The Political Economy of Agriculture in France’s Fifth Republic*

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Agricultural activity, agricultural politics, and agricultural policy are interrelated. In this article, I discuss some of the linkages in the context of France’s Fifth Republic. I demonstrate that the geographic relationship inside France between agricultural product mix and voting behavior helps to explain French governmental conduct during three major episodes of international agricultural policymaking. Two of these episodes involve the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union, the other involves the Uruguay Round of reforms to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Key Words: agriculture; France; European Union; Common Agricultural Policy; General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade; Uruguay Round; agricultural policy; politics.

I. INTRODUCTION

The linkages between agricultural activity, agricultural politics, and agricultural policymaking have been explored in a variety of historical and geographic contexts. One important theme of the resulting literature is the danger of treating agriculture as a homogeneous interest group. In addition (and related) to cleavages between small and large farmers, between autarkic and commercial farmers, between owners and renters of agricultural land, and between employers of agricultural labor and their employees are differences based on product mix. For example, Gerschenkron (1989) stresses the fundamental divergence of interest in Wilhelmine and Weimar, Germany, between cultivators of rye and rearers of livestock.1 By the end of the 19th century, German rye could not compete with...
foreign sources of fodder, so the owners of the large rye-producing estates militated for protectionism. The peasants who raised the livestock on small farms would have benefitted from free trade in animal feedstuffs. Although they, too, received tariff protection for their products, the magnitude of that protection failed to compensate them for the tariffs levied on their agricultural inputs. Toward the end of the Weimar Republic, this heterogeneity of interest translated into heterogeneity of party affiliation and voting behavior. By 1928, livestock farmers embraced Nazism far more readily than did farmers specialized in grains, fruits, or vegetables (Brustein, 1996, p. 90). In Schleswig–Holstein, an important early bastion of Nazism, dairy and livestock farmers voted differently than did their grain-producing counterparts (Farquharson, 1976, p. 4).

This linkage between agricultural specialization and voting behavior has been observed in the United States as well. For example, in the elections of 1920 and 1922, the wheat counties of western Minnesota voted for protest candidates, while the corn counties of southern Minnesota voted for their Republican opponents (Rice, 1924, p. 163). Protest candidates also fared well in the wheat districts, but poorly in the corn districts, of Iowa, Nebraska, and North Dakota (Rice, 1924, pp. 171, 174, 180). Similarly, during the first quarter of this century, Socialist voting among Oklahoma farmers occurred especially frequently in the cotton-producing parts of the state (Burbank, 1976, p. 6). To McGuire (1981), product mix affects political views because it determines the degree of risk experienced by the farmer: The greater the economic risk, the greater the intensity of farmer protest during the Granger, Greenback, Alliance, and Populist eras.

A second important lesson of the literature on agricultural activity, politics, and policy is the utility of political economy as a method of analyzing agricultural policymaking (Swinnen and van der Zee, 1993; Wolfe, 1998). In 20th-century America (Gardner, 1987) and post World War II Europe (Brown, 1990), govern-

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2 During the mid-1920s, for example, “at the same time as the government acted to protect German grain producers, it concluded trade agreements with Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, and France that further increased the entry of foreign dairy and meat products into the German market” (Brustein, 1996, p. 68). For that reason, perhaps, “… in 1930 the volume of grain imports stood at only 48 percent of pre-war levels, while the volume of meat and dairy imports rose to 188 percent and 158 percent of their 1913 volume, respectively” (Brustein, 1996, p. 67).

3 In the words of Nye (1951, pp. 8–9), “The extent and nature of a farmer’s difficulties naturally depended on the type of farming he did and the area in which he did it. The corn and livestock producers of Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and Minnesota found transportation charges their most pressing problem. The dairy farmers of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa, who sold some of their output in a home market, had smaller shipping expenses and were less subject to monopolistic control. The wheat farmer of the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Kansas faced the worst situation. Soil and climate restricted him to one crop and left him at nature’s mercy. The riskiness of wheat made credit harder to obtain, and he needed a great deal of both land and machinery to raise it. The nature of the market left him open to abuse by elevators, millers, and railroads, for he was forced to depend upon someone else to buy, ship, and process his product for a distant market in open world competition. It was no accident that the greatest agrarian unrest after the Civil War centered in the wheat belt.” The significance of product mix in American agricultural politics during the late 19th century is also stressed by Gourevitch (1986, p. 108).
mental favors have been distributed quite disproportionately among agricultural products. If economic conditions shape political behavior and governmental policies shape economic conditions, then governmental officials might design agricultural programs with their own reelection in mind. For example, Wright (1974, p. 30) suggests that the regional distribution of New Deal agricultural spending might have been influenced by the fact “that ‘the South was safely in the Democratic fold’, while the rest of the country, especially the West, was politically uncertain.” Wright’s observation raises an interesting question: If the composition of agricultural output varies considerably in space, will incumbent political officials, seeking to focus governmental favors on particular geographic areas, attempt to target agricultural subsidies on particular agricultural products?

I shall address this question in the context of France’s Fifth Republic (1958–present). Midway through the 1950s, agriculture still accounted for more than one-quarter of French employment. France has always been the largest agricultural producer in the European Union (EU). Successive French governments have played decisive roles in shaping both the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU (Neville-Rolfe, 1984; Lecerf, 1965–1984) and the agricultural features of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Agriculture figures prominently in most studies of French political geography (Siegfried, 1913; Goguel, 1981–1983; Lacoste, 1986; and especially Brustein, 1988).

In principle, at least, interest groups can engage in several distinct types of political behavior: They can vote for particular candidates (ballot behavior), they can transfer wealth to particular candidates or officials (checkbook behavior), and they can stage disturbances that affect the conduct of other interest groups (protest behavior). In this article, I focus on the ballot behavior of the agricultural

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5 To the extent that farmers can alter the composition of their output in response to governmental favors, this strategy will not work; but soil and climate limit greatly the freedom of farmers to engage in such adjustments.


7 Comprehensive, recent descriptions of CAP include Baudin (1993) and Fennell (1997); see also Tangermann (1992) and Meester and van der Zee (1993).

In particular, I examine the differences in voting behavior between agricultural and nonagricultural voters, and among various types of agricultural voters. Section II develops a model of electoral outcomes. Section III appraises the suitability of the model to France’s Fifth Republic. Section IV reports the empirical linkages between agricultural activity and voting behavior in four presidential elections, and Section V relates those linkages to several important positions taken by French governments in the CAP and GATT contexts.

The empirical plinth of this article, constructed in Section IV, is a systematic relationship across French départements between the composition of agricultural activity and the voting behavior of the electorate. The greater the tendency of départements to produce certain particular agricultural commodities, the greater the tendency of départements to support (candidates of) the left; and the greater the tendency of départements to produce certain other agricultural commodities, the greater the tendency of départements to support the right. In Section V, this empirical relationship is used to help resolve three puzzling agricultural positions adopted by three different governments during the Fifth Republic.

1. The CAP actually consists of different policies for different agricultural products. During the formative years of CAP, some products received considerable support, while others received little support. Among those that received little support was table wine. Before enlargement of the EU, France’s share of the benefits from an EU-level policy would have been larger in table wine than in cereals, milk, or meat, and almost as large as Italy’s. Why did France not endorse Italy’s advocacy of generous support for Mediterranean products in general, or at least for table wine in particular?

2. In 1984, the EU decided to impose quotas on the production of milk. Designed to curb expenditures on CAP, this reform was adopted during a French presidency of the EU. Why did France not use its control of the EU’s agenda to ensure a blander reform? Before 1984, France had consistently and successfully advocated an expansive CAP; it had also opposed the principle of national production quotas.

3. After accepting the CAP reforms of 1984 without much of a fight, why did France argue so persistently against the Blair House Accord of November 1992? Conclusion of the Uruguay Round (UR) of GATT reforms was already two years behind schedule. In delaying agreement on agriculture, France was running a nontrivial risk of causing the UR as a whole to collapse. Why take that risk when virtually all French consumers, many French suppliers of services, not a few French manufacturers, and even some French farmers stood to gain from the UR even if the Blair House Accord had to be implemented without modification (Messerlin, 1996)?

9 Section V includes a brief discussion of checkbook behavior; a fuller treatment appears in Keeler (1987). Berger (1972), Champagne (1990), and Frader (1991) provide interesting accounts of agricultural protest behavior during and before the Fifth Republic.

10 In the present context, French départements correspond roughly to American states.
II. THE MODEL

In this section, I develop a simple model to illuminate the impact of agricultural voters on electoral outcomes. It allows for systematic differences in voting behavior, not only between the agricultural and nonagricultural electorates but also within the agricultural electorate. I defer until Section III all discussion of the model’s applicability to France’s Fifth Republic.

Elections. The government consists of a president elected directly by all registered voters. Elections pit one candidate representing the left against another candidate representing the right. No voter abstains. Thus, \( V = L + R \), where \( V \) is the number of votes cast, \( L \) is the number of votes received by the left, and \( R \) is the number of votes received by the right. I shall refer to \( VB = L/(L + R) \) as the voting behavior of the electorate.

Agricultural and nonagricultural voters. Suppose that the electorate consists of two distinct groups of voters: farmers and nonfarmers. Each individual behaves independently of the rest. Within groups, each individual has the same probability of voting for the left.11 Between groups, however, the probability of voting for the left can differ. Specifically, suppose that

\[
L_h = a + bA_h + e_h, \tag{1}
\]

where \( L_h = 1 \) if citizen \( h \) votes for the left (0 otherwise), \( A_h = 1 \) if citizen \( h \) is a farm voter (0 otherwise), and \( e_h \) is a random disturbance. For each voter, the disturbance has an expected value of 0, and it is uncorrelated with the disturbances of other voters. In Eq. (1), \( a \) can be interpreted as the propensity of a nonfarmer to vote for the left, and \( a + b \) can be interpreted as the propensity of a farmer to vote for the left; \( b \) thus represents the difference in voting propensity between the two groups. I shall refer to \( a \) and \( a + b \) as the voting behaviors of nonfarmers and farmers (\( VB_n \) and \( VB_a \)), respectively.

Aggregation. In principle, Eq. (1) can be estimated econometrically using data on individual voters. In practice, however, the votes of individual citizens are not observed.12 Official voting data are usually reported in aggregate form by geographic area. With that in mind, suppose that

\[
L_{ij} = a + bA_{ij} + e_{ij}, \tag{2}
\]

11 The stochastic specification of voting behavior within each group can be justified in a variety of ways. One is to assume that all members of a group have the same preferences (at the margin) but differ (due to informational asymmetries) in their assessments of which candidate would do more to increase the utilities of group members. Another is to allow some heterogeneity in preferences (at the margin) among group members.

12 Using the information collected in ex ante surveys of voting intentions and ex post surveys of voting behavior, it is possible to observe both voting behavior and group affiliation at the individual level (Habert, 1989). Unfortunately, survey data are not particularly useful in the present context. As I show below, important differences in voting behavior exist within agriculture. As a result, it is not enough to know whether or not the respondent is a farmer; it is important to know the type of agriculture in which each farmer engages. And yet, the sample size of most surveys is too small to warrant collection of information about specializations within agriculture.
where \( L_{ij} = 1 \) if citizen \( i \) in area \( j \) votes for the left (0 otherwise), \( A_{ij} = 1 \) if citizen \( i \) in area \( j \) is an agricultural voter (0 otherwise), and \( e_{ij} \) is a random variable satisfying the two conditions imposed on \( e_h \) in Eq. (1). Summing over all individuals in the same geographic area and then dividing by the number of voters in that area,

\[
\text{VB}_j = L_j = a + bA_j + e_j,
\]

where \( \text{VB}_j = L_j = (1/N_j)(\Sigma_i L_{ij}), A_j = (1/N_j)(\Sigma_i A_{ij}), e_j = (1/N_j)(\Sigma_i e_{ij}) \), and \( N_j \) is the number of voters in area \( j \). Note that the \( a \) and \( b \) in Eq. 3 are the same as the \( a \) and \( b \) in Eq. (2). Note also that the voting behavior in area \( j \) (i.e., \( \text{VB}_j \)) is the proportion of citizens in area \( j \) who vote for the left, and \( A_j \) is the proportion of citizens in area \( j \) who belong to the agricultural group. As long as the propensity of a farmer to vote for the left is the same throughout the country (ditto for the propensity of a nonfarmer to vote for the left), data in the form of area-wide aggregates can be used to estimate the propensities of individuals in each occupational group to vote for the left.\(^{13} \) Of particular interest in the present context is the hypothesis that voting behavior fails to differ systematically between agricultural and nonagricultural voters. It implies that \( a + b = a \) and hence that \( b = 0 \).

**Heterogeneity among farmers.** Suppose that the agricultural electorate actually consists of two distinct subgroups of farmers, each defined by the farmer’s principal product. If the two products are milk and wine, then Eq. (3) becomes

\[
L_j = a + b(A_j)(M_j) + c(A_j)(W_j) + e_j,
\]

where \( M \) and \( W \) denote the ratios of milk and wine farmers to all farmers. If \( b - c = 0 \), then the two agricultural subgroups fail to differ in voting behavior. If \( b = c = 0 \), then farmers fail to differ from nonfarmers in voting behavior. The voting behavior of nonfarmers, of milk farmers, and of wine farmers (i.e., \( \text{VB}_n = a \), \( \text{VB}_m = a + b \), and \( \text{VB}_w = a + c \), respectively) all lie in the interval \([0,1]\).

**Farmers versus farm voters.** An elector need not be a farmer to vote like one. Retired farmers, progeny of farmers, neighbors of farmers, and people whose livelihood depends on farmers might vote like farmers even if they themselves neither cultivate crops nor raise animals. The simplest way to model this possibility in Eq. (3) is to make the agricultural proportion of the voting population a fixed multiple (greater than one) of the agricultural proportion of the working population: \( A = (A^*)(1 + \mu) \), where \( A \) is the ratio of agricultural to all voters, \( A^* \) is the ratio of agricultural to total employment, \((1 + \mu) \) is the multiplier, \( \mu \) is non-negative, and \((A^*)(1 + \mu) \) does not exceed 1. If \( \mu \) is unobserved, then, in estimations of Eq. 3, \( a = \text{VB}_a \) and \( b = (1 + \mu)(\text{VB}_n - \text{VB}_a) \). If \( \mu \) is positive, then \( b \) can lie outside \([-1,1]\). In fact, if it is possible to reject the statistical hypothesis that \( b \) lies inside \([-1,1]\), then it is impossible (within the model) to reject the substantive hypothesis that the farm vote includes more than farmers. Whatever the value of \( \mu \), however, \( b \) can differ from 0 only (within the model) if \( \text{VB}_a \) differs from \( \text{VB}_n \).

\(^{13} \) Achen and Shively (1995) refer to this as the simple Goodman model of ecological regression.
Estimation (Achen and Shively, 1995, pp. 45–50). Equations like (3) are linear probability models for estimation with grouped data. The disturbance $e_j$ is distributed asymptotically normally but exhibits heteroskedastic variance. The general form of the heteroskedasticity is known, so that equations like (3) can be estimated using a feasible version of generalized least squares (GLS). In reality, however, the heteroskedasticity inherent in equations like (3) is likely to be small in comparison with the heteroskedasticity attributable to errors in the equation’s specification. Depending on the form of the latter heteroskedasticity, correction for the former could easily result in hypothesis tests inferior to those associated with ordinary least squares (OLS). Accordingly, I shall estimate equations like (3) by OLS. I shall then test for the presence of each type of heteroskedasticity. If the null hypothesis of homoskedasticity cannot be rejected, I shall use the OLS estimates of $a$ and $b$, and of their standard errors, to evaluate the heterogeneity of voting behavior. If homoskedasticity can be rejected, I shall estimate equations like (3) using feasible GLS with observational weights appropriate to the heteroskedasticity detected.

III. THE MODEL APPLIED TO FRANCE’S FIFTH REPUBLIC

The model developed in Section II emphasizes the role of presidents, and hence of presidential elections, in the determination of agricultural policy. Such a model is not well suited to 20th-century America or to France’s Third and Fourth Republics (1870–1940 and 1946–1958, respectively). In the American setting, during the 20th century, Congress has played a major role in the formulation and the implementation of agricultural policy (Hansen, 1991); even the international dimensions of economic policymaking have depended more on the interplay between Congress and the president than on the unilateral actions of the chief executive (Baldwin, 1985, pp. 4, 32, 193, 200). In France’s Third Republic, the executive branch of government was appointed by and responsible to the parliament, not the electorate. The president of the republic performed largely ceremonial functions. In practice, after 1877, the lower house of parliament became “the centre of gravity of political power” (Thomson, 1964, p. 92), a position it continued to occupy during the Fourth Republic (Thomson, 1964, pp. 238–240). In settings such as these, careful attention should indeed be paid to legislative elections.

In France’s Fifth Republic, however, it is entirely appropriate to focus on presidential elections. The constitution of 1958, creating the Fifth Republic, did not make the executive branch of government subservient to the legislature (Chagnollaud and Quermonne, 1996, p. 17). In practice even more than in the

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14 To evaluate the importance of the inherent heteroskedasticity, I perform the Breusch–Pagan test, as modified by Koenker, on the hypothesis that the variance of $e_i$ depends inversely on $N_j$ (Kennedy, 1992, pp. 130–131; Kmenta, 1997, pp. 294–295). To evaluate the importance of the heteroskedasticity attributable to potential specification error, I perform White’s test for heteroskedasticity (Kennedy, 1992, pp. 118–119, 131; Kmenta, 1997, pp. 295–296). A complete description of the statistical methods employed in this article is available from the author upon request.
constitution, the powers of the president have grown dramatically at the expense of parliament (Chagnollaud and Quermonne, 1996, pp. 16–20, 223–224, 363, 773). The constitutional amendment of 1962, which prescribed direct election of the president, reinforced the authority of the chief executive vis-à-vis the parliament (Andrews, 1982; Chagnollaud and Quermonne, 1996, p. 363). As a result, in the Fifth Republic, political power has been “presidentialized” (Chagnollaud and Quermonne, 1996, p. 224). Facetiously but revealingly, Messerlin (1996, p. 299) locates François Mitterrand’s recent presidency in the realm of “elective monarchy.”

Presidential preeminence appears especially clearly in the contexts of foreign policy and national defense. Foreign policy has always included strategies for regulating international trade (Messerlin, 1996). Now that most of the important measures affecting French farmers are devised and implemented in Brussels by the EU, rather than in Paris by the French Ministry of Agriculture, foreign policy includes agricultural policy as well. Given its appearance under the heading of foreign policy, agricultural policy is subject to presidential shaping even when the president fails to command a majority in the parliament and differs in orientation from the prime minister (Chagnollaud and Quermonne, 1996, pp. 759–760, 773–776). This is not to say that parliamentary elections are irrelevant to agricultural policy outcomes. Such elections clearly merit analysis (Converse and Pierce, 1986; Huber, 1996; Chagnollaud and Quermonne, 1996, p. 172), but during the period considered here presidential elections definitely deserve pride of attention.

The model developed in Section II captures several other important features of French agricultural politics. First, it captures the habitual “bipolarization” (Chagnollaud and Quermonne, 1996, p. 172) of French politics into a cleavage between left and right. Although the Fifth Republic is inhabited by many political parties, the second round of each presidential election has been contested by just two individuals. In five of the six direct elections held to date, one of the second-round candidates was clearly identified with the left, the other with the right.

15 Wright (1964, p. 162) recognized early on the implications for agriculture of the Fourth Republic’s demise: “... in the [Fifth] Republic, parliament’s authority had been sharply reduced; the locus of decision-making had shifted to the offices of the President and the Premier, where small staffs of technicians and professional civil servants were given unprecedented freedom to push ahead with plans for reform in every sphere. The older syndical leaders were slow to react to this change. By force of habit, they continued to address their pleas and their pressures to the National Assembly and the Senate... The young syndicalists, by contrast, quickly realized that ‘it was now better to know two well-placed civil servants than twenty deputies’.”

16 Thus, “increasingly frequently, policies undertaken at the European Union level end up in the president’s lap. In this sense, European integration has reinforced the presidentialization of policymaking in France” (Chagnollaud and Quermonne, 1996, p. 777).

17 On the other hand, it does not allow for abstentions. In the presidential election of 1969, which is not analyzed here, the rate of abstention exceeded 31% (Chagnollaud and Quermonne, 1996, p. 182).

18 The exceptional presidential election occurred in 1969 following the abrupt and unexpected
Second, the model allows for internal heterogeneity of the agricultural electorate. Many studies of French agricultural politics reveal a diversity of economic circumstance and ideological persuasion within the agricultural community (Keeler, 1987; Coulomb et al., 1990). Moreover, many studies of French elections uncover systematic geographical differences in voting behavior (Goguel, 1981–1983; Lacoste, 1986; Bon and Cheylan, 1988); these might be related to corresponding variations in the importance and composition of agricultural activity (Klatzmann, 1958; Derivry, 1972; Brustein, 1988; Quantin, 1992).

Finally, the model allows for the possibility that the farm vote includes nonfarmers. By 1990, agriculture accounted for less than 6% of the labor force, and farmers now constitute a minority of even the rural population (Berger, 1972, p. 235; Boussard, 1992, p. 103; Rey and Vélard, 1992, p. 379; Messerlin, 1996, p. 301). So the nonfarm component of the agricultural vote needs to be assessed. In one expert’s estimation (Hervieu, 1992, p. 402), the agricultural vote (expressed as a percentage of the electorate) is twice as large as farm employment (expressed as a percentage of the labor force); others think the ratio of farm voters to farm employment is considerably larger than that (Mayer, 1992, p. 47). The magnitude of the multiplier is sometimes attributed to the symbolic importance of agriculture in French society (Rogers, 1987).

To explore the internal heterogeneity of the French agricultural electorate, I follow the French Ministry of Agriculture and decompose agriculture into eight types of farming: beef and veal (Beef), cereals (Cere), eggs and poultry (Poul), fruit (Fruit), milk (Milk), pork (Pork), wine (Wine), and all other agricultural products (Othr). As a result, I estimate

\[
VB_j = a + b(A^*)(Beef) + c(A^*)(Cere) + d(A^*)(Fruit) + e(A^*)(Milk) \\
+ f(A^*)(Othr) + g(A^*)(Pork) + h(A^*)(Poul) + i(A^*)(Wine) + j.
\]

Each slope coefficient in Eq. (4) is the product of two factors: The first is the difference in voting behavior between the relevant agricultural group and the nonagricultural group; the second is the multiplier that translates agricultural shares of the working population into agricultural shares of the voting population. For example, \(b = (VB_b - VB_n)(1 + \mu)\), where \(VB_b\) and \(VB_n\) represent the voting behaviors of beef farmers and nonfarmers, respectively.

resignation of Charles de Gaulle. Following the presidential election of 1995, it became fashionable to argue that the French political landscape had become divisible into three groupings (left, moderate right, and extreme right) rather than the traditional two (Boy and Mayer, 1997, pp. 179–218), but this alleged change in fault lines occurred after the period analyzed here.

France reports agricultural product mix by départment, but only for broadly defined product groups like these. Employed here is each product group the definition of which remained substantially unchanged between 1965 and 1988; the remaining groups are pooled together as “all other agricultural products.” Unfortunately, départment-level data on product mix are not reported according to the EU’s classification scheme. Designed to respect the boundaries between the EU’s product-specific agricultural policies, the EU’s classification creates product groupings relevant to the formation of distinct agricultural electorates.
Equation (4) can be estimated using reliable data on French presidential elections and agricultural activity. The unit of observation for all variables is the département. The importance of farmers in the labor force \( A^* \) is measured as the number of people in agricultural occupations divided by the number of people in the labor force. The relative electoral importance of each type of farming is measured as the value of shipments of the relevant category of agricultural products divided by the value of shipments of all agricultural products. Equation (4) is estimated separately for each of four presidential elections (1965, 1974, 1981, and 1988), revealing the evolution of voting behavior, and of its relationship to agricultural activity, over nearly a quarter-century.

IV. RESULTS

The simplest way to assess the relationship between voting behavior and agricultural activity is to examine the relevant coefficients of zero-order correlation (Table 1). The first thing to note is the consistent absence of a linear relationship between agriculture’s share of the labor force and the left’s share of the vote. The next thing to note, however, is the strength of the relationship between agricultural product mix and voting behavior. In the first three elections at least, the larger is milk’s share of the département’s agricultural shipments, the smaller is the left’s share of its vote. In the first two elections at least, the larger are the shares of wine and fruit in the département’s agricultural shipments, the larger is the left’s share of its vote. For all three products, the correlation with voting behavior declines over time in statistical and/or quantitative significance. The shares of certain other products in total agricultural shipments also correlate occasionally with voting behavior (e.g., pork in 1965, cereals in 1988). The most important of the relationships, however, is between milk and voting behavior.

The results of estimating Eq. (4) by OLS appear in Table 2. In each of the four elections, it is impossible to reject the null hypothesis of homoskedastic variance. As a result, the hypothesis tests reported below employ the standard errors generated in OLS, not feasible GLS, regressions. The coefficient estimates are plausible in some respects, implausible in others. On the one hand, in every département and every election, the 95% confidence interval surrounding the

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21 At the beginning of the Fifth Republic, there were 90 départements; currently there are 96. All of the results presented in this article relate to the 87 départements whose boundaries have not changed appreciably since 1958. Corsica accounts for two of the excluded départements; the remaining seven are located in the Paris metropolitan area.

22 The coefficient of correlation between VB and \( \log(A) \) also fails to differ from 0 at any reasonable level of statistical significance. Visual examination of the scatter plot of VB against \( A \) reveals no apparent relationship of any kind.

23 Homoskedasticity could not be rejected at the .05 level in either of the tests described in Footnote 14.
voting behavior predicted for the département never includes values outside [0, 1].
Moreover, in every election, for each of the electorates except Milk it is
impossible to reject the hypothesis that voting behavior lies inside [0, 1]. On the
other hand, in the first three elections, it is necessary to reject the hypothesis that
the propensity of the Milk electorate to vote for the left is non-negative. In all
likelihood, this shortcoming is attributable to the specification errors inevitable in
such a simple model. Were I focused on precise measurement of the propensity of
each electorate to vote for the left, I would have controlled for other determinants
of voting behavior. My purpose, however, is simply to establish the importance

\[ \text{Agricultural Activity and Voting Behavior: Coefficients of Correlation} \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agricultural variable</th>
<th>Voting behavior (VB)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>0.042</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.701)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>-0.609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine</td>
<td>0.374</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frut</td>
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<td>Pork</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cere</td>
<td>0.121</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Beef</td>
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<td>Othrr</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.104)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poul</td>
<td>-0.012</td>
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Notes. Voting behavior (VB) is defined as \( L/(L + R) \), where \( L \) and \( R \) are the
numbers of votes received respectively by the left and the right. Agricultural
variables are defined in the last two paragraphs of Section III. Numbers in the
table are zero-order coefficients of Pearson correlation. Numbers in parentheses
are \( p \)-values for two-tail \( t \)-tests of the hypothesis that the corresponding
correlation coefficient is 0. \( N = 87 \) départements.

24 Operationally, it is impossible to reject (at the .05 level) any of the following hypotheses
(evaluated individually): \( a, a + b, a + c, a + d, a + f, a + g, a + h, a + i \) are non-negative; and \( a, a + b, a + c, a + d, a + e, a + f, a + g, a + h, a + i \) do not exceed 1.
25 Operationally, \( a + e \) differs negatively from 0 (at the .01 level) in each of the three elections.
Note that \( a \) is significantly positive (Table 2) and \( (1 + \mu) \) is unlikely to be negative (given the results
reported in Footnote 24).
and the rough pattern of the heterogeneity within the agricultural electorate. For that purpose, the results of estimating Eq. (4) can be considered satisfactory. If the agricultural electorate is in fact heterogeneous, then it should be possible to reject the null hypothesis that the coefficients $b$ through $i$ are equal in value to one another. In each of the presidential elections, this hypothesis can be rejected at the .001 level of statistical significance. Clearly, it is inappropriate to treat the several subgroups of agricultural voters as displaying the same propensity to vote for the left.

To establish the pattern of heterogeneity requires examination of each pairing of agricultural groups. Differences between pairs of agricultural electorates can be evaluated by testing the null hypotheses specified in Table 3. Generally speaking, the most important differences in voting behavior are those between the milk electorate on the one hand and most other agricultural electorates on the other hand (Hypotheses 3, 9, 14, and 19–22). In the first three elections, voting behavior differs significantly between the milk electorate and each of the other agricultural

26 This amounts to the hypothesis (evaluated in an $F$-test) that the equation $V_{B_j} = a + b(A)^* + e_j$ does no worse a job than does Eq. (4) of explaining the variation across départements in voting behavior.

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Intercept</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>(A) Frut</td>
<td>0.7026</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.4773)</td>
<td>(0.6482)</td>
<td>(0.7051)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>(A) Milk</td>
<td>−1.1630***</td>
<td>−1.6749***</td>
<td>−1.5373***</td>
<td>−1.0492**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>(0.2213)</td>
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<td>(0.3100)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(A) Othr</td>
<td>0.1447</td>
<td>−0.0938</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.2979)</td>
<td>(0.4117)</td>
<td>(0.5483)</td>
<td>(0.7334)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>(A) Pork</td>
<td>−0.0344</td>
<td>1.1710</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>(0.7350)</td>
<td>(0.7850)</td>
<td>(1.1012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>(A) Poul</td>
<td>−0.1969</td>
<td>−0.8397</td>
<td>−0.7786</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>i</td>
<td>(A) Wine</td>
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<td>0.5387**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adj. $R^2$</td>
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<td>0.43***</td>
<td>0.39***</td>
<td>0.31***</td>
<td>0.15**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Dependent variable is $V_B = L/(L + R)$, where $L$ and $R$ are the numbers of votes received respectively by the left and the right. Estimation is by ordinary least squares. $N = 87$ départements. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. One, two, and three asterisks denote differences from 0 at the .05, .01, and .001 levels of statistical significance in a two-tail $t$-test (individual coefficients) or in an $F$-test (adjusted $R^2$).
electorates except eggs and poultry. In the election of 1988, voting behavior differs significantly between the milk electorate on the one hand and the cereals, pork, and wine electorates on the other. In each comparison, the milk electorate exhibits the lower propensity to vote for the left.

It is also possible to compare the voting behavior of each agricultural group with the voting behavior of the nonagricultural electorate. In each of the four elections, the propensity to vote for the left is significantly smaller in the milk electorate than it is in the nonagricultural electorate (ε is negative; see Table 2). In contrast, in some elections, the propensity to vote for the left is significantly larger in the wine electorate (1965 and 1974) and in the beef electorate (1965) than it is in the nonagricultural electorate (i and b are sometimes positive). Otherwise, support for the left outside agriculture does not appear to differ from its support in a corresponding agricultural electorate.

The last question of interest concerns the evolution over time in the relationship between agricultural product mix and voting behavior. Table 2 confirms the impression left by Table 1 that the ability of agricultural product mix to predict voting behavior declines over time. In the elections of 1965 and 1974, variations across départements in agricultural activity explain roughly 40% of the corresponding variations in voting behavior; in the election of 1988, they explain just 15% of those variations.

The decline in the explanatory power of agricultural product mix is accompanied by changes in the relative propensities of the several agricultural groups to vote for the left. In 1965, among agricultural voters, the milk electorate exhibits the smallest propensity to vote for the left while the fruit, wine, and beef electorates exhibit the greatest propensities to vote for the left. Over time, the relative propensity to vote for the left tends to rise in the milk and pork electorates and to fall in the beef, wine, and fruit electorates. The largest changes in both directions tended to occur between 1981 and 1988.

Spurious Correlation, Ecological Fallacy?

I have estimated Eq. (4) using the département as the unit of observation. In most départements, the nonagricultural population is much larger than its agricultural counterpart. Ideally it, too, should be decomposed into electorally homogeneous subgroups. Omission of nonagricultural subgroupings from Eq. (4) could jeopardize the validity of the inferences drawn above.27 Even if they were based entirely on the behavior of farm voters, however, the inferences drawn above

---

27 Take, for example, the increasingly positive correlation between the cereals share of agricultural output and the left’s share of the vote. Between 1965 and 1988, the cereal-producing areas of France experienced tremendous urbanization. Although Eq. (4) controls for urbanization per se (via A), it does not control for the composition of the urban electorate. If the composition of the urban electorate is changing in the cereal départements, then the increasingly positive correlation between the cereals’ share of agricultural output and the left’s share of the vote could be spurious. More generally, the declining explanatory power of the present, largely agricultural, model is almost reassuring given the dramatic thinning of the farm electorate that occurred between 1965 and 1988.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Beef, Cere)</td>
<td>(0.5720)</td>
<td>(0.9980)</td>
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<td>(0.0001)</td>
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<td>(0.0079)</td>
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<td>(0.0040)</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
might be subject to spurious correlation. After all, the production of particular agricultural commodities tends to be concentrated geographically in particular parts of the country. Thus agricultural product mix might be correlated with, but causally unrelated to, other geographic determinants of voting behavior. For example, most French table wine is produced in the southern part of the country. If southern farmers support the left for reasons unrelated to the commodity they produce, then the positive correlation between specialization in wine and voting for the left would be spurious indeed.

It is easy to demonstrate that agricultural specialization is not merely a proxy for regional patterns of voting behavior. Consider the presidential voting and agricultural activity that occurred in the administrative region of Languedoc–Roussillon during 1965. Of the five départements that constitute this southern region, four specialized in the shipment of table wine; the other engaged primarily in husbandry. In the four wine départements, the left received between 58 and 65% of the vote; in the husbandry département, it received 33% of the vote. A similar, if less pronounced, pattern appears in the neighboring region of Midi-Pyrénées: The département that specialized relatively heavily in husbandry is the département that voted relatively heavily for the right. In other words, even

28 In the départements of Aude, Gard, Hérault, and Pyrénées Orientales, the importance of wine in agricultural shipments ranged from 46 to 78%. Together with vegetables and fruits, the importance of wine ranged from 77 to 94%. In contrast, in Lozère, beef, veal, sheep, goats, and milk accounted for 83% (while vegetables, fruits, and wine accounted for just 5%) of agricultural shipments.
29 Across all 87 départements, the mean and standard deviation of VB were 45.75 and 9.24, respectively. Note that all five départements of Languedoc–Roussillon were farm-oriented in 1965. Agriculture accounted for 52% of total employment in Lozère and between 22 and 39% of total employment in the four wine départements.
30 The left received 44% of the vote in the husbandry département of Aveyron, and between 51 and 65% of the vote in the other seven départements of Midi-Pyrénées. Like Languedoc–Roussillon,
among adjacent southern départements, outliers in agricultural specialization were often outliers in voting behavior as well.

To evaluate the likelihood of ecological fallacy in the results reported above, one could: (1) estimate Eq. (4) using as observations not whole départements but small rural areas composed overwhelmingly of farmers specializing in the same type of agriculture (Klatzmann, 1958; Criqui, 1992); (2) study elections in which just farmers vote (for example, elections to corporatist agricultural bodies like the chambres d’agriculture; see Keeler, 1987; Bartoli, 1990; Clerc, 1992; Rey and Vélard, 1992); or (3) add nonagricultural variables to the explanatory side of Eq. 4 (Derivry, 1972). In the spirit of the first of these approaches, I have estimated Eq. 4 using electoral data that exclude large metropolitan areas. Specifically, for the elections of 1981 and 1988, I have estimated

\[ V_{BNM_j} = a + b(A_j)(Beef_j) + c(A_j)(Cere_j) + d(A_j)(Frut_j) + e(A_j)(Milk_j) + f(A_j)(Othr_j) + g(A_j)(Pork_j) + h(A_j)(Poul_j) + i(A_j)(Wine_j) + j, \]

where \( V_{BNM_j} \) is voting behavior inside département \( j \) but outside its large metropolitan areas, \( V_{BNM_j} = (LNM_j/(LNM_j + RNM_j)) \), \( LNM_j \) is the number of votes cast for the left inside département \( j \) but outside its large metropolitan areas, \( RNM_j \) is the number of votes cast for the right inside département \( j \) but outside its large metropolitan areas, and all other variables are defined as in Eq. (4). Unlike Eq. (4), Eq. (5) relates to voting behavior in rural areas and small towns. Hence the failure to create appropriate subgroupings of the nonagricultural electorate should pose fewer problems in the latter than in the former, and the explanatory power of the agricultural variables should be greater.

The results of estimating Eq. 5 appear in Table 4. For both elections, the explanatory power of the agricultural variables is indeed greater when the voting in large metropolitan areas is excluded (compare Tables 2 and 4). Moreover, the pairwise comparisons of voting behavior appear robust to the change in dependent variable (compare Tables 3 and 5). Milk remains a powerful predictor of voting for the right. Exclusion of large metropolitan areas serves to sharpen the divergence in behavior between certain agricultural electorates (e.g., milk and wine in 1988; see Hypothesis 22). These findings suggest that the relationships

---

31 Following Derivry (1972, p. 137), I define “large” as “20,000 or more residents.” Results similar to those reported below are obtained when “large” is defined as “50,000 or more residents.”

32 The voting data used to construct \( V_{BNM} \) are taken from Le Monde (1981 and 1988) and relate to individual communes. (The commune is the smallest administrative unit in France; it corresponds roughly to an American township, town, or city.) The determination of whether or not a particular commune belongs to a large urban area is based on INSEE (nd). Full details regarding \( V_{BNM} \) are available from the author upon request.

33 On the other hand, consistent with the fear expressed in Footnote 27, certain effects of Cere decline in importance.
established earlier in this section using département-level data on voting behavior are believable after all.

V. DISCUSSION

The most important empirical findings of this article can be summarized quite succinctly. In the four presidential elections examined here, across 87 départements, agriculture’s share of the labor force is uncorrelated with the left’s share of the vote. On the other hand, the correlation between agricultural product mix and voting behavior is remarkably high. Milk is usually associated with below-average voting for the left, while wine and fruit are often associated with above-average voting for the left. The single greatest difference in voting behavior is that between the milk electorate on the one hand and nearly all of the other electorates on the other hand. Over time, however, most of these patterns have weakened appreciably or disappeared entirely.

These findings are quite consistent with those reported in other studies. Prior ecological analyses of agricultural voting behavior (Klatzmann, 1958; Derivry,
TABLE 5
Hypothesis Tests Associated with Equation 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis (electorates)</th>
<th>1981</th>
<th>1988</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. $b - c = 0$ (Beef, Cere)</td>
<td>0.0559</td>
<td>-0.9028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. $b - d = 0$ (Beef, Fruit)</td>
<td>-0.2645</td>
<td>0.8972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. $b - e = 0$ (Beef, Milk)</td>
<td>2.1828</td>
<td>1.3226</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. $b - f = 0$ (Beef, Othr)</td>
<td>-0.0548</td>
<td>-0.3799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. $b - g = 0$ (Beef, Pork)</td>
<td>-1.1733</td>
<td>-1.8883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. $b - i = 0$ (Beef, Wine)</td>
<td>-0.3232</td>
<td>-0.1376</td>
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<td>7. $c - d = 0$ (Cere, Frut)</td>
<td>-0.3204</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. $c - e = 0$ (Cere, Milk)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. $c - f = 0$ (Cere, Othr)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. $c - g = 0$ (Cere, Pork)</td>
<td>-1.2292</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. $c - h = 0$ (Cere, Poul)</td>
<td>1.506</td>
<td>1.4420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. $c - i = 0$ (Cere, Wine)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. $d - f = 0$ (Frut, Milk)</td>
<td>2.4474</td>
<td>0.4254</td>
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<td>14. $d - e = 0$ (Frut, Othr)</td>
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<td>15. $d - g = 0$ (Frut, Pork)</td>
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<td>-2.7855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. $d - h = 0$ (Frut, Poul)</td>
<td>1.5710</td>
<td>-0.3580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. $d - i = 0$ (Frut, Wine)</td>
<td>-0.0587</td>
<td>-1.0348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. $e - f = 0$ (Milk, Othr)</td>
<td>-2.2377</td>
<td>-1.7025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. $e - g = 0$ (Milk, Pork)</td>
<td>-3.3562</td>
<td>-3.2109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. $e - h = 0$ (Milk, Poul)</td>
<td>-0.8763</td>
<td>-0.7835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. $e - i = 0$ (Milk, Wine)</td>
<td>-2.5060</td>
<td>-1.4602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. $f - g = 0$ (Othr, Pork)</td>
<td>-1.1185</td>
<td>-1.5084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. $f - i = 0$ (Othr, Wine)</td>
<td>(0.3429)</td>
<td>(0.3018)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1972) confirm that farming per se is not associated with any distinctive pattern of voting behavior. On the other hand, descriptive studies of particular categories of French farmers confirm the political orientations observed in Section IV. For example, Bartoli (1990) shows that table-wine producers failed to embrace the conservative agricultural organizations of the Fifth Republic until the late 1980s. Meanwhile, Lachaux (1990, p. 73) locates most livestock farmers toward the conservative end of the political spectrum, and Criqui (1992) describes the conservatism of farmers in Lorraine, a region specialized in the production of milk (INSEE, 1997, p. 71). The concordance between these detailed but informal case studies and the systematic but macroscopic findings presented here should allay any lingering fear of ecological fallacy in the findings of Section IV.

Knowledge of the geographic relationship between voting behavior and agricultural product mix helps one to understand the domestic politics of French agriculture, and hence the strategies of French governments in international economic negotiations. In particular, it helps one to explain three important but puzzling French positions, adopted at various moments during the Fifth Republic.

1. During the formative period of CAP, France was governed uninterruptedly by the right. Given the empirical findings reported in Section IV, one would expect France to have urged a CAP that subsidized milk rather more than wine, even though French farmers stood to capture a very large share of any EU

---

34 Even the timing of the rightward move accords with the findings of Section IV. This is the more noteworthy as a leftist tradition in table wine can be traced back continuously to the Third Republic (Frader, 1991; Loubert, 1974). Between World Wars I and II, peasant fascism did not appear frequently in southern France; when it did, however, it was associated with producers of fruits and vegetables rather than with producers of wine (Paxton, 1997, pp. 22, 25, 161).
subsidies accorded to wine.\textsuperscript{35} That expectation is confirmed (Brown, 1990): Even though responsibility for organizing the table-wine market was largely delegated to France and Italy (Bartoli, 1990), France did not lend much support to Italy’s advocacy of generous aid for wine and other Mediterranean products (Neville-Rolfe, 1984, p. 176; Lecerf, 1984, pp. 91–92). Not until 1970, well after it began to intervene in most other important agricultural markets, did the EU launch its regulation of the market for table wine.

There are other reasons, of course, why France devoted little early energy to CAP treatment of Mediterranean products. Given their importance as agricultural inputs, cereals were logical candidates for quick EU attention; Mediterranean products tend to be harder to standardize, to stockpile, and to dump abroad than are their northern counterparts; both the Netherlands (France’s principal ally in the original call for an EU-level agricultural policy) and Germany (the principal financier of CAP) would have opposed, and possibly vetoed, generous support of Mediterranean products, even if France had rallied to Italy’s cause;\textsuperscript{36} France might have thought it would gain more from improved quality than from increased production of table wine (Lecerf, 1984, pp. 91–92); most important, perhaps, in the present context, northern products accounted for the clear majority of agricultural activity in France (Commission, vy).

Nevertheless, these factors, by themselves, are not entirely satisfactory as explanations of French policy. Precisely because wine was a small sector at the EU level, strong French demands for its support should not have provoked tenacious opposition from the Netherlands or Germany: The budgetary implications were not large enough to justify a protracted row. Moreover, the failure to provide much EU support for table wine contributed during the mid-1970s to a major commercial war between Italy and France (Neville-Rolfe, 1984, pp. 511–516). That war posed nontrivial threats, and not simply in the viticultural context, to the economic integrity of the EU’s internal market, to the compliance of national governments with judgments of the EU’s court of justice, and to social peace in southern France (Champagne, 1990). During the early years of CAP, the absence of tight budgetary constraint meant that agricultural policymakers did not think of themselves as having to take away from one agricultural group what was offered to another agricultural group; the understandable priority of French concern for cereals, milk, and beef does not explain the absence of strong French concern for table wine.

The argument presented here dovetails nicely with one advanced by Putnam (1988, p. 437) in his analysis of two-level games: “On occasion, . . . clever players will spot a move on one board [domestic or international] that will trigger realignments on other boards, enabling them to achieve otherwise unattainable objectives.” In the present context, “clever” French governments of the right

\textsuperscript{35} During the formative years of CAP, France accounted for nearly half of EU table wine production (Commission, vy).
\textsuperscript{36} The contributions of Germany and the Netherlands to EU output were much larger in milk than in table wine, fruit, or vegetables (Commission, vy).
surely recognized that strong support of table wine and other Mediterranean products would retard the downsizing of rural areas that were voting disproportionately for the left. To the extent that producers of Mediterranean products were strong enough in the domestic political setting to prevent poor treatment by the French government, even when the right held power, conservative French incumbents could use German, Dutch, and Belgian reluctance as justification for the absence of table wine from the list of products to be supported generously by CAP.

2. In 1984, the EU decided to impose national quotas on the production of milk. France’s willingness to accept this major reform of CAP, even while it occupied the EU’s presidency, without much consultation of French dairy farmers (Hairy and Perraud, 1990, p. 84; Clerc, 1990, p. 350) and despite dairy dominance of key domestic agricultural interest groups (Clerc, 1990) is not as puzzling as it might seem. Less than three years earlier, for the first time in the history of the Fifth Republic, the left had won a presidential election. Given the strongly negative association at the time between milk’s share of agriculture and the left’s share of the vote, it is not surprising to observe a government of the left accepting quotas on milk production despite the shrinkage of dairy subsidies that was likely to ensue. Once again, Putnam’s insight is relevant: A “clever” Socialist government in France could acquiesce in Brussels to what no political party could accept in Paris: the adoption of agricultural policies that would hasten the hemorrhage of people from the conservative agricultural communities of northern France.

I do not wish to argue that punishment of French dairy farmers for their conservative voting behavior was the only, or even the most important, reason why milk quotas were adopted in 1984. Agricultural expenses were placing intolerable pressure on the EU’s budget, and milk was accounting for a large share of those expenses; the United Kingdom was clamoring for reduction of its net financial contribution to the EU’s budget; France might well have believed that such concessions as it had won for its dairy farmers were the most that could be obtained under the circumstances (Hairy and Perraud, 1990, p. 87); and French dairy organizations, recognizing the inevitability of reform, might have avoided negotiations with the government to escape culpability in the minds of their members. Nevertheless, the French president surely knew that France’s portion of the pain associated with the reform of 1984 would be felt especially acutely in...
areas that were voting disproportionately for his opponents. Such knowledge
must have made reform easier for him than it would have been for his predeces-
sors.

Had the left come to power earlier on, it might have advocated a reallocation of
CAP’s milk money toward fruit and wine. By the 1980s, however, the départe-
ments with relatively large fruit and wine electorates were no longer voting
disproportionately for the left. This relative erosion of support for the left in areas
that produce Mediterranean agricultural products constitutes another explana-
ton, distinct from but compatible with the enlargement of the EU40 and the probable
lack of Dutch and German support, of why the new Socialist government of 1981
did not attempt a radical reallocation of CAP money toward Mediterranean
products.41

3. France reacted harshly to the Blair House Accord of November 1992.42
Indeed, throughout the UR it opposed new GATT constraints on CAP. Why the
reluctance to reform GATT so soon after the willingness to reform CAP? The
context of the period is certainly relevant. The decisive phase of the UR coincided
with malaise over both German reunification and high unemployment; important
parliamentary and presidential elections loomed. In the governments of the early
1990s, the prospect of elections amidst anxiety could easily have triggered acute
desires to bolster the national identity by flexing French muscle in an international
forum43 and to avoid the social disturbances that could have been propagated by

Nevertheless, the change in governmental attitude, despite the continuity in
President Mitterrand’s incumbency, is also quite consistent with the empirical
findings of Section IV. The apparent change in agricultural policy mirrors
contemporaneous changes in voting behavior. The agricultural groups that had
voted especially conservatively in and before 1981 looked less distinctive in
1988, perhaps for the same reason that many farmers abandoned the traditional
right to support de Gaulle in 1965: It was “above all the recognition . . . that the

40 Before Greece, Portugal, and Spain joined the EU, CAP support of Mediterranean products went
only to France and Italy. With the addition of three significant producers of Mediterranean products,
CAP support of wine, fruit, and vegetables became much less effectively targeted on the old agrarian
bastions of the left in Mediterranean France (Commission, vy).

41 Note also the possibility that, from the Socialist perspective, shoring up the party vote in the
rust-belt north might have been deemed a greater priority and/or a more realistic possibility than was
shoring up the party vote in the rural south. Toward that end, it would make more sense to press in
Brussels for the redeployment of CAP funds to an EU-level industrial policy than for the redeployment
of those funds from northern to southern agricultural products.

42 France’s positions during the Uruguay Round of GATT reform are discussed in The Economist:
November 28, 1992; “Chauvin Was a Frenchman,” March 20, 1993; and “Have We Won?,”
December 11, 1993. On the agricultural dimension of the Uruguay Round generally, see Tangermann
(1992); Paarlberg (1993); Anderson (1994); Josling, Tangermann, and Warley (1996); Keeler (1996);

43 “France Turns Tetchy,” The Economist, March 7, 1992; “Pitchforked,” The Economist,
Gaullists now represented the state which controlled the purse-strings’’ (Neville-Rolfe, 1984, pp. 111–112; see also Moulin, 1988, p. 230). In other words, now that the left had finally won a presidential election and controlled agricultural policy, even the most conservative of the agricultural electorates appeared up for grabs.44

This interpretation of agricultural policy in Fifth-Republic France can be embellished in a variety of ways. Four would make especially interesting topics for future research.

1. Model explicitly the determinants of voting behavior at the personal level. I have finessed the important issue of whether voting behavior is determined solely by economic interest. There is considerable evidence of noneconomic voting in Fifth-Republic France. The most important of the noneconomic factors appears to be the degree to which Catholic voters actually practice their religion (Berger, 1972, p. 51; Bon and Cheylan, 1988, p. 156; Boy and Mayer, 1997, pp. 103–108; Derivry and Dogan, 1971).45 Although religious voting introduces specification error to Eqs. (4) and (5), it does not eliminate the governmental incentive identified in this article. The intensity of religious belief differs systematically between nonagricultural and agricultural electorates (Djider and Marpsat, 1990; Michelat and Simon, 1990) and within the agricultural electorate as well (Bon and Cheylan, 1988, p. 156). Depending on how an incumbent government targets agricultural subsidies, it can expand or shrink the “practicing Catholic” segment of the population.46 Further development of this idea requires an explicitly contextual model of voting behavior (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1993; Achen and Shively, 1995, pp. 219–233; Boussard and Chiche, 1992; Perrineau, 1992; Mayer, 1992; Quantin, 1992).

2. Model explicitly the strategies available to governmental officials who seek to influence electoral outcomes. In “political economy” models of governmental behavior, candidates for elective office court swing voters. Typically, the swing voter is represented as lying close to the median along the ideological or policy-issue spectrum, so actual and potential governors jockey to attract voters with moderate views. The model developed in this article endows incumbent governments with two broad methods of influencing electoral outcomes: The first

44 Note also that between 1981 and 1988, the left’s share of the vote became especially highly correlated with the importance of the cereals electorate (Tables 1 and 2); and cereals was the constituency that stood to lose the most from implementation of the Blair House Accord. See Footnote 48, but also Footnotes 27 and 33.

45 Comprehensive information on the practice of Catholicism appears in Isambert and Terrenoire (1980).

46 Whether it can do so within the time horizon of incumbent officials is another matter. As Raymond Vernon has reminded me, any governmental strategy that depends on manipulation of socioeconomic status might take too long to be relevant politically. Note, however, that the term of presidential office in Fifth-Republic France may be sufficiently long (seven years) to warrant the inclusion of medium-term policy effects in the calculations of politicians (Messerlin, 1996, p. 300); and during the first two decades of the Fifth Republic, the shrinkage of agricultural employment proceeded quite rapidly (Adams, 1989, Chap. 2; Marchand and Thélot, 1991; Postel-Vinay, 1991, p. 85).
is to alter voting propensities within electoral groups, the other is to alter the sizes of those groups. The former is clearly compatible with the political economy approach, but what about the latter? It implies that governments might lavish favors on groups that are already firmly committed to reelection of the incumbents (i.e., on groups that already exhibit extremely high propensities to vote for the incumbents), which might seem to violate the assumption of “rational” governmental behavior. Actually, however, it does not. Paradoxically, perhaps, extremely friendly voters might be swing voters; the intensity (and even the direction) of their predisposition might be contingent on the preservation of their (precarious) socioeconomic status. From the politician’s perspective, “rewarding your friends” is not necessarily incompatible with pursuit of swing voters.

3. Analyze the checkbook behavior of agricultural interest groups. Although few farmers are major financial contributors to political parties or candidates, large wheat farmers have probably supplied more money than votes to the right.47 Such transfers might help to explain the somewhat disproportionate support of cereals under CAP (Commission, vy) despite the absence of positive association (during CAP’s formative years) between the right’s share of the vote and the cereals’ share of agricultural activity.48

4. Analyze agricultural interest groups not composed of farmers. I have insisted that “agriculture” consists not simply of farming but also of activities related to farming. In principle, therefore, the agricultural electorate includes those who supply goods and services to farmers as well as those who process agricultural products.49 Although the model of Section II allows for nonfarm membership in the farm electorate, and although certain findings of Section IV support the view that the farm electorate includes nonfarmers, neither the theoretical nor the empirical section is designed to illuminate the interactions between government and these types of agricultural constituencies.50

The potential importance of such interest groups reinforces the need, mentioned above, to devote careful attention to checkbook behavior. In its prime, CAP subsidized farmers in proportion to the amounts they shipped of favored products.

47 The gross operating income originating in the cereals sector is harvested quite disproportionately by a few large “farmers” (Ministère de l’Agriculture, nd, p. 41). Historically, the trade association of the wheat producers has played an important if closet role in French agricultural policy (Baudin, 1993, p. 150; Keeler, 1987).

48 In this connection, it is interesting to consider the agricultural policy of the conservative (Balladur) government formed after the parliamentary elections of 1993. The two major agricultural issues of the moment involved production subsidies for oilseeds and export subsidies for cereals. The Commission of the European Communities was prepared to cut both. Balladur accepted the Brussels position on oilseeds but opposed it on cereals. See “Despite Farm Pact, France Still Talks Tough on Trade,” New York Times, June 16, 1993.

49 According to Cleary (1989, p. 146), “Agricultural policy is increasingly made, not in the chambers of agriculture or at the Ministry [of Agriculture] but in the boardrooms of the booming agribusiness sector.”

50 For example, I assume that the multiplier \(1 + \mu\) varies neither across types of agriculture nor over time. A more refined analysis would aim to identify \(\mu\) and allow it to vary across types of agriculture.
Farmers responded by attempting to increase the productivity of their land—by using pesticides and chemical fertilizers intensively, by investing heavily in agricultural machinery, and, consequently, by borrowing from banks. To the extent that reform will move CAP in the direction of tying a farmer’s subsidies less to his volume of production than to his income and/or his performance of environmentally useful activities, the biggest losers from reform might well be the suppliers of the agricultural chemicals, machinery, and financial services, not the small farmers who protest in the streets (Leblanc, 1995, p. 59; Messerlin, 1996, p. 305). During the Mitterrand era, many such enterprises were owned by the state and mentioned as candidates for privatization. The incumbent governments of the period were surely aware that reform of CAP and GATT might adversely affect the ability of such enterprises to attract private capital and thus relax important constraints on governmental budgets. A fully satisfactory framework for analyzing the opposition to CAP and GATT reform must take account of the pressures emanating from and relating to some major business enterprises of both the public and private varieties.

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51 These include Crédit Agricole, the third largest bank in the world (Durupty, 1988, p. 100), and Rhône-Poulenc, the fifth largest seller of agricultural chemicals in the world (Delion and Durupty, 1983, p. 52), during the 1980s. In 1986, Crédit Agricole held 70% of all farm debt (Moulin, 1988, p. 233).


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