MASTER THESIS

The silent majority: How belonging to the majority silences French deputies

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Abstract

What incentives do politicians respond to? Based on aggregated data of the French National Assembly activities, we constructed a dataset designed for estimating the impact of the majority. Our fixed-effect model allows us to document a 4.67% increase in the probability to attend committee meetings and a decrease in 6.48% in the probability to intervene in floor meetings associated with the majority. The qualitative pattern argues in favor or a majority focused on moving the Government's agenda forward while leaving to the floor to the opposition during public meetings. Thus, it suggests that the subordination of the National Assembly to the Executive branch originates from the subordination of the majority group. These results provide renewed evidence of what has been highlighted by earlier literature as a distinctive pattern of the National Assembly and show how differences in political statuses can influence otherwise similar deputies.

JEL: D72, D73, H83, P16

Introduction

Like many Western countries, France's political institutions are in trouble. Citizens feel less and less represented and a general feeling of distrust toward politicians is spreading. The *8ème vague d'enquête* of the Cevipof (January 2017) highlighted that 89% of the voters considered that the politicians were not preoccupied with their opinions and 70% considered

that the democracy was not functioning well. The 2017 general election reached a record-low turnout rate (44% for the second round).

The French National Assembly is seen by scholars as a weak legislature (Kerrouche, 2006; Costa and Kerrouche, 2009). The Vth Republic (1958) and the election of the President to the universal suffrage (1962) reduced the power of the legislative branch. In this context, the National Assembly gradually polarized and the political group became more and more cohesive (Wilson and Wiste, 1976; Sauger, 2009). However, no work has been able to recover the causal effect of the majority status on the deputies behavior. We will, therefore, wonder to what extent does the majority/opposition dichotomy influences the behavior of the MPs, irrespective of political affiliations.

Literature has provided evidence in support of the idea that no matter the institutional setting, MPs do respond to incentives. Their accountability can be driven by external factors such as the media (Snyder Jr and Strömberg, 2010). In line with the theory, electoral rules shape the MPs attitudes towards accountability (Gagliarducci et al., 2011) and incentives to pork-barrel (Stratmann and Baur, 2002; Carozzi and Repetto, 2016). However, other factors drive the MPs behavior. In the case of voting, if the vote of Congressmen appears to be personal (Levitt, 1996), representatives can be influenced by peer-effects and differences in statuses across MPs (Willumsen and Öhberg, 2012; Harmon et al., 2017).

On the other hand, few papers studied French politicians. Empirical research has mainly focused on political connections (Bertrand et al., 2007; Coulomb and Sangnier, 2014; Fabre, 2017) or pork-barrel transfers (Cadot et al., 2006; Fabre and Sangnier, 2017). Recent studies documented the impact of multiple office holding, either in the case of government members (Fabre and Sangnier, 2017) or MPs (Bach, 2012). To the best of our knowledge, Bach (2012) is the only research in economics on the French National Assembly.

This paper makes several contributions to the literature. It explores empirically how individual decision-making processes can be shaped by institutional characteristics, in our case being a member of the majority. It also analyses the role of both formal and informal rules in the functioning of public institutions. Finally, it documents for the French case the legislative procedure and how deputies can influence it. It contributes to the body of research devoted to national parliaments and bridges the gap by documenting the French National Assembly case.

Our analysis is based on data adapted from the data collected by the association Regards citoyens. Their database aggregates meeting transcripts and official attendance records publicly available on the Nationale Assembly website. We use this data to construct a panel dataset whose goal is to reconstruct the events that occurred on floor and committee meet-

ings during the XIIIth, XIV and the ongoing XVth legislative terms (respectively 2007-2012, 2012-2017 and 2017-2018).

We define variables capable of capturing as much as possible the MPs attendance, participation, and implication in both floor and committee meetings. We rely on attendance and participation indicators, as well as indicators of the legislative implication of the MP. We identified the status and the role of the MP in the Assembly for each legislature. We also include political and personal information of the MPs. By construction, we only include MPs who were reelected at least one time over our spell

Our empirical strategy is based on the majority change that resulted from the 2012 general election in order to recover the average treatment effect on the treated. Identification of the causal effect relies on the assumption that after controlling for confounding factor, no group-specific time trend affects the variation of our groups. Our specification accounts for autocorrelation and has shown to be robust to falsification tests.

Our results show that belonging to the majority leads to an increase of 4.67% in the probability to attend a committee meeting and a decrease in 6.48% in the probability to intervene in public meetings. Also, we do not find evidence of an increase participation or implication in committee meetings, indicating that majority MPs do not take a more active role to the discussion of the bills than their colleagues of the opposition. As for floor meetings, we document that majority MPs do not exploit amendments in order to get additional speaking. The increase in the probability to speak associated with tabling an amendment is 1.6 percentage point lower among majority MPs than in the opposition. They are also less likely to ask long questions to the government.

Altogether, these results provide empirical support to previous work. It sheds light on the fact that majority MPs are incentivized into moving the Government's agenda forward. The majority seems to invest more time in committee meetings in order to prevent the opposition from altering the bill too much. On the other hand, majority MPs will tend to ask shorter question and to put less effort into floor meetings than the opposition. In a nutshell, the majority causes MPs to invest *more* in lawmaking-related missions and *less* in control-related missions.

The remainder is organized as follows: section 1 provides provides some context about the National Assembly. Section 2 presents the related literature. Section 3 presents the dataset. Section 4 presents the empirical strategy and our identifications assumptions. Section 5 presents the results and section 6 the robustness checks. A brief conclusion closes the paper.

1 A brief overview of the the French *Assemblée nationale*

1.1 General considerations

The *Assemblée nationale* (National Assembly) is France's lower chamber. Together with the *Sénat* (Senate) it forms the French Parliament, where the legislative power resides. The National Assembly seats in the Palais Bourbons on the banks of the Seine river in Paris.

1.1.1 The role and the organization of the National Assembly

The National Assembly participates to the missions of the parliament. It votes the bills, controls the action of the Government and evaluates public policies.

The Assembly operates through the *Bureau de l'Assemblée nationale* whose role is to organize its internal functioning. It is composed of 22 members:

- The Speaker of the National assembly,
- Six vice-presidents,
- Three *questeurs* (treasurers),
- Twelve secretaries.

The Speaker of the National Assembly is also the fourth highest office of the State and is elected at the beginning of each legislative term. His role is to rule and organize the debates. He opens and closes meetings and is in charge of the enforcement of the internal regulation.

The other members are elected at the beginning of each session. The political affiliation of the vice-presidents results from a consensus among political groups and one of their main roles is to substitute to the Speaker during public meetings. The treasurers are responsible for the financial administration of the Assembly. No new expense is possible without their approval.

The parliamentary time falls into legislative terms (*législatures*), sessions (*sessions*) and meetings (*séances*). The legislative term lasts five years. The sessions last roughly nine months and up to three public meetings can be held in one day. More precisely, the ordinary session lasts from October, 1st to June, 30th and can be extended between July, 1st and September 30th by the President. In this case, one refers to these spells as *extraordinary* sessions. As for the meetings, they are held in the hemicycle and are open to the public. The slots for the public meetings are 9:30am-1:00pm, 3:00pm-8:00pm and 9:30pm-1:00am.

Since the 2008 Constitutional reform, the agenda of the Parliament is jointly determined by the Government and the Parliament. In practice, it is prepared by the Conference of

Presidents which comprises the Speaker and the vice-presidents of the Assembly, the presidents of the permanent committees, the general rapporteur for the budget committee, the president of the European Affairs Committee and the presidents of the political groups. The Conferences sets a programme for four weeks within the boundaries set by the Constitution:

- Two weeks are dedicated to the agenda set by the Government and the examination of the budget can be prioritized by the Government.
- One over four weeks is dedicated to the control of the Government and the evaluation of public policies.
- One day is dedicated to the agenda set by the opposition and minority groups.
- At least one meeting per week, including during extraordinary meetings, is dedicated to the questions to the Government.

Overall, roughly a fourth of the parliamentary time is dedicated to the control of the Government, the rest of the time is dedicated to the examination of Government and private members' bills.

1.1.2 The deputies: election and status

Deputies are elected for five years by universal suffrage (single member constituency, two-round system). There are 577 MPs, representing 577 constituencies (539 in mainland France, 27 overseas and 11 for the French living abroad). Their mission is to represent the people, vote for the law and control the Government.

MPs can form political groups based on their own political preferences. Groups must contain at least 15 MPs (the minimum was set at 20 before 2009) and have to present to the Assembly a political declaration signed by its members at the beginning of each legislative term. Through this declaration, groups can also self-declare into the opposition. The minority groups are the non-opposing groups but the biggest. The composition of the groups can change over the course of the legislature. Also, MPs can choose to be related and not members of the groups. Their rights are then the same as the members of the groups, except that they are not taken into account in evaluating the size of the group. Opposition groups are granted rights and in particular representative rights in the instances of the Assembly or in the composition of parliamentary committees of inquiry. Finally, the president of the budget committee must come from one of the opposing groups.

MPs benefit from a parliamentary immunity that prevents them from being prosecuted for matters connected to their mandate. They cannot be imposed any custodial measures without the approval of the Bureau.

While in office, they cannot run a national company or a private business receiving public subsidies. They also cannot be lawyers and plead against the State, a national company or a local tier of government. Since 2017, they cannot hold executive responsibilities at a local tier of government (e.g. mayor).

MPs are granted three types of allowances: parliamentary allowance, representation expenses allowance and a credit dedicated to the recruitment of up to five parliamentary assistants. The respective monthly net amounts are of 5,711.08€, 5,373€ and 10,581€. The representation expenses allowances (formerly known as *indemnité représentative des frais de mandat*) was not subject to any control before 2018. They are also granted benefit in kind (e.g. free train on the public railway network). All these measures are justified by the necessity for the MPs to be financially independent in order to ensure that all of them will have the means to devote full attention to their responsibilities.

1.1.3 A word on the legislative procedure

About three-quarters of the time are devoted to legislative work. The legislative procedure seeks to establish a consensus between the two chambers: a bill becomes a law if it is adopted in the same terms by the Assembly and the Senate.

When the Government or an MP table a bill, it is sent to one of the eight permanent committees. The referral to permanent committees became the rule with the reform of 2008. The committee nominates a rapporteur who will be in charge of the preparation of the examination of the bill and the amendments. Before the beginning of the examination, the committee can proceed to hearings. Also, since 2008, the bill brought before the floor is the one the committee agreed on. In this light, the committee can reject or adopt the bill without any further modification or propose a new text including amendments tabled by the MPs or the Government. If the committee does not present a bill, the discussion will be based on the initial draft.

After a spell of at least six weeks, the Conference of the president includes the bill on the agenda. The discussion in public meeting can begin and is organized in two parts. The first part is devoted to a general discussion (*phase d'examen général*) and the second part of an examination article by article (*phase d'examen détaillé*). Discussion can take place under the *temps législatif programmé* (fixed legislative time) framework which defines a total time limit for examining the bill. Procedural motions can lead to the rejection of the bill or the suspension of its examination before the detailed examination or even the general discussion phase.

Once the Assembly has agreed on the bill, it is transmitted to the Senate where it is examined according to similar dispositions. If the Senate does not amend the bill, it is adop-

ted. Otherwise, the legislative shuttle begins: the articles both chambers do not have agreed upon are discussed until all articles are adopted in the same terms.

After one or two lectures, the joint commission can be seized. This commission is made of 7 MPs and 7 Senators representative of the political composition of both chambers. This commission then elects his president, a rapporteur and two vice-presidents and its role is to find a compromise. Each chamber then votes on the text proposed by the joint committee and if the bill is accepted in the same terms, it is adopted. Otherwise, if the conciliation procedure fails, the last word is given to the Assembly: the last text adopted by the lower chamber will be discussed, sent to the Senate and then back again to the Assembly and adopted (the Assembly, however, cannot adopt amendment different than those adopted by the Senate).

There exist particular legislative procedures. The first one is the simplified procedure, which applies to technical texts that have to be voted by the Parliament. In this case, there is no general discussion and the only articles discussed are those for which MPs tabled amendments. In practice, only international agreements are ratified using this procedure.

The second procedure is the *vote bloqué* (Article 44.3 of the Constitution). It allows the Government to ask one of the chambers to cast one vote for several articles or the whole bill. However, this procedure does not override the individual discussion of the articles and the amendments. The third procedure gives the Government to engage its liability before the Assembly (Article 49.3 of the Constitution). If no vote of no-confidence takes place or is adopted, the bill is considered as adopted. Finally, the *ordonnances* give the right to the Government to substitute to the Parliament as the lawmaker.

1.2 Permanent committees

Permanent committees are essential working bodies of the Assembly. Their main mission is to prepare the legislative debate that will take place during the public meetings. Permanent committees also provide information to the Assembly and control the Government. Since 2009, there are 8 permanent committees:

- Cultural affairs and education,
- Economic affairs,
- Foreign affairs,
- Social affairs,
- National defense and armed forces,

- Sustainable development and land-use,
- Finance, the general economy, and budget,
- Constitutional laws, legislation and general administration of the Republic.

Each committee has its own conference room as well as human and financial resources to operate. Most of the legislative work is achieved during the permanent committees: 79.43% (11,508 out of 14,489) of the meetings our dataset contains correspond to committee meetings.

As mentioned above, permanent committees are the bodies seized when one tables a bill. However, a special committee can be created upon request of either Government or the deputies. In practice, almost all bills are examined by permanent committees.

1.2.1 MPs and permanent committees

Each permanent committee comprises at least 70 members and its composition should reflect the political composition of the Assembly. MPs register to only one committee (Accoyer, 2012) but their registration can be modified at any time. Each committee then elects its president, four vice-presidents, and four secretaries. The president of the Budget committee must come from the opposition and the budget committee also elects a general rapporteur, as well as social affairs committee since 2017. In most cases, committee meetings never take place at the same time as permanent committees. In practice, the Wednesday morning is dedicated to the committee meetings and almost all meetings take place between the Tuesday afternoon and the Wednesday.

Attendance is compulsory since 2009 and financial sanctions representing up to 25% of the parliamentary allowance can be enforced. MPs also have the possibility to attend other committee meetings.

1.2.2 The examination of the texts by the committees

The 2008 reform dramatically changed the role of the committees in the legislative procedure. Indeed, the text that will be debated is the one the committee has agreed upon. As such, if one wants to argue against the committee's position, tabling amendments prior to the examination in public committees is necessary.

When a committee has to review a bill, it first nominates a rapporteur who will have to write a report and propose amendments on the bill. The committee can also hear whomsoever it considers relevant. After the presentation of the report, the committee proceeds to a general discussion and a review of the bill article by article. The committee also discusses

the amendments tabled for each article. The members of the committee, the Government, and the rapporteur can table amendments to the extent that they are financially feasible. The discussion and decisions are less formal than during floor meetings.

The report produced by the rapporteur keeps track of all the work, discussions and amendments related to the bill. It also relates the conclusions of the committee regarding the bill (adoption, adoption of an amended text or rejection) and serves as a basis for the discussion in floor meetings.

1.2.3 The other missions of the committees

Committees also have control and inquiry powers. They can proceed to hearings, designate MPs to lead information missions or to evaluate a policy. Six months after a law is passed, the former rapporteur has to write a report of adoption relating the state of adoption of the law.

1.3 Public meetings

Public meetings fall into two big categories: meetings dedicated to the discussion of a bill or to the control of the Government. In both cases, MPs must abide by precise speaking rules. Public meetings are directed by the Speaker who opens, closes and can suspend the meetings. He also makes sure that everybody abides by the internal regulation.

During the meeting, committee presidents, rapporteurs, group presidents and the Government have a special role. The rapporteurs and committee president have the right to speak and their interventions are not deducted from the quota allotted to their group. Group president can ask for a suspension. They can argue against the fixed legislative time procedure or ask for extra speaking time. The Government has no speaking time limit.

1.3.1 The discussion of the bills

During the general discussion, each group's speaking time is proportional to its size. The president of each group chooses his speakers and the duration of their interventions, comprised between 5 and 20 minutes. The Speaker of the Assembly determines the order of intervention.

For the detailed examination phase, each MP can register in order to intervene on a given article. He is then allowed two minutes of speaking time. The Speaker then opens the discussion on the amendments attached to this article. Everybody is allowed to table an amendment prior to the public discussion. The author of the amendment, the presid-

ent of the seized committee or the rapporteur, the Government and a speaker against the amendment can intervene. All speakers but the Government can speak up to two minutes.

If the debate takes place under the fixed legislative time, the rules are the same except that the overall amount of time spent on the bill is fixed in advance. Also, opposition groups receive 60% of the speaking time quota. This quota is then shared proportionally among the opposition groups. As for the non-opposition group, they also allocate their 40% share proportionally. Also, in this case, each individual intervention is not limited in time (only the total amount of time is). All interventions are considered except those from the rapporteur, the committee president and the group presidents (up to one hour if the total discussion time is set at 40 hours or lower, two hours otherwise). Under this procedure, it is also possible for any MP to deliver an explanation of vote of up to five minutes. These explanations are not counted in the time-quota of their group. When a group runs out of time, the Assembly votes on its amendments without any explanation.

1.3.2 The questions to the Government

There are two types of questions in floor meetings: oral questions and questions to the Government. The latter are broadcasted live and often deal with burning issues while oral questions are more specific and deal with local matters. During the questions to the Government, the opposition and the majority can ask 15 questions each. The speaker has two minutes to ask his question, and the Government two minutes to answer.

The oral questions are targeted to a precise minister. Again, the majority and the opposition can both ask 16 questions. The total time allocated for the question and its answer is six minutes. The oral question meetings take place during the control week, usually on Tuesday and Thursday while the questions to the Government take place every Tuesday and Wednesday.

2 Literature review

2.1 Political institutions, politicians and policy choices

Understanding how political institutions are shaped and how they work is necessary to identify their influence on policymaking and ultimately economic outcomes. In this light, the theory has focused on the forms of government and electoral rules (Persson and Tabellini, 2002).

Theory predicts that presidential regimes (i.e. a regime where the agenda-setting power falls to the president) achieve greater accountability (defined as the means the people has to

punish or reward politicians and select the best-elected officials) than parliamentary regimes thanks to a more direct chain of delegation and a stronger separation of powers. As for the electoral rules, it turns out that majoritarian systems (i.e. systems where politicians are elected within single-member districts) will achieve lower representativity but greater accountability if entry barriers (due to platform endorsements) do not dominate the accountability effect.

Persson and Tabellini (2005) tested these predictions using cross-country comparisons. They documented the fact that countries with a presidential system tend to have smaller government and a smaller welfare state than countries with a parliamentary regime. They also showed that electoral rules have an impact on rents, corruption, and aggregate productivity. However, the validity of the interpretation of these results as being the *causal* effect of the political institutions was questioned by Acemoglu (2005) who argued that the instrumental strategy of Persson and Tabellini (2005) did not allow to rule out potential reverse-causality biases. Yet Persson (2005), using transitions to democracy and constitutional reforms argued that parliamentary regimes elected through with proportional rule tend to achieve higher growth outcomes.

Within-country studies on the other hand focused on the identification of incentive channels that could affect the attitudes of representatives and public regulators towards the outcomes of interests (namely accountability and representation). The role of term limits (Besley and Case, 1995), elections versus appointments (Besley and Coate, 2003), the media in both developing (Reinikka and Svensson, 2004, 2005, 2006) and developed countries (Snyder Jr and Strömberg, 2010) or the impact of the isolation of capital cities (Campante and Do, 2014) on either corruption or transfers were highlighted.

Applied works have also studied parliaments. On the one hand, papers have focused on the determinants of voting. Levitt (1996) proposed a framework capable of disentangling the relative importance of constituents' preferences, partisan affiliation and senator's personal ideology in the process of voting and showed that the latter dimension was the main determinant of voting. These results are comforted by Lee et al.'s (2004) findings on the role of voting on policy formation. Using close-race in the US House of Representatives, they showed that voters merely elect policy rather than affect policy formation. Also, Harmon et al. (2017) provided evidence of peer effects in legislative voting. Exploiting the fact that European Members of Parliament seat both in Brussels and in Strasbourg, they showed that seating adjacently reduces by 7% the likelihood that two members deputies from the same party differ in their vote. Finally, Willumsen and Öhberg (2012) shows that in the Swedish context, MPs who belong to the government show more loyalty to their party.

On the other hand, several researchers focused on the determinants of pork-barrel transfers. Carozzi and Repetto (2016) reported the existence of a birth-town bias that induced members of the Italian parliament to favor transfers towards their birth town when they were not elected in their birth district. Still in the Italian context, Gagliarducci et al. (2011) used the fact that the House of Representatives allowed candidates to run on both majoritarian and proportional lists. Their RDD identification scheme revealed the majoritarian system incentivized MPs to put forward more targeted bills and to show lower absenteeism rates. Similar evidence of the impact of electoral rules on pork-barrel transfers was presented by Stratmann and Baur (2002). The authors relied on a particular feature of the German electoral system (which mixes "first-past-the-post" and proportional representation) to show that legislators elected through the proportional system served less the interests of their constituents than their colleagues elected through the FPTP system. However, as documented by Hirano (2011) in the case of Japan, the tendency of the legislators to favor their constituency can be counterbalanced by the discipline of the political party they belong to.

2.2 Distributive politics, pork-barrel, and French politicians

Few papers study the impact of political institutions on economic outcomes in the case of France. The only paper related to France Golden and Min (2013) refer to in their review is Cadot et al.'s (2006) study on the contribution of transport infrastructure accumulation to regional growth. These authors develop a theoretical framework in which rent-seeking politicians choose the level of investment in a public good. Their decision can be influenced by external lobbies granting them a *ego rent* (e.g. reconversion after the elections) on top of the *power rent* they derive from being in office. Their framework predicts that long periods in power will tend to lower the relative value of the *power rent*, thus inducing politicians to favor the lobbies' interests in their allocation decisions. Using panel regional data covering the 1985-1992 period, the authors then provide evidence in favor of strong electoral concerns and influence activities in the determinants of infrastructure allocation.

Other papers documented the political connection that exists between CEOs and politicians. Bertrand et al. (2007) show that politically-connected CEOs tend to follow the electoral cycle by postponing plant closing announcements after the elections in politically contested areas. They also argue, contrary to other studies, that these connections come at a cost for the firms since politically connected firms exhibit lower profit than unconnected firms. As for Coulomb and Sangnier (2014), they showed that firms connected to top politicians can benefit from the political majorities. Indeed, they shed light on a change in the firm's' market capitalization that was connected to the 2007 presidential elections front-runners. Also,

they show that the market capitalization also responded for firms that were likely to benefit from the candidates' platforms.

More recently, Fabre and Sangnier (2017) and Fabre (2017) proposed renewed investigation on pork-barrel politics and political connections in France. Fabre and Sangnier (2017) shows that municipalities formerly held by government members receive on average 45% more discretionary investment subsidies when in office than other municipalities. On the other hand, Fabre (2017) contributed to the political connections literature by showing how multiple office holding leads to an increase in the county grants of about 28% as compared to municipalities in which the mayor does not simultaneously hold a seat at the county tier.

Multiple office holding being a distinctive feature of the French political landscape, some authors advocate for its suppression. Bach (2012) showed that the multiple office holding reduces attendance to committee meetings by 25% to 45% and interventions in floor meeting by 20–30% to 50%. To recover this effect, he relies on the same data sources as ours and exploits the fact that local and national electoral cycles are not synchronized.

To the best of our knowledge, Bach's (2012) contribution is the only contribution to the field of economics regarding the French National Assembly. However, data gathered by Regard Citoyens was also used by Navarro et al. (2012) to propose a methodology to measure the efficiency of French deputies. They judge the data collected by Regard Citoyens as being sufficiently representative of the MPs missions and identify for the year 2010 a negative impact of multiple offices holding on performance as well as a specialization between MPs of the opposition and the majority. Indeed, Left-wing MPs (opposition) tended to ask more written and oral questions than their right-wing (majority) counterpart. They also document the fact that MPs holding responsibilities within committees are more efficient than the other MPs.

The French National Assembly has received little attention from scholars and is seen as an institution on the decline, especially since 1958 and the fact that since 1958 "*[the] parliament has been subordinated to the dictates of an all-powerful executive body*" (Costa and Kerrouche, 2009). However, for the past 15 years, the French parliament has been receiving growing attention that leads Navarro et al. (2012) to talk about a "*comeback to the parliament*".

Recent developments updated the analysis on two main aspects of the National Assembly: highly polarized (Wood, 1968) and cohesive (Wilson and Wiste, 1976) political groups along the majority/opposition divide. These features, that appeared with the Vth Republic (1958) and the election of the president by direct universal suffrage (1962), remain even today distinctive features of the French National Assembly.

Kerrouche (2006) shows that the Assembly is characterized by a constant political battle between the opposition and the majority. The intensity of this struggle can be gauged by

the number of amendments or private members' bills tabled by the opposition. Yet, he argues that members of the opposition have a greater likelihood to affect legislation during committee meetings and opposes the floor meetings which he sees as "*the forum for visible politics*".

Sauger (2009) computes the Rice index (which reports on a 0-100 scale the degree of cohesion of a group) and finds that after a short decline, the Rice index increased dramatically to reach an average of 98 over the 1988-2007 spell. Also, he showed that the probability for two parties who voted the same way on a roll-call vote will again vote in the same way is 88%, as opposed to 62% during the Fourth Republic. The two blocks, right and left, even achieved an almost perfect cleavage during the XIth legislative term (1997-2002). Since MPs are elected through majoritarian rule, these results are from a theoretical point of view surprising. To explain this contradiction, Sauger (2009) argues that the concentration of campaign resources explains why MPs show loyalty to the party.

2.3 Contributions

Empirical works have shown that politicians in general and members of parliament, in particular, respond to incentives no matter the institutional setting. Most empirical works showed that pork-barrel transfers can be magnified by electoral rules to the extent that party discipline is not too strong.

The literature mostly focuses on outcomes such as intergovernmental transfers or voting behaviors. Others outcomes such as participation or attendance at meetings receive little attention. Especially in the case of the French National Assembly, few empirical research exploited publicly available data on presence and participation of the deputies.

Our goal is to propose a robust econometric framework in order to identify the precise causal impact of belonging to the majority. Studies dealing with the National Assembly are mostly descriptive and qualitative. Although Bach (2012) reports some statistical regularities, he does not investigate the causal impact of the majority any further. Our sample contains attendance, interventions, and participation of all MPs from the XIIIth to the currently ongoing XVth legislative terms (2007-2018), including majority changes.

Our contribution is therefore twofold. On the one hand, we will use these data so as to recover the causal impact of the majority on implication outcomes, hence contributing to the wide body of empirical research dealing with politicians' responses to incentives. On the other hand, these results will contribute to the document further the literature on the French lower chamber.

3 Data sources

Our dataset exploits the database constructed by the association Regards citoyens. Their database aggregate official data from the National Assembly website and the *Journal officiel*[1], in order to provide quasi-real time information about the MPs' activities. We constructed from the ground-up a dataset designed for empirical analyses based on their data. Appendix II provides an extensive description of this process.

3.1 Towards a panel dataset

Since 2009, Regards citoyens has been aggregating data on the activities of the deputies. Their database covers the XIIIth, XIVth, and the ongoing XVth legislative terms, that is a period of about 11 years and counting. They summarize the activity of the MPs using 10 indicators:

1. The number of operational weeks,
2. The number of committees attended,
3. The number of interventions in committees,
4. The number of long interventions in floor meetings (defined as interventions of more than 20 words),
5. The number of amendments signed,
6. The number of written reports produced,
7. The number of bills tabled,
8. The number of bills signed,
9. The number of written questions,
10. The number of oral questions.

The indicators constructed by Regard citoyens encompass all publicly available information provided by the National Assembly and the authorities regarding the MPs productions and work.

Although not directly available on their webpage, their dataset also includes a measure of the participation to floor meetings, which comprises all the interventions during floor

[1]The *Journal officiel de la République française* is the official journal of the French Republic in which are recorded all legislative events, regulations, official declarations and legal publication. It is the French equivalent of the *Federal Register* or the *London Gazette*.

meetings and not only the interventions of more than 20 words. As for the amendments, amendments tabled before floor meetings have been collected since 2007 while all amendments (including committee amendments) have only been available since the XIVth legislative term. They deliver information about the activity of the MP provided that he was operational for at least 10 months over the past year. If the mandate of an MP ends before the end of the legislative term, the indicators are frozen.

The data regarding the participation in committee and floor meetings directly comes from the official publications. The attendance to committees is based on the attendance records published in the *Journal officiel*, at the end of the meetings summaries or in the summaries of the video retranscription of the meetings. Participation in floor meetings is based on the full transcript written during the meetings and published in the *Journal officiel* since 1869. Each intervention is then attributed to an MP and characterized (number of words, type of intervention).

Each intervention is also assigned to a meeting, a date and a time in the day. If relevant, they are attached to a committee. Our purpose is not to propose a comprehensive overview as Regard citoyen does, but rather to reconstruct the chronology of the events that have occured at the National Assembly since 2007.

From the indicators cited above, we explicitly recover the number of committees attended (2) and the number of intervention in committees (3) as well as the number of long intervention in floor meetings (4). Implicitly, we also have information on the number of amendment signed (5), the number of oral questions (10) and the number of active weeks (1). We also recover the overall participation to floor meetings (unpublished data). Since our focus is on the determinants of attendance and participation, we do not include information about the number of bills tabled (7) and signed (8), nor information about the written reports (6) and the number of written questions (9).

Instead of proposing a cross-sectional view of these indicators we propose a panel description. For each MP, we extract the number of meetings (both floor and committee) he was supposed to attend and indicate which meetings he attended. We also identify when an MP was rapporteur or when he tabled an amendment and associate these characteristics with the relevant floor meetings[2].

The meetings fall into two categories: floor and committees. For the floor meetings, everybody is supposed to be present so the baseline for the participation is at most the total number of public meeting that took place during each legislative term (resp. 1306, 1359 and

[2]The agenda of the floor meeting is not directly identified from the data. Instead, we use the fact that interventions are classified according to their topic. On the other hand, each bill is associated with a topic and each amendment with a bill. Merging all these information together allowed us to indicate if the MP tabled an amendment or was rapporteur for the bill that has been discussed at this given floor meeting.

316 meetings). Each meeting is associated with a type (legislative or control) depending on whether or not the interventions recorded for this meeting included questions. As for the committee meetings, MPs are only supposed to attend the meetings of the committee they are registered in. In this light, for each MP, we associate his committee meeting based on the biographical information provided for each deputy[3] on the National Assembly website. We then consider the number of meetings that took place while he was registered in a given committee. This allows us to compare the attendance of each MP relative to the overall activity of his meeting. Attendance and participation are then assigned in a similar manner as in the case of the floor meetings.

Our sample is also restricted to the MPs that were reelected at least one time. This leaves us with MPs in office over the three legislative terms, only the XIVth and the XVth, only the XIIIth and the XIVth and for the XIIIth and the XVth legislative terms. What is more, MPs who did not attend any meeting (e.g. due to a nomination in the Government) are excluded.

On top of the information directly provided by the raw database, we coded the political career of each MP and included it as additional variables. These variables code the local offices held by the MP (past and present) as well as his experience in each of these offices. We also added district-specific information (population, distance to Paris and travel time by train) and information regarding the localization of the MP in the hemicycle. Overall, our database can be summarized as follows:

- *Identification variables (5 variables)*: these variables have no econometric value, their only purpose is to sort the observation or group of observations.
- *Individual characteristics (28 variables)*: these variables provide information about the MP: his sex, age, district or socio-professional status. By construction, some variables (e.g. `groupe`) can change from one legislature to another.
- *District characteristics (5 variables)*: these variables give information about the district the MP represents. Their value can change if the MP changes district from one legislature to another. The variable `circ_pop` (which gives the population of the district) is updated at each legislature.
- *Status in the National Assembly (6 variables)*: these variables control for the committee the MP is a member of (which can change arbitrarily over the course of the legislature), his potential responsibilities within his committee, the Assembly and his political group. We also control for by-elections.

[3]The database of Regards Citoyens only features the last permanent committee the MP registered in. If a change occurred during the legislative term - which does happen very often - the past information is erased.

- *Multiple office holders (20 variables)*: these variables indicate whether the MP had responsibilities at local tiers of government during his term.
- *Past local offices (55 variables)*: these variables code the local political career of the MP. However, they are only included for the XIIth and the XIVth legislatures (i.e. 95% of the total number of observations).
- *Parameters of interest (2 variables)*: we included 2 majority dummies, depending on whether one account for the "broad" or the "narrow" definition of the majority.
- *Outcome variables (13 variables)*: these variables keep track of the presence, participation, the number of interventions and word said during both floor and committee meetings.

In the end, our database contains 1,359,199 observations, nested in 423 panels. The dataset also features 14,489 meetings. MPs are not observed across all meetings (unbalanced panel) for the simple reason that they do not have to attend *all* committee meetings. Also, some MPs have shorter spells than others, so the subtotal of meetings that they could have attended might also be different.

3.2 The main variables and their interpretation

Throughout our analysis, we will rely on specific variables. This section briefly documents further how they were constructed, what do measure and how should one interpret them.

3.2.1 Variables attached to the MPs

Majority (`maj_1`) Is a binary variable taking value one if MP *i* belongs to the majority group at time *t*. The definition of the majority is based on the definition of the National Assembly. The majority status is attached to *groups* and not individuals so that if an MP quits his group, he also loses his status of member of the majority. MPs related to the majoritarian group are also considered as majority members.

Amendment (`amendement`) Is a binary variable taking value one if the MP tabled an amendment related to the bill being discussed at floor meeting *t*. The identification of the meeting rests on an indirect association through a recomposition of the agenda of the meeting. If the bill was examined over several meetings, `amendment` still equals one. This means that we do not recover the precise moment where the MP defended his amendment but rather the meetings during which the bill he tabled an amendment for is examined. As such, the mean for `amendements` is 0.3779774, as opposed to only 0.0733393 for `pres_h`.

Rapporteur (`rapporteur`) Is also a binary variable taking value one if the MP was a rapporteur of the bill being examined on floor meetings. Unfortunately, we couldn't identify committee meetings. However, this is of low importance since being rapporteur grants speaking rights only in floor meetings. As for the amendments, the `rapporteur` takes one as long as the text for which the MP is rapporteur is examined.

Question (`question`) Is a binary variable taking value one if, among his interventions at a given meeting, he asked at least one question.

3.2.2 Variables attached to committee meetings

Attendance (`pres_com`) Is a binary variable indicating whether the MP attended the meeting. Identification of attendance is based on the process described in section 3.1. We also distinguish compulsory attendance, when the MP attended the meeting of the committee he is registered in and non-compulsory if his attendance was recorded in another permanent committee.

Participation (`participation`) Is a binary variable taking value one if the MP participate at least once to the committee meeting. This variable is recovered from the number of interventions and indicates if the number of intervention recorded for the given meeting is strictly positive.

Logarithm of interventions (`log_c_inter`) Is defined when the number of interventions is positive only. The rationale for this variable is to measure the implication of the MP, i.e. to gauge whether he only said a word or engaged a discussion with his colleagues. We use a logarithmic transformation in order to account for very talkative MPs.

3.2.3 Variables attached to floor meetings

Participation (`pres_h`) Is a binary variable taking value one if the MP intervened at least once during the floor meeting in question. We talk about participation and not attendance because we do not observe MPs who were present but did not talk.

Logarithm of interventions (`log_long`) This variable is similar to its committee counterpart and accounts for the implication in the debates of the MPs. However, it is defined on the number of *long* interventions (i.e. superior to twenty words). The restriction to long intervention for the baseline computation is based on the fact that it will allow comparing MPs who actually took part to the debates and exclude MPs who only said a few words.

Long interventions (`tribune`) Is a binary variable taking value one if the MP said more than 1,000 words during an intervention. This variable aims at capturing *who* addresses the Assembly the most: interventions of 1,000 words roughly corresponds to an intervention of five minutes or longer.

3.3 Selective summary statistics

Table 1 presents selective summary statistics. Variables selected include basic biographical and political information as well as district characteristics and the summary statistics of the main variables used in our analysis. The complete summary statistics are presented in Appendix I.

Table 1: Summary statistics

	N	Mean	Std. dev	Min	Median	Max
Age	1,356,119	56.7845	8.980632	28	58	80
Sex	1,356,119	0.8007756	0.3994173	0	1	1
Experience	1,356,119	5.006975	5.221099	0	3	34
Total experience	1,356,119	8.48217	7.168048	0	5	34
No. mandates	1,356,119	2.997103	1.780909	1	3	10
Executive	1,356,119	0.5838728	0.4929153	0	1	1
MOH	1,356,119	0.8692696	0.3371054	0	1	1
Former mayor	1,120,385	0.5622639	0.4961083	0	1	1
Parachute	1,273,906	0.4579647	0.4982301	0	0	1
District pop.	1,333,636	975,585.7	632,373.7	6,072	794,497	2,612,189

(a) Personal and political statistics

	N	Mean	Std. dev	Min	Median	Max
Majority	1,356,119	0.419166	0.4934228	0	0	1
Amendment	1,004,277	0.3779774	0.4848822	0	0	1
Rapporteur	1,004,277	0.0470737	0.2117966	0	0	1
Question	1,004,277	0.0193731	0.1378327	0	0	1
Com. Presence	351,842	0.4132338	0.4924148	0	0	1
Com. Participation	147,951	0.4133936	0.4924439	0	0	1
Com. Log interventions	61,162	0.6154763	0.8816934	0	0	5.068904
Floor Participation	1,004,277	0.0733393	0.2606928	0	0	1
Floor Log interventions	49,801	1.290144	1.028096	0	1.098612	5.746203
Floor Tribune	1,004,277	0.0178009	0.1322271	0	0	1

(b) Variables of interest

Notes: Summary statistics of the personal characteristics (table 1a) and the variables of interest presented in section 3.2 (table 1b). Executive takes value 1 if the MP simultaneously holds executive responsibilities at a local government tier (no matter the tier). MOH refers to any kind of multiple office holding. Former mayor takes value 1 if the MP has ever been elected mayor (over his whole political career). Parachute indicates if the district of election is different from the birth district

4 Empirical strategy

Our aim is to estimate the causal impact of the treatment "belonging to the majority" on participation and attendance outcomes. To do it, we exploit the majority switch that occurred in 2012 and see if it has induced a modification of the behaviors. A natural framework to model such patterns is a potential-outcome framework as proposed by Rubin (1974). Such a framework was already used by Gagliarducci et al. (2011) in order to study the impact of electoral rules on MPs behavior.

We define D_{it} as our treatment variable. The observed outcome can be written as $Y_{it}(D_{it}) = Y_{it}(0) + D_{it}(Y_{it}(1) - Y_{it}(0))$. We are interested in the average treatment effect on the treated, that is strictly speaking the impact of belonging to the majority on MPs who have ever been members of the majority. This choice is motivated by the fact that a key requirement to have a chance to belong to the majority is to be a member of a Government party. In our sample, 55 out of 423 MPs never entered the majority. Our definition of the majority follows the definition of the National Assembly. The majority group is defined as the biggest non-opposing groups.

Our identification strategy consists in using change in majority that followed the 2012 general elections. This will allow us to rule out all potential partisan effects that could undermine the identification. Since political affiliation influences the way MPs behave, if we follow only one political group, we might be worried that our effect will correspond to both the *partisan effect*, i.e. the influence of the political affiliation on behavior and the "pure" *majority effect*.

Elections or close races are often used as a way to recover the causal impact of a treatment. For instance, Bach (2012) exploits local electoral outcomes in order to identify the impact of multiple offices holding on participation. We also exploit the fact that since the Constitutional reform of 2000, the general election takes place shortly after the presidential election. The consequence of this reform is the "*transformation into an 'election of confirmation' of the second round of the presidential election*" (Sauger, 2007). For our identification strategy, this means that MPs have themselves little chance to influence their reelection since it is likely to be determined by the outcome of the presidential election.

As for the disentanglement of two effects (*partisan* and *majority* in our case), the problem was initially raised by Willumsen and Öhberg (2012). The solution we provide is somewhat similar to the pattern of Fisman and Miguel (2007) in order to assess the relative importance of legal enforcement over cultural norms in the development of bureaucratic corruption or uncivilness.

4.1 Descriptive evidence

The regularities and the uneven repartition of responsibilities between majority and non-majority members also arise from our data. Table 2 shows that some positions are exclusively held by majority members (e.g. Speaker of the National Assembly, general rapporteurs) and that majority members are overrepresented in almost every instances of the Assembly of the committees. Table 2a only refers to the distributions within the Bureau of the Assembly. It should be noted that the composition of the Bureau is itself more favorable to majority members: non-majority MPs are overrepresented (58.35%) among regular MPs (who are not members of the Bureau). This suggests that belonging to the majority drives the participation to the executive instances of the committees and the National Assembly.

Table 2: Repartition of the responsibilities depending on the majority status

(a) Bureau of the National Assembly

	Majority status		
Bureau position	0	1	Total
PRES	0.00	100.00	100.00
QUEST	41.28	58.72	100.00
SEC	68.21	31.79	100.00
VP	40.67	59.33	100.00
Total	52.93	47.07	100.00

(b) Position within committees

	Majority status		
Committee position	0	1	Total
MEMBRE	59.77	40.23	100.00
PRES	13.70	86.30	100.00
RG	0.00	100.00	100.00
RGB	0.00	100.00	100.00
SEC	68.74	31.26	100.00
VP	42.33	57.67	100.00
Total	58.09	41.91	100.00

Notes: On table 2a, "PRES" refers to the Speaker of the National Assembly, QUEST to the "questeurs" (i.e. treasurers), SEC to the secretaries, VP to the vice-presidents. As for table 2b, RGB refers to "rapporteur général du budget" (general rapporteur for the budget committee), an MP whose role is to present budget bills and ensure the coordination between the Government and the Assembly. The "RG" (general rapporteur for the social affairs committee) holds a similar position as his budget counterpart. Percentages correspond to the share of observations labeled with majority or non-majority members.

Turning to the influence of the majority on the behavior, several facts should be noted. Table 3 reports the means for the amendments tabled, questions asked and rapporteur nominations. On average, non-majority members table more amendments prior to a floor meeting than majority members. They also ask more questions and are less often nominated rapporteurs. These results are not surprising: for instance, amendments have long been a mean for the opposition to filibuster. Kerrouche (2006) notes that amendments "*[are] principally a weapon of the opposition's armoury in its battle with the Government*".

Finally, the majority status also leads to different levels of participation to floor meetings or attendance at committee meetings. As it can be seen from table 4, on average, majority members intervene *less* in floor meetings and attend *more* committee meetings.

Table 3: Repartition of amendments, questions and rapporteur status

	Behavior measures		
Majority status	Amendments	Questions	Rapporteur status
0	0.47076522	0.02446184	0.03285271
1	0.24836634	0.01226498	0.06693827
Total	0.37797739	0.01937314	0.04707367

Notes: Reports the averages conditional on the majority status (value 1 if treated). All variables are binary variables taking 1 if the MP either tabled an amendment, asked a question or had the rapporteur status for the law that was being examined. All these variables refer to the floor part of the legislative process.

Table 4: Participation and attendance averages

	Implication outcomes	
Majority status	Participation (hemicycle)	Attendance (committees)
0	0.07747074	0.38351589
1	0.06756834	0.45348331
Total	0.07333933	0.41323378

Notes: Reports the averages conditional on the majority status. Participation takes value 1 if the MP intervened at least once during a public meeting. Attendance takes value 1 if the MP attended the committee meeting in question.

All these descriptive evidence do not control for potential confounding factors such as the size of the group in the case of the participation in the hemicycle. Indeed, without more information, we could think that the participation of the majority MPs is lower because of a bigger group size, hence a lower individual probability to speak. Therefore in order to recover the causal impact of the majority, we need to formulate some identification assumptions.

4.2 Identification assumptions

The main threat to identification is that time-varying confounding factors might not be sufficiently controlled for. Different endowments and accumulation rates of political capital, an endogenous shift in the internal regulations of the Assembly and discontinuities in the group-specific time trends are the three main factors we need to take into consideration.

4.2.1 Heterogeneity across MPs

There are two main difficulties in estimating the causal effect of belonging to the majority. The first one comes from the fact that there is an important level of self-selection. This is the reason why we restrict our sample to those who have ever been member of the majority. By

doing so, we expect not to lose relevant information regarding the impact of belonging to the majority. As shown by Sauger (2009), the institutions of the Vth Republic are such that almost perfect bipartisanship is achieved with two groups forming the core of the majority and the opposition and smaller groups gradually joining one of the two sides (center and center-right parties aligned on the Gaullist movement and the center-left radicals with the Socialists). Moreover, restricting our sample to the biggest groups limits the disturbance induced by a too large heterogeneity in the group sizes.

We can provide some empirical evidence in support of this idea. MPs who have ever been part of the majority differ from those who never participated to it. Table 5 presents a balance check between the subgroup of MPs who have ever been members of the majority and those who have not. A striking fact is that Majority MPs are on average more experienced, older and elected from a district they are not born in. These features together advocate for the fact that MPs who have more political capital are more likely to be a member of the majority. An explanation for this might simply be that governmental parties being bigger on average, getting an endorsement is harder and therefore takes more time. We can also note that our sample contains only the most experienced MPs: there is no significant difference in the number of mandates of nor the total experience.

By selecting only the MPs who were in the majority, we avoid a potential political capital bias. It allows us to avoid a potential omitted variable bias since political capital is at most imperfectly captured by a fixed effect. For the same reason, we exclude from our sample members of the Bureau of the National Assembly and of the committees since such positions affect are partly determined by the political capital of the MP and affect in turn his attendance. The positive correlation between responsibilities and participation was highlighted by Navarro et al. (2012) who report an average FDH score of 0.936, meaning that almost all presidents are at the efficiency frontier, whereas standard members' average score is 33.4%, meaning that they achieve a third of the interventions they could realize given their presence.

Also, given the unprecedented turnover that followed the 2017 general election, we exclude from our sample the second majority switch. Indeed, most re-elected majority members are highly self-selected and the primo deputies are by definition excluded from our sample.

Table 5: Balance check between treated and non-treated MPs

	Majority	Opposition only	Difference
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Nb. of mandates	3.734417	3.555046	-0.179371
	(1.645662)	(1.670894)	(0.128360712)
Avg. experience	4.876626	4.384745	0.491881**
	(2.903638)	(2.763319)	(0.215526063)
Avg. age	56.42872	53.97853	2.45019***
	(8.733954)	(8.872616)	(0.68152711)
Executive	0.5501355	0.3623853	0.1877502***
	(0.4978175)	(0.4817956)	(0.037424661)
MOH	0.8726287	0.8211009	0.0515278*
	(0.3336145)	(0.3841499)	(0.028770523)
Former Mayor	0.7534483	0.8043478	-0.0508995
	(0.4313755)	(0.3988756)	(0.031336432)
Parachute	0.4390244	0.353211	0.0858134**
	(0.4966046)	(0.4790676)	(0.037241736)
District pop.	980415.5	960778	19637.5
	(621215.3)	(680412.7)	(51444.99508)
Total experience	8.425474	8.385321	0.040153
	(7.098493)	(6.842411)	(0.532016359)

Standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Executive takes value 1 if the MP simultaneously holds executive responsibilities at a local government tier (no matter the tier). MOH refers to any kind of multiple office holding. Former mayor takes value 1 if the MP has ever been elected mayor (over his whole political career). Parachute indicates if the district of election is different from the birth district.

4.2.2 Modification of the internal regulation

Another concern is the fact that a change in the rules can affect the participation of the MPs. The 2008 Constitutional reform impacted several dispositions of the internal regulation of the Assembly. We are worried that a change in the rules leads to a loss of information when using one legislative term as counterfactual. More specifically, two mechanisms could undermine the identification of the causal effect of the majority. On the one hand, a change in the inner regulation could have an impact on attendance, hence leading to a joint estimation of the effect of the majority and the reform. On the other hand, the Constitutional reform could have an impact on the behavior of majority members.

Table 6 investigates the effects of this constitutional reform. Columns (1) to (5) report the effect of the reform on committee attendance and columns (6) to (10) report the effect on floor meetings. Columns (1) to (3) and (6) to (8) are restricted to the XIIIth legislative term. Two different variables (and two different margins of one month before/after the rules changed) are used to account for the fact that the disposition did not come into force at the same time.

Since October 2009 attendance is made compulsory in committee meetings through the update of internal regulation and financial sanctions are enforced. As it can be seen on table 6, the change in the rules resulted in a 4.72% increase in the probability to attend a meeting. The effects are even larger, 7.10%, around the cut-off.

The disposition that could have a differentiated impact among majority members is the *temps législatif programmé* (TLP) which allows 40% of the total discussion time to the majority and the rest to the opposition. This disposition came into force in April 2009. If we do not control for this new disposition, then we might be worried that tout estimated coefficient will report in the case of floor meetings the joint effect of the time limit and the majority. Between 2009 and 2011, this accelerated procedure was used 26 times but with no way of comparing nor any possibility to identify the recourse to this procedure from the data, we cannot infer anything relevant from these statistics.

However, our sample is restricted to the biggest opposition and non-opposition groups. Also, given the fact that there are more opposition groups than minority groups, the share the majority receives is likely to be similar to the share of time allotted to the biggest opposition group. As such, it could be that the share of time of the core majority is comparable to the share received by the biggest opposition group. In order to provide some support to this assumption, we estimate the impact of the reform on floor interventions (columns (3) to (5) of table 6). It turns out that the sole effect of the reform is a global increase in the number of interventions of 1.86% around the cut-off. However, this effect is not persistent (column (4)) and more importantly, neither in the long run nor in the short run did the reform have an impact on attendance among the majority (columns (1) and (5)).

Three mechanisms can explain the absence of impact of the *TLP* on floor meeting outcomes: MPs anticipated the reform they voted for few months before, the reform has no impact due to the similar magnitudes or it is because the dispositions of the *TLP* were already enforced as informal rules. In all cases, we do not have to worry about the potential effects of this disposition.

Finally, the Constitutional reform introduced new dispositions in order to limit the use of amendments as a way to filibuster. Each amendment can be refused by the Speaker of the Assembly if it does not meet some requirements (financial admissibility, relevance).

Overall the constitutional reform has a significant impact on the probability to attend a committee meeting (significant difference between (4) and (5)) and floor meetings (significant difference between (9) and (10)). Therefore, we should exclude the pre-reform era in order to avoid a joint estimation of the effect of the majority and the reform. Also, there is no difference of a differentiated impact of the reform among majority members (columns (2)-(3) and (7)-(8))

4.2.3 Discontinuities in the group-specific time trends

We built our identification strategy in order to disentangle the pure majority effect from a potential partisan effect that could result from the fact that left-wing and right-wing MPs conceive their role differently. Wilson and Wiste (1976) reports that during the early ages of the Vth Republic, the Gaullist movement (right-wing) was more disciplined than the socialist opposition. The identification of the causal effect rests on the assumption that there is no differential time trend across groups, in other words, that the outcome observed in one time period t' can be used as a counterfactual for the unobserved outcome at time t. To understand this, let us consider two parties, L and R and two periods (corresponding to the legislative terms).

The ATT can then be written as $ATT = Y(1) - Y(0)|D = 1$. Computing the average involves unobserved quantities. Indeed, considering that there are N_O *factual* observations and N_C *counterfactual* observations, the ATT can be rewritten as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} ATT &= \frac{1}{N}\sum_i Y_i(1) - Y_i(0) \\ &= \frac{1}{N_O}\sum_i Y_i(1) - Y_i(0) + \frac{1}{N_C}\sum_i Y_i(1) - Y_i(0) \\ &= \frac{1}{N_O}\sum_i (Y_{iR1}(1) + Y_{iL2}(1)) - (Y_{iL1}(0) + Y_{iR2}(0)) \\ &\quad + \frac{1}{N_C}\sum_i (Y_{iR2}(1) + Y_{iL1}(1)) - (Y_{iL2}(0) + Y_{iR1}(0)) \end{aligned}$$

Where $Y_{ijt}(D_{it})$ denotes the outcome under treatment status D_{it} of MP i from group affiliation j at time t. The second term being unobserved, we need to assume that it does not contain any relevant information that could significantly alter the average. This requires in particular that $Y_{R2}(0) \approx Y_{R1}(0)$, i.e. that there is no "depression effect" resulting in exiting the majority or conversely that $Y_{R2}(0) \approx Y_{R1}(0)$ (no "euphoria" or "anticipation"). Put otherwise, there shouldn't be any break in the time trend of the groups. To test this assumption, we explicitly interact groups and time trends and focus on the session around the threshold in section 6, table 18a.

Table 6: Impact of the constitutional reform on presence

	Committee					Hemicycle				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Majority				0.04673***	0.05022***				-0.06484*	-0.07601**
				(0.009290)	(0.009114)				(0.03509)	(0.03610)
Constit1	0.04715***	0.05748***	0.07565***							
	(0.01425)	(0.01537)	(0.01828)							
Constit1 × Maj		-0.02120	-0.009704							
		(0.01390)	(0.01888)							
Constit2						0.001603	0.005042	0.01864***		
						(0.002981)	(0.004229)	(0.006838)		
Constit2 × Maj							-0.007799	-0.01065		
							(0.005673)	(0.008448)		
Cutoff	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Restriction	–	–	–	Yes	No	–	–	–	Yes	No
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	115373	115373	30235	216150	241692	336013	336013	211501	615021	686286
R^2	0.06569	0.06577	0.02066	0.03050	0.03978	0.002116	0.002134	0.002373	0.003681	0.003641

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Constit1 is a binary variable taking 1 if the meeting tool place after October 2009 when the internal regulation of the National Assembly was reformed. Constit2 sets the threshold to April 2009. Constit2 × Maj reports the interaction effect with the majority. The direct majority effect is captured by the individual fixed-effect. This distinction is justified by the fact that dispositions regarding floor and committee meetings did not came into force at the same time. Dependent variables are binary variables with value 1 if the MP attended the committee meeting or intervene during the floor meeting in question. Regressions (4)-(5) (resp. (9)-(10)) report estimates of the impact on the majority on attendance (resp. interventions) with (regressions (4) and (9)) and without ((5) and (10)) restriction to the post-reform era.

4.3 Estimation

In its most general form, our equation of interest is as follows:

$$y_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \text{maj\_1}_{it} + \boldsymbol{X}_{it}\boldsymbol{\beta} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad \forall i, t \tag{1}$$

Where the outcome y_{it} depends on the type of meeting that we observe (committee or hemicycle). Most of the time, $y_{it} \in \{0, 1\}$ so that our model is a linear probability model. β_1, the parameter of interest, will capture the effect on $P(y_{it} = 1)$ of belonging to the majority. α_i is the individual fixed-effect, $\boldsymbol{X}_{it}\boldsymbol{\beta}$ is a set of controls and ε_{it} is an idiosyncratic disturbance term.

We estimate (1) using a fixed-effect model. Such a specification allows us to control for all time independent factors that can affect participation. As in Carozzi and Repetto (2016) identification comes from time-varying covariates only. As a robustness check, we will run an alternative specification (see section 6).

Given the structure of our data and following the remarks of Bertrand et al. (2004) regarding differences-in-differences settings, all regressions are clustered at the individual level: MPs are indeed observed across different terms.

5 Results: the silent majority

The results fall into two parts: permanent committees and floor meetings. The reason for this separation is the fact that the baseline measures are not comparable: for committees, attendance is compulsory and publicized while in floor meetings there is no such thing as a presence sheet. Attendance is tracked through oral interventions, which are a very partial measure. Indeed, it is very likely that an MP attended a meeting and did not take part in the debates.

What is more, if in both the hemicycle and in committees the Government is controlled, as far as the legislative process is concerned, committee's role is to prepare the public meeting that will take place in the hemicycle. This leads to a less formal debate in committees, reinforced by the fact that the formal rules regulating the speaking time are much less stringent than during floor meetings.

Even though we have measures of the oral intervention of the MPs in both settings, interventions coming from floor meetings are generated by a much more regulated generating process. Therefore, both measures are not comparable. The latter reason justifies why we do not adopt a comprehensive approach and focus instead on specific dimensions of the legislative and control processes.

Accounting for the restrictions justified in section 4.2, the final sample contains 842,720 observations nested in 368 panels. As for the time dimension, 11,615 distinct meetings are recorded (2,389 floor meetings and 9,226 committee meetings).

5.1 Permanent committees: the blocking majority

The baseline specification for the committee meetings is:

$$\text{pres\_com}_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \text{maj\_1}_{it} + \boldsymbol{X}_{it}\boldsymbol{\beta} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad \forall i, t \tag{2}$$

Where $\boldsymbol{X}_{it}$ is a row vector including controls for age, multiple office holding, experience, distance between Paris and the MPs' district and fixed effects for committees, legislative term, sessions, number of mandates and political groups. β_1 is the parameter of interest and maj_1_{it} is a dummy variable indicating whether the MP i belongs to the majority at time t. pres_com_{it} is also a binary variable taking 1 if the MP attended the meeting. This variable captures the *attendance* of the MPs.

5.1.1 What drives the attendance to committee meetings?

Table 8 presents the fixed effect estimates of the impact of belonging to the majority on attendance to committee meetings. We remind that attendance is derived from the records of the meetings published in the *Journal officiel*. Therefore, one should not be worried of a potential mechanical effect due to the bigger size of the majoritarian group. Column (1) reports the direct effect of the majority on attendance, columns (2) and (3) provide two interaction mechanisms, column (4) investigates the existence of a potential electoral cycle and column (5) excludes the meetings MPs voluntarily attended to (later referred as *outside meeting*).

Belonging to the majority increases the probability to attend a meeting by 4.67%. It should be noted that when outside meetings are excluded, the effect remains statistically significant though lower (3.8%). This result confirms the correlations found by Bach (2012) who reports that the average number of presences in committee meetings is higher in the majority (19.2) than in the opposition (15.4). An explanation for this is that opposition members have lower chances to make a difference in committee meetings.

In order to test this channel, let us investigate the *affinity mechanism*: majority members are more likely to attend a committee meeting because they know that they will be heard. Committee presidents and vice-presidents lead the debates so if they stem from the majority, this could result in an increase in the probability to speak for majority members. In order to investigate this mechanism, we consider the sole commission whose president is not a member of the majority: the Finance Committee.

Column (2) reports the estimates: the increase in the probability to attend a finance committee meeting when one comes from the majority is equal to 4.75%. However, this increase as compared to the baseline estimate is not satisfactory since only one committee is compared to the others. Also, the Finance Committee plays a very important role within the Assembly (it is for instance embedded with specific powers in order to control the execution of the budget).

Columns (3) and (4) exploit the fact that the committee's vice-presidents do not always come from the majority. Since vice-presidents assist the president. Table 7 presents for each committee the vice-presidents' majority/minority balance.

Based on this balance and the mean balance for all vice-presidents, we compute a deviation index from the mean, expressed in percentages. The average deviation from the mean balance is 2.567 percentage points and varies between -61.635 (the opposition holds all positions) and 40.67 (the majority holds all positions).

It turns out that a one standard-deviation increase of $\Delta\overline{\text{VP}_{\text{share}}}$ decreases the probability to attend the meeting among non-majority members by $(-0.0005346) \times 26.30349 =$ -1,41%. As for members of the majority, the marginal effect of a one-standard deviation increase is equal to $0.04607 + 0.0005991 \times 26.30349 = 6.18\%$ These results provide some empirical evidence regarding a potential affinity mechanism. The next thing we want to investigate is the effect of the majority on participation - rather than attendance - related outcomes.

Table 7: Vice-presidents' majority balance (percentages)

					Committee				
Majority status	AFET	CULT	DEF	DEVE	ECO	FIN	LOIS	SOC	Total
0	100.00	33.05	44.41	100.00	0.00	36.38	39.69	9.40	45.37
1	0.00	66.95	55.59	0.00	100.00	63.62	60.31	90.60	54.63
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

(a) XIIIth legislative term

					Committee				
Majority status	AFET	CULT	DEF	DEVE	ECO	FIN	LOIS	SOC	Total
0	50.30	51.72	66.76	46.20	38.69	0.00	31.27	32.72	40.67
1	49.70	48.28	33.24	53.80	61.31	100.00	68.73	67.28	59.33
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

(b) XIVth legislative term

Notes: This table breaks the committee vice-presidents' observations in two parts: the committee and their majority status. "100" means that all VP-observations for this committee are also labelled as being majority (if value is 1) or opposition (value 0) members.

5.1.2 What about participation and implication?

We define two participation outcomes for committee meetings. The first one is a binary variable indicating whether the MP participated during the committee meeting. By definition, pres_com $= 0 \Rightarrow$ participation $= 0$. The other variable is the logarithmic transformation of the total number of interventions during one meeting. The choice of a logarithmic scale is motivated by the fact that there exist some outliers whose activity ranks far above the average.

Since both variables are based on oral interventions, we need control for the groups' sizes. Columns (1) and (5) of table 9 present the point estimates without controls. It turns out, especially for (5) that controlling allows to rule out potential mechanical effects due to the size of the group.

Our estimates indicate that the majority has an impact on neither the participation nor the number of interventions during a meeting. What is more, excluding outside meetings has no impact either. This leads us to a first conclusion: although *more* present, majority members tend to be *less* active in committee meetings.

A way to interpret this result could be that majority MPs primary goal is to move the Government agenda forward. As such, even if the majority-opposition dichotomy is less marked in the "invisible arena" of committees (Kerrouche, 2006), majority MPs make sure that amendments from the opposition will be adopted only with their consent. In other words, they act as a blocking minority. On the other hand, minority MPs will attend committee meetings only if they consider that they can be useful to the debate.

However, during floor meetings, things should be different: if each side abides by the majority-opposition dichotomy, this should lead to majority MPs being relatively less *implicated* in floor meetings than in committee meetings. Put otherwise, majority MP should leave the floor to the opposition.

Table 8: Impact of belonging to the majority on the attendance to committee meetings

	Dependent variable: attendance				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Majority	0.04673***	0.04658***	0.04607***	0.04652***	0.03800***
	(0.009290)	(0.009841)	(0.009237)	(0.009225)	(0.01252)
Maj × Fin		0.0009373			
		(0.02058)			
Fin		0.02995			
		(0.02749)			
Maj × $\Delta\overline{\text{VP}_{\text{share}}}$			0.0005991**		0.0007111*
			(0.0002922)		(0.0003933)
$\Delta\overline{\text{VP}_{\text{share}}}$			-0.0005346*		-0.0004628
			(0.0002859)		(0.0003720)
Time				0.00002491	
				(0.00006844)	
Time^2 / 100				6.060e-07	
				(0.000003093)	
Compulsory only	No	No	No	No	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	216150	216150	216150	216150	191806
R^2	0.03050	0.03050	0.03068	0.03052	0.03244

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Estimated impact of belonging to the majority on attendance to permanent committee meetings. The XVth legislative term and observations before October 2009 are excluded. All specifications are based on the baseline specification (2). $\Delta\overline{\text{VP}_{\text{share}}}$ corresponds for a given committee to its deviation from the mean of the majority/opposition balance across committee vice-presidents. Regression (5) excludes the meetings MPs chose voluntarily to attend.

Table 9: Impact of the majority on oral participation and the logarithm of the number of interventions

	Dep. var.: participation				Dep. var.: log of interventions			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Majority	-0.01075	-0.003935	-0.003522	-0.02158	0.06187*	0.1837	0.1841	0.1086
	(0.01017)	(0.02793)	(0.02782)	(0.02941)	(0.03691)	(0.1159)	(0.1152)	(0.1059)
$\Delta\overline{\text{VP}_{\text{share}}}$			-0.0001441	-0.0002218			-0.0006881	-0.0006755
			(0.0003375)	(0.0004200)			(0.0009186)	(0.0007974)
Maj $\times$ $\Delta\overline{\text{VP}_{\text{share}}}$			-0.00004674	-0.00008993			0.0001880	0.0001777
			(0.0003626)	(0.0004605)			(0.0008835)	(0.0008452)
Group size	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Compulsory only	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	91438	91438	91438	67094	33676	33676	33676	23075
R^2	0.006351	0.006530	0.006549	0.01092	0.01470	0.01488	0.01496	0.01690

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Estimated impact of belonging to the majority on participation (binary outcome) and the natural logarithm (continuous variable) of intervention in committee meetings. The XVth legislative term and observations before October 2009 are excluded. All specifications are based on the baseline specification (2). $\Delta\overline{\text{VP}_{\text{share}}}$ corresponds for a given committee to its deviation from the mean of the majority/opposition balance across Vice-presidents. Regressions (4) and (8) exclude the meetings MPs chose voluntarily to attend.

5.2 Floor meetings: the opposition's playground

As mentioned above, the measure of attendance relies on the MPs' interventions. The problem with our parameter of interest is that (i) speaking time rules are more stringent than in committees and (ii) in this context of scarcity, group sizes are likely to affect the individual *a priori* probabilities to speak.

In order to control for these confounding factors, we include controls for the size of the group and positioning in the hemicycle and focus on backbenchers whose speaking rules are identical. Indeed, the Speaker and vice-president of the National Assembly lead the debates and committee presidents represent committees during public meetings and are therefore allotted more speaking time than their colleagues. What is more, group fixed-effect control for the quota of questions allotted to each group.

What is more, since differences in speaking rules that apply across meetings, we distinguish between *legislative meetings* and *control meetings*. The former corresponds to the examination by the whole Assembly of a Government or private member's bill and the latter to meetings during which the Government usually comes before deputies in order to answer their questions.

Over the 2,389 single meetings recorded in our sample, 1,723 (72.12%) correspond to legislative meetings and 666 (27.88%) correspond to control meetings. This unsurprisingly closely matches the theoretical distribution of one quarter/three quarters rule the Assembly has to follow. More importantly, this means that one of the meeting types is not overrepresented in our sample.

As for the participation, MPs tend on average to participate more to question meetings than law meetings. The mean for the interventions is 0.07076945 for legislative meetings, as opposed to 0.08005353 for control meetings. An explanation for this is simply that control meetings include the "*Questions au gouvernement*", which are aired every Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon.

The baseline equation for floor meetings is almost identical to (2), except that now the control vector includes controls for the group size and the position of the MP within the hemicycle. The rationale for these geographical variables is to control for the localization of the MPs which is endogenous and likely to be correlated with both individual effects and the outcome variable. For instance, microphones are located in the hemicycle's spans and with endogenous placement, it is impossible to rule out the assumption of a deliberate choice from some MPs.

$$\text{pres\_h}_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 \text{maj\_1}_{it} + \boldsymbol{X}_{it}\boldsymbol{\beta} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad \forall i, t \tag{3}$$

As before, β_1 is the parameter of interest and maj_1$_{it}$ is a dummy variable indicating whether the MP i belongs to the majority at time t. However, the interpretation of this coefficient slightly changes: it now captures the effect of belonging to the majority on oral interventions in floor meetings. The dependent variable is now referred to as the *interventions* of the MPs.

5.2.1 How does the majority affect the overall participation?

Table 11 displays the estimated impact of belonging to the majority on participation to floor meetings. Column (1) reports a barely significant decrease of 6.48% in the probability of speaking (irrespective of the meeting type) when one belongs to the majority. Column (2) and (4) report the interaction effects of legislative (resp. control meetings) on interventions. Columns (3) and (5) study the mechanisms explaining the variation in participation and column (6) documents the existence of a political cycle for public meeting participation: the probability to participate increases with time.

Columns (2) and (4) together show that majority members participate *fewer* in control meetings since the probability to intervene in such meetings decreases by 6.74%, to be compared with legislative meetings, where $P(Y = 1|\text{Legis})$ decreases by 6.23%. This could indicate that majority members are less present in floor meetings (all interventions, including unregistered interventions are recorded).

In legislative meetings, column (3) points out that tabling an amendment increases by 2.44% the probability to speak of majority members, while the same behavior among minority members increases their probability to speak by 4.04%. This means that majority members do not use amendments as a mean for speaking. These findings are consistent with a potential "catch-up" process for opposition deputies who invest more in control meetings because they know they are more likely to be useful than in committee meetings.

What is more, in control meetings, asking a question increases the probability to speak of opposition members of 16.85%. However, there is no significant difference for majority members. The fact that majority members do not have a lower probability to ask a question is not surprising since the majority and the opposition are allotted the same quota of questions. Therefore, we need to go deeper into the characterization of the interventions to see if a differentiated pattern emerges.

5.2.2 What are the implications for the debates in the hemicycle?

The intervention estimates reinforce the idea according to which majority MPs invest fewer floor meetings and focus more on committee meetings or other outside tasks (Bach, 2012).

Floor meetings are indeed mostly symbolical and MPs act out their roles (Kerrouche, 2006). In order to highlight this differentiation depending on the status, let us focus on the impact of the majority on the logarithm of the number of interventions and the interventions of more than 1,000 words. The former dependent variable captures the intensity with which the MP enters the debates while the latter focuses on the very long interventions (approximatively five minutes or more) and therefore indicates who is more likely to use the Assembly as a platform.

Table 12 displays the results. Columns (1) to (5) (resp. (6) to (10)) present the results with the logarithm of interventions (resp. a binary outcome indicating if the intervention exceeded 1,000 words). Columns (1) and (6) present the impact of the majority on all meetings (both legislative and control). Columns (2)-(3) and (7)-(8) are restricted to legislative meetings and columns (4)-(5) and (9)-(10) to control meetings.

Overall, the number of interventions of majority members is 0.76% smaller than those of the opposition. The impact on addresses to the Assembly is also negative, but statistically insignificant. In legislative meetings, the number of interventions is 0.98% smaller and here again amendments play a key role for the opposition since it allows an increase of 0.16% of the number of interventions, while the increase is limited to 0.08% for the majority. The conclusion that seems to emerge is that majority members will not take participate to the debates with the same intensity as members of the opposition.

Regarding addresses to the Assembly, the interesting result is that asking questions will *decrease* the probability of a long intervention among majority members by 0.19% while *increasing* the same probability by 0.53% for the opposition. It also turns out that asking questions decreases the number of interventions of opposition members: this indicates that the opposition prefers long questions in which MPs are more likely to oppose their own views. Again, the differences in the way amendments are used appears: tabling an amendment increases the probability of a long speech by 1.73% among opposition MPs while $P(Y = 1|\text{Amendment})$ increases by a mere 0.65% for the majority.

However, the effect is insignificant when we restrict to control meetings. As for long interventions, majority members do not use amendments in order to get the opportunity to speak. The most remarkable result, however, is that when in the opposition, MPs questions are less numerous but longer, indicating that (i) they are delivering longer speeches to the Government and (ii) that they spare their allotted quota of questions during these meetings. On the other hand, when an MP of the majority asks a question to the Government, it decreases by 3.09% the probability for a long intervention.

These results fuel the idea of a specialization between the majority and the opposition, the latter using floor meetings in order to hold the Government accountable while the ma-

jority focuses on moving the agenda forward. As such, when in the majority, MPs will tend to intervene less (to the extent that it is possible for them) but most importantly less intensively in floor meetings and especially during controls meetings which appear to be the playing ground of the opposition. Direct evidence from this specialization pattern comes from table 10: the majority causes the MPs to table twice as fewer amendments compared to the other MPs and increases their probability to be rapporteur by 43.87%. The absence of impact on the questions is not surprising given that the repartition of the questions is equitable between the majority and the other groups.

Table 10: Impact of the majority on amendments tabling, being rapporteur and questions asked

	Amendments	Rapporteur	Questions
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Majority	-0.4819***	0.4387***	-0.05311
	(0.06019)	(0.04115)	(0.04479)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	443567	443567	171454
R^2	0.1311	0.05271	0.009200

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Estimated impact of belonging to the majority on the probability to table an amendment (prior to a floor meeting only), be rapporteur of ask a question. We focus on amendments tabled prior to a public meeting only. Regressions (1) and (2) were run on legislative meetings only and regression (3) on control meetings only.

Table 11: Estimates for the interventions during floor meetings

		Legis		Control		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Majority	-0.06484*	-0.06735*	-0.05961*	-0.06286*	-0.04697	-0.04330
	(0.03509)	(0.03504)	(0.03556)	(0.03516)	(0.03891)	(0.03637)
Maj × Legis		0.004490**				
		(0.002107)				
Legis		-0.008895***				
		(0.001573)				
Maj × Amendment			-0.01599**			
			(0.006499)			
Maj × Rapporteur			-0.01076			
			(0.01011)			
Amendment			0.04041***			
			(0.004348)			
Rapporteur			0.03654***			
			(0.006916)			
Maj × Control				-0.004490**		
				(0.002107)		
Control				0.008895***		
				(0.001573)		
Maj × Question					0.03557	
					(0.03684)	
Question					0.1685***	
					(0.01808)	
Time						-0.00006808**
						(0.00002650)
Time^2 / 100						0.000002688**
						(0.000001239)
Meeting type restriction	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
N	615021	615021	443567	615021	171454	615021
R^2	0.003681	0.003697	0.008455	0.003697	0.02913	0.003715

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Impact of the majority on interventions in floor meetings. Legis and Control indicate the meeting type, Amendment, Rapporteur and Question indicate if the MP tabled an amendment, was rapporteur or asked a question.

Table 12: Estimated coefficients for the implication in public meetings

	Dep. var.: log interventions					Dep. var.: more than 1,000 words				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Majority	-0.7562*	-0.9786**	-1.2161***	-0.5036	-0.4073	-0.01444	-0.01329	-0.01180	-0.02406*	-0.02374*
	(0.3864)	(0.4247)	(0.4202)	(0.5344)	(0.5263)	(0.01336)	(0.01509)	(0.01477)	(0.01425)	(0.01423)
Maj × Amendment			-0.07369*					-0.01081***		
			(0.04239)					(0.002824)		
Maj × Rapporteur			0.2218**					-0.0003743		
			(0.08819)					(0.005698)		
Amendment			0.1559***					0.01730***		
			(0.02686)					(0.002183)		
Rapporteur			0.1363***					0.01746***		
			(0.05149)					(0.003814)		
Maj ×Question					-0.07968					-0.007196**
					(0.06787)					(0.003243)
Question					-0.2961***					0.005278***
					(0.04345)					(0.001922)
Group restriction	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	26819	18900	18900	7919	7919	615021	443567	443567	171454	171454
R^2	0.02214	0.01752	0.02813	0.03809	0.05331	0.001767	0.001791	0.004989	0.002042	0.002119

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Impact of the majority on the natural logarithm of interventions and the interventions of more than 1,000 words. Regressions (2)-(3) and (7)-(8) are restricted to legislative meetings and regressions (4)-(5) and (9)-(10) on control meetings. Amendment, Rapporteur and Question indicate if the MP tabled an amendment, was rapporteur or asked a question.

5.3 Differential effects: the battle of sexes?

5.3.1 Committee meetings: women's first

Tables 13 and 14 present the differential effect of the gender and multiple office holding on attendance (table 13a), participation (table 13b) and the number of interventions (table 14) in committee meetings. All these tables are organized as follows: even columns restrict the sample to the compulsory meetings, columns (1) and (2) present the differential effect of sex, columns (3) and (4) the differential effect of multiple office holding and columns (5) and (6) the mixed effect. Multiple office holding is captured through a binary variable indicating whether the MP holds a local executive office (mayor, president or vice-president of the county or regional council). Tiers are not differentiated.

As it can be seen from column (1) of table 13, the effect of the majority on attendance is lower among men than women. Indeed, the probability to attend a committee meeting increases by 13.73% when the MP of the majority is a woman as compared to only 8.79% when the MP is a man. Multiple office holding also affects attendance, but the decrease in the probability is lower among multiple office holders of the majority (0.38%) than among non-majority members (4.29%). This decrease can be explained through the fact that multiple office holders know that they have a better chance to make a difference in committee meetings if they are in the majority.

When considering participation (table 13b), it turns out that there is no evidence of an impact of multiple office holding. However, men of the majority appear to participate less than women (column (1)), but this effect disappears if we only account for compulsory meetings. However, table 14, column (1), corroborates the results: being a man of the majority increases the number of interventions by 0.337%, 55% less than for women (the number of interventions increases by 0.523%). Again, this effect disappears if we exclude outside meetings (column (2)). The results are also inconclusive regarding the impact of multiple office holding.

5.3.2 Floor meetings: men's first?

Tables 15, 16 and 17 present the estimated impact of the gender and multiple office holding differential impact on participation, the number of interventions and the long interventions respectively. In all three cases, columns (1) and (2) present the result on all the meetings and columns (3)-(5) (respectively and (6)-(8)) present the effect for legislative meetings (resp. control). Finally, columns (3) and (6) recall the initial effect without any differential covariates.

Table 15 shows that the impact of tabling an amendment on participation is different depending on the gender of the MP. Indeed, the probability for a woman to speak is decreased by 1.02% while that of a man increases by 0.898%. However, among majority members, women are more likely than men to ask questions: the probability is increased by 3.18% for women while it decreases by 3.95% for men. Results, however, are inconclusive regarding multiple offices holding.

From table 16, we can see that when it comes to the number of interventions, men seem to speak more than women. In the case of the amendments, the number of interventions decreases by 0,172% when the amendment is tabled by a woman as opposed to a mere increase of 0,057% for men of the opposition. As for the opposition, tabling an amendment increases the number of intervention by 0,313% for both men and women (column (4)). On the other hand, women from the opposition intervene 0,3428% less when it comes to ask questions (column (7)).

In the case of long intervention, there is no evidence for a differentiated impact of tabling amendments on the probability to address the Assembly among non-majority members. However, in the majority, our results suggest that the probability to address the Assembly is increases of 1.09% among men and decreases of 0.26% among women (table 16, column (4))

Table 13: Differential effects on attendance and participation to committee meetings

	Dependent variable: attendance					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Majority	0.1373***	0.1518***	0.02173	0.005375	0.1434*	0.1748**
	(0.04552)	(0.04420)	(0.01813)	(0.02579)	(0.07628)	(0.07917)
Maj × Sex	-0.04944**	-0.06139**			-0.07122*	-0.09904**
	(0.02360)	(0.02450)			(0.04083)	(0.04791)
Maj × Executive			0.03919*	0.05177*	0.04252	0.02023
			(0.02197)	(0.02952)	(0.1005)	(0.1051)
Maj × Executive × Sex					0.005981	0.02705
					(0.05338)	(0.06060)
Executive × Sex					-0.03915	-0.06404
					(0.04843)	(0.05007)
Executive			-0.04294**	-0.05374**	0.02349	0.05616
			(0.01842)	(0.02472)	(0.08972)	(0.08616)
Compulsory only	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	216150	191806	216150	191806	216150	191806
R^2	0.03072	0.03256	0.03067	0.03251	0.03103	0.03314

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

(a) Differential effect on attendance to committee meetings

	Dependent variable: participation					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Majority	0.06583	0.004733	0.0001958	-0.03756	0.01393	-0.01895
	(0.04835)	(0.05396)	(0.02908)	(0.03188)	(0.09944)	(0.09246)
Maj × Sex	-0.03834*	-0.01504			-0.01431	0.01117
	(0.02237)	(0.02636)			(0.03454)	(0.03674)
Maj × Executive			-0.006976	0.02436	0.1013	0.1568*
			(0.02151)	(0.02666)	(0.09035)	(0.08861)
Maj × Executive × Sex				-0.05461	-0.07025	
					(0.04859)	(0.05140)
Executive × Sex					0.03387	0.04505
					(0.04414)	(0.05914)
Executive			-0.03423*	-0.03621	-0.09621	-0.1174
			(0.02000)	(0.02514)	(0.07913)	(0.1073)
Compulsory only	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Group size	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	91438	67094	91438	67094	91438	67094
R^2	0.006674	0.01089	0.006535	0.01094	0.006726	0.01108

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

(b) Differential effect on participation

Notes: Differential effect of the gender (1 indicates a man) and multiple office holding (Executive takes value 1 in case of an executive responsibility, no matter the tier) on attendance (table 13a) and participation (table 13b) to the committee meetings. × denotes an interaction term.

Table 14: Differential effect on the number of intervention in committee meetings

	Dependent variable: logarithm of interventions					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Majority	0.5228**	0.2416	0.2466*	0.1266	0.8669*	0.2236
	(0.2472)	(0.2097)	(0.1282)	(0.1187)	(0.4452)	(0.4303)
Maj × Sex	-0.1854*	-0.07306			-0.2987*	-0.09848
	(0.1111)	(0.09351)			(0.1713)	(0.1581)
Maj × Executive			-0.1002	-0.02785	-0.6404	-0.1026
			(0.08799)	(0.07284)	(0.5021)	(0.4504)
Maj × Executive × Sex					0.3185	0.05247
					(0.2502)	(0.2273)
Executive × Sex					-0.1991	-0.05782
					(0.1710)	(0.1439)
Executive			0.05478	0.002946	0.3987	0.09494
			(0.05889)	(0.05564)	(0.3166)	(0.2608)
Compulsory only	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Group size	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	33676	23075	33676	23075	33676	23075
R^2	0.01591	0.01697	0.01523	0.01684	0.01649	0.01699

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Differential effect of the gender (1 indicates a man) and multiple office holding (Executive takes value 1 in case of an executive responsibility, no matter the tier) on the logarithm of the number of interventions in committee meetings

Table 15: Differential effects on participation in floor meetings

	Overall		Legis			Questions		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Majority	-0.06086	-0.07078*	-0.05961*	-0.02219	-0.06106*	-0.04697	-0.02350	-0.04762
	(0.04423)	(0.03678)	(0.03556)	(0.04430)	(0.03697)	(0.03891)	(0.04775)	(0.04102)
Maj × Sex	-0.002273			-0.02072			-0.01230	
	(0.01240)			(0.01271)			(0.01311)	
Executive		-0.01705*			-0.01177			-0.01541
		(0.009625)			(0.009974)			(0.01004)
Maj × Executive		0.009380			0.003424			0.002955
		(0.01277)			(0.01333)			(0.01286)
Maj × Amendment			-0.01599**	-0.1155***	-0.02684**			
			(0.006499)	(0.02700)	(0.01103)			
Maj × Rapporteur			-0.01076	-0.1327**	-0.01687			
			(0.01011)	(0.06043)	(0.01706)			
Amendment			0.04041***	0.1053***	0.04545***			
			(0.004348)	(0.02165)	(0.008291)			
Rapporteur			0.03654***	0.09507*	0.03390**			
			(0.006916)	(0.05741)	(0.01312)			
Sex × Amendment × Maj				0.05495***				
				(0.01478)				
Sex × Rapporteur × Maj				0.06527**				
				(0.03167)				
Sex × Amendment				-0.03577***				
				(0.01138)				
Sex × Rapporteur				-0.03083				
				(0.02929)				
Executive × Amendment × Maj					0.01737			
					(0.01313)			
Executive × Rapporteur × Maj					0.01216			
					(0.02108)			
Executive × Amendment					-0.007449			
					(0.009176)			
Executive × Rapporteur					0.003955			
					(0.01530)			
Maj × Question						0.03557	-0.3039**	-0.04027
						(0.03684)	(0.1437)	(0.04822)
Question						0.1685***	0.3357***	0.2020***
						(0.01808)	(0.09597)	(0.03322)
Sex × Question							-0.08966*	
							(0.05089)	
Sex × Question × Maj							0.1836**	
							(0.08054)	
Executive × Question								-0.04976
								(0.03961)
Executive × Question × Maj								0.1307**
								(0.06351)
Meeting type restriction	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	615021	615021	443567	443567	443567	171454	171454	171454
R^2	0.003683	0.003716	0.008455	0.009024	0.008590	0.02913	0.02996	0.02984

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Differential effect of the gender (1 indicates a woman) and multiple office holding (Executive takes value 1 in case of an executive responsibility, no matter the tier) on the participation in floor meetings. Amendment, Rapporteur and Question take value 1 if the MP tables an amendment, asks a question or is rapporteur at the given meeting. × denotes an interaction term. Sex is not identified.

Table 16: Differential effects on the logarithm of the number of interventions in floor meetings

	Overall		Legis			Questions		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Majority	-0.6829*	-0.7346*	-1.2161***	-0.8794**	-1.1481***	-0.4073	-0.3406	-0.4207
	(0.3886)	(0.3893)	(0.4202)	(0.4307)	(0.4251)	(0.5263)	(0.5485)	(0.5277)
Maj × Sex	-0.04228			-0.1974			-0.03943	
	(0.1158)			(0.1205)			(0.1454)	
Executive		0.04556			0.007422			0.1104
		(0.1007)			(0.1070)			(0.1045)
Maj × Executive		-0.04570			-0.09934			0.01207
		(0.1096)			(0.1147)			(0.1179)
Maj × Amendment			-0.07369*	-0.4848**	-0.04648			
			(0.04239)	(0.1883)	(0.07096)			
Maj × Rapporteur			0.2218**	-0.8824**	-0.03453			
			(0.08819)	(0.4410)	(0.1399)			
Amendment			0.1559***	0.3132***	0.1315***			
			(0.02686)	(0.1189)	(0.04350)			
Rapporteur			0.1363***	0.7697**	0.2753***			
			(0.05149)	(0.3469)	(0.1017)			
Sex × Amendment × Maj				0.2288**				
				(0.1016)				
Sex × Rapporteur × Maj				0.5897**				
				(0.2341)				
Sex × Amendment				-0.08816				
				(0.06384)				
Sex × Rapporteur				-0.3393*				
				(0.1780)				
Executive × Amendment × Maj					-0.05048			
					(0.08708)			
Executive × Rapporteur × Maj					0.4209**			
					(0.1748)			
Executive × Amendment					0.03843			
					(0.05329)			
Executive × Rapporteur					-0.2123*			
					(0.1143)			
Maj × Question						-0.07968	0.2693	0.01313
						(0.06787)	(0.3510)	(0.1014)
Question						-0.2961***	-0.3428**	-0.3194***
						(0.04345)	(0.1675)	(0.06134)
Sex × Question							0.02607	
							(0.09440)	
Sex × Question × Maj							-0.1907	
							(0.1877)	
Executive × Question								0.03602
								(0.08188)
Executive × Question × Maj								-0.1532
								(0.1267)
Meeting type restriction	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	26819	26819	18900	18900	18900	7919	7919	7919
R^2	0.02217	0.02218	0.02813	0.02952	0.02914	0.05331	0.05360	0.05351

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$*

Notes: Differential effect of the gender (1 indicates a woman) and multiple office holding (Executive takes value 1 in case of an executive responsibility, no matter the tier) on the logarithm of the number interventions in floor meetings. Amendment, Rapporteur and Question take value 1 if the MP tables an amendment, asks a question or is rapporteur at the given meeting. × denotes an interaction term. Sex is not identified.

Table 17: Differential effects on the long interventions (more than 1,000 words) in floor meetings

	Overall		Legis			Questions		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Majority	-0.01859	-0.01732	-0.01180	-0.004757	-0.01260	-0.02374*	-0.02725	-0.02661*
	(0.01590)	(0.01393)	(0.01477)	(0.01736)	(0.01546)	(0.01423)	(0.01673)	(0.01427)
Maj × Sex	0.002366			-0.003746			0.001987	
	(0.004390)			(0.004747)			(0.004851)	
Executive		0.0002546			0.001060			0.001302
		(0.003586)			(0.004012)			(0.003606)
Maj × Executive		0.004546			0.002145			0.004483
		(0.004257)			(0.004798)			(0.004246)
Maj × Amendment			-0.01081***	-0.03533***	-0.01308***			
			(0.002824)	(0.01232)	(0.004570)			
Maj × Rapporteur			-0.0003743	-0.06836*	-0.01342			
			(0.005698)	(0.03757)	(0.009525)			
Amendment			0.01730***	0.03274***	0.01839***			
			(0.002183)	(0.01062)	(0.003689)			
Rapporteur			0.01746***	0.04849	0.02387***			
			(0.003814)	(0.03616)	(0.007929)			
Sex × Amendment × Maj				0.01351**				
				(0.006653)				
Sex × Rapporteur × Maj				0.03642*				
				(0.01953)				
Sex × Amendment				-0.008521				
				(0.005606)				
Sex × Rapporteur				-0.01629				
				(0.01835)				
Executive × Amendment × Maj					0.003434			
					(0.005515)			
Executive × Rapporteur × Maj					0.02165*			
					(0.01187)			
Executive × Amendment					-0.001593			
					(0.004227)			
Executive × Rapporteur					-0.009067			
					(0.008860)			
Maj × Question						-0.007196**	-0.0006632	-0.007156
						(0.003243)	(0.01652)	(0.005372)
Question						0.005278***	0.009520	0.005439
						(0.001922)	(0.01071)	(0.003602)
Sex × Question							-0.002259	
							(0.005645)	
Sex × Question × Maj							-0.003631	
							(0.008817)	
Executive × Question								-0.0002400
								(0.004216)
Executive × Question × Maj								-0.00004026
								(0.007043)
Meeting type restriction	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	615021	615021	443567	443567	443567	171454	171454	171454
R^2	0.001775	0.001801	0.004989	0.005236	0.005126	0.002119	0.002131	0.002153

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$*

Notes: Differential effect of the gender (1 indicates a man) and multiple office holding (Executive takes value 1 in case of an executive responsibility, no matter the tier) on long interventions in floor meetings. Amendment, Rapporteur and Question take value 1 if the MP tables an amendment, asks a question or is rapporteur at the given meeting. × denotes an interaction term. Sex is not identified.

5.4 Discussion: differentiation and specialization

Our results comfort the findings of Bach (2012) about the specialization of the MPs in the National Assembly. It is consistent with the high cohesiveness of the two main political groups and the resulting bipolarisation highlighted by Sauger (2009), Kerrouche (2006) or Wilson and Wiste (1976).

MPs have three missions: writing the laws, controlling the Government and representing the people. We focused on the two first missions and it turns out that overall, belonging to the majority leads MPs to focus more on their legislative tasks at the expense of their control tasks. The fact that control is less stringent when exerted by the majority is not surprising in itself given the institutions of the Vth Republic. This appears as a consequence of the "*parlementarisme rationalisé*" that the redactors of the Constitution of 1958 wanted to achieve Costa and Kerrouche (2009).

More precisely, we document a 4.67% increase in the probability to attend committee meetings and a 6.48% decrease in the probability to intervene during floor meetings when MPs belong to the majority. Members of the majority attach more importance to committee meetings because they are more likely to move their legislative agenda forward. However, when looking deeper into the characteristics of the interventions, there is no difference in the probability to intervene nor the number of interventions, meaning that majority MPs are more present but not more active. This suggests that they might form a blocking minority, preventing the opposition from altering the bill.

We find some evidence regarding a gendered effect. The most striking result is that the higher attendance to committee meetings appears to be driven by women: their probability to attend a committee meeting being larger than those of male members of the majority. In floor meetings, women tend to speak less when they table amendments (the probability to intervene decreases by 1.02%) but women of the majority ask more questions. As for long interventions, women of the opposition are less likely than men to ask long questions to the government.

On the other hand, there is very little evidence of an impact of multiple offices holding on our outcomes. Multiple office holders to participate less to committee meetings (the decrease in the probability reaches 4.29%) yet multiple office holders of the majority experience a smaller decrease in their probability not to attend a committee meeting (0.38%). However, there is no clear evidence of an effect of multiple offices holding on implication in floor meetings.

During floor meetings, even if speaking rules are more stringent, belonging to the majority causes the MPs to take a less active part to the debates. The probability to intervene is lower and interventions are mostly driven by the few amendments they table, their rap-

porteur status or the quota of questions they have to ask. Regarding these questions, our results suggest in contrast with the majority, the opposition will use them and the visibility they offer to expose their views to the Government.

6 Robustness checks

6.1 Testing the identification assumption

The identification of the effect of the majority relies on the assumption that the observed outcome for each group is as good as its counterfactual unobserved level. In other words, right-wing MPs behave in the XIVth legislature as they would have in the XIIIth if they had been in the opposition. The same cross-legislative term pattern must hold for left-wing MPs. A way to test this assumption is to allow for differential time trends. The estimates are presented in table 18a. It turns out that the explicit inclusion of time trends does not change our estimates. Columns (3) and (6) restrict the sample to the session around the 2012 general election (2011-2012). It turns out that our estimated results are about the same. The higher difference reported in (6) as compared to (5) is likely to be the consequence of a slow-down in the Assembly's work (the last public meeting took place on the March 6th, 2012) and/or a learning process of the newly elected majority. Nevertheless, this does not change our general message.

We also test whether our estimates are robust to alternative specifications. Results from these alternative models are reported in 18b. With the OLS specification, our point estimates do not change dramatically. However, the estimates for the floor meetings appear to be less precise and should be interpreted with caution. With a Probit specification, the signs and significance of the parameters of interest do not change.

6.2 Testing the robustness of the results

We then implement a fake treatment in order to see if our results are not the consequence of a statistical artifact. To test this, we consider the MPs-Legislative term pairs (the majority does not change over the course of the legislative term) and for each of this pairs, we randomly attribute a treatment. The proportion of majority members remains fixed (around 42% of the observations). Intuitively, the treatment that we assign is equivalent to having a trans-partisan majority composed of both left-wing and right-wing MPs drew randomly from the whole sample. Obviously, all effects should disappear. We use this tampered majority to replicate the results from tables 8 and 11. Estimates are presented in tables 19 and 20. It turns out that all effects disappear.

Given the structure of our data, we might also be worried that serial correlation causes over-rejection. To see if this is the case, we simulate 100 false majorities (with the same procedure as described above) and estimate equations (2) and (3). The threshold was set at $t^* = 1.96$ and we got rejection rates of 0.06 for (2) and 0.02 (3), indicating that our model behaves normally.

Table 18: Time trend checks (table 18a) and alternative specifications (table 18b)

	Committees			Hemicycle		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Majority	0.04673***	0.04673***	0.05547***	-0.06484*	-0.06484*	-0.1848**
	(0.009290)	(0.009290)	(0.01842)	(0.03509)	(0.03509)	(0.09066)
Time × Group	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Session restriction	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	216150	216150	17333	615021	615021	44245
R^2	0.03050	0.03050	0.01058	0.003681	0.003681	0.006084

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

(a) Differential time trend controls

	Committees			Hemicycle		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Majority	0.04673***	0.04601***	0.1223***	-0.06484*	-0.04171*	-0.5377***
	(0.009290)	(0.009576)	(0.008480)	(0.03509)	(0.02208)	(0.09118)
Specification	FE	OLS	Probit	FE	OLS	Probit
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	216150	216150	216142	615021	615021	615021
R^2	0.03050	0.05717		0.003681	0.003871	

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

(b) Alternative specifications

Notes: Table 18a includes group-specific time trends (columns (2) and (5)) and a restriction to the 2011-2012 session, in the middle of which general election took place (columns (3) and (6)). Table 18b reports the estimates of the baseline equations for committees and floor meetings via OLS and Probit and compares the results with the FE estimation.

Table 19: Replication of table 8 with a fake treatment

	Dependent variable: attendance				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
False Majority	-0.0004412	-0.0004404	-0.0004407	-0.0004448	-0.0009686
	(0.002056)	(0.002056)	(0.002057)	(0.002055)	(0.002014)
False × Fin		-0.001673			
		(0.003337)			
Fin		0.03066			
		(0.02475)			
False $\times \Delta\overline{\text{VP}_{\text{share}}}$			-0.00001098		-0.00004025
			(0.00007079)		(0.00007981)
$\Delta\overline{\text{VP}_{\text{share}}}$			-0.0001682		-0.00002405
			(0.0002686)		(0.0003029)
Time				0.00003934	
				(0.00007250)	
Time^2 / 100				3.341e-07	
				(0.000003185)	
Compulsory only	No	No	No	No	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	216150	216150	216150	216150	191806
R^2	0.02945	0.02945	0.02947	0.02948	0.03141

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Estimated impact of the false majority on attendance to permanent committee meetings. The XVth legislative term and observations before October 2009 are excluded. All specifications are based on the baseline specification (2). $\Delta\overline{\text{VP}_{\text{share}}}$ corresponds for a given committee to its deviation from the mean of the majority/opposition balance across Vice-presidents. Regression (5) excludes the meetings MPs chose voluntarily to attend.

Table 20: Replication of table 11 with a fake treatment

		Laws		Control		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
False Majority	0.0001095	0.0001110	0.0004228	0.0001097	-0.0004697	0.0001072
	(0.0006257)	(0.0006257)	(0.0007428)	(0.0006256)	(0.001269)	(0.0006257)
False × Lois		-0.001035				
		(0.0007359)				
Lois		-0.006357***				
		(0.0009953)				
False × Amendment			-0.001056			
			(0.001285)			
False × Rapporteur			0.002328			
			(0.003719)			
Amendment			0.03399***			
			(0.002800)			
Rapporteur			0.02814***			
			(0.005004)			
False × Control				-0.001020		
				(0.001205)		
Control				0.007357***		
				(0.001123)		
False × Question					-0.0009745	
					(0.008285)	
Question					0.1789***	
					(0.01179)	
Time						-0.00006808**
						(0.00002650)
Time^2 / 100						0.000002688**
						(0.000001239)
Meeting type restriction	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
N	615021	615021	443567	615021	171454	615021
R^2	0.003681	0.003684	0.008235	0.003682	0.02892	0.003715

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*$p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Notes: Impact of the false majority on interventions in floor meetings. Legis and Control indicate the meeting type, Amendment, Rapporteur and Question indicate if the MP tabled an amendment, was rapporteur or asked a question.

Conclusion

Belonging to the majority has an impact on the MPs behavior, no matter their political affiliation. Majority members are 4.67% more likely to attend committee meetings, where the most important part of the legislative work is achieved. On the other hand, they tend to take a less active role in floor meetings: their probability of intervention decreases by 6.48%. What is more, the majority group, despite a higher attendance rate, does not intervene more. In floor meeting, majority MPs are less likely than the opposition to ask long questions. They also do not use amendments as a way to get additional speaking time.

This empirical evidence corroborates patterns that have been distinctive features of the National Assembly since its very beginning. Majority MPs move the agenda of the Government forward and prevent the other groups from significantly altering it. Our study tends to argue in favor of law*voters* rather than law*makers* MPs but also highlights a specialization between the opposition and the majority where the former controls the Government while the latter focuses on lawmaking. It suggests that the subordination of the National Assembly originates from the subordination of the majority group.

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