The Dreyfus Affair and the French Resistance

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Abstract

How do pivotal episodes shape collective behavior during subsequent critical junctures? Studying the Dreyfus Affair, a major political and judicial crisis that deeply polarized French society, we link ideological conflict and antisemitism in the 1890s with participation in the Resistance and collaboration with Nazi occupation during World War II. Our analysis leverages novel data on grassroots mobilization during the Affair and variation from two concomitant shocks to estimate the effects of ideological polarization and antisemitism. Exposure to allegations of political corruption fueled support for the far-right and electoral polarization, boosted mobilization for Dreyfus, and subsequently decreased participation in the Resistance, with no effects on collaboration. Exposure to antisemitic politicians also increased far-right voting and polarization, but this fostered collaboration without affecting participation in the Resistance. Our results shed new light on the different channels through which polarization and ideology can shape societal outcomes in the short and the long run.

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"The Dreyfus Affair was the inevitable prelude to any conversation that preceded joining the Resistance."
— Lucie Aubrac, French resistant.

1 Introduction

Throughout history, societies experience periods of peace and stability interrupted by episodes of political upheaval, institutional uncertainty, and war. Many such episodes have long-lasting impacts on the communities that experience them, often becoming retrospectively seen as "critical junctures" (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Callen et al., 2026). A vast literature studies the persistent legacy of such episodes. Less is known about how the shared experience of a critical juncture shapes individual and collective behavior in later junctures. The collective memory of past junctures may affect how subsequent ones unfold, but the mechanisms underpinning this type of persistence are not well understood.

European societies, shaped by a series of crises and wars in past centuries, offer a compelling setting to study the interplay between successive junctures. In this paper, we link the Dreyfus Affair (1894–1906) and the Second World War in France, a country where more than seventy thousand Jews were killed during the Holocaust. A watershed moment in the history of antisemitism (as famously argued by Herzl, 1905), the Dreyfus Affair centered on the miscarriage of justice involving a Jewish army officer, Alfred Dreyfus. This case deeply divided French society into two opposing camps: those (the *Dreyfusards*) who demanded justice for Dreyfus, and those who opposed re-opening the case and embraced antisemitism. Our main interest lies in understanding how ideological polarization during this critical period affected French society's collective response to the existential threat posed by Nazi occupation after 1940.[1]

Historians have long debated the legacy of the Dreyfus Affair for the evolution of attitudes and antisemitism in France (Nora, 1996). On the one hand, scholars since Hannah Arendt have argued that the Dreyfus Affair offered a foregleam of the cleavages of the twentieth century, and that France failed to stand up to Nazi Germany because it "had no more true *Dreyfusards*" (Arendt, 1951, p.93). On the other hand, historians such as Epstein (1993) documented a positive association between *Dreyfusard* mobilization and participation in the antisemitic Vichy Regime.[2] Overall, the question of whether the Dreyfus Affair nurtured resistance against, or collaboration with Nazi Germany remains unresolved.

Our main contribution is to trace out the dynamic impacts of two types of ideological shock that swept through France during this critical period. We leverage two natural experiments to estimate the short- and long-run impacts of Dreyfus-era polarization and antisemitism. First, building on Arendt (1951)'s hypothesis on the origins of the crisis, we evaluate how the financial scandals of the 1890s nurtured antisemitism and polarized French society. We show that exposure to allegations of political corruption surrounding one specific scandal—the bankruptcy of the Panama Canal Company, which ruined

[1] This question has broad contemporary relevance: World War II, as the last truly global critical juncture, might inform how ongoing and future societal shifts will unfold worldwide. Yet the collective memory of WWII events, such as that of the Holocaust, appears to be fading away (Pew Research Center, 2020).

[2] Epstein (1993) relies on biographies of hundreds of activists in the pro-Dreyfus movement. He argues that a potential driver of this association could have been the high prevalence of pacifist ideology among *Dreyfusard* activists, which later translated into support for a peaceful arrangement with Nazi Germany.

tens of thousands of French investors—fostered mobilization on opposite sides of the Dreyfus Affair, creating a long-lasting cleavage that eventually undermined participation in the French Resistance, without increasing collaboration with Nazi Germany. Second, we show that exposure to antisemitic sentiment and discourse—through local politicians joining the French Parliament's so-called Anti-Jewish Group, created in 1898 in the midst of the Dreyfus Affair—nurtured short- and long-run mobilization for the far-right and antisemitism, with more muted effects on long-run polarization. This ultimately had weak effects on the Resistance, but it pushed individuals towards collaboration. These contrasting dynamics underlie how ideological outbursts may leave different imprints on the societies that experience them, depending on how polarization and the relative influence of disparate ideologies subsequently evolve.

We assemble a novel dataset to link Dreyfus-era mobilization with participation in the French Resistance and collaboration during World War II. Fine-grained electoral data from Cagé and Piketty (2023) allow us to measure electoral support for the far-right and polarization in the short run, i.e., during the Dreyfus Affair (1898 and 1902), and in the long run, immediately before World War II (1936). We complement this dataset with unique and novel data from Aynié (2011) who compiled a comprehensive list of *Dreyfusard* supporters identified through thousands of letters, petitions, and donations retrieved from multiple archival sources. To capture the interwar persistence of antisemitic mobilization, we digitize archival branch lists from *Action française* (AF), the most influential nationalist and antisemitic organization borne out of the Dreyfus Affair, and the *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme* (LDH), a prominent human rights organization also founded during this period. Finally, we combine these data with administrative data on participation in the Resistance containing birthplace information for 594,598 certified resistance members, as well as data on collaboration with Nazi Germany from Cagé et al. (2023), and novel data on resistance networks from Longuet et al. (2013) that we digitized.

To motivate our analysis, using department-level data from Wilson (1982), we first document a negative correlation between mobilization against Dreyfus and subsequent participation in the Resistance.[3] At the same time, pro- and anti-Dreyfus mobilization were positively correlated at the department level, indicating that activism on opposing sides acted as strategic complements rather than substitutes. We hypothesize that this simultaneous mobilization entrenched deep ideological cleavages, eroding social cohesion and weakening future capacity for collective action. Such divisions ultimately hampered the ability of local resistance cells to recruit and to carry out operations after 1940. Consistent with this interpretation, the interaction between pro- and anti-Dreyfus mobilization is negatively associated with both local resistance intensity and the size of resistance networks.

Our main analysis explores the dynamic impacts of two separate shocks on Dreyfus-era ideological cleavages and WWII outcomes. First, building on Arendt (1951)'s insight that the financial scandal triggered by the bankruptcy of the Panama Canal Company provided fertile ground for the Dreyfus Affair to break out, we construct a measure of exposure to allegations of political corruption in 1895, the year in which the antisemitic press published the names of Members of Parliament (MPs) associated with

[3] *Dreyfusard* involvement is measured via participation in the League of Human Rights, a long-standing NGO founded to defend Dreyfus, and in public meetings advocating for a revision of the Dreyfus trial. For anti-Dreyfus activity, we rely on data on antisemitic riots, meetings of the Antisemitic League and the League of Patriots, and the presence of a local MP who joined the French parliament's Antisemitic group (see also Joly, 2007).

this scandal. French legislative elections were conducted shortly before the names of these politicians were publicly revealed (in 1893), and shortly afterwards (in 1898), allowing us to measure the immediate impact of allegations of corruption on electoral support for antisemitic and other *anti-Dreyfusard* parties, as well as polarization. We refer to this first shock as the *Chéquard* shock, the nickname given by the French press to MPs who allegedly took a bribe from the Panama Company. Second, leveraging data from Joly (2007), we construct a measure of local exposure to antisemitic sentiment during the 1898–1902 legislature. Shortly after the May 1898 parliamentary elections, more than two dozen MPs formed the so-called *Groupe Antijuif* ("Anti-Jewish Group") to collectively oppose the revision of Dreyfus's trial and to push for a broad antisemitic policy agenda in the French Parliament. In this case, the treatment is defined as having an incumbent MP who joined the Anti-Jewish parliamentary group, exposing local constituents to salient antisemitic discourse. We refer to the second shock as the *Antisemitic* shock.

Using a spatial regression discontinuity design (RDD) along the boundaries of treated constituencies for each type of shock, we show that municipalities exposed to allegations of political corruption in 1895, and those represented by a self-proclaimed antisemitic MP after 1898 voted in higher numbers for *anti-Dreyfusard* (far-right) parties in subsequent elections held in 1898 and 1902, respectively. Both treatments also lead to a large short-run increase in electoral polarization, defined as in Esteban and Ray (2011). Thus, exposure to alleged political corruption and exposure to antisemitic local politicians fueled France's antisemitic outburst, while also entrenching new ideological cleavages. However, only the *Chéquard* shock boosted grassroots mobilization on the *Dreyfusard* side: constituencies whose incumbent MP was named in the 1895 leaked list, but not those served by an antisemitic MP after 1898, provided larger numbers of Dreyfus supporters.

We then explore the impacts of each shock on political outcomes measured four decades later, including electoral outcomes observed in 1936 and World War II outcomes. We show that the two shocks had drastically different legacies. On the one hand, the *Chéquard* shock had a long-lasting impact on electoral polarization, without detectable effects on long-run support for the far-right. After 1940, this translated into diminished participation in the Resistance—treated municipalities were significantly less likely to provide resistance members between 1940 and 1945. On the other hand, the *Antisemitic* shock durably increased support for the far-right, as well as the local presence of *Action Française* branches, but this did not translate into heightened electoral polarization by 1936. In Nazi-occupied France, this shock had large positive effects on collaboration, but much weaker effects on the Resistance.

We consider different mechanisms to explain these results. First, the Dreyfus Affair may have created deep and lasting ideological divisions within French society. Consistent with the descriptive evidence linking joint mobilization on *both* sides of the Affair with reduced resistance participation (Section 3.3), these divisions may have weakened social cohesion and trust, undermining capacity for collective action. Evidence from the first natural experiment—the *Chéquard* shock—supports this channel. There, we find that treated constituencies are more polarized in the short and the long run, contribute less to the Resistance, but do not differ in terms of collaboration intensity. This set of results highlights the mediating role of ideological conflict as a driver of reduced resistance activity: the deep ideological divisions born in a period of acute polarization, such as the Dreyfus Affair, can permanently alter coordination

and resilience in subsequent times of crisis.

Second, the Dreyfus Affair may have strengthened local antisemitic sentiment. These latent preferences may have been reactivated in 1940, increasing the probability of aligning with Nazi ideology and decreasing resistance participation. While the null effect of the *Chéquard* shock on collaboration does not support this channel, the dynamic impacts of the *Antisemitic* shock do: the legacy of the latter shock was mainly one of persistent antisemitism, which ultimately bolstered collaboration, often characterized by historians as an individual endeavor with strong ideological motives. The two different natural experiments therefore allow us to document and distinguish between two different channels through which enduring polarization and ideological rifts can shape societal outcomes in times of crisis.

Our results build on the literature on the persistence and reactivation of values and preferences (Voigtländer and Voth, 2012; Cantoni et al., 2019; Giuliano and Nunn, 2021). The association between Dreyfus-era mobilization and subsequent resistance engagement suggests that local attitudes and ideological polarization endure over time and may resurface during critical junctures. Beyond documenting the reactivation of latent preferences, we show that polarization driven by mobilization on two opposite sides of a salient social issue may affect social capital and trust in the long run, shaping a society's resilience against internal and external threats. In this way, this paper provides, to our knowledge, one of the first attempts to understand the dynamic interplay between two successive critical junctures.

With our results linking the Panama scandal to the rise of antisemitism during the Dreyfus Affair, and ultimately the Resistance and collaboration, we also contribute to the empirical literature studying the origins and consequences of antisemitism. Becker and Pascali (2019) and Grosfeld et al. (2020) show that antisemitic violence historically arises not only from isolated economic or political factors, but also from their interaction with cultural or political shocks. Doerr et al. (2022) find that financial shocks can intensify political radicalization, especially where cultural prejudice already exists. This previous work highlights how antisemitism may be catalyzed by the convergence of economic vulnerability and ideological ruptures. In our context, the Panama scandal's exposure of elite corruption in France fueled antisemitism by linking Jewish individuals to economic wrongdoing, illustrating how financial scandals can trigger or amplify antisemitic sentiment and ultimately produce severe social and political consequences. Other recent papers look at the consequences of antisemitism in the short and long run (D'Acunto et al., 2019; Do et al., 2024). Our paper studies how antisemitism may be exacerbated by a financial-political scandal and studies the consequences of this historical episode on French society's capacity to coordinate against an external threat four decades later.

Finally, building on the seminal work of Arendt (1951) and Paxton (1972), we contribute to a recent literature showing that early 20th century events played a critical role in shaping political attitudes in France during Nazi occupation and the Vichy Regime. Most relevant to our paper are the two recent contributions by Cagé et al. (2023), who find that exposure to Pétain's leadership during World War I significantly increased collaboration with Nazi authorities, and Grosjean et al. (2023), who show that peer effects among World War I conscripts produced enduring local political cleavages that subsequently shaped WWII resistance and collaboration. We show that the collective experience of a highly polarizing societal episode preceding World War I, the Dreyfus Affair, shaped resistance engagement during WWII.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides background on the Dreyfus Affair and the French Resistance during World War II. Section 3 describes our data and provides descriptive evidence on Dreyfus-era mobilization and resistance participation. Section 4 introduces our empirical framework. Section 5 presents our main results, showing how exposure to allegations of political corruption and to antisemitic MPs affected political outcomes in the short run as well as resistance participation and collaboration in the long run. Section 6 discusses the underlying mechanisms, and Section 7 concludes.

2 Historical Context

2.1 The Dreyfus Affair

A series of financial scandals fueled the rise of antisemitism in late 19th-century France. One such scandal, the bankruptcy of the Panama Canal Company in 1889, wiped out the savings of more than 800,000 investors, triggering widespread public outrage, legal proceedings, and parliamentary scrutiny (Bayard, 1896; Portalez, 2018). This scandal revealed far-reaching corruption networks linking political and business elites, exposing prominent intermediaries such as the banker Jacques de Reinach and the entrepreneur Cornélius Herz. The antisemitic newspaper *La Libre Parole* exploited Reinach's Jewish origins to frame the scandal as evidence of a purported "Jewish conspiracy," with Reinach's sudden death in 1892 cast as further proof of intrigue. The far-right press subsequently published the names of Members of Parliament (MPs) alleged to have accepted bribes to bankroll the Panama Company—colloquially referred to as *Chéquards*—thereby deepening public mistrust toward political elites (Mollier, 2020).

As argued by Arendt (1951), the Dreyfus Affair unfolded against this backdrop. In 1894, French intelligence uncovered evidence of espionage within the army. Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer, was falsely accused, convicted, and imprisoned on the basis of forged documents. In 1898, Émile Zola's famed essay, *"J'Accuse!"* publicly denounced the miscarriage of justice and the antisemitic conspiracy against Dreyfus. A fierce backlash ensued in the antisemitic press, with unprecedented grassroots mobilization on both sides (Wilson, 1977). Later that year, more than two dozen members of the French parliament formed the so-called *Groupe Antijuif* ("Anti-Jewish Group") with a heterogeneous membership drawing from several political parties, but unified in its stance against Dreyfus's rehabilitation. The group advocated for various antisemitic measures, such as repealing the 1870 Crémieux Decree that had previously granted citizenship to Jewish residents in French Algeria (Joly, 2007).

The Dreyfus Affair profoundly divided French society. *Anti-Dreyfusard* activists rallied in defense of the military hierarchy, whereas *Dreyfusards* called for justice and accountability. In 1899, Dreyfus was convicted again in a new trial but immediately pardoned; he was not fully exonerated until 1906. Although the Affair ultimately discredited antisemitism within mainstream politics—pushing it to the far-right—it left enduring divisions over the ideological foundations of the French Republic.[4]

[4] At the time, the *anti-Dreyfusard* position was encapsulated by Goethe's maxim, "Better an injustice than disorder." By contrast, the *Dreyfusard* stance was forcefully articulated by Léon Blum, later Prime Minister (1936–1938), who wrote: *"He [Dreyfus] struck at the very heart of institutions and the fundamental principles that guarantee any organized society. Those who sent him away or maintain him on his island act solely as enemies of social order"* (author's translation) (Bernstein, 2009).

2.2 Resistance and Collaboration during World War II

Four decades later, the German invasion of May 1940 led to the demise of the French Third Republic and resulted in the partition of France between a Nazi-occupied zone and the Vichy Regime led by Pétain, who committed to a policy of active collaboration with Germany and remained nominally in power until 1944. The Vichy Regime, led by conservative elites, quickly revived an antisemitic and anti-republican rhetoric rooted in far-right ideology, implementing its own political agenda that often exceeded German demands (Paxton, 1972). Notably, the Jewish Statute of October 1940 excluded Jews from the national community, accusing them of having contributed to France's downfall. The antisemitic rhetoric behind these policies echoed that of the Dreyfus Affair.

Resistance to Nazi occupation and the Vichy Regime initially emerged in a decentralized and fragmented fashion, reflecting ideological heterogeneity and severe coordination constraints (Kocher et al., 2018; Millington, 2020). From 1940 onward, numerous small and largely autonomous groups formed across the country, spanning Gaullist networks linked to Free France, communists, socialists, Christian democrats, and politically unaffiliated patriots. While united in their opposition to Vichy and Nazi Germany, these groups differed in their objectives and strategies. Communist involvement, in particular, remained limited until the German invasion of the USSR in 1941. The absence of centralized coordination constrained collective action and reduced operational effectiveness during this early phase.

Resistance was not the only response to occupation. A segment of the French population adhered to the occupier's values and collaborated actively, whether directly with Nazi authorities or within the Vichy Regime. Historians distinguish this ideologically motivated collaboration, rooted in genuine affinity with Nazi ideology, from mere accommodation with the occupying power (Burrin, 1995).

The unification of the Resistance began with Jean Moulin's arrival in occupied France in late 1941. Acting on behalf of de Gaulle, Moulin sought to integrate disparate movements into a unified structure. This process culminated in the formation of the National Resistance Council in May 1943, which brought together resistance movements, trade unions, and political parties, improved coordination and resource allocation, and strengthened the Resistance's external credibility. Nonetheless, unification remained incomplete: ideological tensions persisted, and intensified Nazi repression—including Moulin's arrest in June 1943—underscored the continued fragility of resistance networks (Wieviorka, 2016).

There is widespread qualitative evidence that memories of the Dreyfus Affair resonated among members of the Resistance. Since the Affair had symbolized both antisemitic exclusion, a crucial issue during Nazi occupation, and the struggle for justice, it became a point of reference in ideological debates inside the Resistance. These links underscore how long-standing cleavages rooted in the Dreyfus Affair shaped collective action during World War II. As Lucie Aubrac, a prominent resistant, later recalled:

> "The first leaflet we drafted in the autumn of 1940 for the Libération-Sud movement—condemning both Pétain's collaboration and the first roundups of Jews—was distributed on the benches of the University of Clermont-Ferrand (...). Cavaillès had insisted that it include a reference to the Dreyfus Affair. In my recollection, the Dreyfus Affair was almost a required prelude to any conversation that preceded one's commitment to the Resistance. Our extensive clandestine press regularly referenced it in its articles." (Aubrac, 2009, p.457).

3 Data and Descriptive Evidence

We draw on several data sources to study the short-run effects of the Dreyfus Affair on grassroots mobilization and polarization, and its long-run effects on participation in the Resistance or collaboration with Nazi Germany. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 describe our data pertaining to the Dreyfus Affair and World War II, respectively. Section 3.3 provides descriptive evidence on the negative relationship between Dreyfus-era polarization and participation in the Resistance.

3.1 The Dreyfus era

Political Corruption. We compiled the list of all active Members of Parliament (MPs) allegedly involved in the Panama scandal, the so-called *Chéquards*, by hand-digitizing a series of articles published in the far-right newspaper *La France* in December 1895 (Arendt, 1951; McCullough, 2001). These articles were the first instance of public disclosure of the names of politicians alleged to have received bribes in exchange for voting to bankroll the ill-fated Panama company.[5] Among the 104 names that appeared in *La France*, we uniquely identified 29 MPs still in office in 1895, when the list was published (see Appendix Table A.1). These MPs (one per constituency) served across 140 cantons and 1,816 municipalities, representing the entire political spectrum from the extreme-left to the extreme-right. Appendix Figure A.1a displays the constituencies and municipalities with a *Chéquard* MP between 1893 and 1898.[6]

Antisemitism. The list of 25 MPs who joined the Anti-Jewish parliamentary group in spring 1898 comes from Joly (2007). Led by the infamous antisemite Édouard Drumont, this group was formed in June 1898 to take a stance against the revision of Dreyfus's conviction and to promote an antisemitic and nationalist political agenda (see Section 2.1). Appendix Table A.2 lists the 25 members of this group while Appendix Figure A.1b shows the constituencies they represented.

To measure the persistence of antisemitism until the 1930s, we collect data on *Action française* ("French Action", hereafter AF), a nationalist, royalist, and anti-republican movement born in the *anti-Dreyfusard* camp during the Dreyfus Affair. Contemporaries and historians document AF's central role in spearheading antisemitic mobilization until WWII (Joly, 2013). We measure local AF activity using archival branch lists from the movement's annual yearbook that reported the locations of AF sections in 1936 (BNF, 2010). Digitizing these records, we identify 916 municipalities (3%) with an AF section. Because AF sections typically served a wider catchment area than a single municipality, we aggregate this data to the canton level; 637 cantons (22.5%) contained at least one AF section.

Dreyfusard Mobilization. We construct a granular measure of *Dreyfusard* mobilization drawing on the work of Aynié (2011), who constructed a comprehensive database of Dreyfus supporters. Rather

[5] The Panama scandal had previously been investigated in 1892–1893 by a parliamentary committee that interrogated 41 MPs, but these interrogations took place behind closed doors. Six of the interrogated MPs later appeared on the leaked list.

[6] Data sources report information at different administrative levels in France. In 1898, France was divided into 14 regions, 87 departments, 548 constituencies, 2,735 cantons, and 34,065 municipalities. On average, about 12 municipalities formed one canton, and five to six cantons formed one constituency.

than relying on names of known public figures, Aynié reconstructs the mobilization of ordinary people from petitions, contributions to Dreyfus subscriptions (public fundraising launched by the newspapers *Le Siècle* and *L'Aurore*, as well as the *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme*), letters of support addressed to Alfred Dreyfus and his family and leading figures of the *Dreyfusard* movement, collected across numerous archives. She then identifies the municipality of residence of 32,864 individuals who actively mobilized in favor of Dreyfus. This yields 2,091 distinct municipalities with at least one mobilized individual (i.e., an individual who signed a petition, wrote a letter of support, or contributed to a *Dreyfusard* subscription). Overall, petitions account for 73% of recorded acts of support, subscriptions for 19%, and letters for 8%. Our measure of *Dreyfusard* mobilization is then defined as the number of mobilized individuals per 10,000 inhabitants in each municipality.

Electoral Data: To measure short- and long-run electoral polarization, we rely on municipality-level results from the parliamentary elections of 1893, 1898, and 1936 from Cagé and Piketty (2023). The dataset reports electoral outcomes at the municipality level and also includes a range of demographic and geographic covariates, including municipal population.

Using these data, we compute a measure of electoral polarization based on Esteban and Ray (2011), which captures both the relative size of political groups and the ideological distance between them. Formally, the index is defined as:

$$ER_c(p,x) = K \sum_{i=1}^{N} \sum_{j=1}^{N} p_i^{1+\alpha} p_j |x_i - x_j|, \tag{1}$$

where p_i and p_j denote the vote shares of parties i and j, x_i and x_j represent their ideological positions, and α is a sensitivity parameter governing the strength of group identification. Higher values of α place greater weight on large political groups, thereby increasing the contribution of sizable ideological blocs to overall polarization. Following Esteban and Ray (2011), we set $\alpha = 1.6$ and $K = 4$. Finally, we proxy ideological differences between parties by relying on the classification from Cagé and Piketty (2023) that groups parties into five families, ranging from extreme left (1) to extreme right (5). This classification remains fixed across all election years in 1898, 1902 and 1936: for example, the extreme left is consistently assigned a value of one in 1898, 1902 and 1936, even though the ideology of extreme left may have changed over time.[7]

Department-level data. In Section 3.3, we rely on information provided by Wilson (1982) to measure *Dreyfusard* and *anti-Dreyfusard* mobilization at the department level. Mobilization in favor of Dreyfus includes the establishment of local offices of the League of Human Rights (*Ligue des Droits de l'Homme*, or LDH) and the local occurrence of so-called revisionist meetings. The LDH was established as a *Dreyfusard* organization campaigning for justice, civil rights, and the revision of Dreyfus's trial; it remains in operation to this day. Revisionist meetings were organized by grassroots, generally left-wing actors and

[7] In the absence of detailed information on party manifestos or programmatic orientations during the Dreyfus era, we are unable to fully reconstruct how ideological positions shifted in response to the Dreyfus Affair.

advocated for the revision of Alfred Dreyfus's trial between 1898 and 1899.

For *anti-Dreyfusard* mobilization, Wilson (1982) reports whether a department hosted meetings of the Antisemitic League (*Ligue Antisémitique de France*) or the League of Patriots (*Ligue des Patriotes*), elected an antisemitic MP in 1898, or experienced antisemitic riots. The Antisemitic League, founded by Édouard Drumont in 1889 and outlawed in 1899, promoted a fiercely antisemitic ideology and opposition to Dreyfus during the Affair. Similarly, the League of Patriots had a staunch *anti-Dreyfusard*, nationalist, and antisemitic orientation. Antisemitic riots refer to violent demonstrations in 1898 targeting Jewish communities, often incited by *anti-Dreyfusard* propaganda.

Most of the information from Wilson (1982) is coded such that zero indicates no occurrence, one indicates a single occurrence, and two indicates multiple occurrences. For instance, Wilson (1982) reports whether a department had zero LDH meetings, exactly one, or more than one in 1899. To ensure comparability, we construct binary indicators for each mobilization measure, coded as one if a department recorded any such activity and zero otherwise. We then construct a composite score ranging from zero (no *anti-Dreyfusard* or *Dreyfusard* activity) to five (all five types of *anti-Dreyfusard* activity present) and, respectively, from zero to three (all three types of *Dreyfusard* activity present). We then standardize both scores to have mean five and standard deviation one to ensure comparability across both scores.[8] Appendix Figure A.2 presents the spatial distribution of both scores at the department level.

3.2 World War II Outcomes

Resistance. We use two datasets on resistance activity during World War II from the *Service Historique de la Défense* (SHD) of the French Ministry of Defense. The first dataset reports individual-level records for 594,598 officially certified resistance members, including their municipality of birth.[9]

We treat municipality of birth as a proxy for the location of resistance activity—while internal migration did occur at the onset of the German invasion in 1940, the vast majority (around 80 percent) of migrants are estimated to have returned within months (Jackson, 2003). We also digitized data on resistance networks compiled by Longuet et al. (2013). This dataset reports the names of all resistance networks active in France between 1940 and 1945, along with the departments in which they operated and the size of their membership, allowing us to compute the average network size for each department.

Collaboration and Other Data. To measure the local intensity of collaboration with Nazi Germany and the Vichy Regime, we use data from Cagé et al. (2023). This dataset comes from an extensive 2,106-page list compiled in 1944–1945 under the supervision of Colonel Paul Paillole, the head of French army

[8]The mean of five is used to ease interpretation of the *Dreyfusard* and *anti-Dreyfusard* indices by ensuring that these indices do not contain negative values.

[9]The data cover individuals recognized under five official certifications: *Forces Françaises Combattantes* (FFC), *Forces Françaises Libres* (FFL), *Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur* (FFI), *Résistance Intérieure Française* (RIF), and *Délégué à l'Information et à la Résistance* (DIR). While historians typically estimate the number of active resistance fighters at 200,000–300,000 (Wieviorka, 2016), the SHD data also include noncombatant participants (e.g., informants, couriers, and logistical supporters). Geographically, the number of certified resistance members correlates strongly with population size, both across municipalities ($R^2 = 0.47$) and departments ($R^2 = 0.61$), suggesting that the data primarily reflect demographic patterns rather than systematic reporting bias.

intelligence at the time. It records 95,967 individuals who were alleged to have actively collaborated with Nazi Germany or Vichy, including their places of birth. We use their addresses to approximate the municipalities where these collaborators were active.

From Cagé et al. (2023), we also use data on World War I death rates and whether municipalities fell in the Nazi-occupied zone or under Vichy control in 1940. Finally, we use population census data from INSEE (2025), which provides department-level characteristics for the years 1872 and 1886, as well as other predetermined municipality-level characteristics.

3.3 Descriptive Evidence

In this section, we document the relationship between grassroots mobilization on both sides of the Dreyfus Affair and subsequent participation in the Resistance during WWII.

To this end, we compute two indices capturing pro- and anti-Dreyfus mobilization at the department level. As mentioned above, we use information on whether a department experienced Antisemitic League meetings, League of Patriots meetings, *anti-Dreyfusard* donations, antisemitic riots in 1898, and the presence of an antisemitic MP in 1898 to construct a measure of *anti-Dreyfusard* mobilization. For *Dreyfusard* mobilization, we observe whether a department had LDH offices in 1899 or in 1902, and revisionist meetings that supported reopening the case in favor of Dreyfus. After aggregating these variables into two department-level indices of *Dreyfusard* and *anti-Dreyfusard* activity, we estimate:

$$\begin{aligned} Resistance_d = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times Dreyfusard_d + \beta_2 \times AntiDreyfusard_d \\ +\beta_3 \times Dreyfusard_d \times AntiDreyfusard_d + X_d + \delta_r + \varepsilon_d, \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

where Resistance$_d$ represents a measure of resistance activity equal to either (i) the number of Resistance members per 10,000 inhabitants; or (ii) the average size of resistance networks operating in each department d. We interpret the first outcome as a measure of the intensity of resistance engagement, and the second measure as a proxy for the coordination costs faced by local resistance cells in each department: larger networks imply that resistance cells either faced lower coordination costs, or were better able to overcome these coordination frictions. The number of resistance members is normalized by department-level population before World War II (measured in the 1931 census) to ensure that the results are not driven by demographic differences across departments.

$Dreyfusard_d$ and $Antidreyfusard_d$ are our standardized mobilization scores. β_3 estimates the effect of the interaction of both scores, capturing the extent of social cleavages related to the Dreyfus Affair. The vector of department-level controls, X_d, includes the share of foreign residents in 1872 and 1886; the literacy rate and religious composition in 1872; the share of the workforce employed in industrial occupations in 1886; the urbanization rate; population size in 1931; as well as the distance to Berlin and a dummy indicating if a department was occupied by the Nazis or under Vichy control. Depending on the specification, we also control for political mobilization by including party vote shares in the 1936 parliamentary elections, and we include modern-day region fixed effects δ_r to account for unobserved heterogeneity at that level. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust.

Table 1: Dreyfus-era mobilization and the Resistance (OLS)

	Resistance members per 10,000 inhabitants			Network size		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Anti-Dreyfusard Score	-18.54***	-17.20**	31.25	-45.45	-42.52	198.23
	(6.74)	(6.81)	(23.76)	(30.09)	(30.16)	(150.92)
Dreyfusard Score		-6.76	41.98*		-13.09	235.05
		(4.63)	(23.26)		(32.01)	(143.98)
Anti-Dreyfusard × Dreyfusard			-9.92**			-49.50*
			(4.52)			(28.76)
Mean	126.75	126.75	126.75	508.70	508.70	508.70
Observations (Departments)	87	87	87	87	87	87
R^2	0.75	0.75	0.77	0.44	0.44	0.47

Note: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. Anti-Dreyfusard Score is measured on a scale from 0 to 5 and Dreyfusard Score from 0 to 3. Both scores are then standardized with mean 5 and standard deviation one to ensure comparability. All regressions include department-level controls: the share of foreign residents in 1872; the shares of Catholic and Jewish citizens in 1872; the literacy rate in 1872; the share of the workforce employed in industrial occupations in 1886; the urbanization rate in 1886; 1931 population, and the average distance of each department to Berlin and if the majority of the department was controlled by the Nazi regime or Vichy. We also include region fixed effects and control for vote shares accruing to parties classified as left, center-left, center-right, and right in the 1936 parliamentary election. The number of resistance members is normalized by population and expressed per 10,000 inhabitants. Mean refers to the average for each outcome across departments. The average network size refers to the average size of each network comprising permanent and occasional members in each department in 1944. Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust.

Table 1 presents estimates from equation (2). We first consider specifications only looking at the *anti-Dreyfusard* score and the *Dreyfusard* score. Across columns 1-2 and 4-5, a one standard deviation increase in the *anti-Dreyfusard* score at the department level leads to 19 fewer resistance members per 10,000 inhabitants (significant at the 1% level), and a reduction in the size of resistance networks by 45 individuals on average (not statistically significant).[10] The correlation between the *Dreyfusard* score and the two resistance outcomes is small in magnitude and non-significant.

In columns 3 and 6, we introduce the interaction of these two variables. In this augmented specification, both *anti-Dreyfusard* mobilization and *Dreyfusard* mobilization are positively correlated with the two resistance outcomes. Importantly, the interaction of pro- and anti-Dreyfus mobilization is significantly associated with both reduced participation in the Resistance (column 3) and a lower size of resistance networks (column 6). The interaction coefficient in column 3 suggests that polarization during the Dreyfus Affair is associated with lower resistance engagement, while the corresponding coefficient in column 6 implies greater coordination costs faced by resistance networks in those areas. Overall, resistance engagement and network size are both lower in departments where high *Dreyfusard* and *anti-Dreyfusard* mobilization coexisted. This pattern likely reflects the detrimental impact of internal ideological cleavages on the formation and effectiveness of resistance networks, which depended heavily on trust and coordination. We now turn to exploring the extent to which this relationship may be causal.

[10] In results not reported, we check that these effects are not driven by variation in the number of resistance networks in each department. By 1944, departments had 17 active networks on average with a standard deviation of 16. Each department had at least one active network, allowing us to compute average network size for every department.

4 Empirical Framework

The Dreyfus Affair left deep scars on French society, causing both an unprecedented wave of anti-semitism and ideological cleavages that persisted until at least WWII. In this section, we exploit two different shocks that unfolded during the Dreyfus Affair to estimate this episode's short- and long-run impacts. Section 4.1 describes the spatial RDD we use for the two treatments corresponding to each shock, while Section 4.2 discusses threats to identification.

4.1 Spatial RD Design

Our identification strategy exploits two separate shocks to estimate the short- and long-run impacts of the Dreyfus Affair. Each shock captures a specific dimension of social conflict during this episode.

The first shock captures variation associated with the origins of the Dreyfus Affair. During the Affair's initial phase,[11] a series of financial scandals provided fertile ground for antisemitic sentiment and conspiratorial beliefs to take root (Arendt, 1951). We study the scandal surrounding the bankruptcy of the Panama Canal Company, which nurtured antisemitic hatred targeting Jewish businessmen involved in the failed governmental attempts to rescue the company (see Section 2.1). In December 1895, the newspaper *La France* published a leaked list of all politicians—the so-called *Chéquards*—who allegedly took bribes from the Panama Company. Constituencies represented by a *Chéquard* MP at this time were differentially exposed to allegations of political corruption. We hypothesize that such exposure amplified local antisemitic sentiment and polarization by reinforcing narratives linking Jewish actors to financial wrongdoing: constituencies represented by these MPs faced stronger associative cues between the scandal and conspiratorial claims of "Jewish corruption." As the Dreyfus Affair unfolded, this environment might have made constituencies with a *Chéquard* MP more responsive to the events and the antisemitic rhetoric of the Affair, magnifying its local ideological impacts.

The second shock captures variation associated with a later phase of the Affair, when French society became more clearly divided between the *Dreyfusard* and the *anti-Dreyfusard* camp. In June 1898, more than two dozen MPs formed the so-called *Groupe Antijuif* ("Anti-Jewish Group") advocating for a broad antisemitic policy agenda in the French Parliament. Joly (2007) describes the composition and the ideological platform of this group; we rely on his classification to identify the group's individual members and the constituencies in which they served. We hypothesize that individuals whose incumbent MP joined the Anti-Jewish group in 1898 were differentially exposed to the spread of antisemitism.

For both shocks, our identification strategy relies on a spatial regression discontinuity design (RDD) comparing municipalities located just inside the boundaries of constituencies with an incumbent MP of a given type (*chéquard* or *antisemitic*) with those located just outside. The key identifying assumption is that municipalities located close to either side of these borders are otherwise comparable, so that potential

[11] This initial phase roughly spans the period between Dreyfus's arrest (November 1894) and the publication of "J'Accuse!" (January 1898). During this period, publicly available evidence of Dreyfus's innocence was scarce and the vast majority of the French population believed Dreyfus had been rightfully convicted (Wilson, 1982). See Section 2.1 as well as Do et al. (2024) for additional details.

outcomes vary smoothly at the constituency boundary.[12] The RD specification is as follows:

$$Y_{ic} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times D_{ic} + \beta_2 dist_{ic} + \beta_3 D_{ic} \times dist_{ic} + \sum_{s=1}^{S} \gamma_b \times cons_{ic}^{s} + \varepsilon_{ic} \tag{3}$$

where $D_{ic} \in \{chéquard_{ic}, antisemitic_{ic}\}$, our main treatment indicator, is a binary variable equal to one if municipality i lies: (i) in a constituency (c) where the incumbent MP was named in the *Chéquard* list in 1895, and zero otherwise; or (ii) in a constituency where the incumbent MP joined the Anti-Jewish parliamentary group in 1898, and zero otherwise. We estimate the impacts of both shocks separately, running a different RDD for each. In both cases, $dist_{ic}$ is the distance to the boundary of the nearest treated constituency. We report the local linear non-parametric estimator from Calonico et al. (2014), and we use their MSE-optimal bandwidth throughout, the size of which varies depending on the outcome being used. This bandwidth is approximately 8 kilometers when we examine 1898 electoral outcomes and approximately 5 kilometers when we look at resistance outcomes. Finally, equation (3) also includes nearest-treated constituency fixed effects, $cons_{is}$, equal to one for all municipalities that share the border of the same constituency and zero otherwise. Thus, equation (3) compares outcomes between municipalities located on either side of the same constituency boundary, treating each treated constituency and their corresponding MP as a separate natural experiment. This approach is analogous to including border segment fixed effects in spatial RDDs (Lehner, 2024). Standard errors are heteroskedasticity-robust and clustered at the constituency level, and we exclude Parisian constituencies in our main analysis.

In equation (3), Y_{ic} denotes an outcome observed in municipality i and constituency c. Our main outcomes of interest are measures of electoral polarization in the short run and measures of participation in the Resistance or collaboration in the long run. For short-run outcomes, we use the municipal-level far-right vote share and the index of electoral polarization in the parliamentary election that followed the relevant shock—i.e., the 1898 elections for the *Chéquard* shock and the 1902 elections for the *Antisemitic* shock. The polarization index serves as a proxy for local ideological divisions at the time of the Dreyfus Affair, accounting for both the relative vote shares of the different political families and the ideological distances between them. Specifically, we first rank political families on an ordinal scale ranging from 1 to 5, and we then use party vote shares to measure the local influence of each political ideology, as described in Section 3.1. Intuitively, polarization is lowest when most voters support a single party family and highest when the electorate is roughly split between two blocs on opposite sides of the political spectrum (e.g., extreme right and extreme left). Because the extreme right was typically *anti-Dreyfusard* and the left typically *Dreyfusard*, this index provides a meaningful proxy for the intensity of the ideological cleavage centered on the Dreyfus Affair (Dreyfus, 2011).[13]

[12] Our design follows the literature on spatial RDDs going back to Holmes (1998) and Black (1999), using administrative boundaries as quasi-experimental thresholds. Constituencies in the French Third Republic were drawn to equalize representation by population, without consideration for other socio-economic characteristics (Ranger, 1997).

[13] For example, a municipality voting almost entirely for the extreme left would display little polarization, as nearly all voters would be *Dreyfusard*. A municipality where the extreme left dominates but a non-negligible share votes for the extreme right would exhibit moderate polarization. An electorate evenly divided between the extreme left and the extreme right would display maximal polarization, reflecting strong and opposing pro- and anti-Dreyfus mobilization.

4.2 Threats to identification

Our two spatial RDDs compare outcomes in treated constituencies (i.e., those represented by an incumbent MP who is either *chéquard* or *antisemitic*) to adjacent non-treated constituencies. Thus, a key identification assumption for each RDD is that the incumbent MP's type was plausibly exogenous from the perspective of voters. Constituencies on either side of these borders should have been comparable prior to the revelation of each MP's type, with underlying ideological characteristics assumed to be continuous at the boundary. Identification concerns would arise if treated constituencies already differed systematically from neighboring constituencies—for instance, if they exhibited stronger electoral polarization or support for far-right parties—before the Dreyfus Affair.

To address these concerns, we compare the pre-treatment characteristics of treated and non-treated constituencies. Appendix Table A.3 reports balance tests for the *Chéquard* treatment, using party vote shares in 1893, as well as municipality-level demographics including the number of foreign voters, occupational structure, local shares of Jewish citizens and foreigners, measures of Catholic conservatism which may be correlated with pre-existing antisemitic sentiment, such as the presence of refractory clergy (see Squicciarini, 2020), and the shares of Catholic students and schools in 1893. Reassuringly, we do not find statistically significant differences along these characteristics, and an overall F-test fails to reject the null of joint significance of these covariates. Appendix Table A.4 reports the corresponding balance checks for the *Antisemitic* MP treatment, using 1898 vote shares since the Anti-Jewish parliamentary group was formed shortly after the 1898 parliamentary elections. Again, there is no evidence of imbalance at the boundary of treated constituencies (we similarly find no evidence of imbalance if we use instead vote shares observed in 1893). Appendix Table A.5 and A.6 report additional balance checks using alternative bandwidths for the *Chéquard* treatment the *Antisemitic* treatment, respectively. There are no systematic discontinuities across treated constituency boundaries, except for a small imbalance in the vote share of centrist candidates in 1893 when using a 10-km bandwidth. However, this difference vanishes using the optimal bandwidth from Calonico et al. (2014)'s optimal bandwidth and its magnitude is negligible. Taken together, these results support the continuity assumption at the cutoff and the validity of the RDD for both treatments.

5 Short- and Long-Run Impacts of the Dreyfus Affair

This section reports our main results on the impacts of allegations of political corruption (the *Chéquard* shock) and those of antisemitic MPs (the *Antisemitic* shock) on outcomes measured during the Dreyfus Affair (Section 5.1) and outcomes measured shortly before or during WWII (Section 5.2).

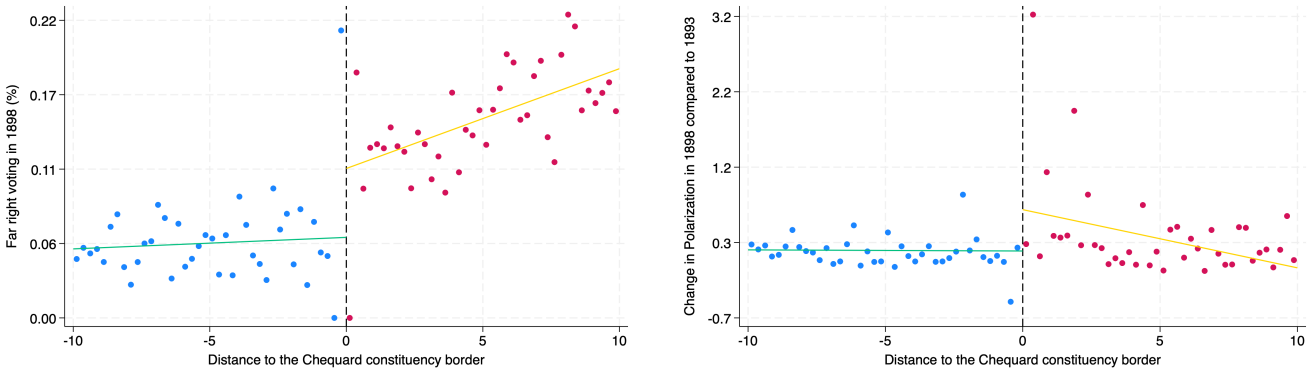
5.1 Short-run outcomes (1898–1902)

Far-right support and polarization. We begin by presenting RD results for short-run outcomes observed during the Dreyfus Affair. Panel (A) of Figure 1 plots the effects of exposure to a *Chéquard* MP in 1895 on far-right vote shares and electoral polarization in the subsequent election (1898). For this treat-

ment, we look at the change in electoral polarization between the 1893 and the 1898 elections, defined as $\Delta_c = \frac{ER1898_c - ER1893_c}{ER1893_c}$, where ER denotes the polarization index defined in Section 3.1. In Panel (B), we look at the effects of exposure to an *Antisemitic* MP during the 1898–1902 legislature, with outcomes observed in the 1902 election. In this case, the change in polarization is measured between 1898 and 1902. The left-hand side of Figure 1 shows a discontinuous increase of 6 to 16 percentage points in far-right vote shares at the RD cutoff for both the *Chéquard* and *Antisemitic* MP treatments. The right-hand side of this figure shows a simultaneous increase in polarization for both treatments.

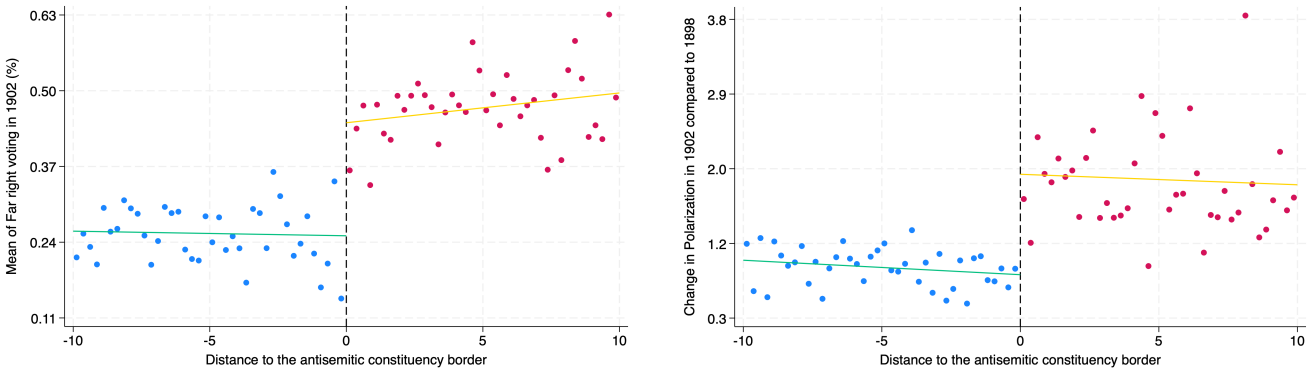
Figure 1: Short-run effects on far-right support and polarization

Panel A: Exposure to allegations of corruption in *Chéquard* constituencies (1895–1898)



(a) Far-right vote share **(b)** Change in electoral polarization

Panel B: Exposure to *Antisemitic* MPs (1898–1902)



(c) Far-right vote share **(d)** Change in electoral polarization

Note: The figure displays RD estimates for far-right vote shares and changes in electoral polarization around treated constituency borders. Panel A compares municipalities located just inside *Chéquard* constituencies, defined by positive values of the running variable, to municipalities just outside these constituencies, using 1898 far-right vote shares and changes in electoral polarization between 1893 and 1898. Panel B compares municipalities located just inside *Antisemitic* constituencies to municipalities just outside these constituencies, using 1902 far-right vote shares and changes in electoral polarization between 1898 and 1902. Far-right parties are defined as monarchist, conservative, and antisemitic parties in 1898, and nationalist, reactionary, and plebiscitary parties in 1902. Estimates use a local linear estimator with a triangular kernel and a 10-kilometer bandwidth selection. Nearest treated constituency fixed effects are included throughout.

The RD estimates reported in Table 2 corroborate this graphical evidence. Columns (1)–(2) show an increase in far-right vote shares of approximately 6 to 7 percentage points, when using the optimal

Table 2: Short-run effects on far-right support and polarization

	Far-right vote (%)		Δ Polarization	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bandwidth	Conventional	Robust	Conventional	Robust
Panel A: *Chéquard* constituencies				
CCT	0.06**	0.07**	1.23**	1.42***
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.53)	(0.51)
Panel B: *Antisemitic* constituencies				
CCT	0.16***	0.14**	1.51***	1.68***
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.52)	(0.59)
Mean	0.10	0.10	0.60	0.60
Spec	local linear	local linear	local linear	local linear

Note: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. In Panel A, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 7.52 km for the far-right vote share (N=3,528 municipalities) and 4.30 km for the change in electoral polarization between 1893 and 1898 (N=2,217). In Panel B, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 9.32 km for the far-right vote share (N=3,292 municipalities) and 7.14 km for the change in electoral polarization between 1898 and 1902 (N=2,311). Mean refers to the sample mean across all French municipalities. Estimates are obtained using a local linear regression with a triangular kernel. Nearest treated constituency fixed effects are included throughout and standard errors are clustered at the constituency level.

bandwidth choice, for the *Chéquard* treatment and of 14 to 16 percentage points for the *Antisemitic* MP treatment. Columns (3)–(4) show the change in polarization between 1893 and 1898 is statistically significant when using the optimal bandwidth (4.3 kilometers). Appendix Table A.7 shows that these results are robust to alternative bandwidth choices (5, 7.5, and 10 kilometers).

Dreyfusard mobilization. In Table 3, we report RD estimates of the effects of the two treatments on mobilization in support of Alfred Dreyfus, measured as the number of Dreyfus supporters per 10,000 inhabitants in each constituency, using original data from Aynié (2011). As described in Section 3, Dreyfus supporters are individuals who either signed a pro-Dreyfus petition, wrote a letter in support of Dreyfus, joined the *Ligue des droits de l'homme* (LDH), or subscribed to a *Dreyfusard* newspaper. The estimates in Panel A show a discontinuous increase in the number of Dreyfus supporters at the boundary of *Chéquard* constituencies: the municipalities inside those constituencies had approximately 7 to 8 additional Dreyfus supporters per 10,000 inhabitants. Exposure to allegations of political corruption thus intensified mobilization on the *Dreyfusard* side as well, perhaps because many individuals responded to local *anti-Dreyfusard* sentiment: the same treatment that increased *anti-Dreyfusard* voting also pushed ordinary citizens to petition, write, and organize in favor of Dreyfus. By contrast, Panel B does not show a clear effect on *Dreyfusard* mobilization for constituencies represented by an antisemitic MP: the estimates are small, unstable in sign, and statistically non-significant. Thus, the two treatments had different impacts on local grassroots mobilization. The *Antisemitic* shock increased *electoral* mobilization, as votes shifted towards the far-right and electorates polarized at the ballot box, but unlike the *Chéquard* treatment, this did not translate into heightened mobilization around the Dreyfus Affair, in particular mobilization on the *Dreyfusard* side.

Table 3: Short-run effects on Dreyfusard support

	Dreyfusard supporters per 10,000		
Bandwidth	Observations	Conventional	Robust
Panel A: *Chéquard* constituencies			
CCT	2040	6.73*	8.22*
		(4.00)	(4.94)
Panel B: *Antisemitic* constituencies			
CCT	2142	-0.62	1.34
		(5.92)	(8.02)
Spec		local linear	local linear

Note: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. The dependent variable is the number of Dreyfusard supporters per 10,000 inhabitants at the municipality level. In Panel A, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 3.74 km. In Panel B, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 4.36 km. Each observation corresponds to a municipality. See Table 2 for additional details on the RD estimation.

5.2 Long-run outcomes (1936–1945)

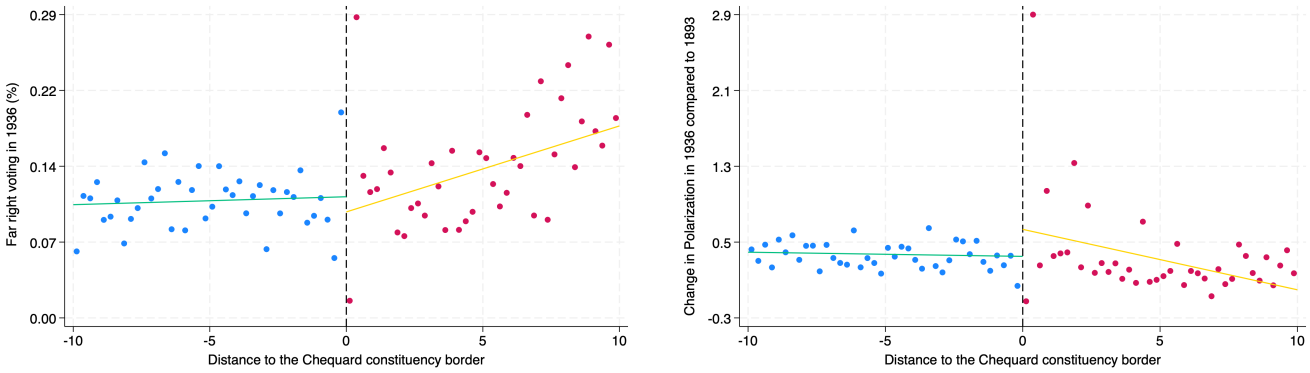
Far-right support and polarization. Figure 2 and Table 4 examine the political legacy of the two shocks over a four-decade period, using similar electoral outcomes to those observed during the Dreyfus Affair. We look at far-right vote shares in the 1936 parliamentary elections, the last elections held before WWII, and the change in electoral polarization between 1893 and 1936. For *Chéquard* constituencies (Panel A), we find no long-run effect on far-right voting, while we find a sizeable effect on electoral polarization: municipalities inside *Chéquard* constituencies experienced an additional, statistically significant increase in polarization of 0.65 to 0.76 between 1893 and 1936. These results imply that treated municipalities polarized roughly twice as much as the average municipality over the period. For *Antisemitic* constituencies, however, this pattern is reversed (Panel B). The far-right vote share in 1936 is 7 percentage points higher (a 25% increase relative to the mean far-right vote share), while the estimates for the change in electoral polarization are negative and non-significant.

These results suggest that the two shocks had drastically different legacies. The *Chéquard* shock, which increased the local salience of the Dreyfus Affair in early stages of this episode, left a long-lasting ideological cleavage without durably shifting voters to the right—the division outlived the ideological outburst that created it. The *Antisemitic* shock, which shifted electoral support to the far-right but did not increase grassroots mobilization for Dreyfus, durably shifted voters towards the far-right, with no lasting increase in polarization. If anything, the negative imprecise polarization estimates suggest that these localities may have become politically more homogeneous as they converged toward the far-right.

In Appendix Table A.10, we report additional results at the canton level on the establishment of local branches of two grassroots organizations: *Action Française* (AF), associated with the antisemitic far-right, and the *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme* (LDH), associated with the *Dreyfusard* side. These results are consistent with the other long-run effects observed on 1936 electoral outcomes. In particular, we find a positive and significant effect of *Antisemitic* MPs on AF branches, while we find no significant impact of either treatment on the presence of LDH chapters.

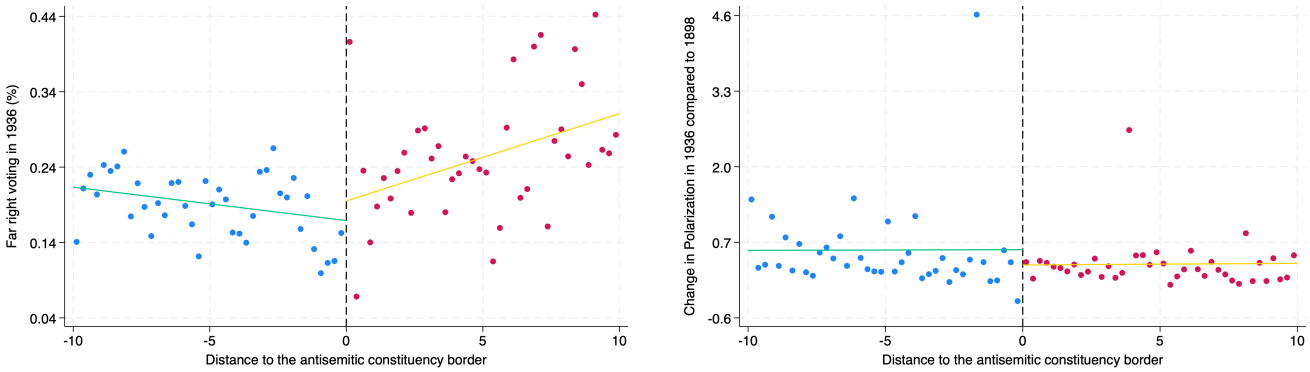
Figure 2: Long-run effects on far-right support and polarization (1936)

Panel A: *Chéquard* constituencies



(a) Far-right vote share **(b)** Change in electoral polarization

Panel B: *Antisemitic* constituencies



(c) Far-right vote share **(d)** Change in electoral polarization

Note: This figure displays RD estimates for far-right vote shares measured in 1936 and changes in electoral polarization between 1893 and 1936 around treated constituency borders. Panel A compares municipalities located just inside *Chéquard* constituencies, defined by positive values of the running variable, to municipalities just outside these constituencies. Panel B compares municipalities located just inside *Antisemitic* constituencies to municipalities just outside these constituencies. Estimates use a local linear estimator with a triangular kernel and a 10-kilometer bandwidth selection. Nearest treated constituency fixed effects are included throughout.

Resistance. Figure 3 presents the long-run effects of the two treatments on resistance activity during World War II. Panel A displays a negative discontinuous effect on the number of resistance members (normalized by pre-WWII population) at the boundary of *Chéquard* constituencies. Panel B shows no comparable discontinuity at the boundary of constituencies represented by an antisemitic MP.

Table 5 reports the corresponding RD estimates. Columns (1) and (2) report our baseline specification (equation 3) without controls. Results reported in Panel A show that municipalities just inside *Chéquard* constituencies provided approximately 37 fewer resistance members per 10,000 inhabitants (46.90 with the robust CCT estimator), a drop of roughly 26 percent relative to the sample mean of 144. In columns (3) and (4) we additionally control for alternative local determinants of resistance engagement: World War I mortality, municipal population in 1940, and 1936 party vote shares. Results remain substantially unchanged. Panel B reports the RD estimates for the *Antisemitic* treatment. All point estimates are

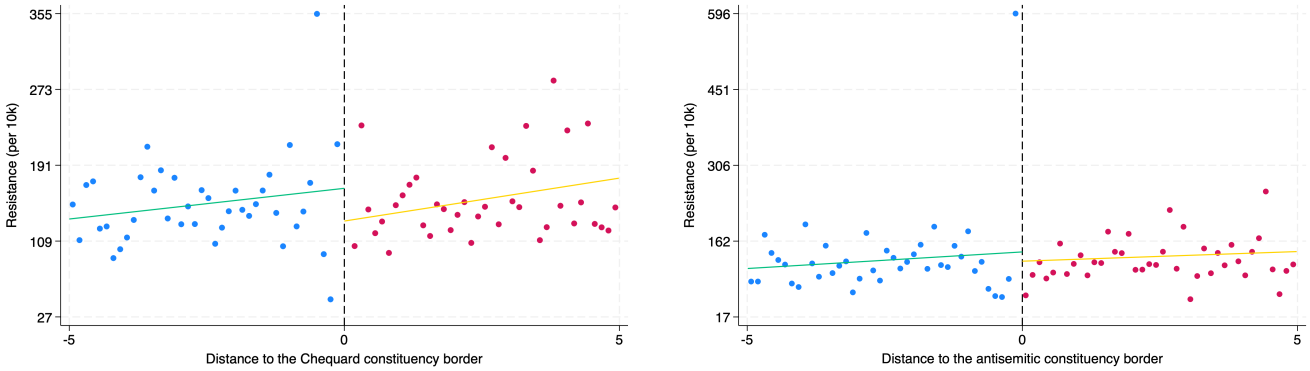
Table 4: Long-run effects on far-right support and polarization (1936)

	Far-right vote 1936		Δ Polarization 1936	
Bandwidth	Conventional	Robust	Conventional	Robust
Panel A: *Chéquard* constituencies				
CCT	0.02	0.04	0.65*	0.76**
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.38)	(0.37)
Panel B: *Antisemitic* constituencies				
CCT	0.07*	0.07*	-0.51	-0.72
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.60)	(0.74)
Mean	0.27	0.27	0.69	0.69
Spec	local linear	local linear	local linear	local linear

Note: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. Right-wing vote measures votes going to the far-right during the 1936 election. Polarization 1936 is measured using the Esteban and Ray polarization index. The change in polarization is computed as $\Delta_c = \frac{ER1936_c - ER1893_c}{ER1893_c}$, where ER denotes the polarization index from Esteban and Ray (2011). For Panel A, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 5.54 km for right-wing voting in 1936, 7.47 km for polarization in 1936, and 4.21 km for the change in polarization. For Panel B, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 9.94 km for right-wing voting in 1936, 5.83 km for polarization in 1936, and 8.94 km for the change in polarization. Each observation corresponds to a municipality. See Table 2 for additional details on the RD estimation.

negative but smaller and not statistically significant. Thus, the *Chéquard* shock, which mobilized both the *Dreyfusard* and *anti-Dreyfusard* camps, had enduring effects on polarization, which translated into diminished resistance participation after 1940. By contrast, the *Antisemitic* shock, which shifted electoral support toward the far-right but did not affect grassroots *Dreyfusard* mobilization, had no significant effects on the Resistance. Appendix Table A.9 confirms the robustness of these results across alternative bandwidths (5, 7.5, and 10 km across treated constituency boundaries).

Figure 3: Long-run effects on the Resistance



(a) *Chéquard* constituencies **(b)** *Antisemitic* constituencies

Note: The figure displays the number of resistance members per 10,000 inhabitants. Panel (a) compares municipalities located just inside *Chéquard* constituencies, defined by positive values of the running variable, to those just outside. Panel (b) compares municipalities located just inside constituencies represented by antisemitic MPs to those just outside. See Figure 2 for additional details on the estimation.

Table 5: Long-run effects on the Resistance

	Resistance members			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bandwidth	Conventional	Robust	Conventional	Robust
Panel A: *Chéquard* constituencies				
CCT	-36.76**	-46.90**	-30.72*	-39.18*
	(18.54)	(22.83)	(17.97)	(22.32)
Panel B: *Antisemitic* constituencies				
CCT	-17.79	-27.00	-24.23	-33.26
	(17.52)	(25.05)	(18.95)	(27.15)
Mean	143.71	143.71	143.71	143.71
Additional controls	no	no	yes	yes
Spec	local linear	local linear	local linear	local linear

Note: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. For Panel A, the optimal bandwidth computation equals 4.96 km (N=2,512) without additional controls and 5.04 km (N=2,496) with additional controls. For Panel B, the optimal bandwidth computation equals 4.85 km (N=1,954) without additional controls and 4.59 km (N=1,817) with additional controls. For Panel B fixed-bandwidth rows, the observations column reports the effective number of municipalities without additional controls first and with additional controls second. Resistance is expressed per 10,000 inhabitants. Additional controls refer to the vote share of each party during the 1936 election, the WWI death rate at the municipality level, and the population of each municipality in 1940. Each observation is at the municipality level. See Table 2 for additional details on the RD estimation.

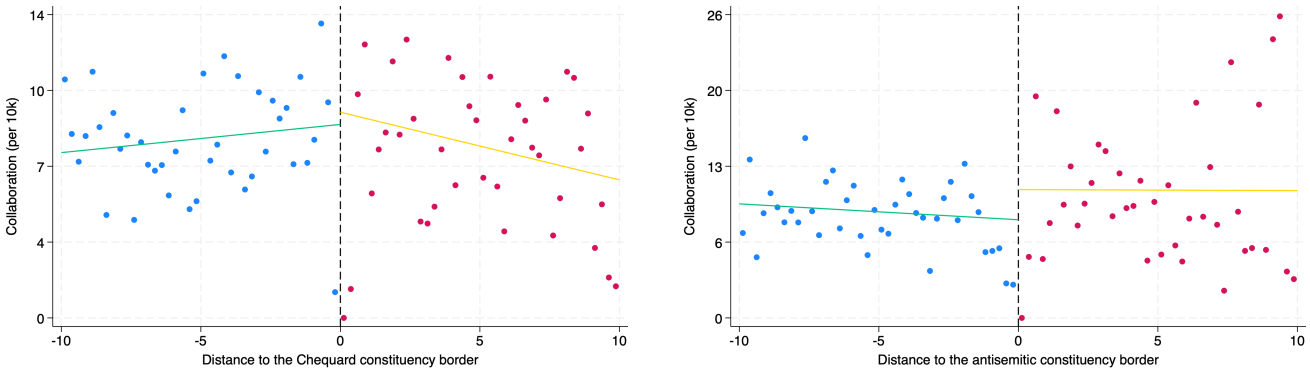
Collaboration. The evidence thus far shows that exposure to *Chéquard* MPs intensified mobilization on both sides of the Dreyfus Affair, durably raised local polarization, and reduced resistance four decades later. Meanwhile, exposure to *Antisemitic* MPs durably shifted electoral support toward the far-right, without generating *Dreyfusard* counter-mobilization or lasting polarization.

In order to explain long-term effects of the Dreyfus Affair on the Resistance, we note that two channels are theoretically plausible. Under a primarily ideological channel, far-right and antisemitic sentiment inherited from the 1890s might have increased affinity with Nazi and Vichy ideology (Marrus and Paxton, 2019). Under a polarization channel, the cleavage inherited from the Dreyfus Affair may have raised the costs of cooperation within resistance networks, without generating an increase in collaboration. Data on collaboration can therefore help disentangle the two channels. Using the data from Cagé et al. (2023), we re-estimate the two spatial RD specifications with the number of individual collaborators per 10,000 inhabitants as the dependent variable in equation (3).

We do not find support for the ideological channel using the *Chéquard* treatment. Panel A of Figure 4 shows no discontinuity in collaboration at the boundary of *Chéquard* constituencies. The corresponding estimates in Table 6 are small and statistically indistinguishable from zero. Department-level evidence using the *Dreyfusard* and *anti-Dreyfusard* scores from Wilson (1982) points in the same direction: in Appendix Table A.13, we regress the intensity of collaboration on these scores and find that the coefficients on the *anti-Dreyfusard* score, the *Dreyfusard* score, and their interaction are all small and insignificant. Thus, Dreyfus-era polarization caused by the *Chéquard* treatment did not translate into higher collaboration with Nazi Germany or the Vichy Regime. However, we find evidence that the ideological channel operates for the *Antisemitic* treatment. Panel B of Figure 4 displays a positive effect at the RD cutoff. The corresponding estimates in Panel B of Table 6 indicate approximately 4.5 additional collaborators per

10,000 inhabitants, more than half the sample mean.

Figure 4: Long-run effects on collaboration



(a) *Chéquard* constituencies **(b)** Antisemitic MP constituencies

Note: The figure plots the number of collaborators per 10,000 inhabitants. Panel (a) compares municipalities located just inside *Chéquard* constituencies, defined by positive values of the running variable, to those just outside. Panel (b) compares municipalities located just inside constituencies represented by antisemitic MPs to those just outside. See Figure 2 for additional details.

Table 6: Long-run effects on collaboration

		Collaboration	
Bandwidth	Observations	Conventional	Robust
Panel A: *Chéquard* constituencies			
CCT	2782	-0.65	-0.54
		(1.85)	(2.44)
Panel B: *Antisemitic* constituencies			
CCT	2075	4.46**	4.78*
		(2.15)	(2.90)
Mean		8.05	8.05
Specification		local linear	local linear

Note: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors clustered at the constituency level in parentheses. The observations column reports the total effective number of municipalities within each bandwidth. Mean refers to the average across all municipalities, and collaborators are expressed per 10,000 inhabitants at the municipality level. See Table 2 for additional details on the RD estimation.

Taken together, the results from the two natural experiments allow us to disentangle different channels through which enduring polarization and ideological cleavages inherited from the Dreyfus Affair shaped WWII outcomes. While the Resistance was a collective effort requiring mutual trust and coordination, collaboration was primarily an individual endeavor with potentially strong ideological motives. The positive effects of the *Antisemitic* MPs on collaboration, which stand in contrast to those of the *Chéquard* MPs, suggest that only the former shock created a legacy of persistent antisemitism. Latent antisemitic preferences were then reactivated in 1940, increasing the probability of aligning with Nazi ideology. At the same time, the legacy of the *Chéquard* shock is one of persistent polarization. Local ideological divisions inherited from this early shock may have weakened social cohesion and trust, undermining capacity for collective action, and ultimately weakening participation in the Resistance.

6 Interpretation

Our results are consistent with a simple framework in which resistance and collaboration respond differently to the ideological composition of a community. Resistance is a collective activity: its output depends not only on how many individuals participate but on how well they cooperate within clandestine networks operating under severe repression (Kocher et al., 2018; Wieviorka, 2016). Ideological mobilization therefore enters the production of resistance through two opposing forces. On the one hand, committed individuals are easier to mobilize, so a larger ideologically engaged population expands the pool of potential resistance members. On the other hand, when members of mutually hostile factions must operate side by side, distrust raises coordination costs and reduces the productivity of resistance networks. This second force is in line with the reports of resistance members (Aubrac, 2009) and with a large literature showing that social heterogeneity and intergroup antagonism depress mutual trust and collective action (Alesina and La Ferrara, 2000, 2002).

Collaboration, by contrast, is an individual activity. Two forces govern its intensity. First, the individual return to collaborating increases with ideological proximity to the occupier: for individuals who share elements of the occupier's worldview, the psychological and social costs of alignment are lower and the perceived legitimacy of the occupier and collaborationist regime higher. Second, the material returns to collaboration are set by the occupier, who acts as a monopsonist for the services of informers and supporters. When collaborators are drawn from rival factions, the occupier can exploit their mutual hostility to put them in competition with one another thereby bidding down the rents paid to all in a divide-and-rule logic. The composition of the local collaborator pool thus matters directly: the more ideologically homogeneous the pool, the weaker the competition among collaborators, the higher the rents the occupier must concede, and the more attractive collaboration becomes at the margin.

The two treatments that we study correspond to distinct shifts in the composition of the underlying communities. The *Chéquard* treatment expanded both the *Dreyfusard* and the *anti-Dreyfusard* camps. The mobilization force and the coordination friction were therefore both active; our estimates indicate that the friction dominated, and resistance fell. At the same time, a symmetric expansion of the two camps implied no net shift in ideological proximity to the occupier, and collaboration did not respond.[14]

The *Antisemitic* treatment instead produced a durable, one-sided expansion of the far-right camp. For resistance, this shift sets two different forces against each other. On the one hand, local communities became politically more homogeneous, which diluted the coordination friction and, other things equal, could have favored resistance networks through more mobilization. On the other hand, the same shift moved part of the population ideologically closer to the occupier, shrinking the pool of individuals

[14]The absence of a collaboration response is consistent with the historiography of Vichy. The values of the *anti-Dreyfusard* tradition (traditionalist conservatism, defense of the army and of the Church) were indeed those on which Vichy's National Revolution drew (Paxton, 1972). Historians, however, draw a sharp distinction between adherence to Pétainist values and active collaboration with the German occupier. Many individuals close to this tradition were ardent nationalists and Germanophobes, for whom collaboration with Germany amounted to a betrayal of the nation; some of them joined the Resistance, a trajectory documented in the literature on the "vichysto-résistants" (Azéma and Wieviorka, 1997). Antisemitism, by contrast, was the component of the far-right worldview most directly aligned with Nazi ideology and with the actively collaborationist wing of the Vichy regime (Marrus and Paxton, 2019). A shock expanding the anti-Dreyfusard camp as such therefore need not raise collaboration, whereas a shock to antisemitic values does.

willing to resist and, by fostering collaboration, raising the risk of denunciation faced by prospective resisters. These two forces operate in opposite directions and the statistically insignificant resistance estimates are consistent with the two forces roughly offsetting each other. For collaboration, by contrast, no such offset arises: both features of the shift, greater ideological proximity to the occupier and a more homogeneous pool of potential collaborators (which weakened the occupier's ability to play informers off against one another) pushed in the same direction, and collaboration rose.

The differential persistence of the two legacies is consistent with classical cleavage theory, in which political divisions endure when they are embodied in opposing group identities that sustain one another (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), and with evidence that political preferences and prejudice persist locally over long horizons (Cantoni et al., 2019; Voth, 2021). A two-sided mobilization creates a self-reinforcing structure, consistent with the positive correlation between pro- and anti-Dreyfus mobilization documented in Figure A.2, whereas a one-sided shift faces no organized opponent and persists as a change in preferences rather than as a standing conflict. The Dreyfus Affair thus left some communities durably divided and others durably realigned. Under Nazi occupation and the Vichy Regime, the division depressed the activity that required cooperation across groups, while the realignment fed the activity that required only individual alignment with the occupier.

7 Conclusion

The Dreyfus Affair had consequences that extended far beyond the political crisis of the 1890s. Combining new data on Dreyfus-era mobilization with records of resistance and collaboration during World War II, we show that distinct ideological shocks produced different long-run outcomes. Exposure to allegations of political corruption intensified mobilization on both sides of the Affair and generated persistent polarization, ultimately reducing participation in the French Resistance. By contrast, representation by openly antisemitic MPs produced a durable shift toward the far-right and increased collaboration with Nazi Germany, without significantly affecting resistance participation.

These results highlight two channels through which historical conflict can shape collective responses to later crises. Persistent ideological polarization can erode trust and raise the costs of coordination, weakening collective action even decades later. Ideological realignment, meanwhile, can increase affinity with an occupying regime and encourage individual or opportunistic collaboration. The legacy of critical junctures such as the Dreyfus Affair therefore depends not only on which preferences and beliefs they affect, but also on whether they leave communities politically realigned or durably divided.

More broadly, our results show how successive historical crises can remain connected through the political and social structures they leave behind. The Dreyfus Affair reshaped local cleavages and identities that resurfaced under the extreme pressures of occupation and war. Understanding these enduring effects is essential for explaining why communities exposed to a common national crisis may later display sharply different capacities for cooperation, resistance, and resilience.

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Online Appendix

1 Introduction **2**

2 Historical Context **6**
2.1 The Dreyfus Affair . . . 6
2.2 Resistance and Collaboration during World War II . . . 7

3 Data and Descriptive Evidence **8**
3.1 The Dreyfus era . . . 8
3.2 World War II Outcomes . . . 10
3.3 Descriptive Evidence . . . 11

4 Empirical Framework **13**
4.1 Spatial RD Design . . . 13
4.2 Threats to identification . . . 15

5 Short- and Long-Run Impacts of the Dreyfus Affair **15**
5.1 Short-run outcomes (1898–1902) . . . 15
5.2 Long-run outcomes (1936–1945) . . . 18

6 Interpretation **23**

7 Conclusion **24**

References **25**

Online Appendix **A-1**

List of Figures

A.1 **Spatial distribution of treated constituencies** . . . A-4
A.2 **Dreyfusard and Anti-Dreyfusard scores at the department level** . . . A-5

List of Tables

A.1 **List of *Chéquard* MPs (1895)** . . . A-2
A.2 **List of MP members of the Anti-Jewish Parliamentary Group (1898)** . . . A-3
A.3 **Balance checks on pre-1895 covariates: *Chéquard* MPs** . . . A-6
A.4 **Balance checks on pre-1898 covariates: *Antisemitic* MPs** . . . A-7
A.5 **Additional balance checks: *Chéquard* MPs (pre-1895)** . . . A-8
A.6 **Additional balance checks: Antisemitic MPs (pre-1898)** . . . A-8
A.7 **Short-run effects on far-right vote shares and polarization** . . . A-9
A.8 **Short-run effects on Dreyfusard support** . . . A-10
A.9 **Long-run effects on the Resistance** . . . A-11
A.10 **Long-run effects on local AF and LDH chapters** . . . A-12
A.11 **Quadratic and cubic polynomial RD estimates for key outcomes** . . . A-12
A.12 **Long-run effects on collaboration** . . . A-13
A.13 **Correlation between Dreyfus-related Mobilization and Collaboration** . . . A-13

Table A.1: List of *Chéquard* MPs (1895)

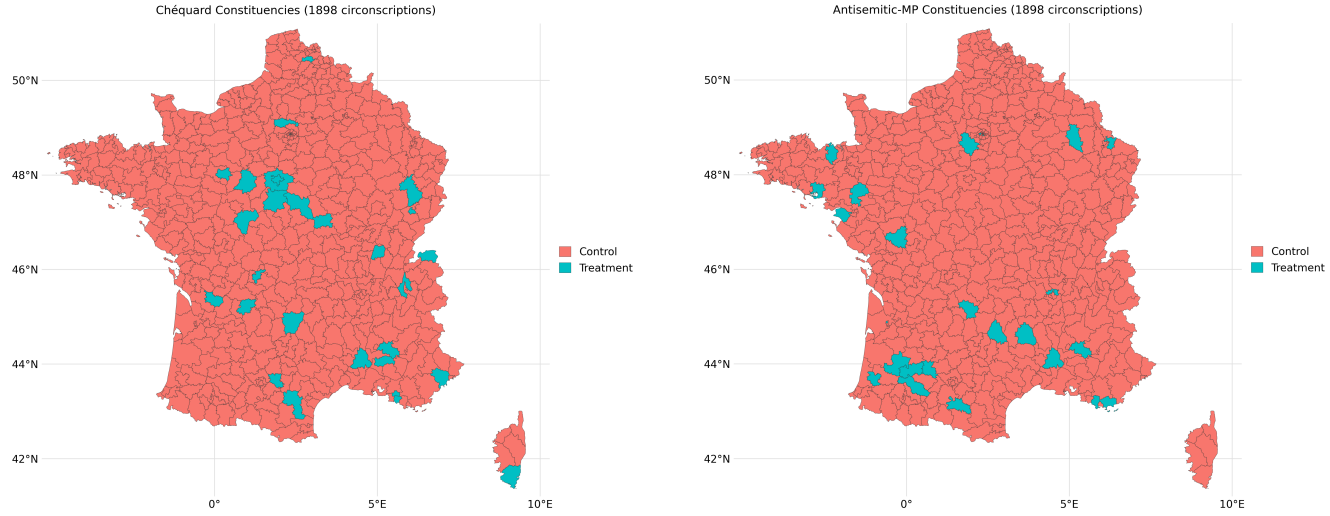
No.	Name	Department	Constituency	Political party / group	Bloc
1	Beauquier	DOUBS	BESANCON-1	Radical	Left
2	Antide Boyer	BOUCHES-DU-RHONE	MARSEILLE-5	Conservateur	Right
3	Chavoix	DORDOGNE	PERIGUEUX-2	Républicain	Right
4	Crémieux	GARD	UZES	Radical	Left
5	Jullien	LOIR-ET-CHER	ROMORANTIN	Radical	Left
6	Laporte	NIEVRE	NEVERS-1	Socialiste révolutionnaire	Left
7	Henry Maret	CHER	SANCERRE	Radical	Left
8	Viger	LOIRET	ORLEANS-2	Radical	Left
9	Naquet	VAUCLUSE	CARPENTRAS	Socialiste	Left
10	Wilson	INDRE-ET-LOIRE	LOCHES	Radical	Left
11	Compayré	TARN	LAVAUR	Socialiste	Left
12	Mercier	HAUTE-SAONE	VESOUL	Républicain	Right
13	Basly	PAS-DE-CALAIS	BETHUNE-1	Socialiste	Left
14	Chevillon	BOUCHES-DU-RHONE	MARSEILLE-4	Radical	Left
15	Arnous	CHARENTE	BARBEZIEUX	Conservateur	Right
16	Labussière	HAUTE-VIENNE	LIMOGES-1	Républicain	Right
17	Arène	CORSE	SARTENE	Conservateur	Right
18	Rouvier	ALPES-MARITIMES	GRASSE	Radical	Left
19	J. Roche	SAVOIE	CHAMBERY-1	Républicain	Right
20	Bastid	CANTAL	AURILLAC	Républicain	Right
21	Marty	AUDE	CARCASSONNE	Républicain	Right
22	Frébault	SEINE	PARIS-7	Républicain	Right
23	Hubbard	SEINE-ET-OISE	PONTOISE-1	Radical-Socialiste	Left
24	Boissty d'Anglas	DROME	NYONS	Radical	Left
25	Rabler	LOIRET	ORLEANS-1	Radical-Socialiste	Left
26	Gaston Bozérian	LOIR-ET-CHER	VENDOME	Républicain	Right
27	Mercier	HAUTE-SAVOIE	THONON-LES-BAINS	Républicain	Right
28	Herbette	AIN	BOURG-2	Radical	Left
29	Robillard	SARTHE	LE-MANS-1	Indépendants	n.a.

Note: Deputies Boyer, Arène, Jullien, Henry Maret, Naquet, and Rouvier were interrogated by the Parliamentary Committee in 1893. Among the *Chéquards* identified but no longer in power after 1893: Burdeau, Camille Dreyfus, Chevandier, Clémenceau, Germain, Léon Renault, and Marquiset chose not to run in the 1893 election; Cordier, De Soubeyran, De la Berge, Dugué de la Fauconnerie, Floquet, Gaillard, Lagrange, Laguerre, St-Martin, and Vian lost in the 1893 election; Denormandie, Devès, and Millaud had become senators by 1893; and Etienne (Algérie), Pierre Alype (Indes françaises), and Soriat (Guadeloupe) represented constituencies outside mainland France.

Table A.2: List of MP members of the Anti-Jewish Parliamentary Group (1898)

No.	Name	Department	Constituency	Political party / group	Bloc
1	Charles Bernard	GIRONDE	BORDEAUX-2	Républicain Socialiste	Left
2	Paul de Cassagnac	GERS	MIRANDE	Conservateur	Right
3	Albert Chiché	GIRONDE	BORDEAUX-1	Conservateur	Right
4	Joseph Paulin Daudé	LOZERE	MENDE	Conservateur	Center-Right
5	Théodore Denis	LANDES	DAX-1	Radical	Center-Left
6	Henry Ferrette	MEUSE	BAR-LE-DUC	Conservateur	Center-Right
7	Ludovic Gervaize	MEURTHE-ET-MOSELLE	NANCY-3	Conservateur	Right
8	Armand Jacquey	LANDES	MONT-DE-MARSAN-1	Conservateur	Right
9	Joseph Lasies	GERS	CONDOM	Conservateur	Right
10	Joseph Massabuau	AVEYRON	ESPALION	Indépendants	Center
11	R. de Maussabré-Beufvier	DEUX-SEVRES	PARTHENAY	Conservateur	Right
12	Lucien Millevoye	PARIS	16-1	Conservateur	Right
13	Léonce Pascal	GARD	UZES	Indépendants	Center
14	F. du Breil de Pontbriand	LOIRE-INFERIEURE	CHATEAUBRIANT	Conservateur	Right
15	Abel Bernard	VAUCLUSE	APT	Radical Socialiste	Left
16	François d'Aulan	DROME	NYONS	Indépendants	Center
17	Léon Borie	CORREZE	TULLE-1	Conservateur	Right
18	Gustave Cluseret	VAR	TOULON-2	Socialiste révolutionnaire	Left
19	Jules Delpech-Cantaloup	GERS	LECTOURE	Conservateur	Center-Right
20	Julien Dumas	ARIEGE	PAMIERS	Conservateur	Right
21	Régis de L'Estourbeillon	MORBIHAN	VANNES-1	Conservateur	Right
22	Jules Galot	LOIRE-INFERIEURE	PAIMBOEUF	Conservateur	Right
23	Victor Gay	LOIRE	SAINT-ETIENNE-3	Indépendants	Center
24	Marcel Habert	SEINE-ET-OISE	RAMBOUILLET	Conservateur	Right
25	F. Rioust de Largentaye	COTES-DU-NORD	DINAN-2	Conservateur	Right

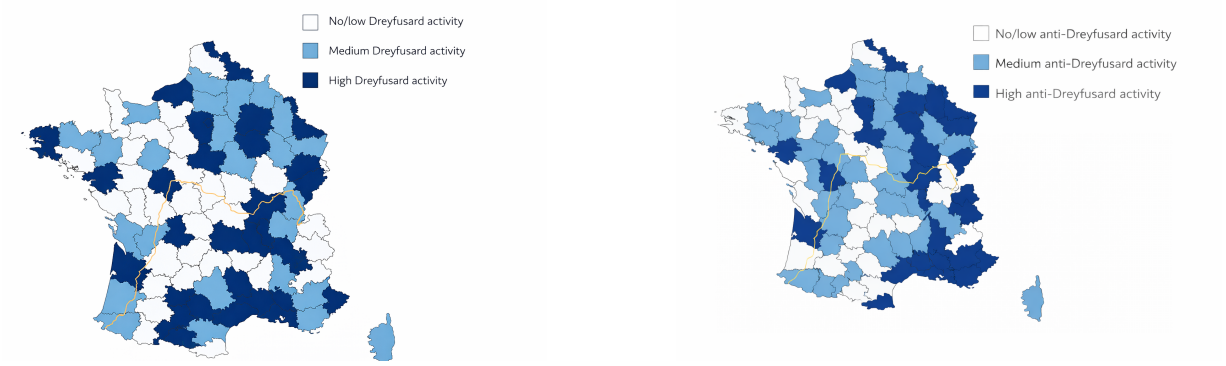
Figure A.1: Spatial distribution of treated constituencies



(a) *Chéquard* constituencies (1893-98) **(b)** *Antisemitic* MP constituencies (1898-1902)

NOTE: Figure (a) shows constituencies with a *Chéquard* incumbent MP in 1895. The constituencies are: Besançon (1c), Marseille (5c), Périgueux (2c), Uzès, Romorantin, Nevers (1c), Sancerre, Orléans (2c), Carpentras, Loches, Lavaur, Vesoul, Béthune (1c), Marseille (4c), Barbezieux, Limoges (1c), Sartène, Grasse, Chambéry (1c), Aurillac, Carcassonne, Paris (7), Pontoise (1c), Nyons, Orléans (1), Vendôme, Thonon-les-Bains, Bourg (2e circonscription), Le Mans (1c). Figure (b) shows constituencies with an *Antisemitic* MP (member of the Anti-Jewish parliamentary group) during the 1898–1902 legislature. The constituencies are: Toulon (2c), Pamiers, Dax (1c), Vannes (1c), Châteaubriant, Dinan (2c), Rambouillet, Bordeaux (1c), Paris (16), Tulle (1c), Mirande, Nyons, Paris (13), Mende, Lectoure, Bar-le-Duc, Saint-Étienne (3c), Paimbœuf, Nancy (3c), Mont-de-Marsan (1c), Condom, Espalion, Parthenay, Uzès.

Figure A.2: Dreyfusard and Anti-Dreyfusard scores at the department level



(a) Dreyfusard score (b) Anti-Dreyfusard score

NOTE: Figure (a) and Figure (b) illustrate the spatial distributions of Dreyfusard and Anti-dreyfusard scores. The scores range from zero (no Anti-Dreyfusard or Dreyfusard activity) to five (all five types of Anti-Dreyfusard activity are present) or three (all three types of Dreyfusard activity are present). For more details, please refer to Section 3. Dark blue refers to departments that have a high Dreyfusard activity (score of three) or Anti-Dreyfusard activity (score of four or five). Light blue refers to departments that have medium Dreyfusard activity (score of one and two) or Anti-Dreyfusard activity (score of two or three) and white refers to Departments that have low/no Dreyfusard activity (score of zero) and Anti-Dreyfusard activity (score of zero or one).

Table A.3: Balance checks on pre-1895 covariates: *Chéquard* MPs

	(1) All constituencies		(2) *Non-Chéquards* constituencies		(3) *Chéquards* constituencies		(2)–(3) Pairwise t-test	
Variable	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean difference
Votes towards the far left (1893)	548	0.08	519	0.08	29	0.12	548	-0.03
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.04)		
Votes towards the left-center-right (1893)	548	0.76	519	0.76	29	0.76	548	-0.00
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.05)		
Votes towards the far right (1893)	548	0.14	519	0.15	29	0.13	548	0.02
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.04)		
Total number of votes / 10k (1893)	548	1.55	519	1.54	29	1.62	548	-0.078
		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.10)		
Participation rate in election (1893)	548	0.73	519	0.73	29	0.76	548	-0.02
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.02)		
Esteban and Ray polarization index (1893)	548	0.69	519	0.68	29	0.80	548	-0.12
		(0.03)		(0.03)		(0.19)		
Foreign people / 10k (1893)	548	0.16	519	0.16	29	0.22	548	-0.06
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.10)		
Population / 10k (1896)	548	4.01	519	4.03	29	3.73	548	3.08
		(0.68)		(0.72)		(1.50)		
Population / 10k (1940)	548	6.76	519	6.73	29	7.36	548	-0.63
		(0.21)		(0.21)		(0.90)		
Share of Jews (1896)	548	0.00	519	0.00	29	0.00	548	-0.00
		(0.00)		(0.00)		(0.00)		
Share of foreigners (1872)	548	0.02	519	0.02	29	0.02	548	0.00
		(0.00)		(0.00)		(0.01)		
Liberal professions / 10k (1866)	548	0.55	519	0.55	29	0.50	548	0.05
		(0.06)		(0.06)		(0.13)		
Industrial workers / 10k (1866)	548	1.99	519	2.00	29	1.81	548	0.19
		(0.36)		(0.37)		(0.80)		
Agricultural workers / 10k (1866)	548	0.22	519	0.22	29	0.28	548	-0.07
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.04)		
Protestants / 10k (1872)	548	0.09	519	0.09	29	0.07	548	0.02
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.04)		
Catholics / 10k (1872)	548	4.26	519	4.34	29	2.80	548	1.54
		(0.79)		(0.83)		(0.97)		
Share of catholic students (1893)	548	0.28	519	0.28	29	0.26	548	0.02
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)		
Share of catholic schools (1893)	548	0.24	519	0.24	29	0.24	548	-0.00
		(0.00)		(0.00)		(0.01)		
Share of refractory clergy (1791)	548	0.44	519	0.44	29	0.37	548	0.07*
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.04)		
F-test of joint significance (F-stat)								1.21
F-test, number of observations								548

NOTE: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Reported t-test values correspond to mean differences across groups, while reported F-test values correspond to F-statistics. Standard errors are robust. Party classifications follow Cagé et al. (2023). Votes for the far-left include SOCREV, SOC, and RADSOC; votes for the center left include RAD, RADDIV, and REP; votes for the center include REPDIV and DIV; votes for the center right include REPLIB, RALLIE, REVIS, BOUL, and BON; and votes for the far-right include REAC.

Table A.4: Balance checks on pre-1898 covariates: *Antisemitic* MPs

	(1) All constituencies		(2) *Non-antisemitic MP* constituencies		(3) *Antisemitic MP* constituencies		(2)–(3) Pairwise t-test	
Variable	*N*	Mean	*N*	Mean	*N*	Mean	*N*	Mean difference
Votes towards the far left (1898)	553	0.18	529	0.18	24	0.16	553	0.02
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.05)		
Votes towards the left-center-right (1898)	552	0.66	528	0.66	24	0.60	552	0.06
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.06)		
Votes towards the far right (1898)	553	0.10	529	0.10	24	0.20	553	-0.10
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.07)		
Total number of votes / 10k (1898)	553	1.32	529	1.33	24	1.25	553	0.07
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.09)		
Participation rate in election (1893)	553	0.73	529	0.73	24	0.73	553	0.00
		(0.00)		(0.00)		(0.02)		
Esteban and Ray polarization index (1898)	553	0.69	529	0.69	24	0.75	553	-0.06
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.07)		
Foreign people / 10k (1893)	553	0.17	529	0.17	24	0.13	553	0.04
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.05)		
Population / 10k (1896)	553	4.58	529	4.16	24	13.85	553	-9.70
		(0.82)		(0.71)		(10.50)		
Share of Jews (1896)	553	0.00	529	0.00	24	0.00	553	-0.00
		(0.00)		(0.00)		(0.00)		
Share of foreigners (1872)	553	0.02	529	0.02	24	0.02	553	0.01
		(0.00)		(0.00)		(0.00)		
Liberal professions / 10k (1866)	553	0.59	529	0.56	24	1.31	553	-0.75
		(0.07)		(0.06)		(0.79)		
Industrial workers / 10k (1866)	553	2.27	529	2.06	24	6.87	553	-4.81
		(0.43)		(0.37)		(5.47)		
Agricultural workers / 10k (1866)	553	0.22	529	0.22	24	0.23	553	-0.01
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.05)		
Protestants / 10k (1872)	553	0.09	529	0.08	24	0.23	553	-0.16
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.17)		
Catholics / 10k (1872)	553	3.96	529	3.71	24	9.50	553	-5.79
		(0.72)		(0.68)		(7.28)		
Share of Catholic students (1893)	553	0.28	529	0.28	24	0.32	553	-0.04*
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.03)		
Share of Catholic schools (1893)	553	0.24	529	0.24	24	0.25	553	-0.01
		(0.00)		(0.00)		(0.02)		
Share of refractory clergy (1791)	547	0.44	523	0.43	24	0.48	547	-0.05
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.05)		
F-test of joint significance (F-stat)								1.11
F-test, number of observations								547

NOTE: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Reported t-test values correspond to mean differences across groups, while reported F-test values correspond to F-statistics. Standard errors are robust. Count variables are divided by 10,000 where indicated. Party classifications follow Cagé et al. (2023). Votes for the far-left include SOCREV, SOC, and RADSOC; votes for the left-center-right category include RAD, REP, REPDIV, DIV, REPLIB, RALLIE, REVIS, OPP, and BON; votes for the far-right include CONS, MON, and ANT.

Table A.5: Additional balance checks: *Chéquard* MPs (pre-1895)

Bandwidth	Observations	Far-Left	Right-Center-Left	Far-Right	Foreigners	Literacy	Population	Polarization
CCT		0.05	-0.07	0.02	59.36	-0.02	254.72	0.18
		(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(59.56)	(0.03)	(327.72)	(0.15)
5 km	2574	0.05	-0.03	0.01	33.51	0.03	297.17	0.04
		(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(87.13)	(0.04)	(520.73)	(0.20)
7.5 km	3351	0.04	-0.06	0.02	86.23	0.03	285.82	0.14
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(347.25)	(0.17)
10 km	4469	0.05	-0.07*	0.03	71.17	-0.02	105.11	0.18
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(39.20)	(0.03)	(307.41)	(0.15)
Mean		0.05	0.81	0.14	24.10	0.59	1064.99	0.98

Note: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. 'Extreme left' refers to the share of votes for extreme left parties in 1893; 'center-left' to the share for center-left parties; 'center' to centrist parties; 'center-right' to center-right parties; and 'right' to right-wing parties. 'Foreign voters' indicates the absolute number of foreign voters in 1893, while 'literacy' refers to the literacy rate in 1893. 'Population' refers to the total population in 1893. 'Polarization' is measured using the Esteban and Ray polarization index for 1893, calculated with $\alpha = 1.6$. See Table 2 for additional details on the RD estimation.

Table A.6: Additional balance checks: Antisemitic MPs (pre-1898)

		Outcome						
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Bandwidth	**Observations**	Left	Left-Center-Right	Right	Foreigners	Literacy	Population	Polarization
Optimal		0.01	0.01	0.02	-30.67	-0.02	-2062.60	0.01
		(0.02)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(30.01)	(0.04)	(2188.50)	(0.08)
5 km	2041	0.00	0.06	-0.03	-51.93	-0.07	-2956.20	0.04
		(0.03)	(0.08)	(0.05)	(58.93)	(0.05)	(3276.10)	(0.12)
7.5 km	2818	0.01	0.03	0.00	-33.19	-0.02	-2083.60	0.02
		(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(38.53)	(0.04)	(2101.30)	(0.10)
10 km	3529	0.01	0.01	0.02	-28.83	0.00	-1581.00	0.01
		(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(28.64)	(0.03)	(1516.30)	(0.09)

Note: Entries report robust RD estimates. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. The observations column reports the total effective number of observations within each bandwidth for the election outcomes, computed as the sum of the effective observations to the left and right of the cutoff. Effective observations differ slightly across outcomes because of missing values. The Optimal row uses the outcome-specific MSE-optimal bandwidth, so no common observation count is reported there. All specifications include nearest treated constituency fixed effects and standard errors are clustered at the constituency level. *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A.7: Short-run effects on far-right vote shares and polarization

		Far right vote (%)		Δ Polarization	
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bandwidth	**Observations**	Conventional	Robust	Conventional	Robust
Panel A: *Chéquard* constituencies					
CCT		0.06**	0.07**	1.23**	1.42***
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.53)	(0.51)
5 km	2564	0.07**	0.08*	1.17**	1.51***
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.56)	(0.43)
7.5 km	3519	0.06**	0.09	0.87	1.22**
		(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.60)	(0.54)
10 km	4414	0.06**	0.07**	0.77	1.02
		(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.59)	(0.65)
Mean		0.10	0.10	0.60	0.60
Spec		local linear	local linear	local linear	local linear
Panel B: *Antisemitic* constituencies					
CCT		0.16***	0.14**	1.51***	1.68***
		(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.52)	(0.59)
5 km	2008	0.16**	0.19*	1.65***	1.95***
		(0.06)	(0.10)	(0.57)	(0.74)
7.5 km	2770	0.16***	0.16**	1.50***	1.71***
		(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.52)	(0.63)
10 km	3464	0.16***	0.14**	1.42***	1.62***
		(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.51)	(0.62)
Mean		0.10	0.10	0.60	0.60
Spec		local linear	local linear	local linear	local linear

Note: Significance levels: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. For Panel A, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 7.52 km for the far-right vote share (N=3528 municipalities) and 4.30 km for the change in electoral polarization between 1893–1898 (N=2217). For Panel B, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 9.32 km for the far-right vote share (N=3292 municipalities) and 7.14 km for the change in electoral polarization (N=2311). For Panel B fixed-bandwidth rows, the observations column reports the effective number of municipalities for the far-right vote and polarization outcomes first, and the effective number for the change in polarization second. The change in polarization is computed as $\Delta_c = \frac{ER1902_c - ER1898_c}{ER1898_c}$, where ER denotes the polarization index from Esteban and Ray (2011) or for 1898 using 1893 as a baseline year. Each observation is at the municipality level. Mean refers to the sample mean across all municipalities in France. Estimates are obtained using a local linear regression with a triangular kernel. Nearest treated constituency fixed effects are included throughout and standard errors are clustered at the constituency level.

Table A.8: Short-run effects on Dreyfusard support

	Dreyfusard supporters per 10,000	
Bandwidth	Conventional	Robust
Panel A: *Chéquard* constituencies		
CCT	6.73*	8.22*
	(3.99)	(4.94)
5 km	5.15*	9.89*
	(3.12)	(5.84)
7.5 km	2.61	6.89
	(2.26)	(4.68)
10 km	1.82	4.74
	(1.92)	(3.72)
Spec	local linear	local linear
Panel B: *Antisemitic* constituencies		
CCT	-0.62	1.34
	(5.92)	(8.02)
5 km	-2.97	7.47
	(5.02)	(10.71)
7.5 km	-4.75	-1.60
	(3.89)	(6.72)
10 km	-5.91	-2.63
	(3.76)	(5.33)
Spec	local linear	local linear

Note: Significance levels: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. Dreyfusard supporters per 10,000 measures the number of Dreyfusard supporters per 10,000 inhabitants at the municipality level. At least one Dreyfusard supporter is an indicator equal to one if at least one Dreyfusard supporter is observed in the municipality. For Panel A, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 3.74 km for Dreyfusard supporters per 10,000 and 4.02 km for the extensive-margin indicator. For Panel B, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 4.36 km for Dreyfusard supporters per 10,000 and 6.47 km for the extensive-margin indicator. Each observation corresponds to a municipality. See Table 2 for additional details on the RD estimation.

Table A.9: Long-run effects on the Resistance

		Resistance members			
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Bandwidth	**Observations**	Conventional	Robust	Conventional	Robust
		No additional controls		Additional controls	
Panel A: *Chéquard* constituencies					
CCT		-36.76**	-46.90**	-30.72*	-39.18*
		(18.54)	(22.83)	(17.97)	(22.32)
5 km	2531	-36.61**	-36.92	-30.84*	-20.13
		(18.34)	(36.37)	(36.32)	(35.55)
7.5 km	3479	-18.49	-51.80**	-15.56	-44.60*
		(14.62)	(25.79)	(14.82)	(26.03)
10 km	4373	-11.14	-35.97	-9.02	-31.56
		(12.10)	(21.92)	(12.91)	(22.62)
Mean		143.71	143.71	143.71	143.71
Additional controls		no	no	yes	yes
Spec		local linear	local linear	local linear	local linear
Panel B: *Antisemitic* constituencies					
CCT	1954	-17.79	-27.00	-24.23	-33.26
		(17.52)	(25.05)	(18.95)	(27.15)
5 km	2004	-17.71	-7.64	-23.18	-27.48
		(17.06)	(40.28)	(17.62)	(41.14)
7.5 km	2764	-13.66	-32.26	-18.91	-42.22
		(12.82)	(24.56)	(13.14)	(25.70)
10 km	3458	-5.85	-26.99	-12.15	-33.16*
		(11.21)	(17.54)	(11.33)	(18.38)
Mean		143.71	143.71	143.71	143.71
Additional controls		no	no	yes	yes
Spec		local linear	local linear	local linear	local linear

Note: Significance levels: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. For Panel A, the optimal bandwidth computation equals 4.96 km (N=2,512) without additional controls and 5.04 km (N=2,496) with additional controls. For Panel B, the optimal bandwidth computation equals 4.85 km (N=1,954) without additional controls and 4.59 km (N=1,817) with additional controls. For Panel B fixed-bandwidth rows, the observations column reports the effective number of municipalities without additional controls first and with additional controls second. Resistance is expressed per 10,000 inhabitants. Additional controls refer to the vote share of each party during the 1936 election, the WWI death rate at the municipality level, and the population of each municipality in 1940. Each observation is at the municipality level. See Table 2 for additional details on the RD estimation.

Table A.10: Long-run effects on local AF and LDH chapters

	AF sections per 10,000		LDH sièges per 10,000	
Bandwidth	Conventional	Robust	Conventional	Robust
Panel A: *Chéquard* constituencies				
CCT	0.24	0.40	0.03	0.05
	(0.23)	(0.32)	(0.24)	(0.34)
Spec	local linear	local linear	local linear	local linear
Panel B: *Antisemitic* constituencies				
CCT	0.42*	0.78**	0.30	0.31
	(0.23)	(0.30)	(0.28)	(0.41)
Spec	local linear	local linear	local linear	local linear

Note: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. AF sections measure the number of Action Française sections per 10,000 inhabitants at the canton level. LDH sièges measure the number of Ligue des droits de l'homme sièges per 10,000 inhabitants at the canton level. For Panel A, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 9.30 km (372 cantons) for AF sections and 9.20 km (367 cantons) for LDH sièges. For Panel B, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 11.12 (467 cantons) km for AF sections and 10.51 km (444 cantons) for LDH sièges. Each observation corresponds to a canton. See Table 2 for additional details on the RD estimation.

Table A.11: Quadratic and cubic polynomial RD estimates for key outcomes

	Right-wing vote 1898		Polarization 1898		Δ Polarization 1898		Resistance	
	Conventional	Robust	Conventional	Robust	Conventional	Robust	Conventional	Robust
Panel A: Quadratic polynomial								
CCT	0.07**	0.08**	0.24**	0.31**	1.49***	1.58***	-52.88*	-57.26
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.12)	(0.15)	(0.41)	(0.45)	(30.60)	(37.26)
Bandwidth (km)	10.63	10.63	6.40	6.40	5.71	5.71	5.96	5.96
Observations	4594	4594	3082	3082	2785	2785	3418	3418
Panel B: Cubic polynomial								
CCT	0.08	0.08	0.54**	0.53**	1.51***	1.58**	-57.87*	-57.86
	(0.05)	(0.09)	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.42)	(0.51)	(35.78)	(42.54)
Bandwidth (km)	6.67	6.67	5.82	5.82	8.32	8.32	8.67	8.67
Observations	3165	3165	2872	2872	3696	3696	3925	3925
Mean	0.10	0.10	0.67	0.67	0.60	0.60	143.17	143.17

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Resistance is expressed per 10,000 inhabitants. Each observation corresponds to a municipality. Mean refers to the sample mean across all municipalities. See Table 2 for additional details on the RD estimation. *$p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A.12: Long-run effects on collaboration

Bandwidth	Observations	Conventional	Robust
Panel A: *Chéquard* constituencies			
CCT	2782	-0.65	-0.54
		(1.85)	(2.44)
5 km	2564	-0.54	-0.94
		(1.98)	(4.61)
7.5 km	3521	-0.98	-0.24
		(1.39)	(2.95)
10 km	4416	-0.81	-1.04
		(1.21)	(2.07)
Mean		8.05	8.05
Specification		local linear	local linear
Panel B: *Antisemitic* constituencies			
CCT	2075	4.46**	4.78*
		(2.15)	(2.90)
5 km	2041	4.48**	5.62
		(2.17)	(4.22)
7.5 km	2819	3.94**	4.97*
		(1.90)	(2.97)
10 km	3530	3.37**	4.88*
		(1.67)	(2.62)
Mean		8.05	8.05
Specification		local linear	local linear

Note: Significance levels: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors clustered at the constituency level in parentheses. The observations column reports the total effective number of municipalities within each bandwidth, computed as the sum of the effective observations to the left and right of the cutoff. For Panel B, the MSE-optimal bandwidth is 5.12 km (N=2,075 municipalities). One observation refers to the municipality level. Mean refers to the average across all municipalities, and collaborators are expressed per 10,000 inhabitants at the municipality level. See Table 2 for additional details on the RD estimation.

Table A.13: Correlation between Dreyfus-related Mobilization and Collaboration

	Collaborationist members per 10,000 inhabitants		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Anti-Dreyfusard Score	0.29	0.28	3.77
	(0.62)	(0.63)	(3.18)
Dreyfusard Score		0.06	3.56
		(0.47)	(3.04)
Anti-Dreyfusard × Dreyfusard			-0.71
			(0.59)
Mean	9.44	9.44	9.44
Observations (Departments)	87	87	87
R^2	0.56	0.56	0.57

Note: Significance levels: *$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$. Anti-Dreyfusard Score is measured on a scale from 0 to 5 and Dreyfusard Score from 0 to 3. Both scores are standardized to improve comparability. All regressions include department-level controls: the share of foreign residents in 1872 and 1886; the shares of Catholics and Jews in 1872; the literacy rate in 1872; the share of the workforce in industry in 1886; the urban share; population size in 1931; the average distance from each department to Berlin; and an indicator for whether the department was predominantly under Nazi or Vichy control. We also control for the aggregate vote shares of the Left, Center-Left, Center-Right, and Right in the 1936 parliamentary election, as well as region fixed effects. Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses.