.0155	0.0010	–0.0089	0.0087*	0.0040
Standard error	(0.0010)	(0.0113)	(0.0017)	(0.0102)	(0.0056)	(0.0038)
Robust p-value	0.5768	0.1139	0.5410	0.3197	0.0907	0.2936
Observations left	437	299	341	349	352	363
Observations right	293	241	260	265	266	272
Bandwidth	0.0738	0.0526	0.0587	0.0598	0.0607	0.0625
Mean (left)	0.0018	0.0436	0.0012	0.0609	0.0280	0.0064

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level.

Table A.26: No Jump in Predetermined Characteristics (2011-2017): First Round Support by Ideology

	Far-Right	Sov. Right	Center-Right	Centrist	Center-Left	Far-Left	Misc.
MSE-optimal estimate	–0.0054	–0.0004	–0.0040	0.0024	0.0042	0.0050	0.0032
Standard error	(0.0057)	(0.0010)	(0.0119)	(0.0037)	(0.0113)	(0.0065)	(0.0042)
Robust p-value	0.2358	0.5768	0.6297	0.4249	0.5448	0.3513	0.4385
Observations left	417	437	296	506	424	437	300
Observations right	291	293	239	313	291	293	241
Bandwidth	0.0707	0.0738	0.0521	0.0882	0.0717	0.0739	0.0530
Mean (left)	0.1397	0.0018	0.1408	0.0086	0.1328	0.0357	0.0076

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level.

Table A.27: No Jump in Predetermined Characteristics (2011-2017): Trends

	Candidate Already Ran	Treatment Lagged	RN Support Trend	RN Incumbent	Opponent Incumbent Ideology
MSE-optimal estimate	0.1758	0.0813	0.0185	0.0044	–0.1502
Standard error	(0.2047)	(0.1410)	(0.0192)	(0.1125)	(0.2171)
Robust p-value	0.2579	0.4674	0.3200	0.9873	0.5201
Observations left	81	117	133	126	90
Observations right	53	55	56	61	56
Bandwidth	0.0510	0.0715	0.0793	0.0742	0.0589
Election FE	No	No	No	No	No
Mean (left)	0.1481	0.0256	–0.0019	0.0079	0.6889

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The predicted treatment is obtained from a linear regression of the treatment status on the predetermined characteristics in Table A.24 (columns 1-5), Table A.25, Table A.26 and Table A.27.

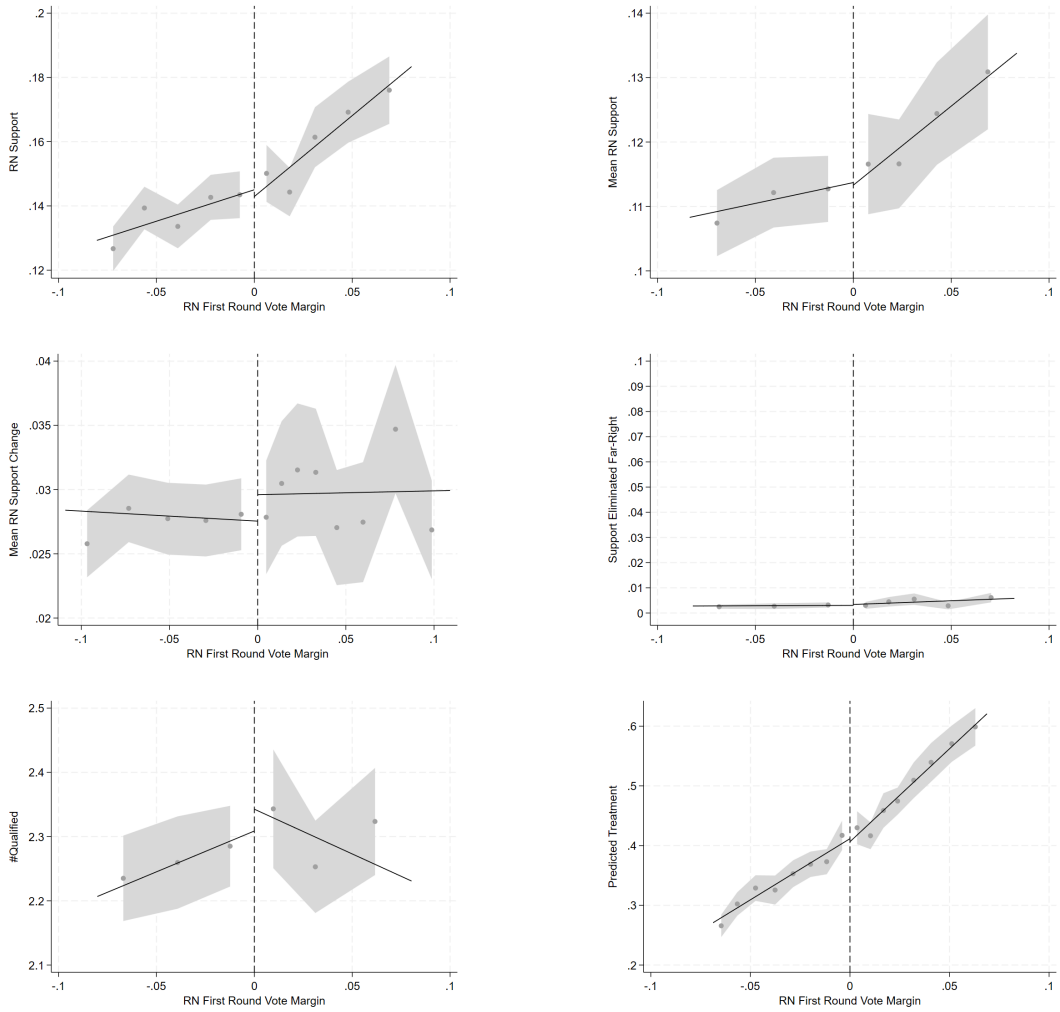
Table A.28: No Jump in Predetermined Characteristics (2011-2017): Trends (Election FE)

	Candidate Already Ran	Treatment Lagged	RN Support Trend	RN Incumbent	Opponent Incumbent Ideology
MSE-optimal estimate	0.2546*	0.0959	0.0066	–0.0116	–0.0965
Standard error	(0.2014)	(0.1451)	(0.0108)	(0.1142)	(0.1761)
Robust p-value	0.0998	0.3877	0.5715	0.9117	0.5492
Observations left	71	95	79	110	110
Observations right	50	54	49	61	61
Bandwidth	0.0444	0.0636	0.0531	0.0674	0.0676
Election FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean (left)	0.1690	0.0316	0.0012	0.0091	0.6909

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level.

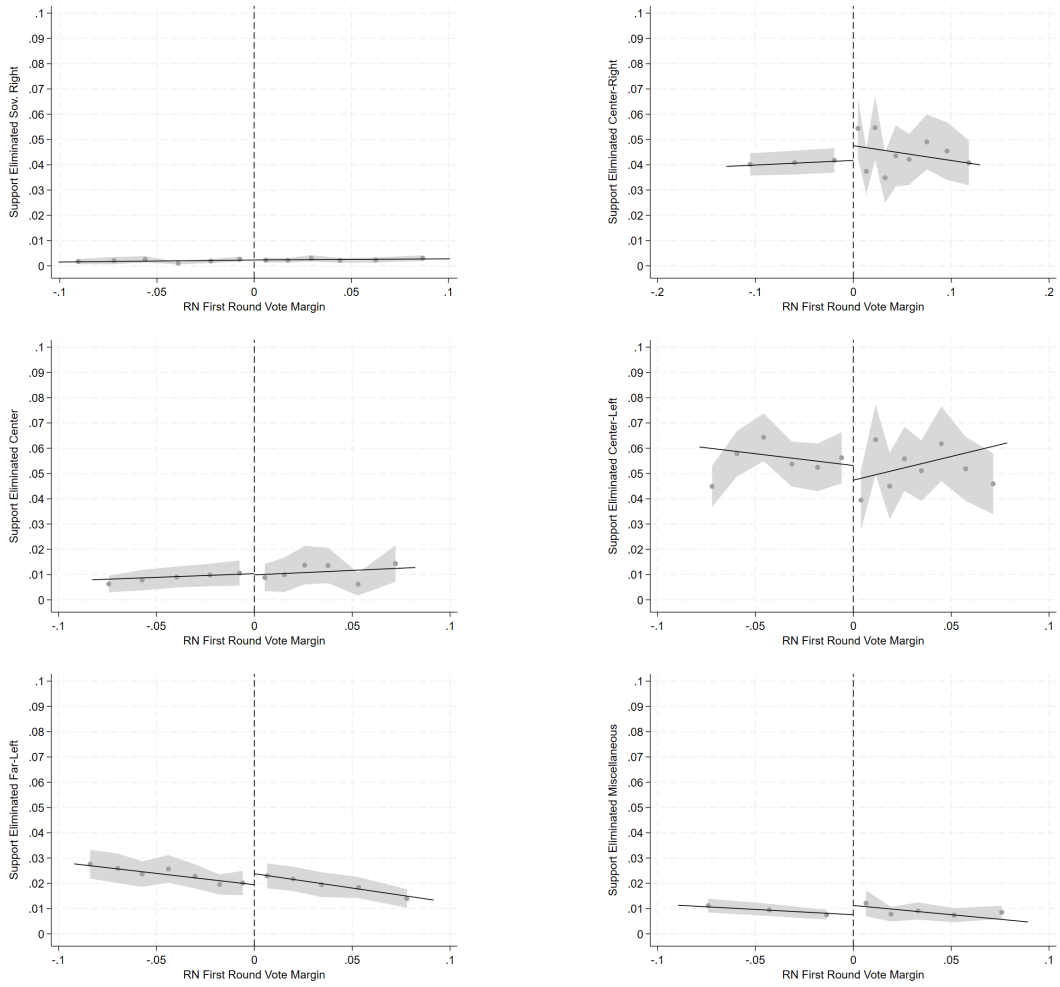
A.5 No Sorting: Figures

Figure A.14: No Sorting Based on Pre-determined Characteristics



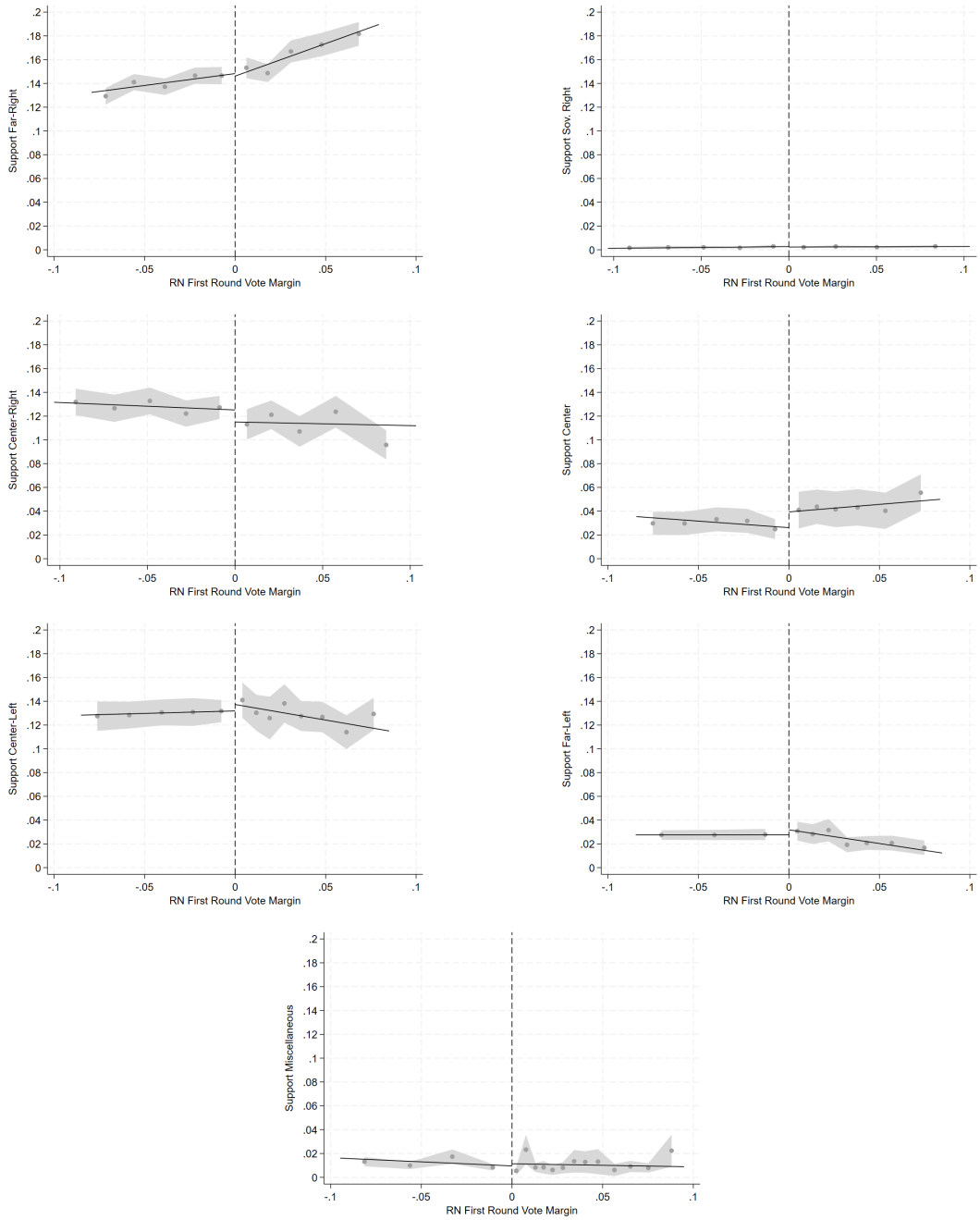
Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.15: No Sorting Based on Pre-determined Characteristics: First Round Support for Eliminated Tickets



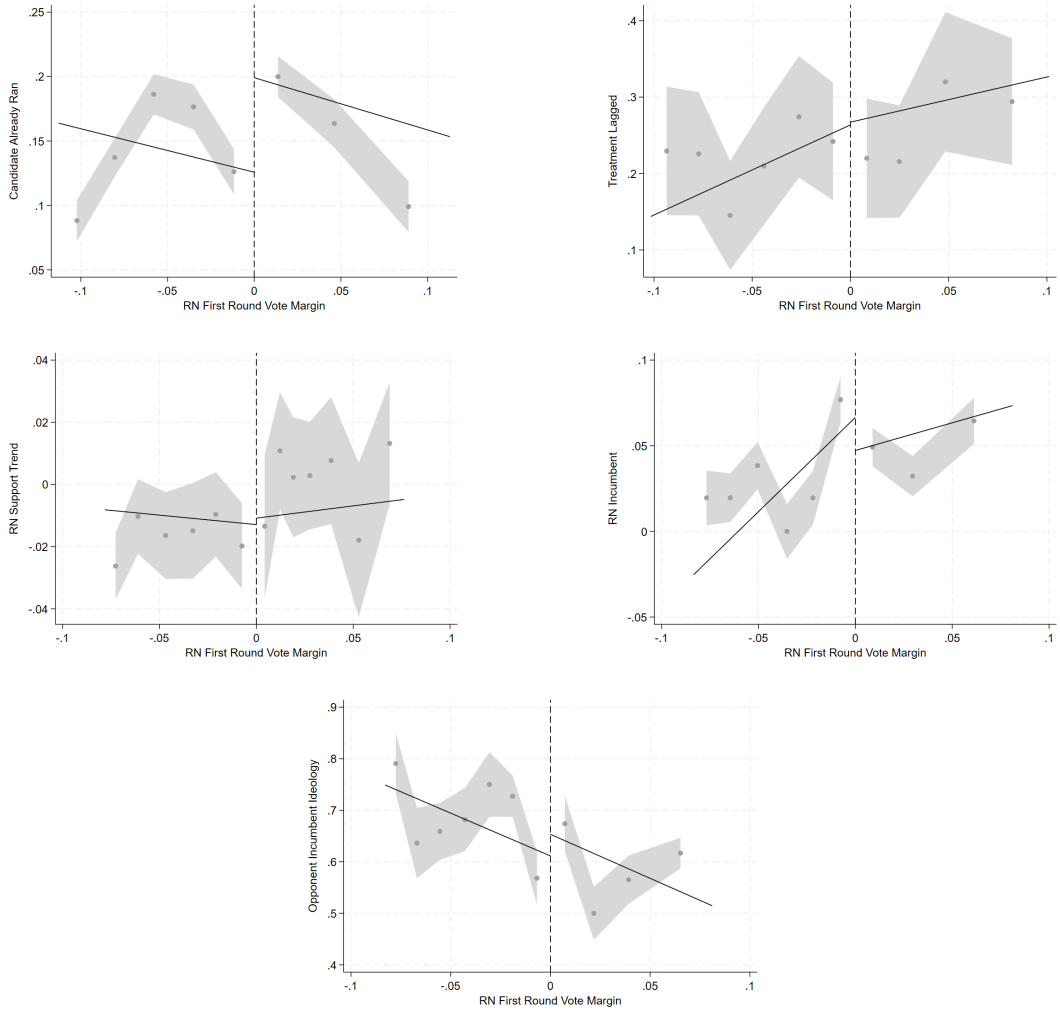
Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.16: No Sorting Based on Pre-determined Characteristics: First Round Support by Ideology



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.17: No Sorting Based on Pre-determined Characteristics: Trends



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.18: No Precise Manipulation (2011-2017)

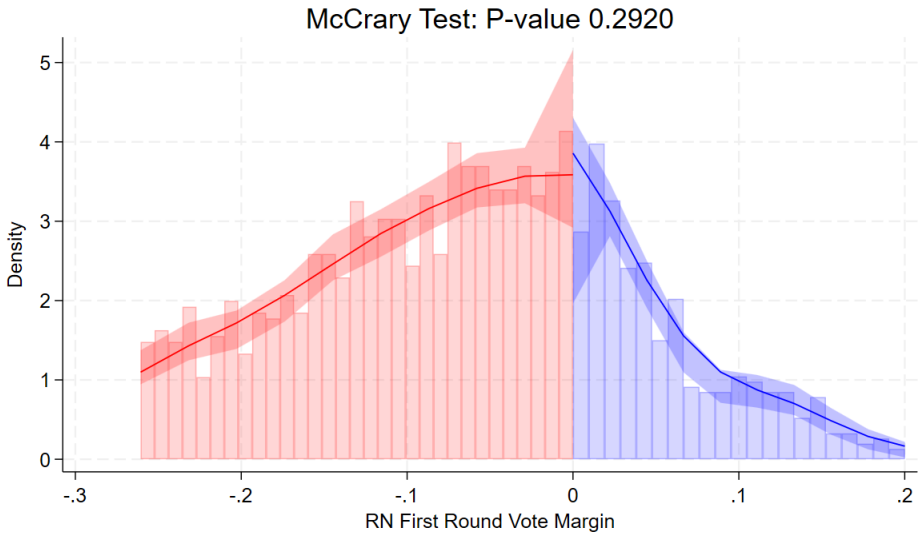
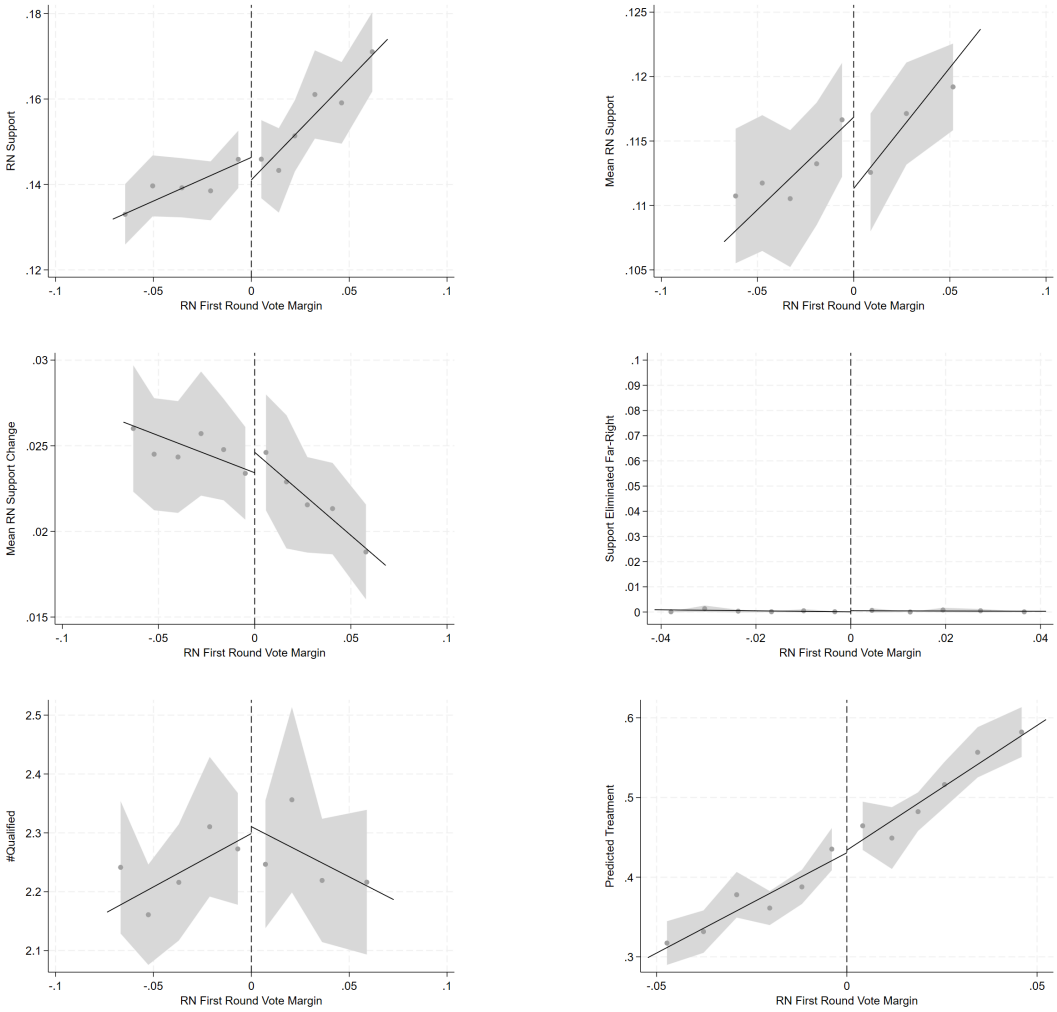
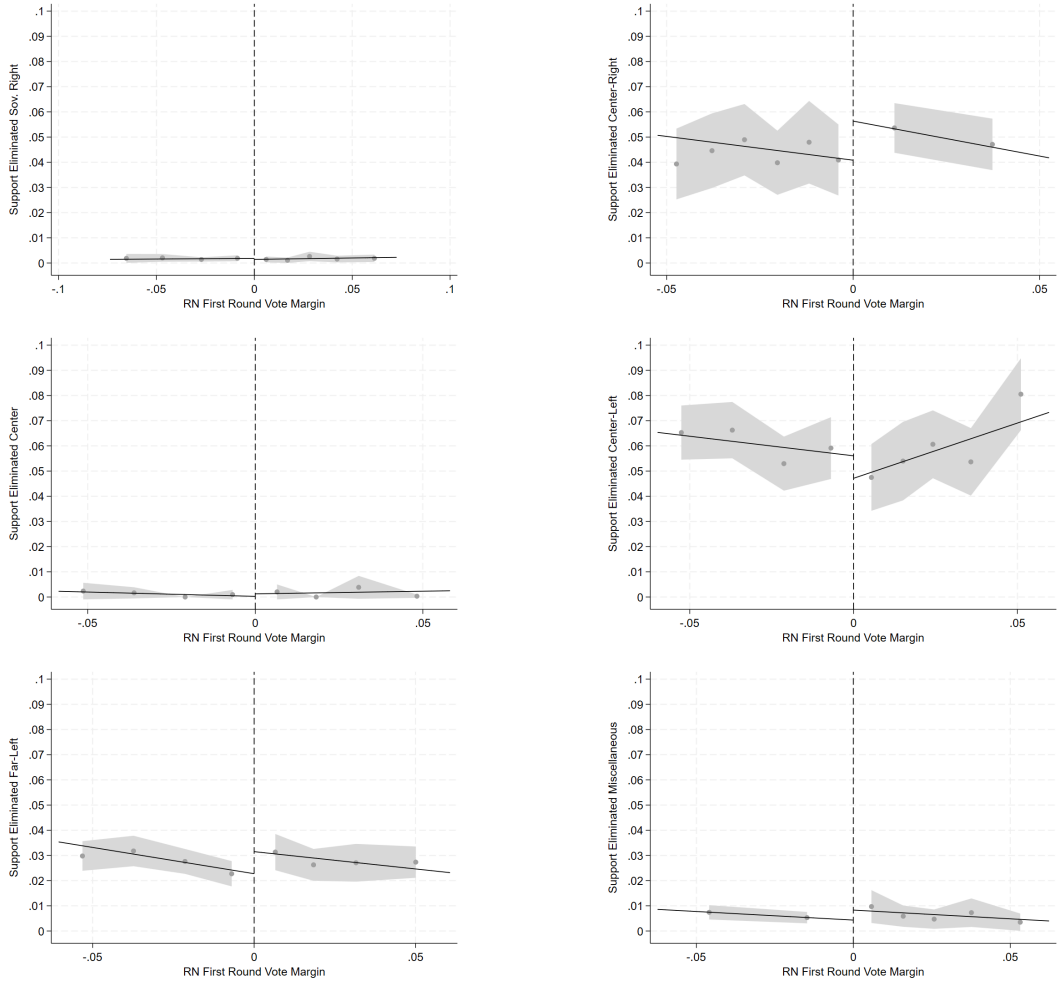


Figure A.19: No Sorting Based on Pre-determined Characteristics (2011-2017)



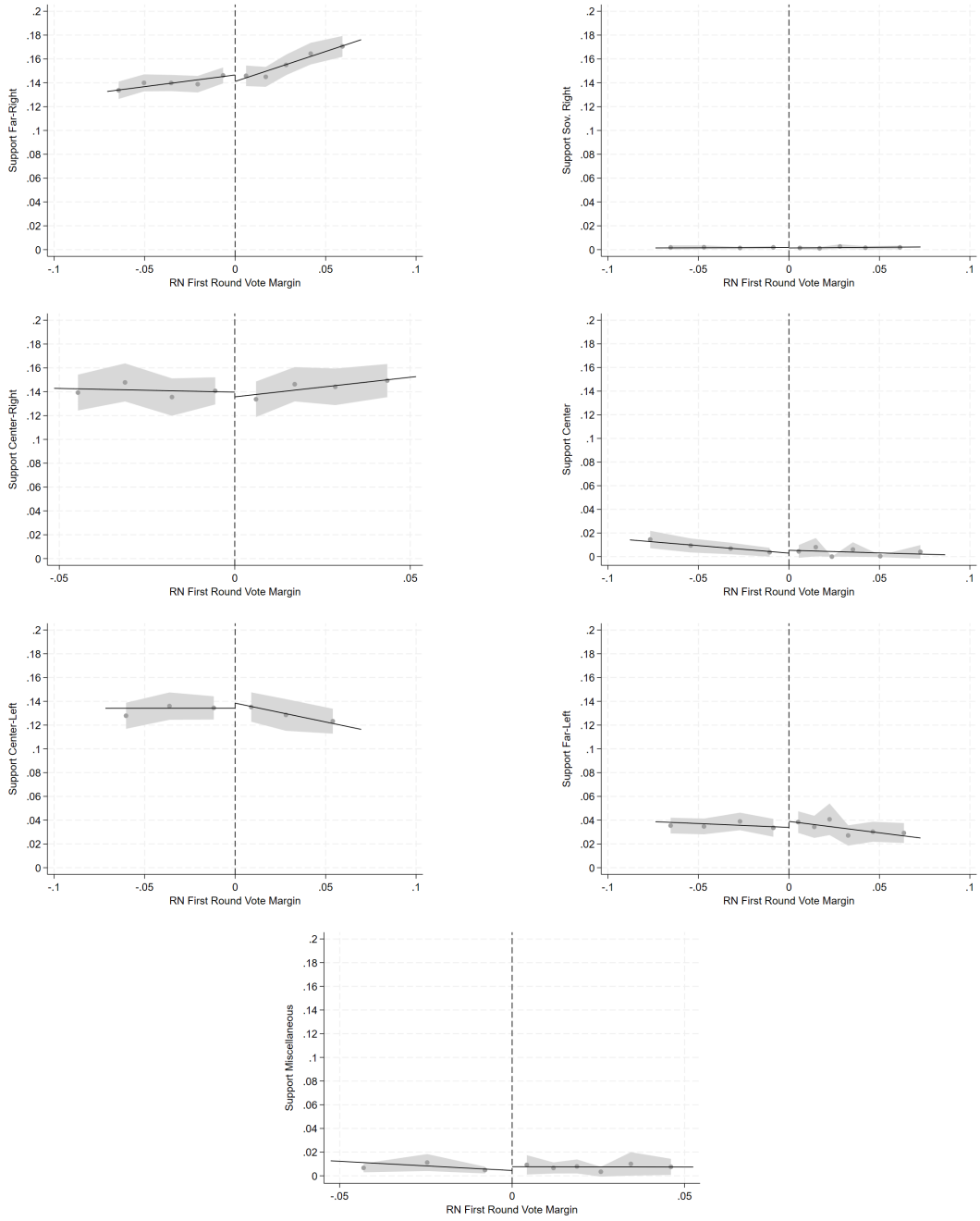
Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.20: No Sorting Based on Pre-determined Characteristics (2011-2017): First Round Support for Eliminated Tickets



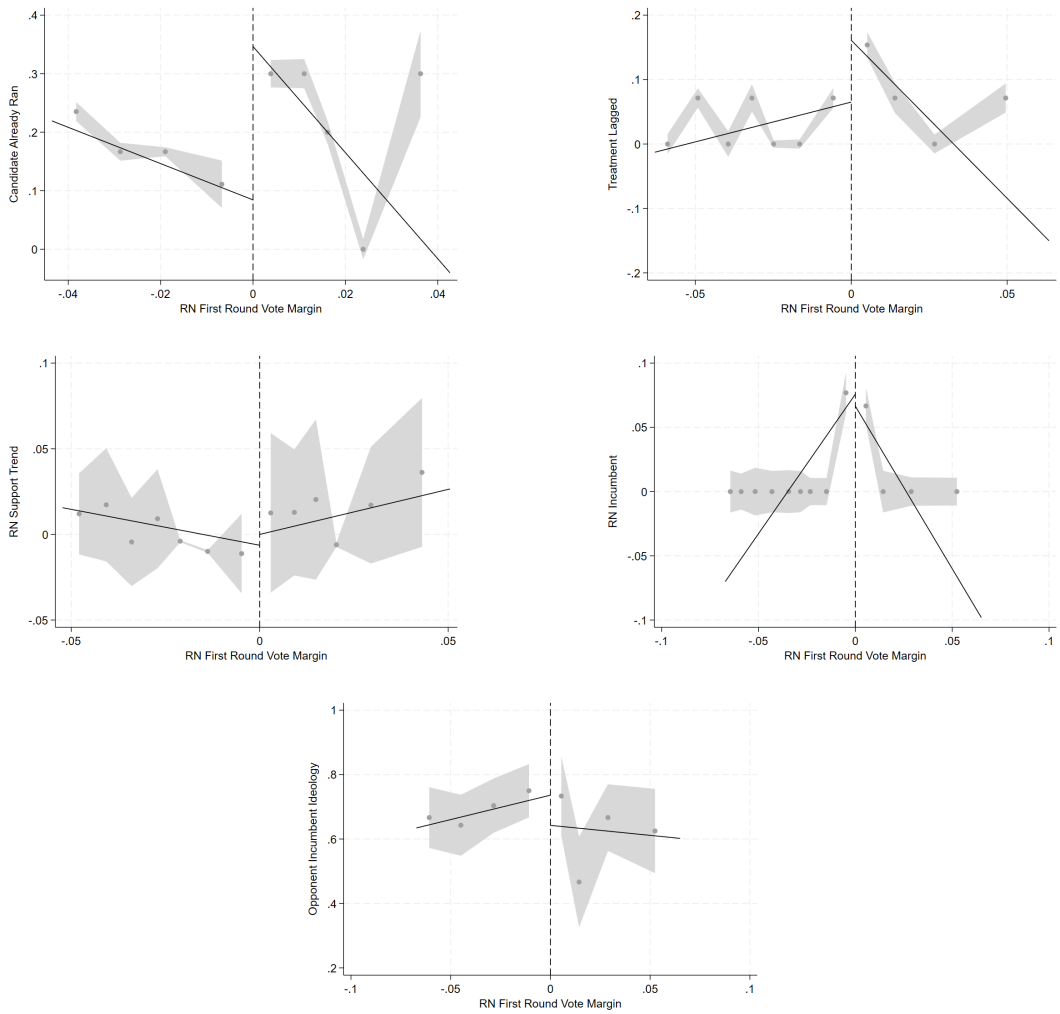
Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.21: No Sorting Based on Pre-determined Characteristics (2011-2017): First Round Support by Ideology



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

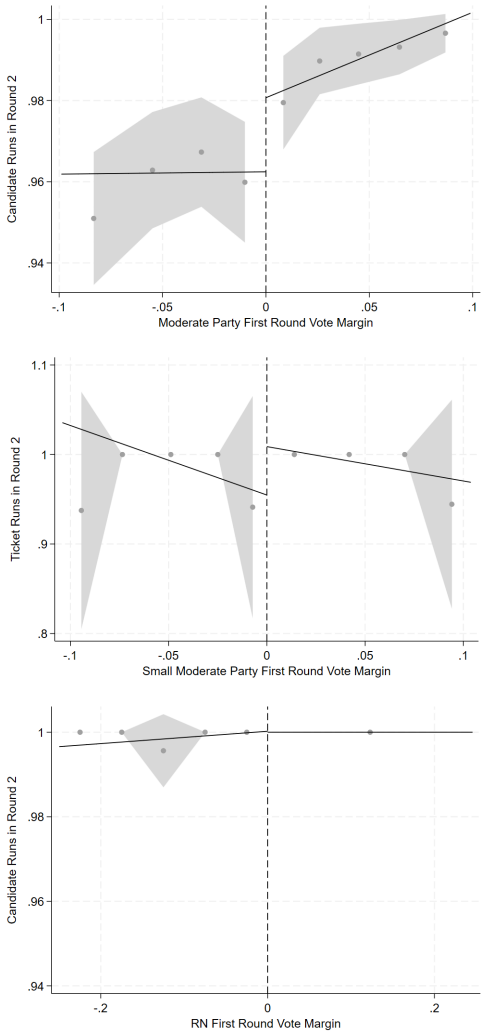
Figure A.22: No Sorting Based on Pre-determined Characteristics (2011-2017): Trends



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

A.6 Lee Bounds

Figure A.23: Selection into Running in the Second Round (2011-2017) Moderate and RN



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced or evenly-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Since tickets from moderate parties which narrowly rank second are less likely to run in the second round relative to those which narrowly rank first (see Figure A.23), the estimated null effect of moderate parties' first round electoral successes on their support change could be biased—if compliers, i.e. tickets which run in the second round if and only if they rank first, have different potential outcomes from always-takers. Following Anagol and Fujiwara (2016) and Granzier, Pons, and Tricaud (2023), I therefore compute upper bounds on the effect of ranking first on moderate parties' support change. As noted by Granzier, Pons, and Tricaud (2023), in the absence of defiers, the effect of ranking first on a party's conditional change in support (ΔS) takes the form (using potential outcome notation with subscript 1 for outcomes if treated and 0 if controls and dropping i, t subscripts for parsimony):

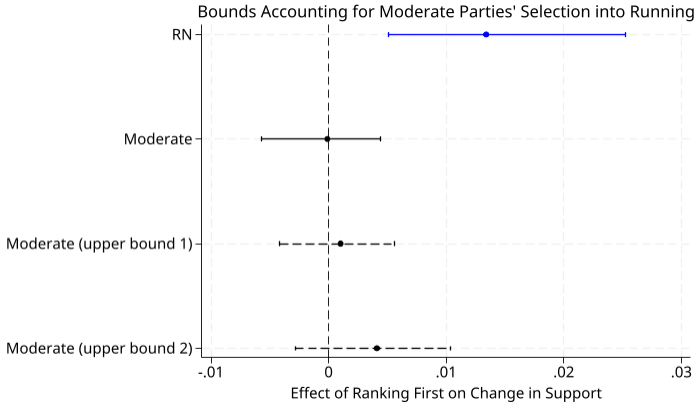
$$\overbrace{E[\Delta S_1 - \Delta S_0 \mid RV = 0, Runs_1 = 1]}^{\textit{Effect on support change } (\Delta S) \textit{ conditional on being always-taker or complier}} = \left(\frac{1}{\underbrace{E[Runs_1 \mid RV = 0]}_{\lim_{RV \downarrow 0} E[Runs|RV]}} \right) \cdot$$

$$\left\{ \underbrace{E[\Delta S_1 R_1 - \Delta S_0 Runs_0 \mid RV = 0]}_{\text{RD effect on } \Delta S} - \underbrace{\Pr(Runs_1 > Runs_0 \mid RV = 0)}_{\text{RD effect on } Runs} \cdot \underbrace{E[\Delta S_0 \mid RV = 0, Runs_1 > Runs_0]}_{\text{Unobservable}} \right\}$$

Upper bounds can be estimated by bounding the unobservable term $E[\Delta Support_0 | RV = 0, Runs_1 > Runs_0]$. I accordingly estimate two upper bounds: a first upper bound in which I assume that, if compliers had ran in the second round despite no having ranked first, they would on average have obtained exactly the same support in the second round as in the first round, and a second upper bound in which I assume that they would have obtained zero votes in the second round. To construct those upper bounds for $E[\Delta Support_1 - \Delta Support_0 | RV = 0, Runs_1 = 1]$, I estimate $\Pr(Runs_1 > Runs_0 | RV = 0)$ and $E[\Delta Support_1 R_1 - \Delta Support_0 Runs_0 | RV = 0]$ using RDDs (using as dependent variables, respectively, a dummy equal to one if the ticket runs in the second round, and the unconditional change in support for the ticket—set to minus its first round support if it did not run in the second round). To obtain an estimate of $\lim_{z \downarrow 0} E[Runs|RV]$, I fit a non-parametric local linear regression with triangular kernel weights to the right of the cut-off and used the predicted value to the left of the cut-off as estimate. For the first upper bound, I replace the unobservable term by zero and, for the second, more conservative upper bound, I replace the unobservable term by an estimate of the average first round support of narrowly control compliers and never takers, similarly obtained after fitting a non-parametric local linear regression with triangular kernel weights

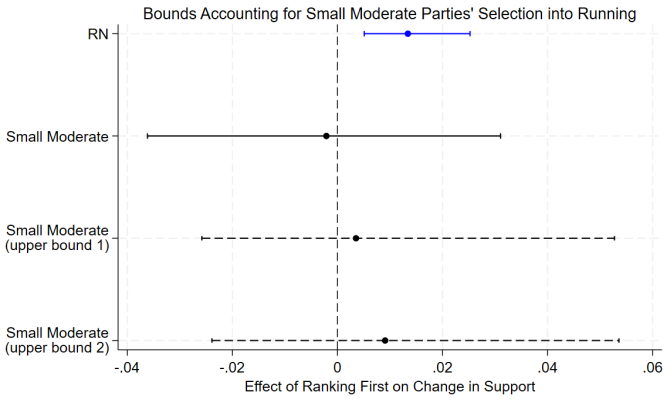
to the left of the cut-off among tickets which do not run in the second round. Finally, I iterate the procedure over 10,000 bootstrap samples for inference.

Figure A.24: Heterogeneity RN vs Moderate with Lee Bounds (2011-2017)



Note: The upper bound 1 assumes that moderate tickets which run in the second round if and only if they rank first in the first round would have obtained the same number of votes in both rounds if they ran despite ranking second in the first round. The upper bound 2 assumes that they would not have obtained any vote in the second round. The confidence intervals are 95% confidence intervals, obtained by applying Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014)'s bias-correction for the main estimates, and obtained from 10,000 bootstrap samples for the upper bounds.

Figure A.25: Heterogeneity RN vs Small Moderate with Lee Bounds (2011-2017)



Note: The upper bound 1 assumes that moderate tickets which run in the second round if and only if they rank first in the first round would have obtained the same number of votes in both rounds if they ran despite ranking second in the first round. The upper bound 2 assumes that they would not have obtained any vote in the second round. The confidence intervals are 95% confidence intervals, obtained by applying Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014)'s bias-correction for the main estimates, and obtained from 10,000 bootstrap samples for the upper bounds.

A.7 Additional Tables

Table A.29: Increase in Rassemblement National Support and Vote Share (First Differences, 2011-2017)

	Change in RN Support	Change in RN Vote Share	Change in Turnout
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0134***	0.0239**	0.0012
Standard error	(0.0051)	(0.0119)	(0.0072)
Robust p-value	0.0032	0.0255	0.7145
Observations left	261	371	274
Observations right	219	276	231
Bandwidth	0.0451	0.0640	0.0484
Mean (left)	0.0288	0.0720	–0.0068

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level.

Table A.30: Regression Used to Predict RN Support Change

	(1) RN Support Change
Elim. Far-Right Support	0.4686***
	(0.0553)
Elim. Sov. Right Support	0.2917***
	(0.0684)
Elim. Center-Right Support	0.3096***
	(0.0078)
Elim. Centrist Support	0.1612***
	(0.0136)
Elim. Center-Left Support	0.0865***
	(0.0068)
Elim. Far-Left Support	0.0470***
	(0.0113)
Elim. Misc. Support	0.1595***
	(0.0146)
Qualified	-0.0008
	(0.0007)
Mean RN Support Change	0.4989***
	(0.0309)
RN Support Trend	0.0307**
	(0.0141)
Missing RN Support Trend	-0.0063***
	(0.0010)
Constant	-0.0015
	(0.0025)
Observations	3746
R^2	0.678
Adjusted R^2	0.677

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Standard errors clustered at the district level. The regression was used to compute the predicted change in RN support used as control in Figure A.26.

Table A.31: Effect on Sentiment of RN's Actions and Attributes in Articles

	Fear	Joy	Neutral	Sadness	Anger	Surprise
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0093**	–0.0680*	0.0635	–0.0202	0.0020	0.0054
Standard error	(0.0045)	(0.0383)	(0.0474)	(0.0282)	(0.0075)	(0.0132)
Robust p-value	0.0363	0.0530	0.1053	0.3968	0.7960	0.9828
Observations left	238	177	204	177	164	133
Observations right	189	165	174	163	151	135
Bandwidth	0.0920	0.0658	0.0749	0.0651	0.0590	0.0486
Election FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean (left)	0.0125	0.1272	0.7369	0.0922	0.0100	0.0222

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. Dependent variables are the average sentiment score of the actions or attributes associated to "RN" in articles published the day of the first round or the following day and mentioning the RN ticket (see subsection A.1 for details). For transparency, I report the phrases with the highest sentiment scores in Table A.13, Table A.14, Table A.15, Table A.16, Table A.17 and Table A.18.

Table A.32: Effect on Campaign Donations (2012-2017, Declared Donations)

	Some Donation	Some Donation	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations over Election Average	Donations over Election Average
MSE-optimal estimate	0.1015*	0.1091**	0.0454*	0.0518**	3.0350*	3.1881*
Standard error	(0.0590)	(0.0591)	(0.0312)	(0.0313)	(1.9405)	(1.9046)
Robust p-value	0.0566	0.0361	0.0918	0.0380	0.0742	0.0548
Observations left	270	241	199	202	265	250
Observations right	223	210	182	186	222	215
Bandwidth	0.0572	0.0523	0.0416	0.0426	0.0565	0.0544
Control for round 1 support	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Control for other funding	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Mean (left)	0.0556	0.0539	0.0240	0.0237	1.1265	1.1941

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The dependent variables' exact definition can be found in subsection A.1. When controlling for the other funding, I include separate controls for the log of the total party funding, the log of the candidate's personal funding, and the log of exceptional in-kind contributions.

Table A.33: Effect on Distribution of Campaign Donations (2012-2017)

	Percentile	$\geq$ 200€	$\geq$ 400€	$\geq$ 600€	$\geq$ 800€	$\geq$ 1000€	$\geq$ 1200€
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0412*	0.0951*	0.0903*	0.1028**	0.1015**	0.1021**	0.0348
Standard error	(0.0272)	(0.0542)	(0.0565)	(0.0549)	(0.0547)	(0.0549)	(0.0356)
Robust p-value	0.0871	0.0531	0.0617	0.0313	0.0337	0.0326	0.2552
Observations left	278	290	244	240	244	240	289
Observations right	229	235	212	210	212	210	235
Bandwidth	0.0585	0.0611	0.0530	0.0520	0.0528	0.0522	0.0609
Control for round 1 support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean (left)	0.5021	0.0379	0.0328	0.0292	0.0246	0.0250	0.0173

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The dependent variables' exact definition can be found in subsection A.1. When controlling for the other funding, I include separate controls for the log of the total party funding, the log of the candidate's personal funding, and the log of exceptional in-kind contributions.

Table A.34: Effect on Distribution of Campaign Donations (2012-2017, Declared)

	Percentile	$\geq$ 200€	$\geq$ 400€	$\geq$ 600€	$\geq$ 800€	$\geq$ 1000€	$\geq$ 1200€
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0418*	0.0953*	0.0948**	0.1029**	0.1015**	0.1021**	0.0348
Standard error	(0.0274)	(0.0544)	(0.0554)	(0.0550)	(0.0547)	(0.0549)	(0.0356)
Robust p-value	0.0861	0.0532	0.0500	0.0313	0.0337	0.0326	0.2552
Observations left	270	288	250	240	244	240	289
Observations right	227	235	215	210	212	210	235
Bandwidth	0.0578	0.0607	0.0544	0.0519	0.0528	0.0522	0.0609
Control for round 1 support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean (left)	0.5024	0.0382	0.0320	0.0292	0.0246	0.0250	0.0173

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The dependent variables' exact definition can be found in subsection A.1. When controlling for the other funding, I include separate controls for the log of the total party funding, the log of the candidate's personal funding, and the log of exceptional in-kind contributions.

Table A.35: No Effect on Campaign Donations to Moderate Parties (2012-2017)

	Some Donation	Some Donation	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations over Election Average	Donations over Election Average
MSE-optimal estimate	–0.0488	–0.0554*	0.3424	0.4663	–0.1526	–0.2177
Standard error	(0.0373)	(0.0344)	(0.8527)	(0.8902)	(0.1671)	(0.1794)
Robust p-value	0.1840	0.0927	0.5166	0.4398	0.2257	0.1282
Observations left	1653	1758	891	896	1472	1332
Observations right	1838	1965	915	919	1618	1447
Bandwidth	0.1121	0.1236	0.0479	0.0484	0.0952	0.0819
Control for round 1 support	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Control for other funding	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Mean (left)	0.7030	0.7042	2.6598	2.6466	0.9444	0.9703

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The dependent variables' exact definition can be found in subsection A.1. When controlling for the other funding, I include separate controls for the log of the total party funding, the log of the candidate's personal funding, and the log of exceptional in-kind contributions.

Table A.36: No Effect on Campaign Donations to Small Moderate Parties (2012-2017)

	Some Donation	Some Donation	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations over Election Average	Donations over Election Average
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0115	–0.0205	–11.9786	11.9391	–0.8058	–1.4622*
Standard error	(0.2393)	(0.2578)	(10.2832)	(17.7516)	(1.0357)	(0.9622)
Robust p-value	0.8862	0.9510	0.3578	0.3268	0.2668	0.0801
Observations left	48	48	47	47	44	32
Observations right	40	40	40	40	37	24
Bandwidth	0.1276	0.1235	0.1199	0.1199	0.1064	0.0725
Control for round 1 support	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Control for other funding	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean (left)	0.7708	0.7708	12.7795	12.7795	1.5096	1.4359

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The dependent variables' exact definition can be found in subsection A.1. When controlling for the other funding, I include separate controls for the log of the total party funding, the log of the candidate's personal funding, and the log of exceptional in-kind contributions.

Table A.37: No Effect on Campaign Donations (2020-2022)

	Some Donation	Some Donation	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations over Election Average	Donations over Election Average
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0154	–0.0541	–0.0986	–0.1572	3.4731	1.0691
Standard error	(0.0773)	(0.0554)	(0.1901)	(0.1675)	(4.6252)	(1.8844)
Robust p-value	0.6011	0.2929	0.8157	0.4288	0.3042	0.5503
Observations left	140	190	171	208	145	166
Observations right	116	142	135	144	118	130
Bandwidth	0.0745	0.1050	0.0943	0.1126	0.0776	0.0897
Control for round 1 support	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Control for other funding	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Mean (left)	0.0857	0.0737	0.1092	0.0914	0.7722	0.6767

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The dependent variables' exact definition can be found in subsection A.1. When controlling for the other funding, I include separate controls for the log of the total party funding, the log of the candidate's personal funding, and the log of exceptional in-kind contributions.

Table A.38: Effect on Campaign Donations in Next Election (2017-2022)

	Some Donation	Some Donation	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations by Round 1 Vote	Donations over Election Average	Donations over Election Average
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0282	–0.0009	0.0045	–0.0234	2.3022	0.7060
Standard error	(0.0539)	(0.0502)	(0.0405)	(0.0332)	(2.1588)	(1.6517)
Robust p-value	0.4714	0.8345	0.9342	0.6572	0.2899	0.5388
Observations left	284	278	200	256	309	274
Observations right	238	234	191	219	245	232
Bandwidth	0.0667	0.0651	0.0484	0.0592	0.0717	0.0642
Control for round 1 support	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Control for other funding	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean (left)	0.0528	0.0540	0.0302	0.0349	1.6073	1.7640

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The dependent variables' exact definition can be found in subsection A.1. When controlling for the other funding, I include separate controls for the log of the total party funding, the log of the candidate's personal funding, and the log of exceptional in-kind contributions.

Table A.39: Random Forest Performance when Predicting Donations Based on Round 2 Votes

Dependent Variable	Group	Accuracy	Balanced Acc.	ROC AUC	PR AUC	Brier	RMSE	MAE	R^2
Some Donations	Control	0.963	0.699	0.991	0.785	0.022			
Some Donations	Treated	0.922	0.645	0.796	0.382	0.070			
Donations by Registered Voter	Control						0.034	0.005	0.881
Donations by Registered Voter	Treated						0.064	0.013	0.258
Donations Percentile	Control						0.095	0.039	0.330
Donations Percentile	Treated						0.125	0.060	0.116
≥200€	Control	0.973	0.649	0.994	0.829	0.016			
≥200€	Treated	0.940	0.665	0.836	0.450	0.062			
≥400€	Control	0.988	0.800	1.000	1.000	0.007			
≥400€	Treated	0.956	0.575	0.900	0.416	0.042			
≥600€	Control	0.989	0.795	1.000	1.000	0.006			
≥600€	Treated	0.953	0.499	0.894	0.319	0.035			
≥800€	Control	0.993	0.833	1.000	1.000	0.005			
≥800€	Treated	0.953	0.499	0.919	0.336	0.034			
≥1000€	Control	0.994	0.853	1.000	1.000	0.004			
≥1000€	Treated	0.953	0.499	0.922	0.338	0.034			
≥1200€	Control	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.003			
≥1200€	Treated	0.964	0.499	0.844	0.189	0.031			

Note: The table reports performance measures of the random forest predictions, separately for treated and control districts. The measures reported are accuracy, balanced accuracy, the area under the receiver operating characteristic curve (ROC AUC), the area under the precision-recall curve (PR AUC), the Brier score, the root mean squared error, the mean absolute error and the R-squared.

Table A.40: Effect on Campaign Donations Under-Predicted by Round 2 Votes (2012-2017)

	Some Donation	Some Donation	Donations by Registered Voter	Donations by Registered Voter	Donations Percentile	Donations Percentile
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0493	0.0532	0.0071	0.0083	0.0338	0.0376
Standard error	(0.0466)	(0.0472)	(0.0060)	(0.0064)	(0.0256)	(0.0263)
Robust p-value	0.2307	0.2158	0.1801	0.1549	0.1347	0.1003
Observations left	290	263	160	195	283	252
Observations right	235	221	150	179	230	214
Bandwidth	0.0611	0.0562	0.0334	0.0404	0.0590	0.0547
Control for other funding	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean (left)	0.0000	0.0013	0.0050	0.0038	0.0046	0.0060

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The dependent variables are the difference between the realized donations measure and its predicted value obtained from training a random forest on second round RN votes in control districts. More details can be found in subsection A.1. When controlling for the other funding, I include separate controls for the log of the total party funding, the log of the candidate's personal funding, and the log of exceptional in-kind contributions.

Table A.41: Effect on Campaign Donations Under-Predicted by Round 2 Votes (2012-2017) cont.

	$\geq$ 200€	$\geq$ 200€	$\geq$ 400€	$\geq$ 400€	$\geq$ 600€	$\geq$ 600€
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0510	0.0559	0.0444	0.0506	0.0642*	0.0710*
Standard error	(0.0459)	(0.0465)	(0.0432)	(0.0436)	(0.0428)	(0.0440)
Robust p-value	0.2150	0.1957	0.2178	0.1680	0.0820	0.0597
Observations left	316	282	289	252	282	241
Observations right	251	229	235	215	229	209
Bandwidth	0.0673	0.0590	0.0610	0.0548	0.0589	0.0523
Control for other funding	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean (left)	–0.0024	0.0002	–0.0012	0.0006	–0.0008	0.0011

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The dependent variables are the difference between the realized donations measure and its predicted value obtained from training a random forest on second round RN votes in control districts. More details can be found in subsection A.1. When controlling for the other funding, I include separate controls for the log of the total party funding, the log of the candidate's personal funding, and the log of exceptional in-kind contributions.

Table A.42: Effect on Campaign Donations Under-Predicted by Round 2 Votes (2012-2017) cont.

	$\geq$ 800€	$\geq$ 800€	$\geq$ 1000€	$\geq$ 1000€	$\geq$ 1200€	$\geq$ 1200€
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0687*	0.0761**	0.0691*	0.0767**	0.0118	0.0142
Standard error	(0.0435)	(0.0446)	(0.0437)	(0.0448)	(0.0321)	(0.0335)
Robust p-value	0.0678	0.0469	0.0669	0.0464	0.7000	0.6641
Observations left	258	233	256	232	370	343
Observations right	219	204	218	204	266	257
Bandwidth	0.0557	0.0497	0.0553	0.0494	0.0793	0.0723
Control for other funding	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean (left)	0.0005	–0.0008	0.0014	0.0001	0.0010	0.0009

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. The dependent variables are the difference between the realized donations measure and its predicted value obtained from training a random forest on second round RN votes in control districts. More details can be found in subsection A.1. When controlling for the other funding, I include separate controls for the log of the total party funding, the log of the candidate's personal funding, and the log of exceptional in-kind contributions.

Table A.43: Increase in Rassemblement National Support and Vote Share (First Differences, 2011-2017 - Only Two Qualified Parties)

	Change in RN Support	Change in RN Vote Share	Change in Turnout
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0103**	0.0216**	–0.0008
Standard error	(0.0048)	(0.0109)	(0.0067)
Robust p-value	0.0144	0.0266	0.9390
Observations left	221	284	226
Observations right	178	211	180
Bandwidth	0.0496	0.0628	0.0511
Sample	Two parties qual.	Two parties qual.	Two parties qual.
Mean (left)	0.0357	0.0936	–0.0176

Note: ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. District × election pairs in which more than two parties qualified for the second round are dropped.

Table A.44: No Effect on Campaign Spending and Non-Donations Funding (2012-2017)

	Total Spending over Election Average	Party Funding over Election Average	Candidate Personal Funding over Election Average	Exceptional In-Kind Support over Election Average	Unspent Funding over Election Average
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0161	–0.7371	0.0095	0.0633	0.0835
Standard error	(0.1230)	(0.6727)	(0.1316)	(0.2114)	(0.7922)
Robust p-value	0.8767	0.2142	0.8485	0.5606	0.7542
Observations left	299	199	293	236	410
Observations right	241	180	236	206	283
Bandwidth	0.0633	0.0453	0.0619	0.0503	0.0909
Control for round 1 support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean (left)	0.9627	0.0021	0.9701	0.9930	1.2297

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level.

Table A.45: Effect Cannot Be Explained By Qualified Tickets' Decision to Drop-Out (2011-2017)

	#Drop-Out Tickets	Aggregate Round 1 Support of Drop-Out Tickets	Change in RN Support
MSE-optimal estimate	0.0358	0.0057	0.0134***
Standard error	(0.0414)	(0.0068)	(0.0051)
Robust p-value	0.3167	0.3336	0.0033
Observations left	437	502	260
Observations right	293	313	219
Bandwidth	0.0740	0.0868	0.0449
Controls	No	No	Yes
Mean (left)	0.0412	0.0064	0.0288

Note: $^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$. Estimation relies on local linear regressions with triangular kernel weights. Standard errors and p-values are bias-corrected following Calonico, Cattaneo, and Titiunik (2014) and clustered at the district level. In column 3, I control for the aggregate first round support of tickets which do not run in the second round despite qualifying.

A.8 Additional Figures

Figure A.26: Increase in RN Support: Robustness to Alternative Specifications

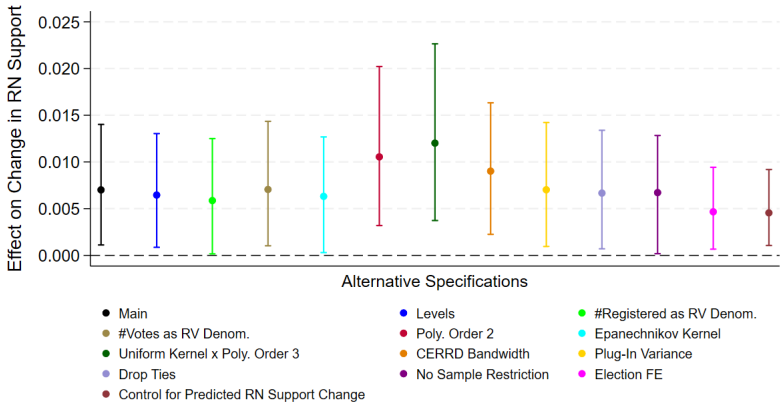
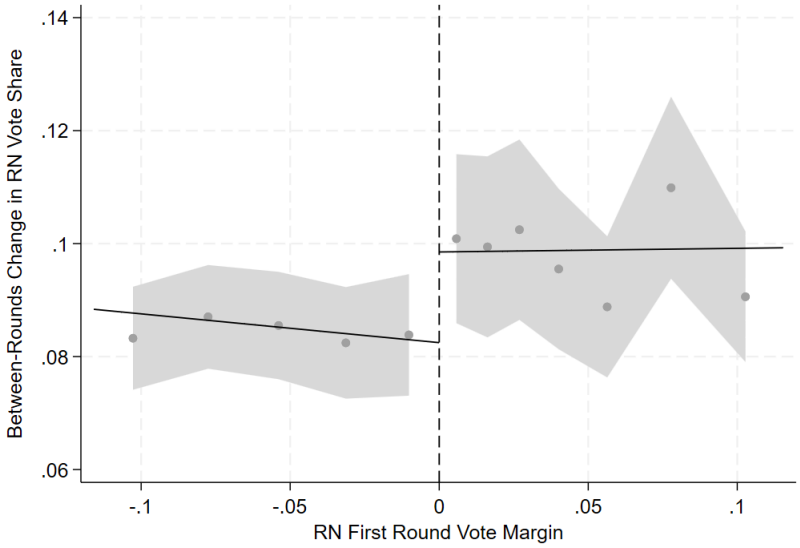
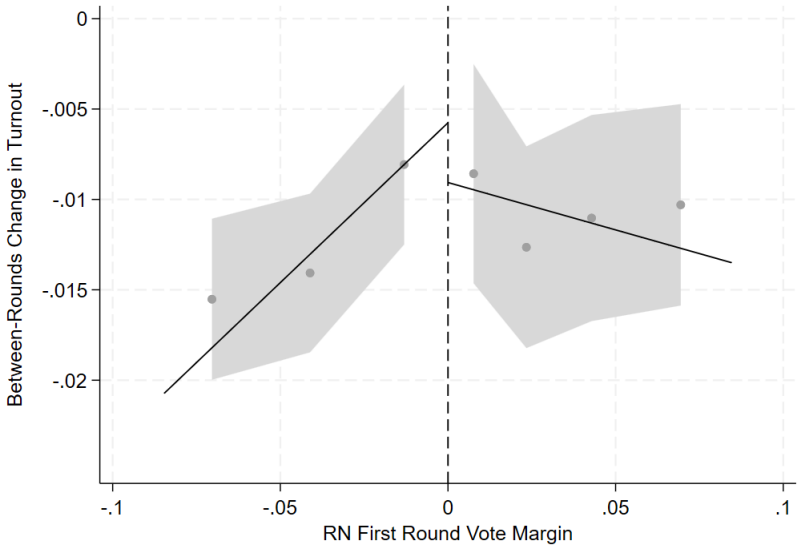


Figure A.27: Jump in Between-Rounds Change in RN Vote Share



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.28: No Jump in Between-Rounds Change in Turnout



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.29: No Increase in Turnout: Robustness to Alternative Specifications

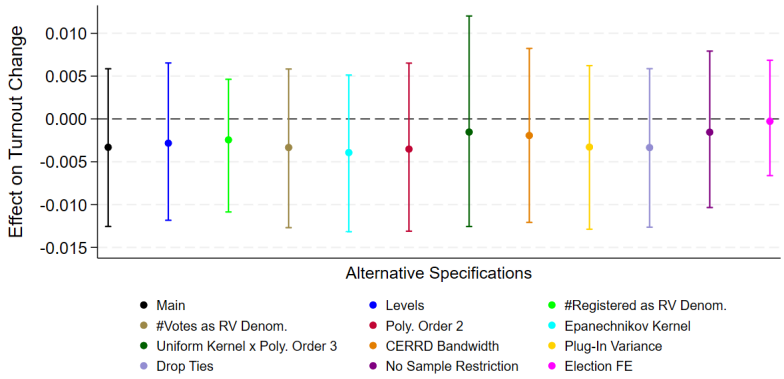
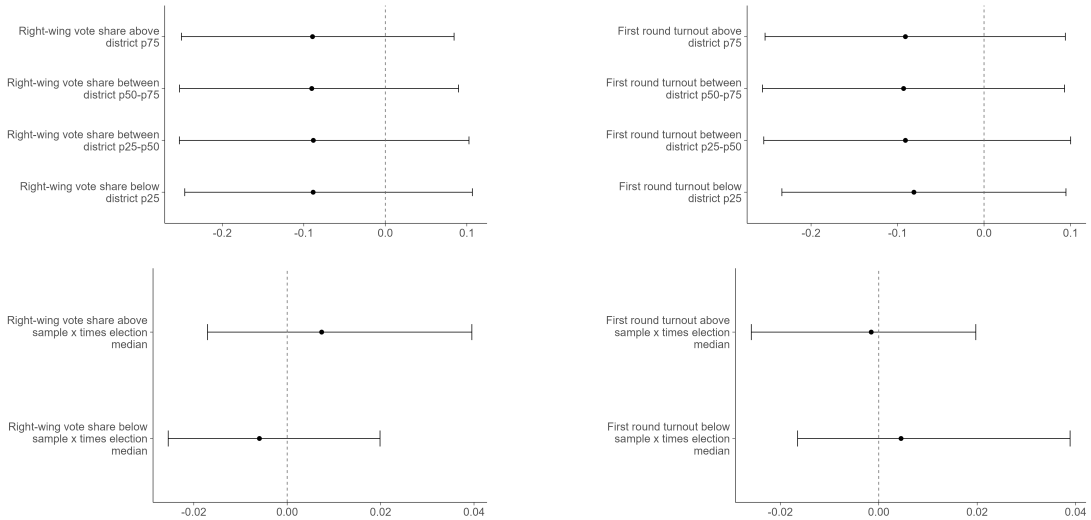


Figure A.30: Change in Turnout: No District or Polling Station Heterogeneity



Note: Heterogeneous treatment effect estimates and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals obtained following Calonico, Cattaneo, Farrell, et al. (2025).

Figure A.31: Effect on RN Support: Robustness to Controlling Flexibly for Turnout Change (2011-2017)

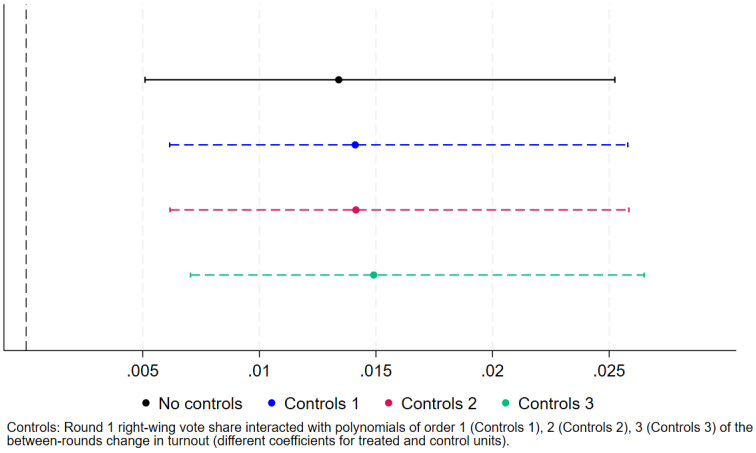
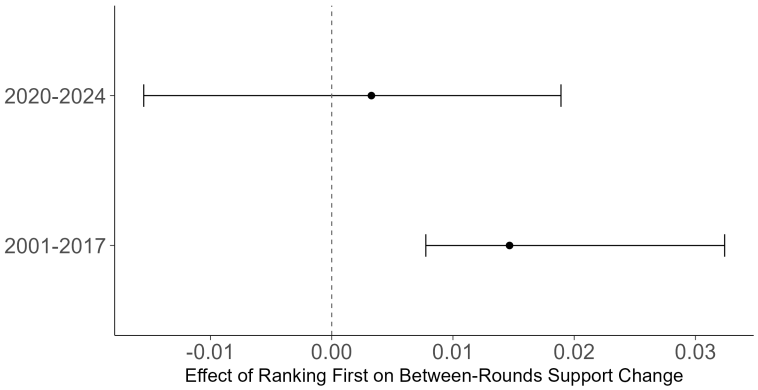
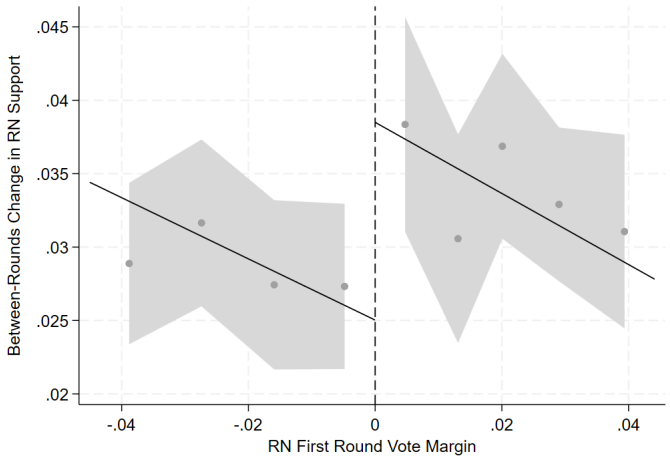


Figure A.32: Heterogeneous Effects on RN Support by Period (2001-2010 Included)



Note: Heterogeneous treatment effect estimates and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals obtained following Calonico, Cattaneo, Farrell, et al. (2025).

Figure A.33: RN: Increase in Support (2011–2017)



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.34: Increase in RN Support (2011–2017): Robustness to Alternative Specifications

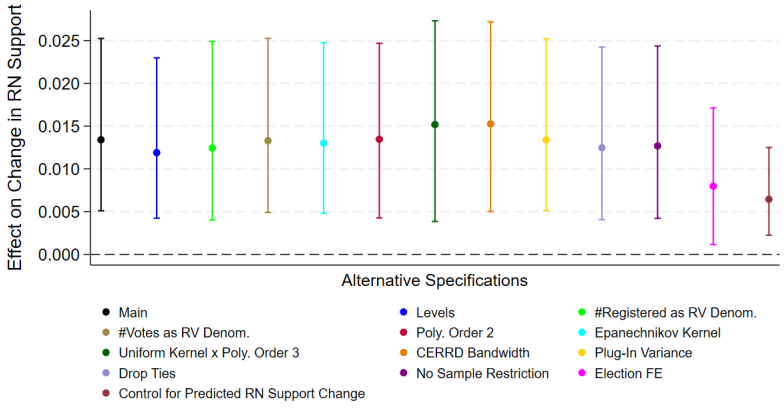
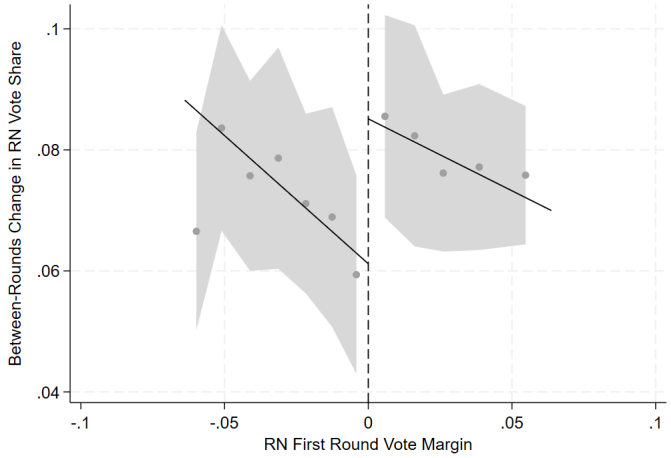
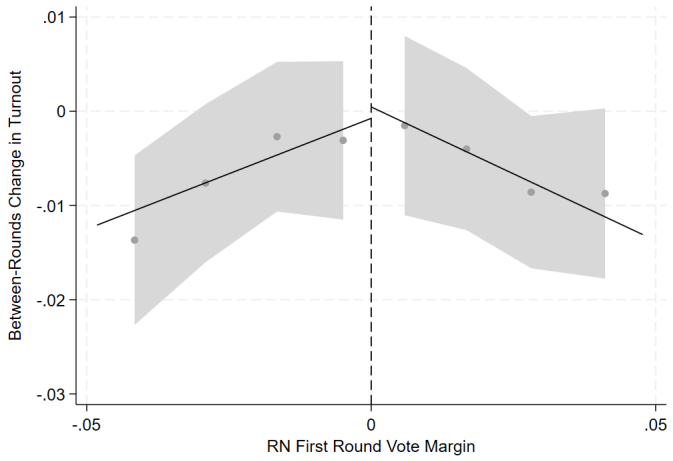


Figure A.35: Jump in Between-Rounds Change in RN Vote Share (2011-2017)



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.36: No Jump in Between-Rounds Change in Turnout (2011-2017)



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.37: No Increase in Turnout (2011-2017): Robustness to Alternative Specifications

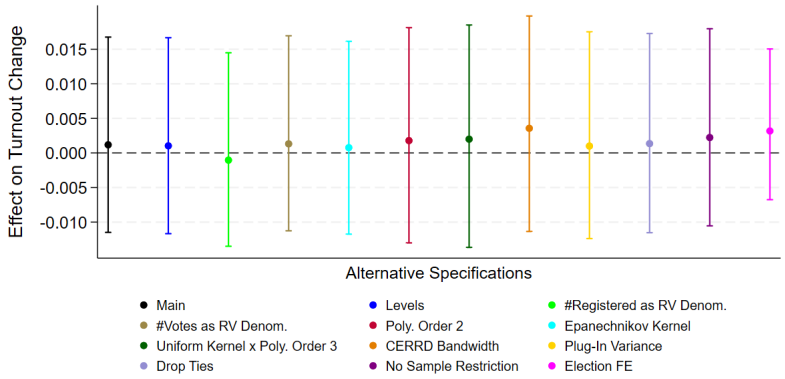
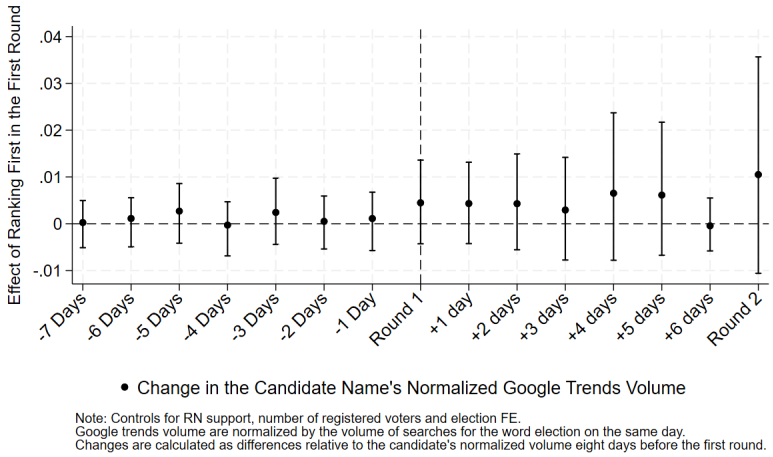
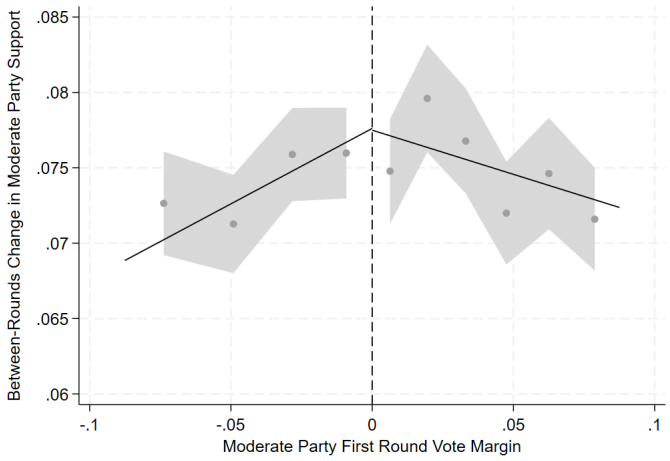


Figure A.38: Estimated Effects on Google Trends Volume of Candidates' Names (2011-2017)



Note: Controls for RN support, number of registered voters and election FE.
Google trends volume are normalized by the volume of searches for the word election on the same day.
Changes are calculated as differences relative to the candidate's normalized volume eight days before the first round.

Figure A.39: Moderate Parties: No Effect on Support (2011-2017)



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.40: Moderate Parties: No Effect on Support (2011-2017): Robustness to Alternative Specifications

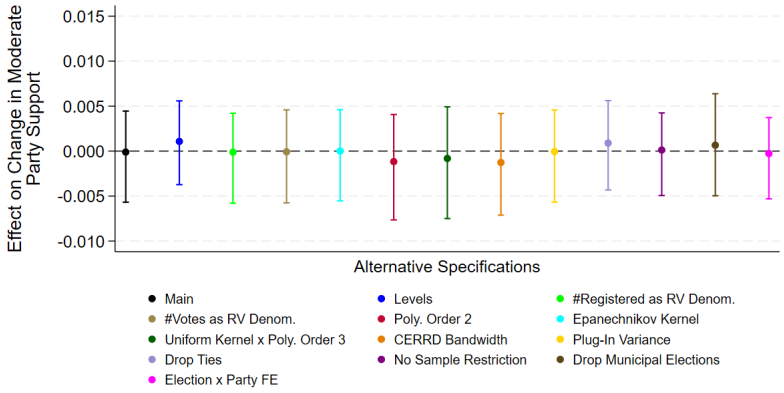
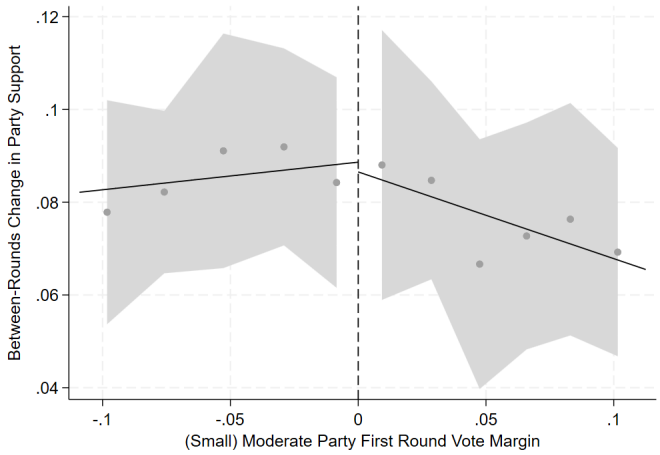


Figure A.41: Small Moderate Parties: No Effect on Support (2011-2017)



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.42: Small Moderate Parties: No Effect on Support (2011-2017): Robustness to Alternative Specifications

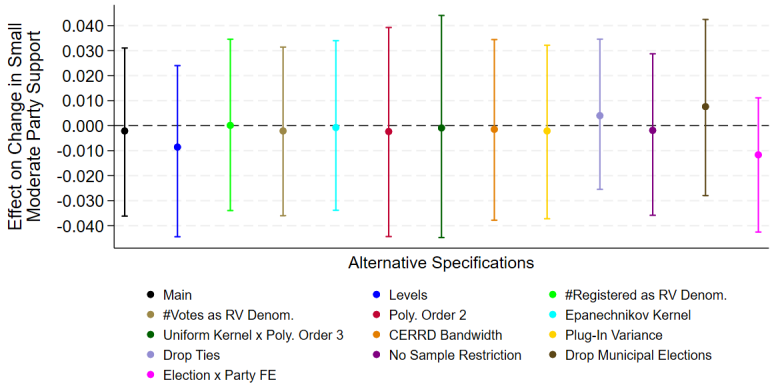
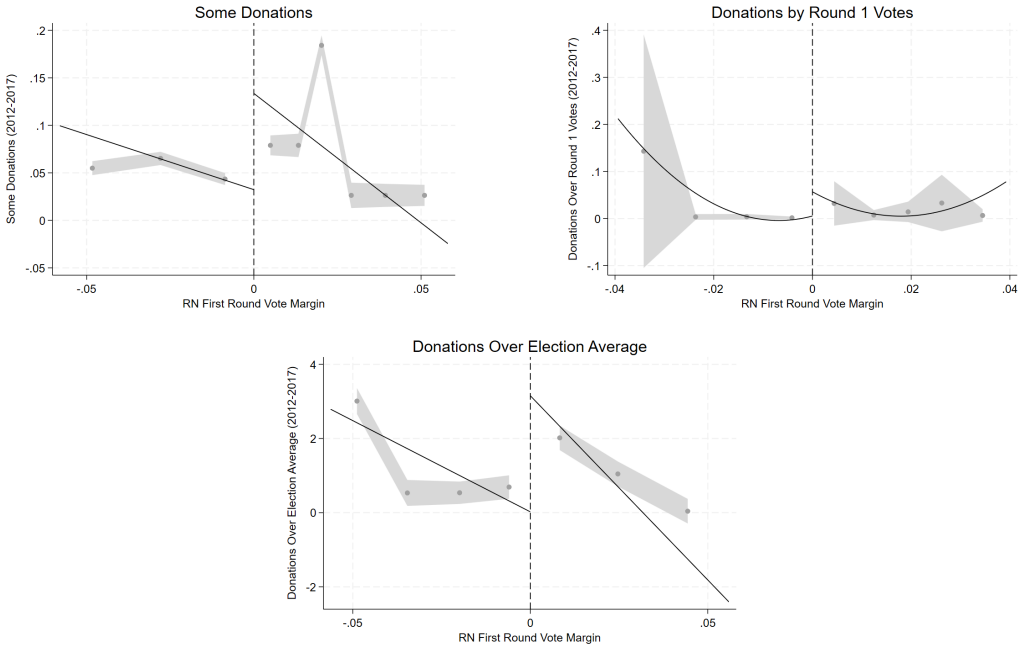
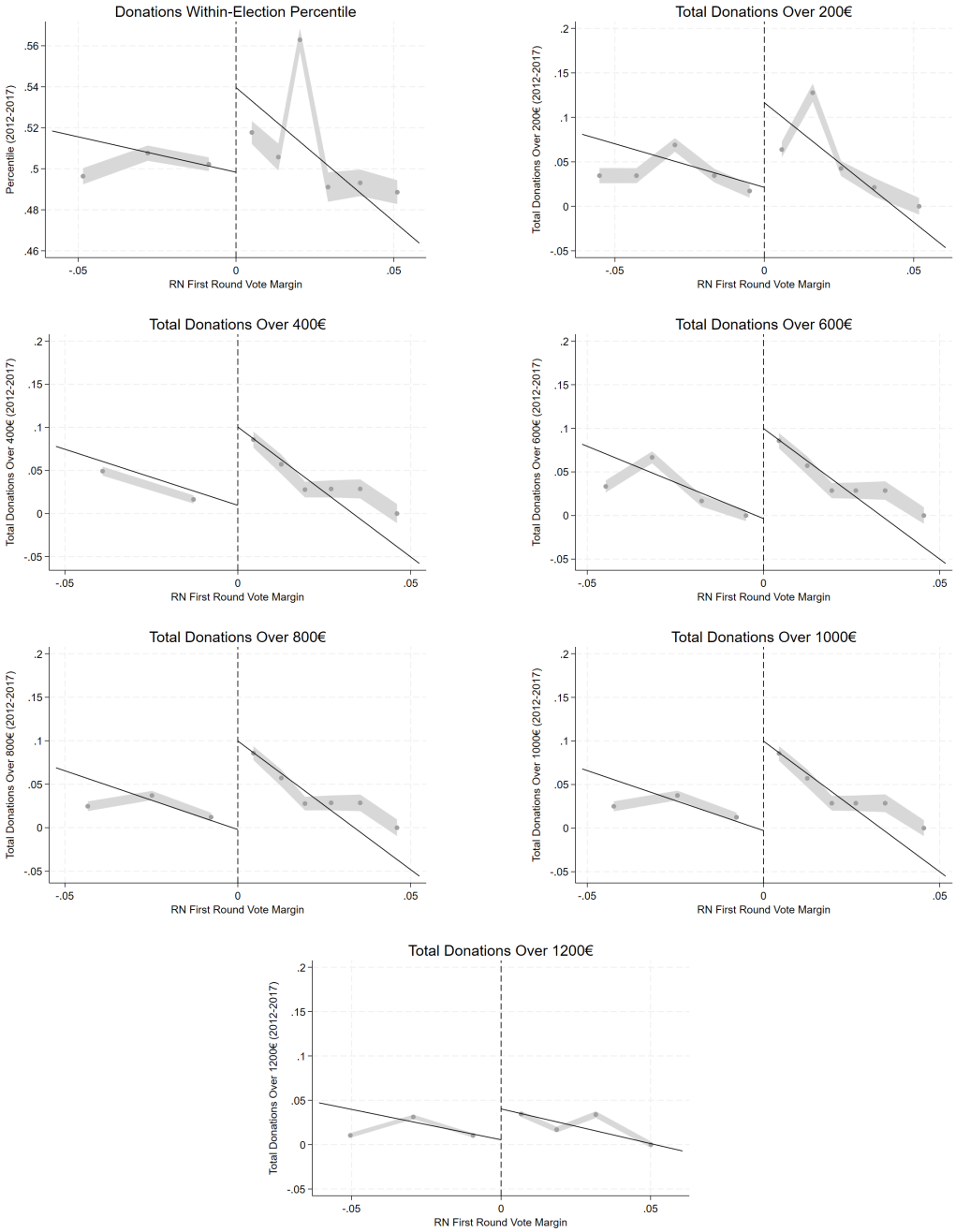


Figure A.43: Increase in Donations to RN Tickets (2012-2017)



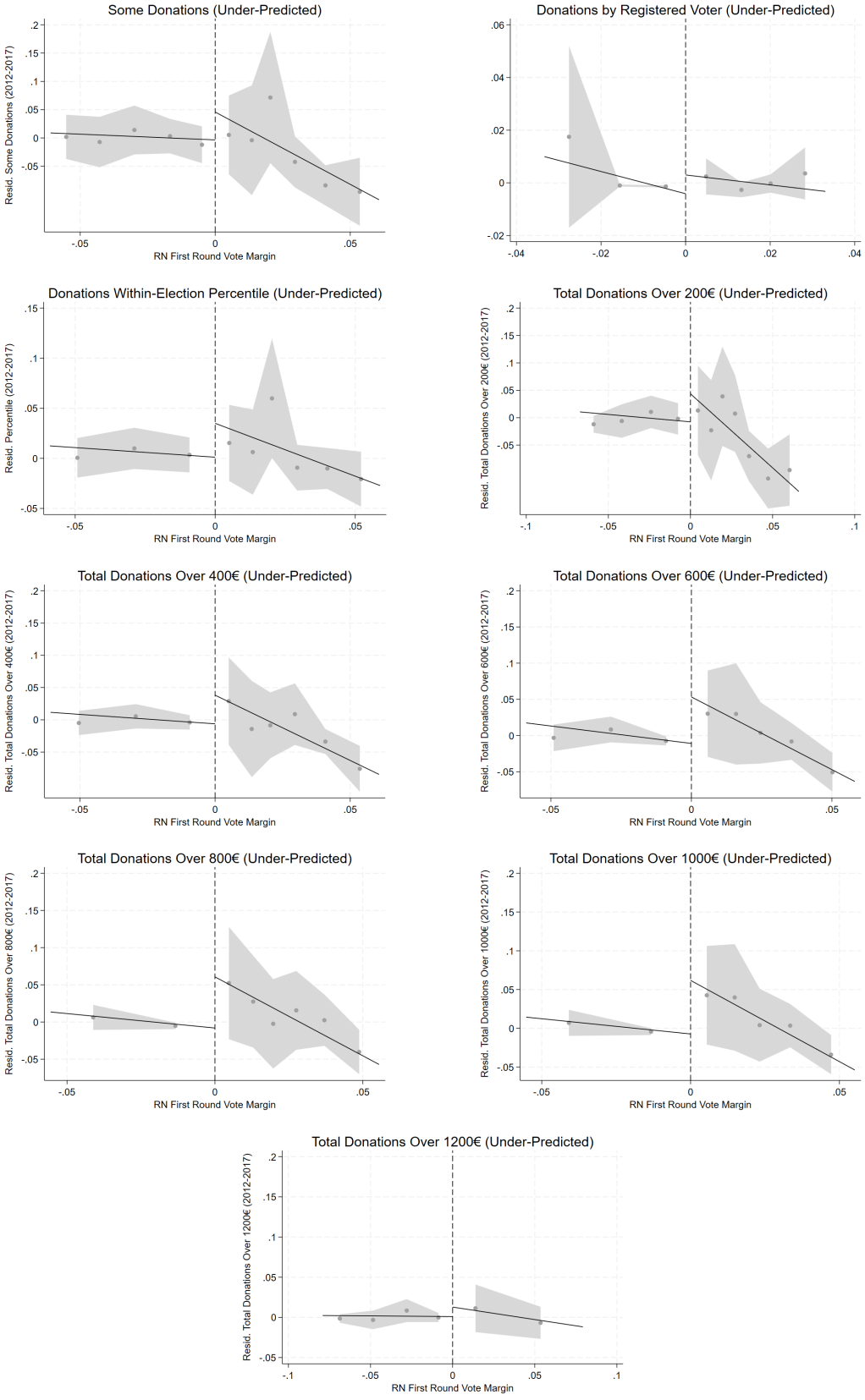
Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.44: Increase in Donations to RN Tickets (2012-2017) cont.



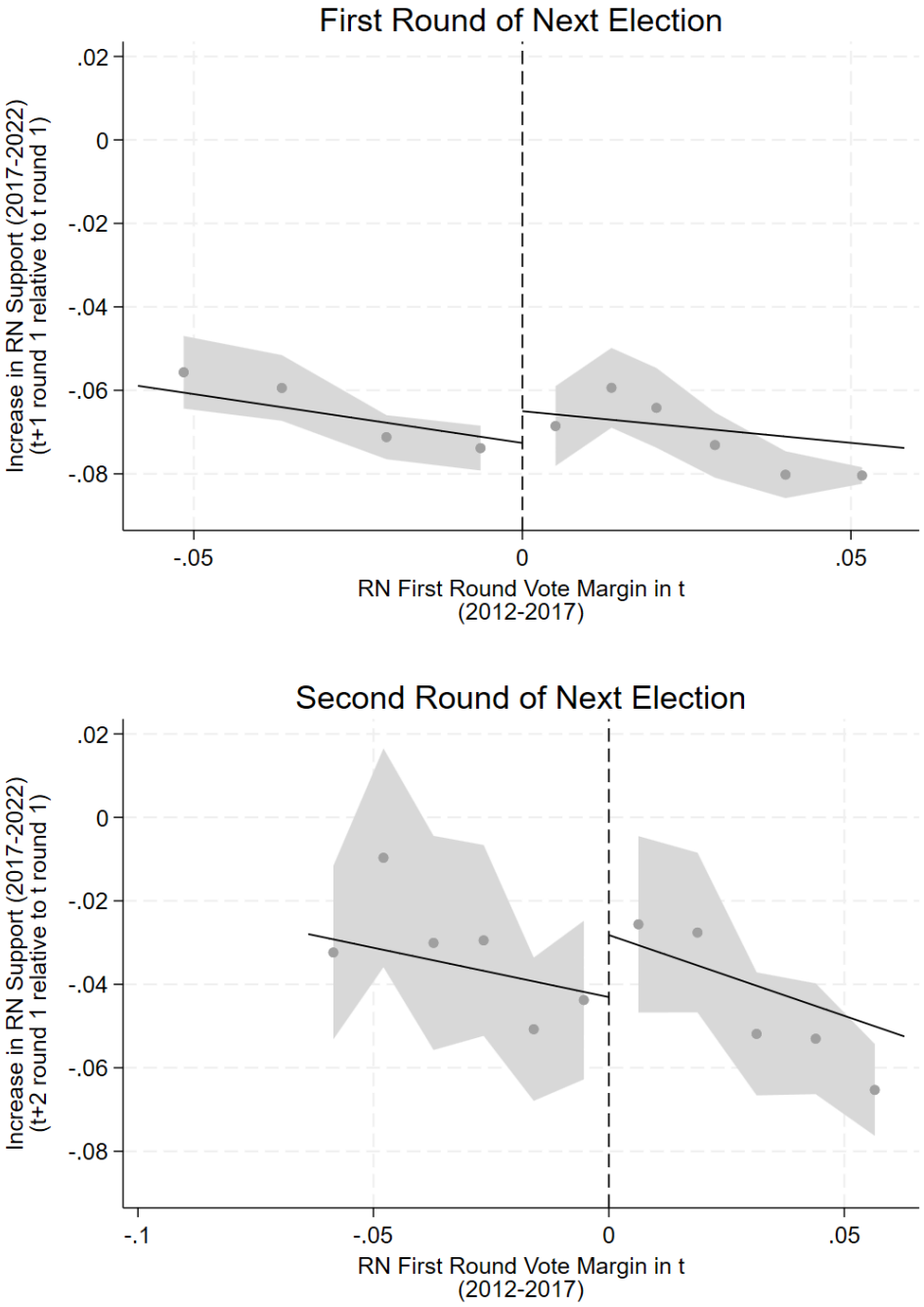
Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.45: Increase in Donations to RN Tickets Under-Predicted by Round 2 RN Votes (2012-2017)



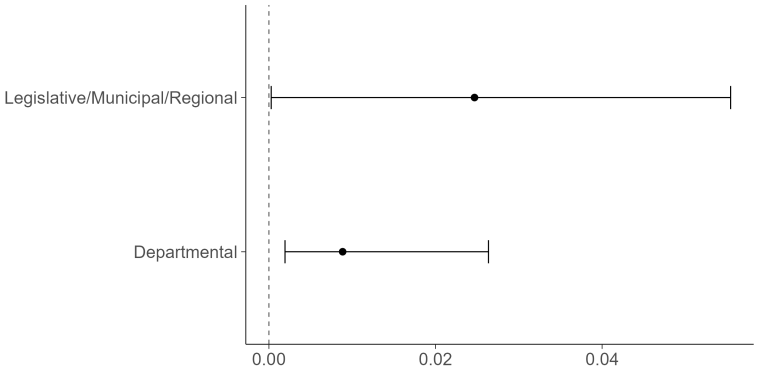
Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.46: Effect on RN Support in Next Election (Baseline: 2012-2017)



Note: Bins selected using an IMSE-optimal quantile-spaced method with polynomial regression. Shaded areas correspond to 95% confidence intervals for the dependent variable mean in each bin.

Figure A.47: Heterogeneous Effects on RN Support by Election Type (2011-2017)



Note: Heterogeneous treatment effect estimates and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals obtained following Calonico, Cattaneo, Farrell, et al. (2025). Legislative, regional and municipal elections are aggregated due to the small number of district × election pairs.

A.9 Further Institutional Context

The sample consists of legislative and local (municipal, departmental, regional) elections. I drop municipal elections from municipalities with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants (3,500 before 2013) because those elections follow split-ticket voting—allowing voters to vote for candidates of multiple lists—and the data does not contain party labels nor report results for non-elected candidates. In each of these elections, tickets compete at the district level and the candidate or list with the more votes at the end of the second round (or, of the first round if no second round is held). Competition is between candidates in legislative elections and pre-2015 departmental elections. From 2015 onward, candidates to departmental elections run in pairs of two candidates for parity reasons. In municipal and regional elections, candidates run in lists. In legislative and departmental elections, a second round occurs if the first-ranked candidate (or candidate pair) did not obtain an absolute majority of valid votes or obtained fewer than 25% of registered voters' votes. In regional and municipal elections, a second round occurs if the first-ranked list did not obtain an absolute majority of valid votes. If a second round occurs, tickets that ranked first or second in the first round necessarily qualify for the second round. In addition, in legislative and departmental elections, candidates (or candidate pairs) who obtained votes from at least 12.5% of registered voters (10% before 2010) qualify for the second round. In regional and municipal elections, lists that obtained at least 10% of expressed votes (7% for regional elections in Corsica) also qualify for the second round. In departmental and legislative elections, a single candidate (or a candidate pair in the case of departmental elections from 2015 onward) is elected by district while, in municipal and regional elections, a council possibly including members of different lists is elected for each district.

A.10 Ticket Classification

The Ministry of the Interior provides a 'nuance' for each ticket, along the election results. This nuance may be a party or movement name (in which case, I report the name in French) or, when tickets run as part of a cross-party alliance or do not represent a specific party, a broader ideological label (e.g. 'far-right', 'centrist union', etc). When defining 'moderate tickets', I exclude RN tickets, tickets labeled by the Ministry of the Interior as 'far-right', as well as tickets from the 'Parti Communiste' and from the 'Parti de Gauche' (also called 'Front de Gauche' (FG) and 'France Insoumise' (FI) due to name changes over time). Indeed, for both the 'Parti Communiste' and the 'Parti de Gauche', when ENEF respondents are asked to place the party on a 0-10 far-left to far-right scale, the mode is systematically the most extreme point (0), picked by over 40% of respondents. The number of first- and second-ranked tickets of each nuance can be found in Table A.46, and Table A.47. In Table A.48, I report the number of first- and second-ranked moderate tickets classified as 'small', i.e. with an average support below 10 percentage points between 2007 and 2010.

Table A.46: First and Second-Ranked Tickets Classified As Non-Moderate (2011-2017)

Ticket Nuance	#Second	#Close Second (5p.p.)	#Close Second (2p.p.)	#First	#Close First (5p.p.)	#Close First (2p.p.)
Front National (RN)	1179	292	120	430	235	107
Parti Communiste	71	22	7	125	31	14
Parti de Gauche/LFI/FG	132	26	14	51	20	12
Far-right	6	3	1	3	2	1

Table A.47: First and Second-Ranked Tickets Classified As Moderate (2011-2017)

Ticket Nuance	#Second	#Close Second (5p.p.)	#Close Second (2p.p.)	#First	#Close First (5p.p.)	#Close First (2p.p.)
Parti Socialiste	958	332	148	1353	347	155
Miscellaneous right	850	275	99	916	272	92
Les Républicains/UMP	921	249	103	873	256	112
Right-wing union	458	193	84	669	215	96
Miscellaneous left	595	176	75	562	183	78
En Marche	57	28	17	397	50	14
Left-wing union	309	115	55	357	115	53
Miscellaneous	355	95	33	271	104	42
MoDem	41	14	11	76	7	1
UDI	93	20	5	74	23	16
Majorité - Nouveau Centre	80	18	5	62	16	4
Parti Radical de Gauche	52	13	5	52	16	7
Majorité	41	9	5	50	10	4
EELV	109	19	8	32	16	7
Centrist union	17	4	3	11	2	1
Regionalists	23	3	1	10	3	2
Parti Radical	11	3	1	5	4	2
Ecologists	4	1	1	2	1	0
Center	5	0	0	1	0	0
Debout La France	1	0	0	1	0	0

Table A.48: First and Second-Ranked Small Moderate Tickets (2011-2017, Average 2007-2010 Support<10p.p.)

Ticket Nuance	#Second	#Close Second (5p.p.)	#Close Second (2p.p.)	#First	#Close First (5p.p.)	#Close First (2p.p.)
MoDem	41	14	11	76	7	1
EELV	109	19	8	32	16	7
Regionalists	23	3	1	10	3	2
Parti Radical	11	3	1	5	4	2
Ecologists	4	1	1	2	1	0
Debout La France	1	0	0	1	0	0

Table A.49: Tickets Classified As Far-Right (Sample: Districts with RN First or Second, 2001-2024)

Ticket Nuance	#Tickets	Average Round 1 Support
Front National (RN)	2,896	14%
Reconquête	377	1%
Far-right	144	1%
Mouvement National Républicain	42	1%
Mouvement Pour la France	13	0%
Miscellaneous far-right	9	0%

Table A.50: Tickets Classified As Sovereignist Right (Sample: Districts with RN First or Second, 2001-2024)

Ticket Nuance	#Tickets	Average Round 1 Support
Sovereignist right	277	1%
Debout La France	186	1%
Rassemblement Pour la France	10	2%

Table A.51: Tickets Classified As Center-Right (Sample: Districts with RN First or Second, 2001-2024)

Ticket Nuance	#Tickets	Average Round 1 Support
Miscellaneous right	1,272	7%
Les Républicains/UMP/RPR	1,228	10%
Right-wing union	721	14%
UDI	153	8%
Center-right union	116	10%
MoDem	91	4%
Majorité - Nouveau Centre	78	5%
Chasse, Pêche, Nature et Traditions	18	1%
Majorité Présidentielle	16	7%
Horizons	12	18%
Right	6	11%
Parti Radical	4	0%
Démocratie Libérale	2	7%

Table A.52: Tickets Classified As Centrist (Sample: Districts with RN First or Second, 2001-2024)

Ticket Nuance	#Tickets	Average Round 1 Support
Ensemble	449	13%
Miscellaneous centrists	209	5%
En Marche	147	11%
Centrist union	59	5%
Union des Démocrates Français	40	7%
Center	21	1%

Table A.53: Tickets Classified As Center-Left (Sample: Districts with RN First or Second, 2001-2024)

Ticket Nuance	#Tickets	Average Round 1 Support
Parti Socialiste	1,124	12%
Miscellaneous left	1,042	6%
Left-wing union	802	13%
EELV	596	4%
NUPES	202	10%
Left and ecologists union	171	7%
Parti Radical de Gauche	111	5%
Pôle Républicain	21	2%
Center-left union	12	6%
Left	6	23%
Mouvement Des Citoyens	2	3%

Table A.54: Tickets Classified As Far-Left (Sample: Districts with RN First or Second, 2001-2024)

Ticket Nuance	#Tickets	Average Round 1 Support
Far-left	865	1%
Parti Communiste	794	5%
Parti de Gauche/LFI/FG	725	5%
Miscellaneous far-left	247	0%
Lutte Ouvrière	31	1%
Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire	19	1%

Table A.55: Tickets Classified As Miscellaneous (Sample: Districts with RN First or Second, 2001-2024)

Ticket Nuance	#Tickets	Average Round 1 Support
Miscellaneous	927	2%
Ecologists	885	1%
Regionalists	189	2%
Gilets Jaunes	3	1%

A.11 Anecdotal and Survey-Based Evidence

Anti-RN Discourses

> **Interviewer:** *'[Is] the RN Pétain's heir?'* **Elisabeth Borne:** *'Yes, also, heir to Pétain, absolutely. [...] I do not believe at all in the normalization of the RN. I think its ideas should not be trivialized; its ideas are still the same. Now, of course, the RN dresses them up, but I still believe it is a dangerous ideology.'*
>
> **Élisabeth Borne (French PM) on Radio J, 28 May 2023**

RN Support, a Taboo Topic

> *On the small market square of Fort-Mardyck [...] admitting that one votes for the [RN] or shares its ideas remains taboo: everyone we spoke with wished to remain anonymous. In this industrial region, many people come from the left. Like this 75-year-old retiree: 'I want change. We're fed up with everything.' Or this couple of Socialist voters—aged 63 and 65—who looked disapprovingly at the [RN] leafleting on their market. 'Oh no, not the [RN]!' exclaims the husband when he sees [the RN candidate] arriving, joined that Thursday, March 10, by [RN] candidates from the neighboring canton. The conversation begins. 'I'm racist,' the woman asserts. 'They look frank, but they aren't'—meaning North Africans. A little farther on, two elderly women stop [the RN candidate]. 'Of course we'll vote [RN]! We're sick of the radishes,' says one of them, before clarifying: 'Radishes are Arabs.' She continues: 'We voted for the left, we voted for [Sarkozy]. We want change.'*
>
> **La Voix du Nord, 2011**

> *We come across Christiane, of Italian origin, a janitor returning to her building. She has lived in the neighborhood for over thirty years and asks us to change her first name because she's afraid someone might 'set fire to her mailbox.' At first, she says she cast a blank ballot, then admits that she slipped in a vote for the [RN].*
>
> **Rue89, 2014**

> *'I'm sure that among my retired friends, many of them chose the RN', laments Célia, a 76-year-old retiree who herself voted for the Socialist–Radical Left list. 'But to save face, they won't admit it, because for our generation, voting for the RN is still taboo.'*

La Dépêche du Midi, 2015

Last night, [RN] activists gathered around Lydia Le Barz carried out their final leaflet drop and poster campaign in Lanester—a night-time operation. 'I don't go handing out flyers in the housing projects—it's risky!' 'When you're at 20% [of votes], you can go anywhere.' [...] 'We prefer doing it in the evening.' [...] 'It's also for the sake of discretion,' adds another activist. [...] Some [activists] are former members of the Communist Party or the Socialist Party. Politically, some have come a long way. 'When I was 20, I had my Communist Party card and sold L'Humanité,' one activist explains. Another joined only a year ago: 'Before that, I was a Socialist.' [...] 'What I like best is putting up posters at night... It makes me feel like a Resistance fighter,' confides one [RN] activist. 'But I don't talk too much about what I think,' she adds. 'I think of my children. It's still really taboo to vote for the RN. We're still demonized.'

Le Télégramme, 2015

In this traditionally Socialist region, it was already a breakthrough for the [RN]. It has now turned into a landslide. Yesterday, the day after the first round of the regional elections, the people of Lumbres were not very talkative about the results. 'We haven't talked about it,' say the men taking down the stalls from the Saint-Nicolas market. The collapse of the left to the benefit of the [RN]—a taboo subject? In this café, no one utters a word. And with good reason: 'Here, we don't talk about politics,' warns the owner. In another café, the same observation holds true—politics is not welcome at the counter. [...] Out on the street, a few people are going about their business on the Grand-Place. Like this 49-year-old woman from Lumbres, who isn't surprised by the results: 'Things had to change. They promise us the moon, and we never get anything.' This is the first year she's voted for Marine Le Pen. Another resident, aged 40, is more surprised: 'I was born in Lumbres, I'm a shopkeeper here, and I have no idea where she got her votes from. I didn't see it coming to that extent.'

La Voix du Nord, 2015

At the bakery in the morning, no one lingered on the previous day's vote. Yet Brienon, with its 47.83% vote for the [RN], stands out—as does the whole district. 'A taboo topic,' says the shopkeeper. Here, 'people come in, they buy their bread. They don't

make speeches.' Just across the street, the pharmacist goes further: 'They don't talk about it, but they've had enough.' [...] A man adds that here, 'many Socialists have switched to the [RN].' It's hard to say for sure, but it's worth noting that in 2010 and 2004, the people of Brienon had mostly voted for [a socialist].

L'Yonne républicaine, 2015

Taboo Erosion

'And then I think I'm benefiting from the Marine effect, which, in a way, has de-demonized the FN.'

Jean-Paul Le Tourneur (RN candidate) in Le Parisien, 21 Mar. 2011

Louis Aliot, vice-president of the FN, stated today, after his party's breakthrough in the first round of the local elections, that 'the image of little devils that we had is starting to change and that as the demonization fades, the Front National progresses.'

Le Figaro, 21 Mar. 2011

'It's historic—for the first time, the Front National is advancing to the second round in three cantons, thanks to head-to-head runoffs rather than three-way races. [. . .] It's also the Marine effect. Our party has been de-demonized.'

Jean-Luc Manoury (RN candidate) in L'Est Républicain, 21 Mar. 2011

'Here, voting for the [RN] is no longer taboo,' explains Nathalie, the owner of Le Fontenoy bar, who has been living in Avignon for eight years [...] 'Over the past eight years, there's been a change,' she continues. 'People have become more uninhibited. They talk about their [RN] vote more openly and calmly.'

Le Monde, 2014

'Are you planning to vote on Sunday?' A striking observation: the answers we collected exceeded our expectations. These days, it's no longer taboo to talk about one's voting intentions. Along a market aisle, between a greengrocer's stall and a fabric vendor's stand, voters from the Arras area speak quite freely. And it's either under the cover of anonymity—or not—that some explain they support the [RN].

La Voix du Nord, 2015

Above all, exit polls show that it is no longer taboo for business owners to identify themselves as [RN] voters—particularly the heads of small firms who feel threatened by globalization.

Artisans, 2015

In this area [...], voting for the [RN] is no longer taboo—much less an act one hides in shame.

Midi Libre, 2017

'I wouldn't vote for the [RN],' says Manon Louche. [...] 'But I admit that around me...' The racing world is reflecting on the issue. The question of the [RN] is by no means taboo. The young woman knows people who say they're ready to take the plunge.

Le Monde, 2015

Having already run as a [RN] candidate in the city of Courbevoie during the March 2014 municipal elections, Élyane Penou is among the growing number of young people for whom the [RN] is no longer taboo. With 25,000 members, the [RN]'s youth wing [...] now claims to be 'the leading youth movement in France.'

Pèlerin, 2015

The [RN] no longer scares people. At the foot of a tower in the Salines neighborhood, far-right rhetoric is no longer taboo. A man in his thirties, straddling his scooter, says he is 'proud of his Maghrebi origins,' but does not 'hide'—that is, he understands—the appeal his neighbors feel for Marine Le Pen's party and its anti-immigration message.

Corse Matin, 2015

Figure A.48: Perceptions of the RN (ENEF 2017, Wave 13)

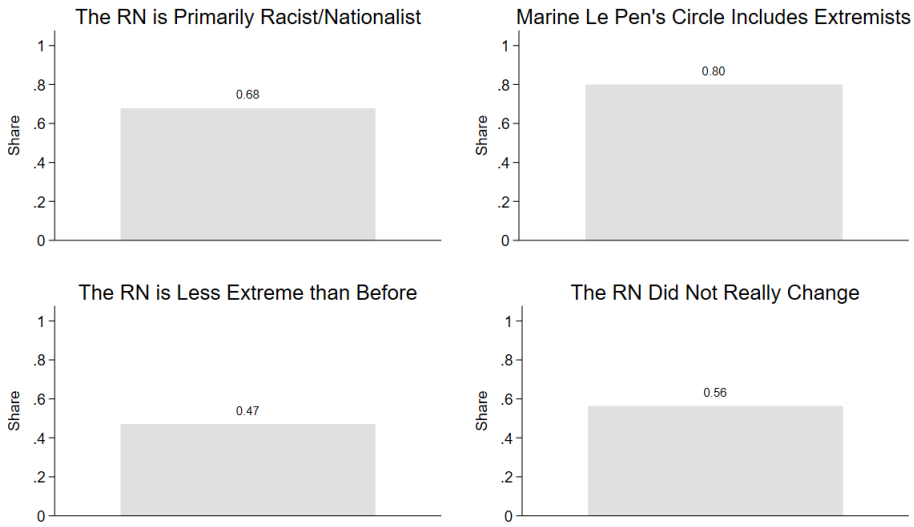


Figure A.49: Perceptions of the RN Depending on Vote in Second Round of the 2017 Presidential Election (ENEF 2017, Wave 13 and 17)

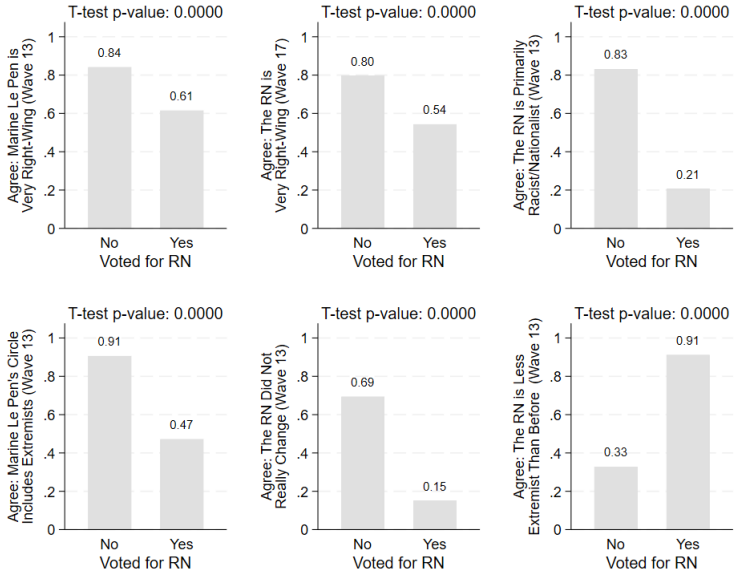


Figure A.50: Share Embarrassed to be Known as Politically Active by Likelihood to Vote RN (ENEF 2017)

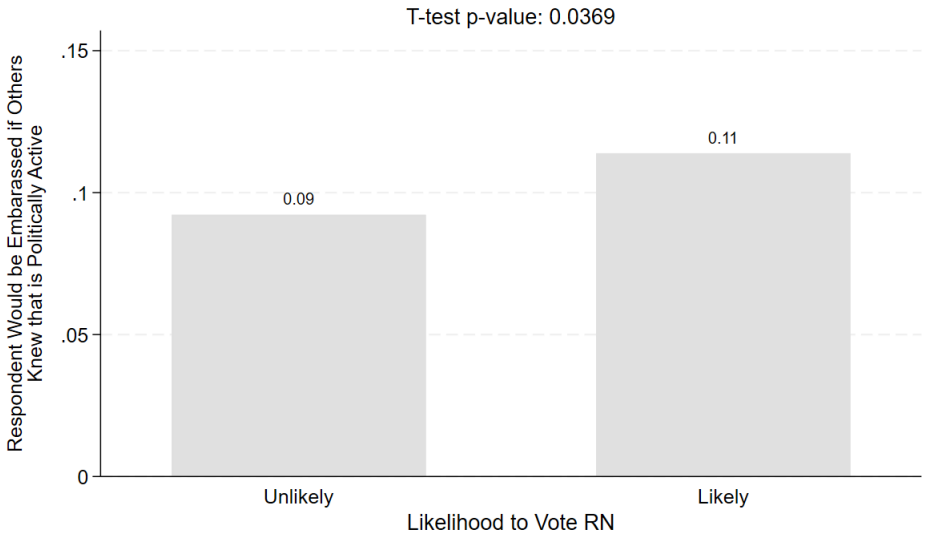


Figure A.51: Reported Perceived Party Ideology (ENEF 2017 Wave 1)

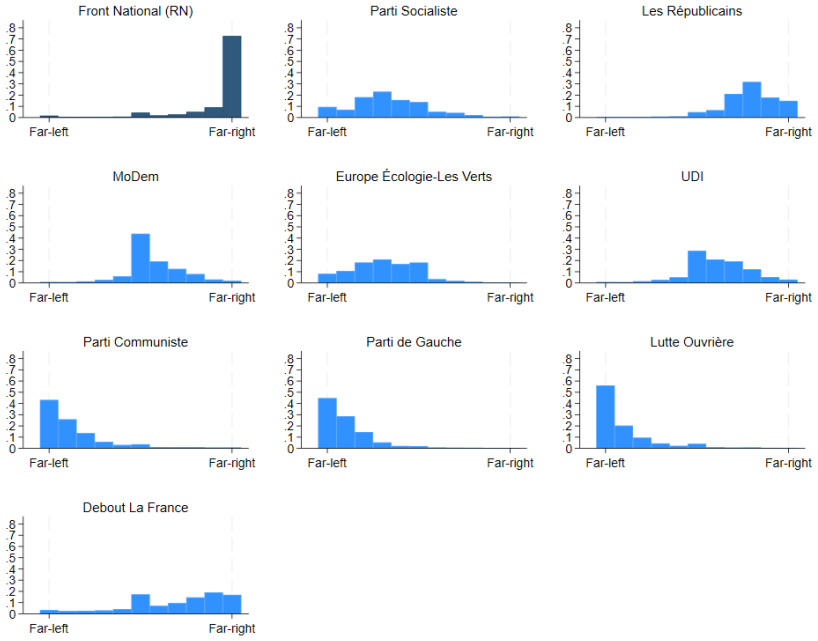


Figure A.52: Reported Perceived Party Ideology (ENEF 2017 Wave 4)

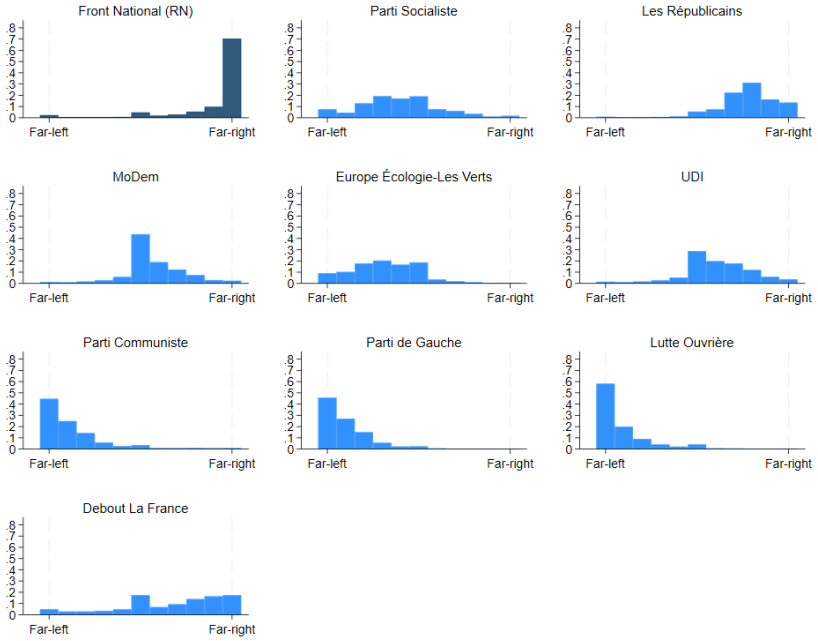


Figure A.53: Reported Perceived Party Ideology (ENEF 2017 Wave 11bis)

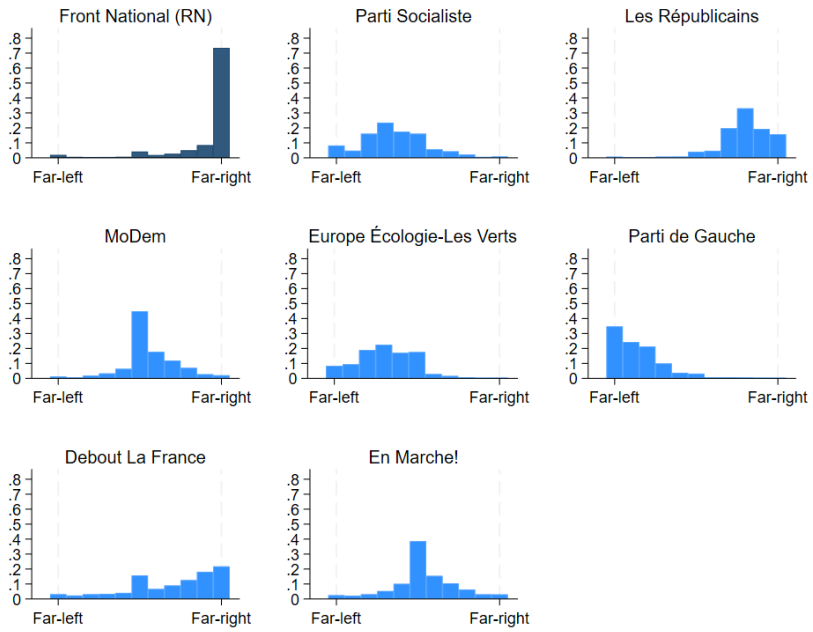


Figure A.54: Reported Perceived Party Ideology (ENEF 2017 Wave 17)

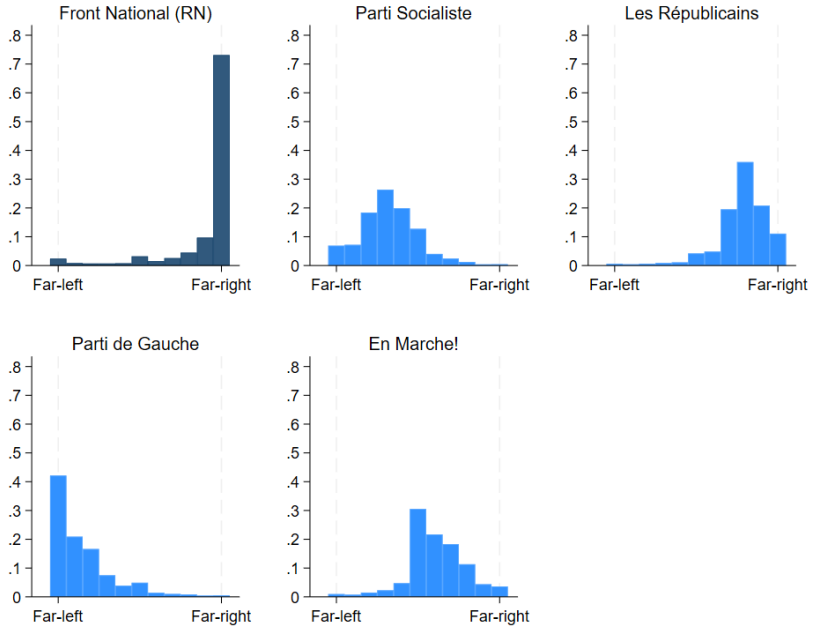


Figure A.55: Reported Likelihood to Ever Vote for a Party (ENEF 2017, Wave 2)

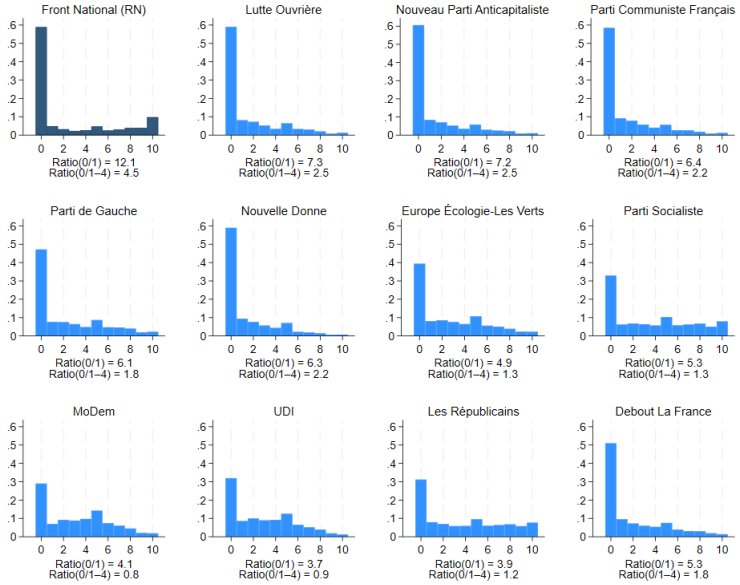


Figure A.56: Reported Likelihood to Ever Vote for a Party (ENEF 2017, Wave 8)

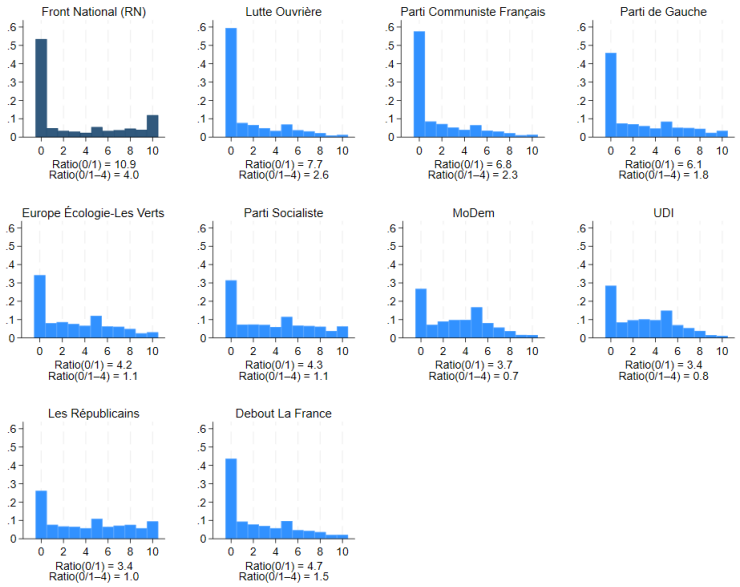


Figure A.57: Reported Likelihood to Ever Vote for a Party (ENEF 2017, Wave 10)

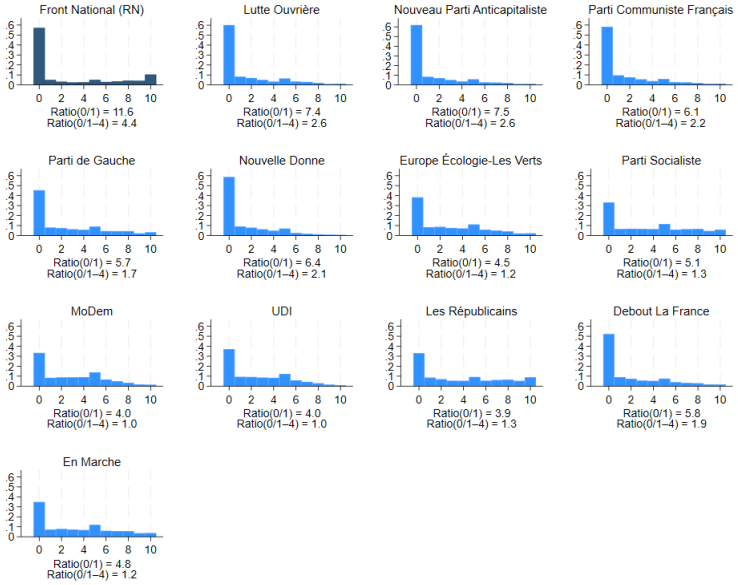


Figure A.58: Reported Likelihood to Ever Vote for a Party (ENEF 2017, Wave 11 bis)

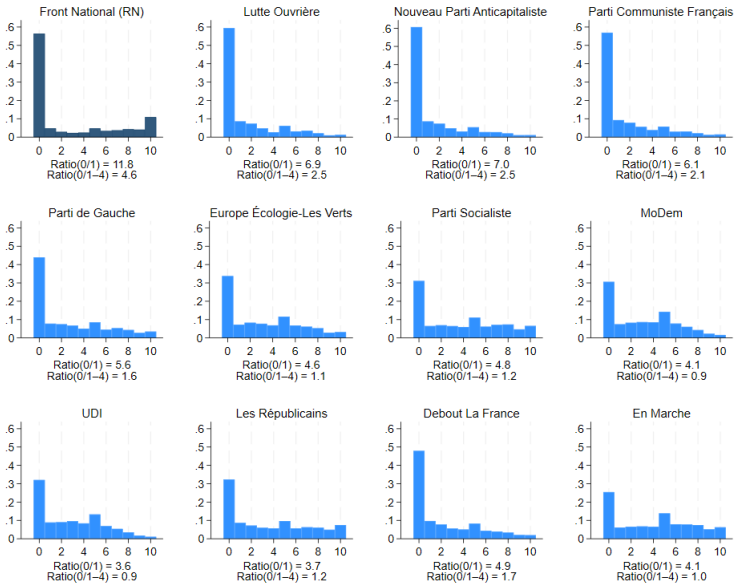


Figure A.59: Bootstrap 95% Confidence Interval for Fraction of Respondents Not At All Likely to Ever Vote for Party (0) over Extremely Unlikely (1) in ENEF 2017

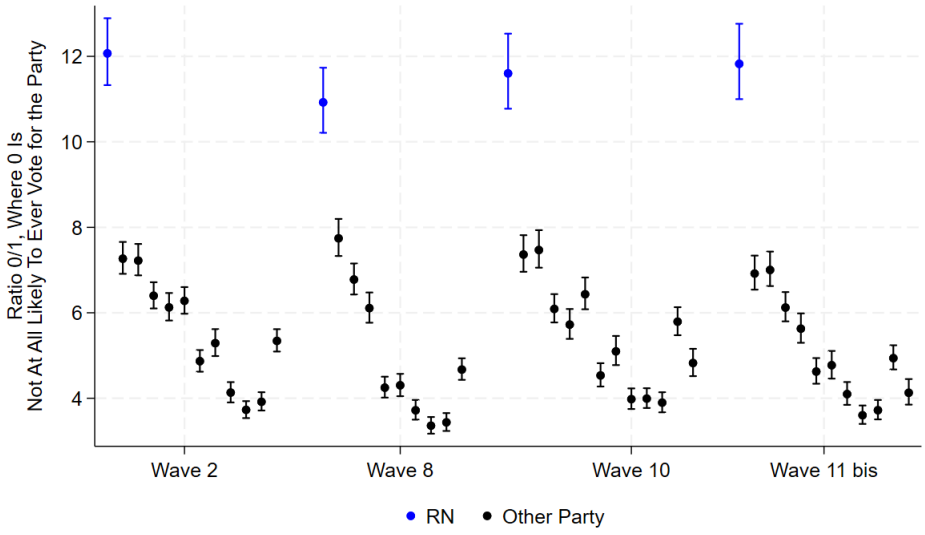


Figure A.60: Bootstrap 95% Confidence Interval for Fraction of Respondents Not At All Likely to Ever Vote for Party (0) over Unlikely (1-4) in ENEF 2017

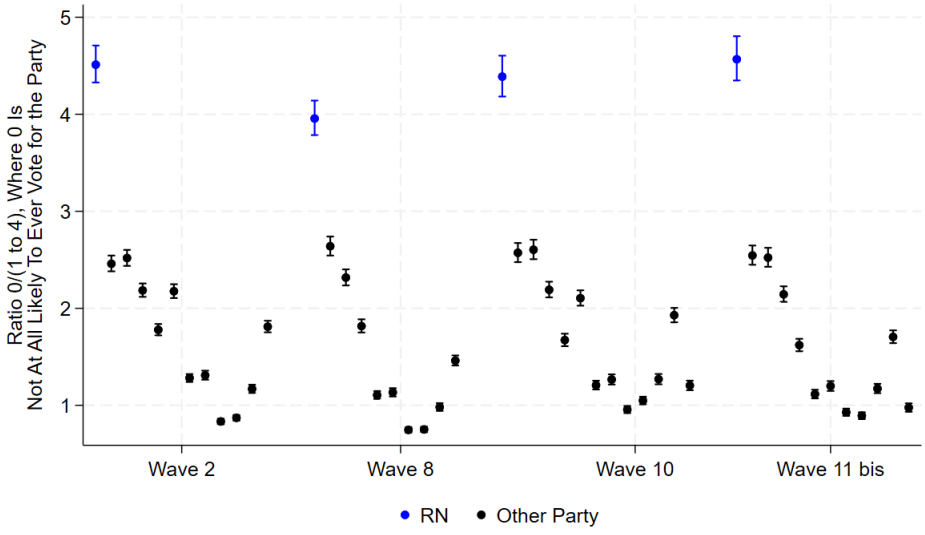
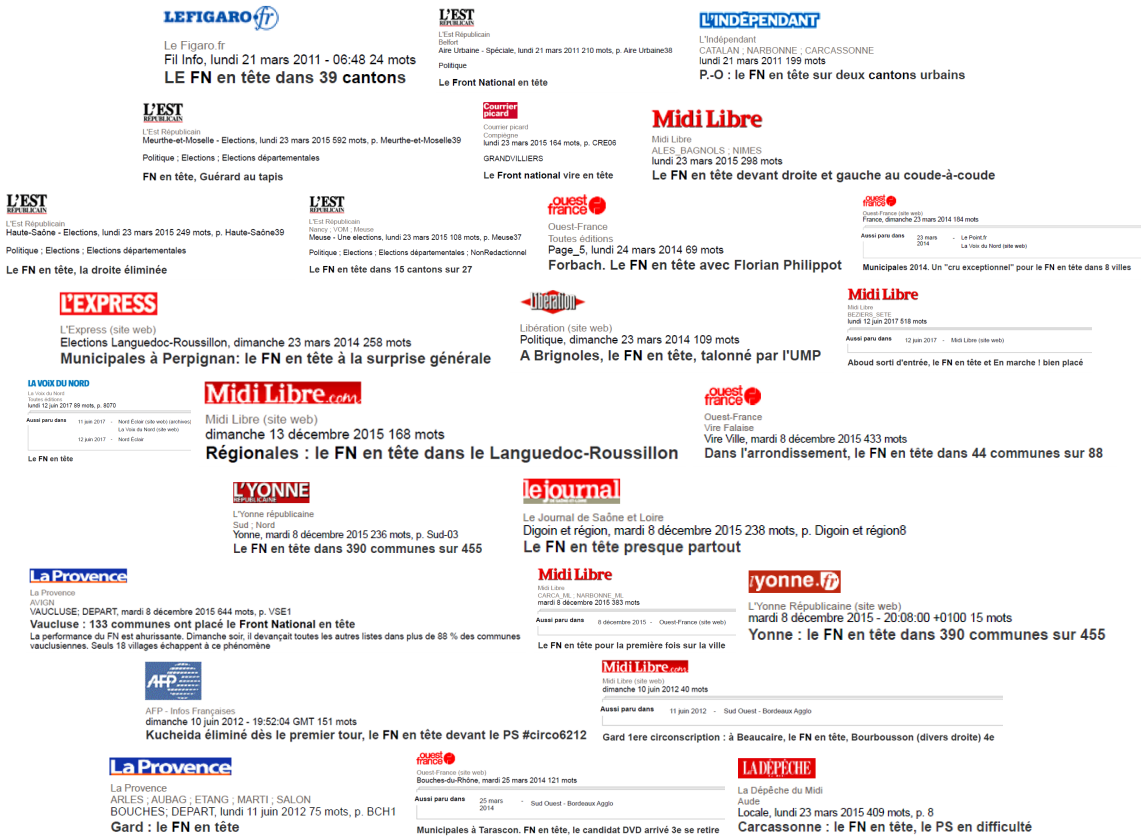


Figure A.61: 'RN Ahead' in Headlines



Note: Headlines containing the phrase 'RN ahead' among articles published in the week following the first round of some local or legislative election between 2011 and 2017.