

Séminaire étude quantitative des comportements politiques/ Séance du 02 avril 2019/ Romain Lachat.

*Do Voters Lead or Do They Follow a New Party? Evidence from the 2017 French Presidential Election.*

Recent research by Lenz suggests that policy preferences rarely influence vote choice and that citizens adopt their preferred party and/or candidate's positions. However, issues should be more important in contexts lacking the stabilizing effect of party identification. We assess the impact of issue preferences on vote choice and of vote choice on issue preferences in the context of the 2017 French presidential election. The context of that election is unique because a candidate lacking a long-standing party, Emmanuel Macron, rose to prominence and won the election. As a result, long-term partisan attachments were not around to stabilize vote choice. As expected, using panel data, we find that policy preferences help explain why Macron attracted votes from the mainstream left and right. We also find weak evidence that he influenced the preferences of voters who switched their vote choice to support his candidacy.