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**Election Geography in the Department of Landes
1958–2002 (France)**

Autoři:

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Abstract:

This paper attempts to explore the basic characteristics of voting behaviour in one of the largest French departments, the Department of Landes. Its aim is to answer the question of how citizens of a given territory vote, and which candidates tend to win elections in the long term perspective. Research units consist of the National Assembly electoral districts, and the electoral results in those districts. The basic method used is a historical approach based on a long-term comparison of election maps over a given period of time. Results of presidential elections, and a comparison of the results of individual candidates in both legislative and presidential elections, are also used.

Keywords: Landes, France, elections, election geography

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1. Introduction

For many years, France has been one of the countries most interesting to political researchers. This country has given birth to a great number of political theories thanks to the long-term continuous development of its political system. It is no wonder that such a democratic tradition, disrupted only by a short period of the Vichy regime in the 20th century, has provided political science with unusually fertile ground for the birth of electoral geography. The first works to seek a geographical explanation of the political processes in a defined area were produced by André Siegfried, who attempted to analyse voting behaviour in western France, the most conservative part of the country. Elaborating on his theory, Siegfried stated that, in the long term, the voting behaviour of individuals is influenced by the environment in which they live, and by their shared values and common geographical background (Siegfried, 1913).

The whole area of France is divided into 95 departments; our attention focuses on one of them – the second largest one, the Department of Landes, which forms a part of the *Aquitaine* region of southwest France that borders with Spain.

The aim of this text is to explore electoral behaviour in the given department during the time of the French Fifth Republic. The main emphasis lies in the focus on differentiation of electoral support in particular electoral districts, and profiles of the winning candidates and long-term tendencies in the studied area. The basic material consists of the legislative elections results since 1958, supported by the results of selected presidential elections.

2. Election Geography and Methodological Approach

Election geography is frequently defined as the branch of political science that studies geographical aspects of election organization, process and results (Johnston, 2001). The basic field of election geography research is currently divided into five areas. The first area of interest is the spatial organization of elections, demarcation of electoral districts within particular regions, and the administrative characteristics related to their demarcation. The second area focuses on spatial differentiation of election results and the factors determining such differentiation, especially cleavages. The third focal area, perhaps the most important one, concentrates on the impact of

local (geographical) factors on political attitudes and opinions that influence decision making of voters. Nor can the last two areas of study can be ignored – spatial differentiation of election results (in particular the impact on representative body formation and transformation of votes into mandates); and spatial variability of power, together with the actual policy result produced by the elected body. As mentioned above, the most important aspects in the case of the Landes Department are the geographical impacts on voting related to the perception of the given territory by voters, and their socialization and shared environment. British researchers on election geography have defined four basic processes that can be considered the most important factors affecting voters' decision-making. (Derek, Johnston, 2001):

1. **The Neighbourhood effect** – essentially, that a candidate in a home district gains more votes than can be expected of the same party candidate who is not in his/her "home" environment;

2. **Disputed issue voting** – based on the fact that a candidate addressing a problem with reasonably higher importance to the given territory than perceived in the national context, tends to gain more votes;

3. **The Campaign effect** – reflects the spatially-differentiated impact of local election campaigns. This effect is intensified especially in countries with more competing parties and with majoritarian voting system, such as France. Electoral competition takes place among candidates within the given electoral districts;

4. **The "Infection" effect** – defined as the influence of shared decisions affected by opinions and attitudes of voters living in "neighbourhood solidarity". This effect tends to function positively, as it encourages voters to support a particular candidate or candidate lists.

The above mentioned election geographic objects of interest can be studied from a wide range of perspectives. From our point of view, the historical approach towards election results studied in a given territory seems to be an appropriate one, for it seeks answers by studying the history of the given region, paying close attention to factors influencing voting behaviour in the past. To study the history of

voting behaviour, a comparative and long-term election results are analyzed. Many authors have used the historical approach to analyzing voting behaviour in the French environment: the work of André Siegfried on the electoral geography of the *Ardeche* department in the *Rhône-Alpes* region in the south of Lyon is considered particularly significant. That study explores voting behaviour in the defined territory in the context of such geographical factors as climate, altitude, population structure, economic activity, etc., during selected periods of the Third Republic (Siegfried, 1949). Within the Czech academic environment, it is interesting to note the paper (Jedlička, Sýkora, 1991) that presents spatial analyses of election results in the Czech territory in 1990, and compares them to the election results from the inter-war period. This work proved the hypothesis that more than 40 years' absence of competitive elections did not erase regionally-determined sources of traditional political partisanship. Moreover, the paper proved that regional differentiation of election results was determined by strong traditions and socio-cultural background that remained unchanged for several decades. The party KDU-ČSL (Christian Democrat), which is traditionally based in the region of south Moravia, can serve as a model example in the Czech environment. This is the most compact and stable example of party affiliation in the Czech territory. Among the works by foreign authors attempting to explain historical voting behaviour linked in some way to the Czech Republic, the work of Tomáš Zarycke, who studied voting behaviour in the countries of Central Europe, is worth mentioning. That author concludes that despite a great number of sudden changes, especially territorial, the former frontiers of two different former state entities still latently exist, and within the study of election geography are still identifiable today. One of the positive characteristics of the historical approach is the ability to uncover the causes and motivations of individual voting decisions that are primarily influenced by the environment they live in (Agnew: 1987). One of the weak points is its limited use over a larger territory, meaning that findings in a given region can only be applied to that "home" locality.

To understand the mutual relation between particular political parties and distribution of votes in a defined geographical space, it is also necessary to describe in detail the electoral system, which has a great influence on the form of the party spectrum and the behaviour of voters in particular. In the French Fifth Republic an

electoral system was adopted that tends to be more hostile to political parties. It is a two-round majority system with a closed second round, which is, moreover, accessible only to those candidates who gain a given share of the vote in the first round. Since 1958, there has been a system in which a candidate in a single mandate district wins the first round if he/she obtains more than a half of all votes, provided a minimum 25 % of all eligible voters must participate in voting. However, situations when candidates get to the second round are the more frequent case. According to Sartori, the first round appears to represent a first selective choice narrowing the number of candidates for the second round (Sartori, 2001, p. 95). Voters, therefore, behave in the first round as they would in the proportional system, while in the second they behave as they would in a majority system. In the first round parties tend to act individually, and candidates of centralized parties whose election campaign is based on national level tend to have a relatively higher probability of victory. Before the second round, parties form coalitions based on the bipolar left – right cleavage. The most important and most interesting negotiations take place there: individual parties arrive at pre-electoral agreements on mutual support in exchange for resignations from the electoral competition, and the parties search for a mutually-agreeable person that will represent these political allies.

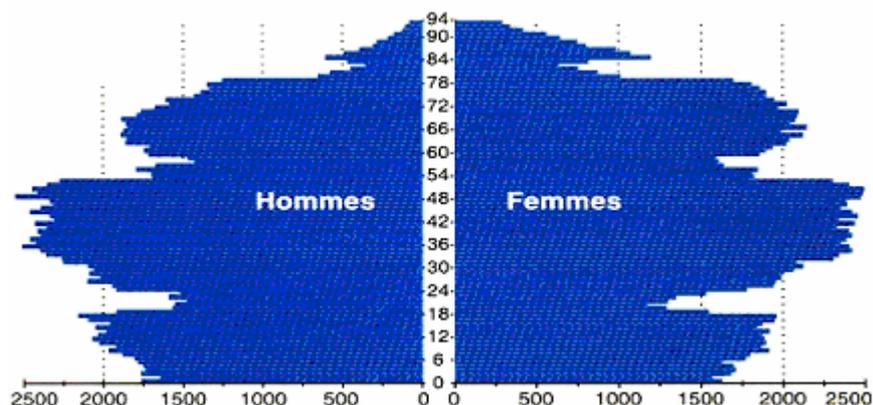
The system adopted by the Fifth Republic punished ideological politics while forcing increased communication among ideologically-close political parties. The described electoral system is basically flexible, producing politically flexible parties. In this way, subjects likely to win a great amount of votes are penalized but, at the same time, more opponents than supporters tend to be found in one district. This is mostly disadvantageous for anti-system parties unless their position is so strong that they can win an absolute majority. In such a system, voters act in the first election round according to their feelings and personal whims, while in the second round it is calculation and rationality that most influence the voter's decision (Sartori, 2001). In the long term study of voting behaviour and the electoral system of France, it is necessary to mention one change. One of the goals that President Francois Mitterrand decided to implement after being elected in 1981 was a change in the National Assembly voting system. According to the adopted proposal, the previous majority system was replaced by a proportional one with candidate lists. However, its

effects were not those anticipated by its authors, and two years later it was replaced again by the well-tested two-round majority system. Because only one election was held under the rules of that system, that temporary deviation will not be analyzed in depth, and only the effects of the electoral system change on election results within the given department will be mentioned.

3. Basic Characteristics of the Landes Department

The Landes Department, with an area of 9 800 km², is the second largest department in France; under the country's administration it forms part of the *Aquitaine* region in south-west France. The Landes is traditionally a rural area with a high concentration of village population living in the southern part of the given territory. $\frac{3}{4}$ of the whole department are covered with forests, protected within the Bois de Gascoigne National Park. From the perspective of the election geography the most important variables are population numbers and distribution. There were 327 400 inhabitants living the Landes Department in 1999, with a 5% increase due to positive migration since 1990. 20% of the population of the given department are new-comers, relatively young, below 40 years of age. Despite this trend, average age is on the increase. One of the main reasons for population growth is the easy and accessible commute to the relatively nearby urban areas of Bordeaux, Toulouse, and the cities of Biarritz and Bayonne on the Spanish border, combined with a relatively pleasant life in the country. The population in the given territory is unevenly distributed: $\frac{4}{5}$ of its inhabitants live in the cities and villages in the south and south-east of the department, while the sparsely populated northern part is covered mostly with forests and the National Park zone. The active population of the department is 143 800 inhabitants, and thanks to ever-increasing involvement of women in economic activities this trend is rising as well.

Graph 1. The age structure of the Landes Department



Source: INSEE – Analyses des circonscriptions législatives

From the perspective of election geography it would be helpful to mention the basic characteristics of the individual electoral districts. The Landes Department is divided into three electoral districts. The administrative centre Mont-de-Marsan together with the least populated area in the north and north-west compose the first electoral district. The second electoral district has a larger number of voters but is smallest in area; its centre is the city of Dax with the neighbouring village of St. Paul les Dax; it is situated in the southwest area adjacent to the cities of Bayonne and Biarritz. The third electoral district is situated in the south of the department in the area where the plateau of the Bois de Gascoigne National Park meet the highlands that form the immediate foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains. This electoral district contains no big cities, it mostly consists of small towns and villages, and in terms of number of voters it is the smallest electoral district.

Table 1. Numbers of voters in individual electoral districts

The electoral district	Number of registered voters
District I	84 354
District II	95 934
District III	79 301

Source: INSEE, 2002

The Landes Department is a relatively sparsely populated area, with a total of 340 975 inhabitants, most of them living in villages and small towns. 78 % of inhabitants live in towns with population of over 10 000 inhabitants, the rest live in four largest cities: the urban areas of the cities of Dax and St. Paul les Dax, Mont-de-Marsan and Tarnos.

Table 2. Urban structure

	up to 2000 inhabitants	2000 – 9999 inhabitants	10000 and more inhabitants	Total
Number of villages and towns	300	27	4	331
Population	154 627	112 534	73 814	340 975

Source: INSEE, 2002

The basic economic statistics of the department, such as levels of unemployment and GDP, have recently been at or about the national average. The level of unemployment in the Landes Department in 2005 was between 9, 0% and 9, 5%, which is one percent below the national level (the level of unemployment in France was 10, 1% in 2005). The second most studied economic statistic in France, GDP per capita, is slightly below average in the Landes Department. National GDP per capita is 23 497 Euro, while in the Landes Department it is 19 796 Euro per capita (Cordellier a Netter, 2003). Two basic characteristics suggest that, in comparison to other departments, its position is slightly below average: it is not among the best situated areas in the west of the country, nor is it among the most problematic zones like those on the Mediterranean coast and the northern areas of the Pas-de-Calais region.

Keeping in mind, the above data, the Landes Department may be further characterized a region of agriculture and forestry, where agriculture is predominant, with a slower pace typical of the rural life style. Unlike other areas, this department does not suffer from a declining agricultural sector coupled with mass migration from country to urban areas, and it has managed to maintain its traditional character.

Forests cover two thirds of the department and grain production is the fundamental activity in this southern territory (Labarbe, 1996).

4. Electoral Behaviour in Presidential Elections in the Landes Department

The fundamental and most important feature of the French political system is direct presidential elections held in accordance with the rules of a two-round majority voting system, the same as the voting system to the National Assembly. The only difference between the two systems is that in the second round of the presidential elections only two candidates can participate. The transformed 1958 Constitution did not mention this basic element when direct presidential elections were incorporated into the system in 1962 in accordance with the results of a referendum held to affirm the legitimacy of General de Gaulle's successors. Since 1965, the President of the French Republic has been elected directly. The referendum legitimized this fundamental element of the semi-presidential system; it was immensely popular among voters, and participation was as high as 73% of registered voters. Since the mid-1960s the presidential elections have been considered one of the most important contests between the key representatives of the political parties. Results of the presidential elections in the first round in the Landes Department are shown in the following table.

Table 3. Difference in the election results of chosen candidates of presidential elections in the Landes Department in comparison to the national level (%)

	Gaull. ²	Right. ³	Soc. ⁴	PCF ⁵	EXD ⁶	Others
1965	-0,4	-2,49	2,63	0	0,2	-0,77
1969	-0,18	0,81	1,43	-2,46	0	1,82
1974	14,71	-13,89	1,41	0	0	-2,23
1981	-1,22	-2,66	8,17	-1,11	0	-3,18
1988	1,05	-1,57	7,97	0,19	-5,41	-2,23
1995	0,64	-1,07	8,66	0,89	-6,1	-3,02
2002	-0,68	0,16	5,72	1,13	-6,81	0,48

Source: www.election-politique.com

The table above shows the difference in the support of individual candidates in the Landes Department in comparison to the national level. The data reveal the following tendencies: In comparison to national results, in a long term run socialist candidates tend to win presidential elections in the Landes Department. The largest differences in the positive direction were achieved by F. Mitterrand and L. Jospin in the elections of 1981–1995. On the other hand, in the long-term, worse results were achieved in this region by the candidate of the extreme right, the National Front's Jean Marie Le Pen, who has participated in presidential elections since the mid-1980s⁷. A significant difference appeared in the first round of the 1974 presidential elections when a representative of a regional centre became a candidate to the country's highest administrative office. The long-term mayor of the city of Bordeaux, Jacques Chaban Delmas, became a candidate for President of the Republic as a

² Gaullist candidates: 1965- G. De Gaulle, 1969 – G. Pompidou, 1974 – J. Ch. Delmas, 1981, 1988, 1995 a 2002 – J. Chirac

³ Candidates of the right: 1965 – J. Lecanuet, 1969 – A. Poher, 1974, 1981 – V.G.d'Estaign, 1988 – R. Barre, 1995 – E. Balladur, 2002 – F. Bayrou

⁴ Socialist Party candidates: 1965, 1974, 1981, 1988 – F. Mitterrand, 1969 – G. Deferre, 1995, 2002 – L. Jopin

⁵ Communist Party candidates: 1969 – J. Duclos, 1981 – G. Marchais, 1988 – A. Lajoinie, 1995, 2002 R. Hue

⁶ Extreme right candidate: 1988, 1995, 2002 – J.M. Le Pen

⁷ It is true that J.M. Le Pen participated in presidential elections for the first time as early as 1974, but he obtained less than 1% of votes, therefore his influence in those elections can be considered marginal.

representative of the Gaullist movement, but his support was strictly limited and he did not succeed in making it to the second round of the elections. This is a typical example of the so-called neighbourhood effect, when a locally well-known candidate gains much higher support. This support is reflected in the negative result of the right-wing candidate d'Estaing. This was, however, a unique phenomenon that was not based on any longer-term trends. From the electoral geography perspective, the steady support for F. Mitterrand and L. Jospin seems to be much more interesting. It is support that is long-term, and above the national average.

5. Results of the First Round of the Elections to the National Assembly in the Individual Districts

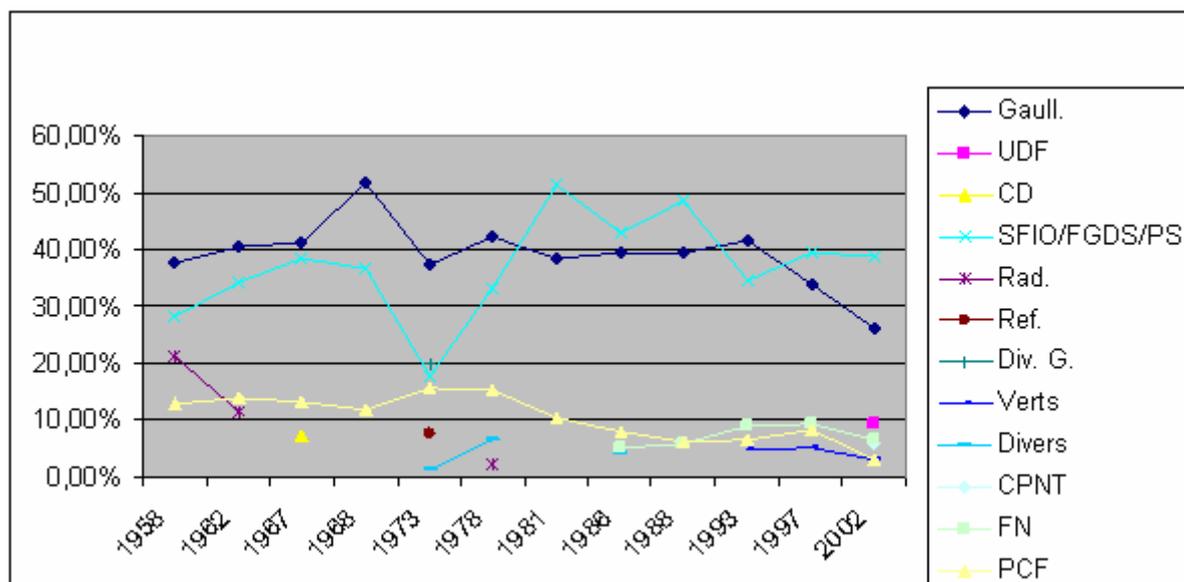
The basic feature of any democratic system is the existence of regularly repeated elections. The results of the first round of the elections to the National Assembly in individual electoral districts are described in the following chapter. Precisely because of the electoral system and its characteristics, it is important to present results of the individual candidates of different political parties and movements that attempted to gain support in individual electoral districts.

5.1. The electoral District of Mont de Marsan

The first electoral district, which is composed of the main administrative centre and the extremely sparsely populated areas of the Bois de Gascoigne National Park, is characterized, in the context of the first round of the legislative elections, by the long-standing competition between the two main streams of the French politics. From the Graph 2, the long-term competition between the main representatives of the right-Gaullist formation and the left non-Communist stream is evident. In the first years of the Fifth Republic, candidates of the Gaullist movement won regularly. Their victories reached their historical maximum in 1968; since that time their declining results do not suggest any sign of a possible comeback to the successful period of the early Fifth Republic. In the 1970s candidates of the left political parties won consistently. The last moderate shift was occurred in 1993, but since then Socialist candidates have re-secured their position as the dominant winners. Candidates of other political parties do not find consistent constant support in the district, with the

minor exception of Communist candidates, whose support continues to decline in any case.

Graph 2. Results of first round parliamentary elections – the Mont de Marsan District



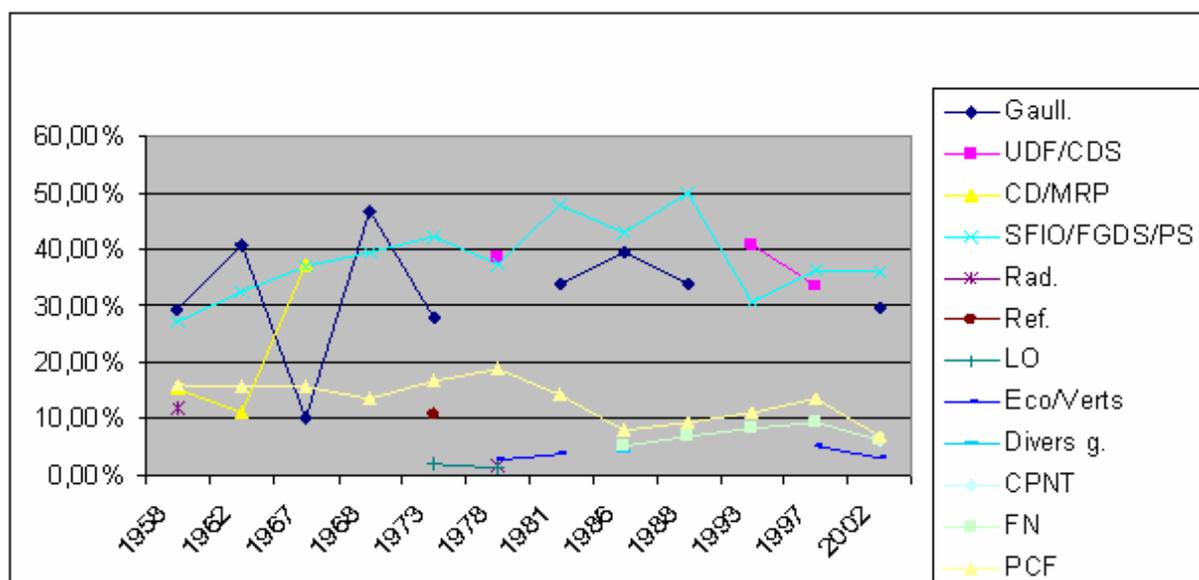
Source: Ministry of the Interior, Republic of France

5.2. The Dax Electoral District

The second electoral district is the smallest in terms of area. Closer long-term comparison of election results and their characteristics to those of the first electoral district reveal clear differences. The district has traditionally supported candidates of the left. On the right, it is possible to observe declining success for the candidates of the Gaullist Movement and Centre-Right parties, namely CD/MRP (Centre démocrate – Democratic Centre/Mouvement republicaine populaire – Popular Republican Movement), followed by UDF/CDS (Union pour la democratie francaise – Union for French Democracy/Centre des democratres sociaux – Social Democratic Centre). Similarly, the Gaullists achieved their historical maximum in 1968. Since then, none of the right-wing candidates have managed to achieve the same or better results. Since the early 1970s there has been an observable tendency among the parties of the right to nominate a single common candidate from either the RPR (Rassemblement pour la république – Movement for the Republic) or the UDF/CDS. There is also a significant increase in support for the Non-Communist Left, whose

candidates reached their maximum in 1988. Two minor declines in support of the candidates with socialist orientation appeared only in the years 1978 and 1993, concurrent with increased support for the Communist Party, with whom they compete for votes. Nevertheless, unlike the Socialist candidates who have maintained stable levels of support, the Communists have lost their position in recent years.

Graph 3. Results of first round of parliamentary elections – the Dax District



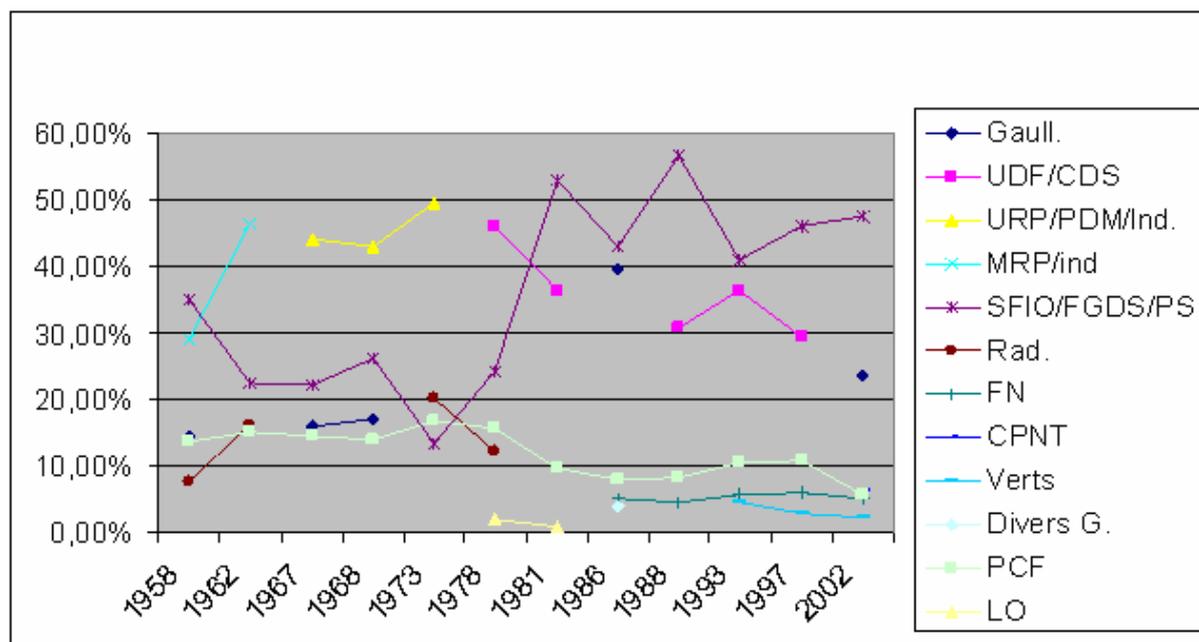
Source: Ministry of the Interior, Republic of France

5.3. The Saint Sever Electoral District

The third electoral district of the Landes Department also has its own characteristic trends in election results. Until the 1973 elections, winners were usually candidates who, despite constant changes in their administrative identities, were faithful to the Centre-Right Non-Gaullist stream that had had its origins in the post-war Christian-Democratic MRP. In this district, the Gaullists did not even nominate their own candidates, apart from exceptional cases intended to secure some extra votes. Nevertheless, except for the 1988 elections, they did not obtain the kind of support that would ensure a reasonable starting position for the second round of the elections. A very interesting turn in support in the third district was identified in the Socialist Party. Until the early 1970s its results kept declining. The

most important turning point, however, came in the late 1970s; since that time it has been possible to consider the Saint Sever District as one of the most solid regions for Socialist candidates⁸. As in the previous two cases, the Communist Party has contested every election, each time nominating its own candidate. However, a long-term decline in support for the Communist Party continued in the last elections, when it sank to its historical minimum.

Graph 4. Results of first round of parliamentary elections – the Saint Sever District



Source: Ministry of the Interior, Republic of France

6. Changes in the Election Map of the Landes Department

The mandate in France is not usually won in the first round of the elections; as a rule it is the second round score that decides the final result. The following part of this paper will examine the candidates who finally obtained a seat in the National Assembly as the legitimate representatives of the Landes Department.

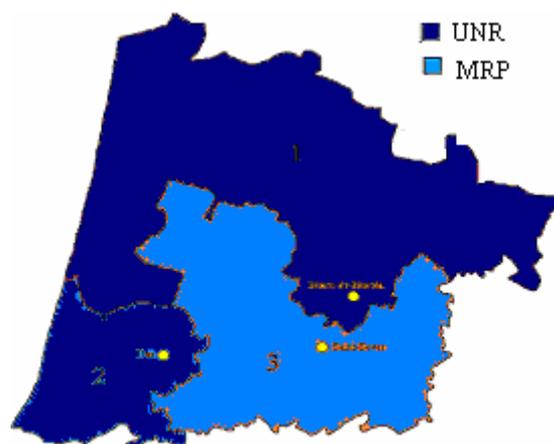
In the first elections to the National Assembly after the transformation of the political system by Charles de Gaulle in 1958, mandates in all three districts were secured by candidates of the right. Those elections were still influenced by the fading

⁸ One of the factors may be that the President of the Socialist Party and the President of the Republic F. Mitterrand bought his weekend house in this electoral district. With the application of the neighbourhood effect, this may have transformed voting behaviour of voters.

fear of civil war that had caused a significant polarization of the party system. The Gaullist Movement and representatives of the Right parties were perceived as being able to guarantee the newly transformed political system while, on the other hand, Socialists and particularly Communists were perceived as the main critics of the newly-adopted changes.

In the first two electoral districts, Robert Besson and Maxe Morase, the candidates of the UNR, obtained the mandates. Both entered the second round with the highest number of votes in their respective districts, and both easily defeated the other two candidates of the Socialist Party and Communist Party in the second round. In the third district, on the other hand, Lamarque Cando, a candidate of SFIO (Section française de l'internationales ouvriere – French Section of the Workers' International) won the first round, but presence of a Communist candidate in the second round weakened his position, and the mandate was finally obtained by the representative of the Centre-Right MRP Jean Commennay.

Map 1. Legislative elections in 1958

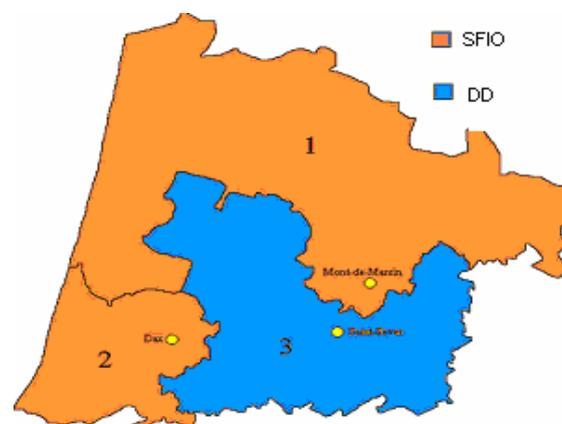


Sources: Ministry of the Interior, Republic of France, original map

In the subsequent 1962 elections, the situation still resembled the first elections as a referendum on support for the policies of President De Gaulle. These were special parliamentary elections, as the President of the Republic had decided to dissolve the National Assembly after the referendum on the direct election of the President of the Republic. Within those four years, however, considerable changes

may be observed in the studied area. The first two electoral districts experienced a change in trends confirmed in the next regular parliamentary 1967 elections. In the first two districts, the candidates elected in 1958 elections Besson and Moras were defending their mandates. They both won the first round, but did not obtain the necessary majority. In the second round, however, they were defeated by the candidates of the Socialist stripe because, unlike in the 1958 elections, the Communist candidates did not take part in the second round. In this way they helped the candidates of the SFIO, Lamarque – Cando and Dussarth, to be elected. In the third district, Jean Commennay was elected to his post again with no major problems. In the electoral competition, he presented himself as an independent and non-Gaullist candidate of the right. A similar scenario was repeated in the regular elections in 1967, where he fought in the second round for the post of a successful Socialist member of the National Assembly Dussarthra Henri Lavielle, a well-known figure in communal politics of the city of Dax.

Map 2. Legislative elections in 1962 and 1967

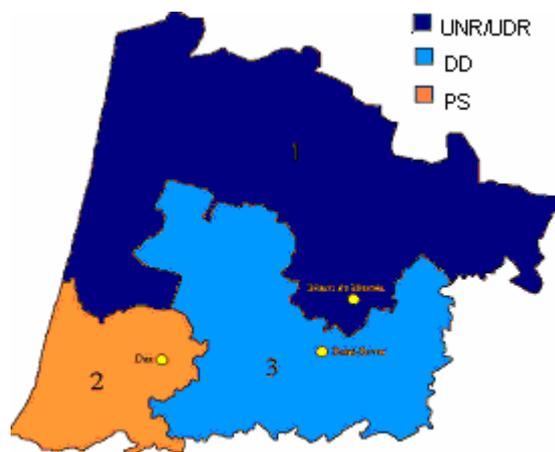


Sources: Ministry of the Interior, Republic of France, original map

New changes in the election map of the Landes Department occurred after the 1968 special parliamentary elections. It is important to realize, however, that those elections were of exceptional character, held at a time of street fights and riots in metropolitan Paris during the first half of the year. The President decided to solve the tense situation by dissolving the National Assembly and announcing special parliamentary elections. In the electoral district of Mont de Marsan, the mandate was

obtained by the Gaullist Movement UDR candidate André Mirtin in the first round. In the Dax electoral district, Henri Lavielle, a candidate of the non-Communist left repeated his victory from the previous 1967 elections and won the second round of the elections. In the third electoral district, where there had been no change for ten years, the right non-Gaullist candidate Commennay remained in his mandate as a member of the National Assembly. In the following regular parliamentary elections in 1973 voters returned current members of the National Assembly to their posts; however, their victories were no longer as decisive. On the contrary, there was an explicit tendency toward gradually increasing support for the non-Communist left-wing candidates who, after the foundation of the Socialist Party in 1971, began to present themselves as representatives of that new political party. In response to complaints, the Constitutional Council decided to annul the results of the regular elections in the first electoral district, and at the end of 1973 special elections were held. In the following dual, the Gaullist member of the National Assembly failed to defend his mandate, losing to Socialist Roger Dourour.

Map 3. Legislative elections in 1968 and 1973



Sources: Ministry of the Interior, Republic of France, original map

The regular legislative 1978 elections produced great changes in election map of the Landes Department. Candidates of the Socialist Party gained mandates, and solidified their stable position in all three electoral districts in the following decade. In

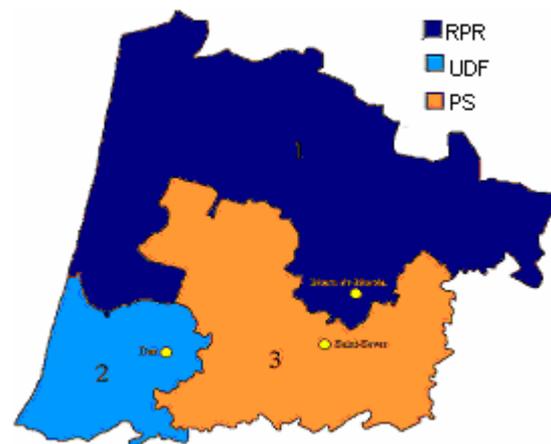
the first electoral district it was Socialist candidate Roger Dourou who won in the second round, managing to defend his previous mandate against the Gaullist Movement candidate A. Juppe. In the second electoral district, Henri Lavielle secured his position, while the third electoral district saw its first alternation in twenty years. In that "watershed" year, there was also an exchange of seats in the Saint Sever electoral district, where candidate for the newly established pro-presidential movement UDF, J. Commennay, who had won the election regularly in previous years, was defeated by Henri Emmanuelli. The following election revealed a gradual increase in support for the non-Communist left, who found solid support in the Landes Department. By the time of the special parliamentary elections announced by President Mitterrand after his election as President Office in 1981 and 1988, Socialist candidates were winning their mandates mostly in the first round.

The results of the 1986 elections represent a unique case. These elections produced a radical change caused by the introduction of the proportional voting system. The basic constituency for allocating mandates according to counted votes was the department; and the number of members of the National Assembly was decided according to the number of voters and population. Three members were elected to the National Assembly from the Landes Department. The results gave 2 mandates to the Socialists and 1 to the Gaullists, with National Assembly seats going to representatives Henri Emmanuelli (PS), Jean Pierre Penicaut (PS) and Louis Lagua (RPR).

The above-mentioned trend of higher support for left-wing candidates in the 1980s first began to reverse itself in the regular 1993 elections. These were the first elections held after the collapse of the Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. The left incorporated that fact into their campaign in a miscalculated manner, and inner disunion within the Socialist Party harmed its image in the election campaign. The governing Socialist Party suffered a tremendous defeat, obtaining only 53 mandates out of the total 577 on the national level. In contrast, the former opposition right parties RPR and UDF secured 499 representatives in the National Assembly. This national result was naturally reflected in the results for the Landes Department as well. In the first electoral district, candidate Louis Lauga (RPR) secured his mandate by winning the seat of Socialist Party member Alain

Vidalise. In the second electoral district, candidate Henri Lallande (UDF/CDS) succeeded in wresting away the seat of Socialist National Assembly member Penicaute. The only exception was the third electoral district, where Henri Emmanuelli, top member of the governing Socialist Party and close friend of the President of France, managed to defend his mandate.

Map 4. Legislative elections 1993

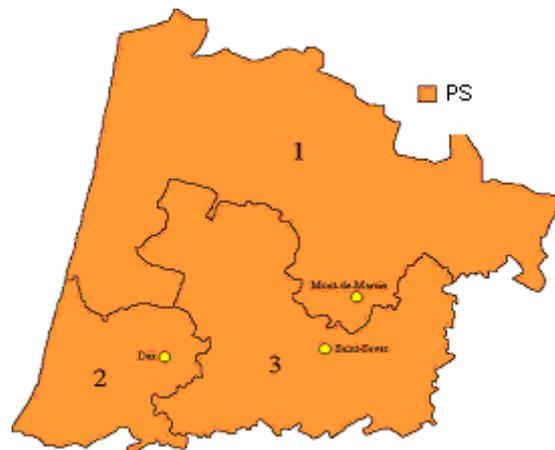


Sources: Ministry of the Interior, Republic of France, original map

The decision of President Jacques Chirac to dissolve the National Assembly and announce early elections in 1997 proved to be quite unfortunate. The results of those elections paved the way for the longest period of cohabitation since the beginning of the political system known as the Fifth Republic. A Gaullist President was forced to share executive power with a leftist government led by a Socialist premier. In the Landes Department, this was the last era of major change: candidates of a left-wing coalition of the Radical Movement Socialist Party won all the mandates in all three electoral districts. That result was repeated in the 2002 elections. Alain Vidalies won his mandate in the first district, J.P. Dufau in the second one, and finally clear favorite Henri Emmanuelli proved his position in the third

district where he was elected in the first round, and repeated his virtually unchallenged in the following parliamentary elections⁹.

Map 5. Legislative elections in 1978, 1981, 1988, 1997 and 2002



Source: Ministry of the Interior, Republic of France, original map

7. Voting Behaviour in the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections

In order to ensure better understanding of voting behaviour in the given area, and particularly to be able to recognize the attitude of voters toward a political party represented by individual candidates, French political scientist Nonna Mayer invented a method based on comparison of the election results of presidential and parliamentary elections. According to Mayer, this makes it possible to discover who is really “stronger” in the given district; and whether it is possible to identify some kind of “rooted” partisanship based on a particular programme pushed forward by a strong candidate with local support, or instead whether support for a candidate is based on backing by the political party he has been nominated by (Mayer, 2002). The author used the method for the period after the 2002 elections. Its aim was to answer the question whether support for Jean Marie Le Penn in the presidential elections was support for his populist promises and campaign, or whether that

⁹ Henri Emmanuelli, with his position in the third Saint Sever electoral district, is considered to be particularly strong, as he has continued to win both regular and special elections since 1978. On the grounds of complaints of an unfair election campaign, the Constitutional Council annulled the results of the regular elections twice, and announced new special elections only in the given district – but H. Emmanuelli won in each case.

support was due to a concrete programme and values that could be enforced by members of his party in the National Assembly.

In our case, the election results in 1981, 1988 and 2002, when presidential elections were immediately followed by parliamentary elections, seem to be the most appropriate for our study. The first two cases were special parliamentary elections following presidential elections and dissolution of the National Assembly, while the third case represents regular parliamentary elections held only with a three months' delay. The delay was agreed upon a general consensus of all political parties that participated in the elections because of the 2002 presidential elections term.

Table 5. Difference in support of political parties in the parliamentary and presidential elections (%)

	PS	RPR/UMP	UDF	FN	PCF	Others
1981	16,32	8,66	-15,05	0	-2,43	-7,5
1988	9,64	2,61	-4,19	-3,26	1,08	0
2002	21,04	8,58	-1,86	-4,1	1,07	-25,41

Sources: Ministry of the Interior, Republic of France, original calculation

From comparison of the results counted at the department level to those of the main national candidates in presidential elections above, it is evident which ideas and values are more or less supported, and which candidates find stronger support in the Landes Department. In the given period, the Socialist Party candidates obtained higher scores, ahead of the Gaullist candidates who secured somewhat stronger support as well; on the other hand, representatives of the right formations and extreme right National Front did not receive the required number of votes. This is evident especially in the 1981 and 2002 elections when the support of the Socialist candidates to the National Assembly was notably higher than that of the leading Socialist candidate for President few weeks earlier. This fact suggests that there is deeper-rooted support for the policies put forward by the non-Communist left in combination with the strong position of a particular candidate.

7. Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to answer questions of long-term voting behaviour by voters in the Landes Department, and which political entities tend to win parliamentary mandates there. According to the presented data, it is possible to summarize the voting behaviour in the Landes Department by mentioning a few basic characteristics. As far as presidential elections are concerned, it is an area where, in the long run, Socialist candidates tend to win. The evidence suggests that there was only one case in which a Gaullist movement candidate gained higher support; nevertheless, that was a unique occasion, not a long-term trend. Study of the support for individual political parties in the electoral districts in the parliamentary elections shows a long term-trend towards gradually increasing support for left-wing candidates, who have been increasingly more and more successful and who, today, regularly win election to the National Assembly for the Landes Department. The comparison of election maps according to the presented data shows that it is possible to divide the whole era of the Fifth Republic into two basic periods. The first one begins with the 1958 elections and ends in the mid-1970s. In this period, the first two districts seemed to experience an alternation and competition between Gaullist and socialist-oriented candidates, while the third electoral district was a different case. During that time, a candidate of non-Gaullist right who did not present himself as a "non-party" candidate but ran as a representative of a different political party each time continued to win regularly in that area. The second period began with the 1978 elections, when candidates of the left won and secured their victories till 1993 in all three districts. The 1993 elections produced an alternation in the first and second districts. That change, however, was not confirmed four years later - on the contrary, all three mandates returned to the hands of Socialist Party representatives. A closer look at the structure of Socialist Party partisanship in the Landes Department and other features reveals that its population can be described as rural, active mostly in the service sector, and is today of a different orientation than the original Socialist Party voters of the mid 20th century. The comparison of the presidential and parliamentary election results clearly shows a stronger support for non-Communist left candidates with a local background. These candidates can thus utilize their success at different levels of

politics, and can today count on the long-term support of the local electorate. Based on the comparison of the individual parties' candidates support in presidential and parliamentary elections, we can conclude that support for the values backed by the Socialist Party in the Landes Department is stable, and from a long-term perspective higher than support for the politics of other political parties and their candidates.

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