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## Errata

- p.50, line 5 up: delete 'that the fact'.
- p.51, line 11: replace 'it' most important member with 'its'.
- p.72, line 13: delete 'sell of' and read 'reference to'.
- p.78, note 5: replace 'bought' a consensus with 'brought'.
- p.79, line 2: replace 'it' posed with 'this'.
- p.90, line 6: insert 'nation' following 'one and indivisible'.
- p.109, line 4: delete 'h' following 'nineteenth'.
- p.114, line 14: replace 'collaborative' regime with 'collaborationist'.
- p.123, line 1: delete colon; insert 'and' colonial master.
- p.200, line 12: replace 'was' criticised with 'were'.
- p.213, line 12 up: replace 'are' discernible with 'were'.

**Immigrant Integration / European Integration:**

**The *Front National* and the Manipulation of  
French Nationhood**

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## Abstract

This thesis seeks to explain the popularity of the extreme right *Front national* (FN) in the last two decades of twentieth century France through an examination of the politics of nationhood. The rise of the FN in the 1980s and 1990s was paralleled by an increasing preoccupation with French nationhood and identity. Deeply held assumptions about the French nation-state and French national identity were challenged: first, via the recognition of settled ethnic minorities on French soil and second, via the evolution of the European Union. The FN portrays both of these developments as threatening the continued existence of '*la nation*'. The 'survival of the nation' is the core theme of FN policy and rhetoric, and has been used to defend not only a homogenous 'cultural' vision of French society and identity but also a 'political' vision of the sovereign democratic nation-state.

The thesis argues that an ideational approach affords significant insights into FN successes. It analyses major theoretical approaches to the nation, locating intertwined political-cultural concepts of nationhood in France that inform and shape national identity, and examines the rise of the FN in this context. This is followed by a detailed examination of the debates on immigration and European integration, and their evolution alongside the emergence of the FN. Reference to cognitive matrices helps explain the appeal of the FN line in both these debates, as well as contributing to an understanding of the 'Republican' response.

Both the debates allowed the concept of the nation to take centre stage and to be adopted and defended by parties and figures on both Left and the Right. A quasi-consensus on the merits of 'Republican integration' emerged from the so-called immigration debate, and on the merits of a confederal Europe from the EU debate. In both cases, the debates bolstered the ideas and policies of the extreme right, with particular emphasis on the 'survival of the nation', however imagined. The FN's exploitation of the national idea—of the retention of the nation-state as the basic unit of political and cultural identity—facilitated the emergence and implantation of the party in the 1980s and 1990s. This thesis argues that the success of the FN is due to the party's manipulation of the politics of nationhood to serve its racist and exclusivist policies.

## Declaration

I certify that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other institution, and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.



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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARLP	Alliance républicaine pour les libertés et progrès
Attac	Association pour une taxation des transactions financiers pour l'aide aux citoyens
CEECs	Central and Eastern European Countries
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CNCDH	Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme
CNF	Code de nationalité française
CNI	Centre national des indépendants
CNRS	Centre national de recherche scientifique
CORIF	Conseil de réflexion sur l'avenir de l'Islam en France
CPEDERF	Centre Parisien d'Études et de Documentation pour l'Enseignement et le Rayonnement du Français
CRIDA	Centre de Recherche, d'Information et de Documentation Antiraciste
DL	Démocratie libérale
EBRD	European Bank of Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EFAD	<i>Être Français aujourd'hui et demain</i>
EJPR	<i>European Journal of Political Research</i>
EMS	European Monetary System
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
ENS	École normale supérieure
EP	European Parliament
EPC	European Political Community (failed 1950s proposal)
EPC	European Political Cooperation (pre-Maastricht foreign policy cooperation)

EPU	European Political Union
EU	European Union
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Commission
FD	Force démocrate
FEN	Fédération des étudiants nationalistes
FN	Front national
FNJ	Front national de jeunesse
FPÖ	Freiheitspartei Österreich
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDR	German Democratic Republic (former East Germany)
GRECE	Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne
HCI	Haut Conseil à l'Intégration
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
INED	Institut national d'études démographiques
INSEE	Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
JIP	Jeunes indépendantes de Paris
LDH	Ligue des droits de l'homme
LICRA	Ligue contre le racisme et l'anti-sémitisme
MAI	Multilateral Agreement on Investment
MDC	Mouvement des Citoyens
MNR	Mouvement national républicain
MPF	Mouvement pour la France
MRAP	Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples
MRG	Mouvement des radicaux de gauche
MRP	Mouvement républicain populaire
MSI	Movimento Sociale Italiano



MTEU	Maastricht Treaty on European Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
ND	Nouvelle Droite
NPD	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschland
OAS	Organisation armée secrète
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFPRA	Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides
OMI	Office des Migrations Internationales
ON	Ordre nouveau
ONI	Office national d'immigration
PCF	Parti communiste français
PESC	Politique étrangère et de sécurité commune
PFN	Parti des forces nouvelles
PFSNP	Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques
PPF	Parti populaire français
PR	Parti républicain
PRG	Parti radical de gauche
PS	Parti socialiste
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
REPS	Die Republikaner
RPF	Rassemblement du peuple français
PRF-IE	Rassemblement pour la France et l'Indépendance de l'Europe
RPR	Rassemblement pour la République
SOPEMI	Système d'observation permanente des migrations internationales
TNC	Transnational corporation
UDCA	Union de défense des commerçants et artisans
UDF	Union pour la démocratie française

UE	Union européenne
WEP	<i>West European Politics</i>
WEU	Western European Union
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## Glossary: French Terms

<i>Acquis communautaire</i>	Body of EU law, regulations and decisions
<i>Ancien régime</i>	Historical period and system of government prior to 1789
<i>Banaliser</i>	To render commonplace, everyday
<i>Beur</i>	Second <sup>+</sup> -generation immigrants from the Maghreb
<i>Code de la nationalité</i>	Nationality Act (determining citizenship)
<i>Cohabitation</i>	Coexistence of Presidency and Government from opposing political parties (1986-88; 1993-95; 1997-)
<i>Colbertisme</i>	State intervention in large scale projects
<i>Comité des sages</i> or, <i>Commission des sages</i>	Select Committee / Expert Commission
<i>Droit du sang</i>	Acquisition of citizenship via descent
<i>Droit du sol</i>	Acquisition of citizenship via place of birth
<i>Jacobinisme</i>	Belief that political and administrative power should be the responsibility of central (national) government
<i>Pensée unique</i>	Official doctrine (literally, unique / single thinking)
<i>Pieds noirs</i>	Returning French from Algeria following independence
<i>Sans papiers</i>	'Unregularised' or unofficial immigrants, separate from <i>immigration clandestine</i> , illegal immigration
<i>Souverainistes</i>	Those promoting national independence, opposed to supranational integration

The most significant change in French political life in the last two decades of the twentieth century was the emergence and ascent of a party of the extreme right—the *Front national* (FN)—and its successful implantation into French political life. In its first ten years of existence, after it was founded in 1972, the FN failed to attract 1 per cent of the vote, and its leader could not find the 500 signatures necessary to stand as a presidential candidate in 1981. But support for the FN and its ideas steadily grew through the 1980s to regularly poll 15 per cent of the vote in European, national and regional elections by the 1990s, attracting a loyal and increasingly heterogeneous group of voters. Despite the split of the party following bitter personal feuding between its president, Jean-Marie Le Pen, and second-in-command, Bruno Mégret, in 1998-99, it can by no means be written off as a political force and its policies continue to find support amongst the electorate. Significant sections of society aver that 'there are too many immigrants in France'; that traditional values are not adequately protected; and that European integration is a threat to French identity.<sup>1</sup>

That an extreme right party should meet with such success in the homeland of the Rights of Man—'*patrie des droits de l'homme*'—appears surprising: its politics stand in stark contrast to the humanist and supposedly universal values embodied in the 'liberty, equality, fraternity' triptych. While terminology and definitional aspects concerning the FN are disputed—particularly as to whether it may be classified as neo-fascist—there is general agreement that this is a party of the extreme or far right, exhibiting characteristics which 'fit' the label and promoting policies which accord with an exclusivist extreme right ideology. The FN is a member of a political 'family' of far right parties—*une famille spirituelle*—which exhibits shared characteristics, including racism, xenophobia, extreme nationalism, and anti-democratic characteristics.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See SOFRES poll reported in *Le Monde*, 30 May 2000. 59 per cent agree that there are 'too many immigrants in France'; almost 40 per cent feel that European integration 'threatens French identity'. Despite the split in the FN, *Le Monde* concludes that the Le Pen's ideas have made inroads ('*les idées de l'ancien leader [Le Pen] ont fait leur chemin*'). 43 per cent think that traditional values are not adequately protected, and 47 per cent that one no longer feels properly 'at home' in France. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. Translations of French titles are given, where necessary, on their first usage.

<sup>2</sup> On the party 'family', see P.Allum, *State and Society in Western Europe*, Cambridge, Polity, 1995; C.Mudde, 'Defining the Extreme Right Party Family', *West European Politics (WEP)*, Vol. 19 (2), April 1996, pp.225-48. On the major characteristics of the extreme right, see C.Mudde, 'Right Wing Extremism Analysed', *European Journal of Political Research (EJPR)*, Vol. 27 (2), February 1995, pp.203-24.

While mainstream media and academia recounted evidence of the *banalisation* of FN discourse and *lepénisation* of society in general, few judged the FN as a real danger to national political life. The abolition of the short-lived system of proportional representation in 1988—the system under which the FN had gained 35 seats in the national parliament—appeared to rule out any future of meaningful representation for this minority party at the national level. The national leaders of the mainstream right forbade any alliances with the FN. These developments fostered an optimistic attitude which held that at worst, the FN could gain power in some provincial small towns, as indeed it went on to do in June 1995.

However the real political power of the FN was made clear following the 1998 regional elections, with the forging of alliances between the mainstream right and the FN for the election of the regional president in five regions. Further, the party developed a wide network of grass-roots activists, becoming well implanted and winning support in local and municipal elections across the country. President Jacques Chirac denounced the FN as a racist and xenophobic party in a televised address to the nation.<sup>3</sup> Articles in the mainstream press began to compare the Fifth Republic with 1930s Germany and the Weimar Republic, and foreshadowed the FN winning control over certain regions and the possibility of needing to overturn future elections.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, an appeal to an ethnic reading of nationhood and identity was seen in national political developments—not only in the increasing votes for the openly nationalist FN, but also in ‘mainstream’ politics. The attempt by the Right in the mid-1980s to introduce a reform of the nationality law which would abolish the automatic granting of French citizenship to children born in France of foreign parents is indicative of this preoccupation with national identity and citizenship. Introduced by Charles Pasqua, then Minister of the Interior, the proposed legislation was withdrawn in the face of public opposition and Pasqua conceded defeat. But what proved to be politically impossible in the 1980s became publicly acceptable in the 1990s, with the ‘Pasqua laws’ establishing that those born of ‘foreign’ parents—albeit on French soil—must apply for citizenship on reaching the age of majority.<sup>5</sup> The granting of citizenship was no longer automatic. The notion that French culture and nationality are somehow inherited fits well with the messages from the far

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<sup>3</sup> Chirac's speech reported in *Le Monde*, 25 March 1998.

<sup>4</sup> See for example S.Baumont ‘Contre le FN: la Constitution’ (Against the FN: the Constitution), *Libération*, 26 March 1998; A.Lipietz, ‘La proportionnelle’, (Proportional Representation), *Libération*, 30 March 1998. Dominique Jamet, in *Demain le Front?* (Tomorrow the Front?), Paris, Bartillat, 1995, argued that it was not beyond the realms of possibility that the FN could govern nationally in an alliance.

<sup>5</sup> For details of the legislation and reactions to it at the time, see *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6-12 May 1993, pp.40-5. This will be examined in detail in Chapter 5.

right and signaled a shift in perceptions of the nation in France from a political model to a more deterministic paradigm. A reaffirmation of 'Republican citizenship' by the subsequent Left-coalition government, and appeals to the dominant civic reading of nationhood were situated within a broader debate on national identity.

The 1980s saw an explosion in French literature and media on the issue of national identity—especially around the bicentenary of the Revolution in 1989. Historians Collette Beaune and Fernand Braudel reflected at length on the origins of French national identity.<sup>6</sup> Both on the Left and the Right, associations such as *Espaces 89* and *Le Club de l'Horloge* organised conferences and symposia, debating and publishing on the issue of French identity.<sup>7</sup> A number of journals devoted issues to the question of 'the nation'.<sup>8</sup> By 1990 national identity had become a central theme in media and scholarly publications; references to a 'crisis' of national identity were commonplace. Régis Débray, lamenting the decline of the nation, saw the identity crisis as resulting from a reticence or a refusal to acknowledge '*le fait national*'—whether promoting Marxism, modernity, or globalisation.<sup>9</sup> But in the same year, sociologist Alain Touraine forecast in *Le Monde* that 'the national question will replace the social question as the centre of political life'.<sup>10</sup> On the Right this national question would be epitomised by the threat posed to French national identity by immigration; on the Left, by the prospect of the dissolution of the nation into a supranational Europe.

Nationalism, Ernest Gellner states, is 'primarily a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent'.<sup>11</sup> This definition is however influenced by the way in which the national unit—the nation—is imagined. The political and the national have always been closely linked in France: as Olivier Mongin writes, it is difficult for a Republican spirit to conceive that an individual's identity could be based on any community of belonging other than a political

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<sup>6</sup> C. Beaune, *La Naissance de la nation France* (The Birth of the French nation), Paris, Gallimard, 1985. She refers to a 'consciousness of being a particular human community by its origin and its territory, a people which is connected to its own territory for all time'. F. Braudel, *L'Identité de la France*, Vol. I (History and Environment), Paris, Editions Artaud, 1986.

<sup>7</sup> See from the Left, *Espaces Quatre-vingt-neuf*, *L'Identité française*, Paris, Éditions Tierce, 1985, denouncing racism and xenophobia, and promoting a plural culture while retaining values of liberty, equality, fraternity. From the right, *Le Club de l'Horloge*, *L'Identité de la France*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1985, espousing a 'return to the nation', defending the values of '*enracinement*' (rootedness), and denouncing multiculturalism.

<sup>8</sup> See for example *Le Débat*, no. 63, January-February 1991, on the theme of '*Retour de la nation?*' (Return of the Nation?).

<sup>9</sup> R. Débray, *À demain de Gaulle*, Paris, Gallimard, 1990.

<sup>10</sup> 'La question nationale et la politique française' (The national question and French politics), *Le Monde*, 13 March 1990.

nation.<sup>12</sup> Ernst Renan's famous 1882 'What is a nation' address is used to reinforce this 'political' aspect. Renan denied the importance of race, language, religion and argued that a nation is an everyday plebiscite. His account stressed the voluntary aspect, positing a nation based not on deterministic factors but on free will.<sup>13</sup> Such readings have been dominant in French self-understanding.

However, they coexisted with more exclusive—or xenophobic—imaginings of the nation, exemplified by a 1985 cover story in *Le Figaro Magazine*, 'Will we still be French in 30 years?'.<sup>14</sup> This article claimed to extrapolate existing demographic trends and describe French society in the year 2015—a society in which one in three children would be born of Muslim parents and where France would no longer exist as a nation 'au sens ou l'entendait Renan'—'the memory of great things that we have achieved together'.<sup>15</sup> National identity according to this view is determined by imagined historical and cultural factors: a marriage of the deterministic with the Republican rhetoric of Renan. This view fits well with the message of the FN: explicitly that national identity is threatened and implicitly that Muslim immigrants are the cause of this. The power and legitimacy of this message are increased through the skilful use of Renan's celebrated address on nationhood.

This thesis seeks to explain the popularity of the national-populist *Front national* in the last two decades of the twentieth century with reference to 'national' paradigms that influenced the distinctive French approach to nation and identity in two major political debates during this time. The rise of the extreme right is often explained in terms of modernisation, alienation, and economic disadvantage during a period of major and rapid transformation. However other western European countries are facing similar challenges: dilemmas of nation-state structures and constrained actions; recession and unemployment; and the effects of globalisation and interdependence. Such conditions may be significant but are not in themselves an inevitable precursor to far right support. The rise of

<sup>11</sup> E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1983, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> O. Mongin, 'Retour sur une controverse: du "politiquement correct" au multiculturalisme' (Return to a controversy: from "politically correct" to multiculturalism), *Esprit*, no. 212, June 1995, pp.83-7. Notably, this section of the journal was entitled 'Le Spectre du Multiculturalisme Américain' (The Spectre of American Multiculturalism), which illustrates the widely held negative view of so-called Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism. It is seen to imply ethnic segregation—and in its worst light, to lead to a 'Lebanisation' of society.

<sup>13</sup> E. Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?', *Oeuvres Complètes*, I, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1947. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, these ideas have retained much currency and contributed to a dominant political reading of nationhood.

<sup>14</sup> J. Raspail, 'Serons-nous encore Français dans 30 ans?', *Le Figaro Magazine*, 26 October 1985, pp.123-33. This claimed to be an 'explosive dossier' devoted to immigration, its conclusions illustrated by the bust of Marianne covered with an Islamic veil.

<sup>15</sup> From 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?': 'le souvenir des grandes choses que nous avons faites ensemble'. This is an unusual use of his address in that it stresses history and cultural continuity, it is more commonly referenced

the extreme right is also commonly linked to immigration. Racist beliefs and behaviour, the 'new racism' of the cultural differentialists, have been examined with particular reference to non-European immigration, perceived and presented as threatening national identity. But again, non-European immigrant flows have been characteristic of other western European countries: for example the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. The post-war French immigration experience is not significantly different, but France alone of these countries has experienced the emergence of a nationally-successful party of the extreme right.<sup>16</sup>

This thesis seeks to provide an additional explanatory framework for the appeal of the FN: namely that the FN used the French understandings of the nation-state to its advantage and encouraged the sentiment of a 'crisis' of national identity. The dominant political questions of the 1980s and 1990s—immigration and European integration—allowed the FN to exploit understandings of nationhood and belonging, mustering support for their policies. Indeed, the ideas and policies of the FN have found far wider resonance and support than their election results alone would suggest. Although the FN's electoral successes consolidated in the 1990s around the 15 per cent mark and the party is widely denounced as racist and xenophobic, polls regularly indicate that up to 30 per cent of the French electorate agrees with the FN's ideas.<sup>17</sup> The thesis will examine what is distinctive about the French situation that has resulted in both a solid and faithful bloc of FN supporters as well as wider support for the FN's ideas. How could the ideas of a xenophobic and extreme nationalist party like the FN attract such backing in a wealthy, modern western society, where the experience of extreme nationalism had led commentators to argue at the beginning of the 1980s that the extreme right no longer existed as a credible political force?

### **Core argument: the defence of the nation**

The thesis will respond to this conundrum through the analysis of the two major divisive national debates which coincided with the rise of the FN in the late 1980s and 1990s: first, those relating to immigrant integration and citizenship, and second, those concerning the integration of France into the

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to bolster a voluntaristic concept of national belonging.

<sup>16</sup> This point is made by leading French sociologist Michel Wieviorka: France faces similar problems and issues to other western European countries. What differs, then, is not the question but 'the political and intellectual culture within which the debate develops'. See his discussion of social, economic and political problems facing France in 'Last words on "politically correct" French-style. The Debate on Multiculturalism', lecture hosted by the Ashworth Centre for Social Theory, University of Melbourne, 7 August 1995.

<sup>17</sup> At its most extreme, a 1997 IPSOS/*Le Point* poll reported that 48 per cent of electors said they were close to FN or its ideas. See *L'Express*, 11 December 1997.



European Union (EU). These debates were played out against a background of increasing far right influence that was hostile towards the arrival and settlement of 'non-European' migrants and towards the integration of France into a supranational European polity. Both these debates, like the politics of the FN, were centred on the idea of the nation. Overall, the rise of the far right has to be seen in the context of the challenges facing the French model of the nation-state, conceived in France as the ideal and indispensable form of the nation. The core of my argument relates to the normative power of the national idea in shaping political and public responses to the challenges of immigration and European integration.

The thesis draws on the FN's policies opposing the 'destruction' of the nation, with particular reference to the two integration debates. Both of these 'integrations' are portrayed as threatening challenges to the continued existence of *La France* and a distinctive national identity. The FN's powerful exploitation—indeed, virtual appropriation—of the national idea and its arguments for the retention of the nation-state as the basic unit of political and cultural identity allowed both the partial legitimisation and *banalisation* of the FN in French political life by the 1990s.

The divisive nationwide debates around these two central and controversial issues parallel the rise of the party. The centrality of the idea of the nation in debates on cultural and political integration bolstered the FN's position, and allowed them to draw on supposed 'Republican' traditions to claim legitimacy for the party and its policies. The distinctive French traditions of the nation-state provide insights into the successes of the extreme right—and of the inability of both 'mainstream' Right and Left to counteract the *Front national*. It is the strength, and the variegated understandings, of the concept of the nation in France that allowed the rise of a far right party in the late twentieth century in a country faced with significant political and cultural change.

The thesis draws on the two-model approach to nationhood: 'political' and/or 'ethno-cultural', in a simplified shorthand version. The French nation has been primarily conceived and understood as civic-political community, closely tied to the democratic state.<sup>18</sup> However I also argue that—despite the 'received version' of France as the model political nation—a secondary but influential strain of an ethno-cultural understanding of nationhood coexists with the political-civic understanding. This ethno-cultural strand is strengthened through the largely unacknowledged incorporation of cultural elements into a supposedly neutral public sphere.

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<sup>18</sup> A key work which develops the significance of understandings of nationhood is Rogers Brubaker's *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1992.

Despite reservations in setting up the two nationhood models as opposites—political versus cultural, open versus closed—this typology is widely applied in France and forms a useful basis for examining the multi-faceted nature of nationhood. Robert Gildea has drawn links between French political culture and collective memory, identifying parallel and competing collective memories and the ways in which the past is constructed as myth to serve the aims of particular political communities.<sup>19</sup> Diverse, and opposing, camps explicitly use understandings of nationhood to bolster their case. The sustaining power of the nation, exploited with reference to history, tradition and identity, has been used to great effect by the FN. The thesis accounts for the continued appeal of the ideas of the FN in the framework of the nation and the so-called 'crisis' of national identity. It draws upon an interpretative or constructivist approach in assuming that actors' behaviour is shaped by ideas and norms. It cannot be explained by, and is not the exclusive result of, actors' material interests or resources. Thus a strong normative element, based on shared collections of central ideas and principles, guides policy-making approaches and decision-making as well as influencing electoral choices. The success of the FN is explicable not only in terms of interests, personal or national, but in reference to understandings of nationhood and readings of national identity.

A close examination of the norms associated with nationhood in France contributes to the understanding of the FN's political emergence and successes. The simplistic opposition of political versus cultural conceals a far more complex and interwoven reality where attacks on the 'founding myths' of the Republic, and an appeal to a secondary, cultural, understanding of nationhood, can be coupled with a Jacobin defence of the nation-state. For example, the Republican argument that France is a civic nation which does not accept cultural pluralism and sub-national group identities in the public sphere is exploited by the far right to bolster their racist policies. The FN also draws on the Republican understanding of the nation as a sovereign political entity in opposing European integration. What both approaches have in common is a 'national' reference that relies on central tenets of national understanding: what it is to be 'French'. These understandings have contributed to the forging of a particular French approach to two central issues: first the integration of cultural minorities, and second, the integration of France into the European Union. In both of these, France retains a distinctive approach amongst its European neighbours.

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<sup>19</sup> R. Gildea, *The Past in French History*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994. Political cultures, he argues persuasively, are defined not by race or class, but by their collective memory: 'the collective construction of the past by a given community'. Rival interpretations struggle for acceptance / suppression; identical figures and events are presented in different ways; and there is a 'modification of memory' in light of events.

Finally, the thesis argues that the FN both contributed to and benefitted from the French 'reaffirmation of the national' in the 1990s. In response to the dual integration debates, a contested consensus emerged around a reaffirmation of the continuing significance of the nation in the 1990s: the affirmation of integration *à la française* in domestic politics and of the continuing salience of the nation in European politics. This development served the FN well: it is in part testament to the enduring power of nationhood, and was able to be manipulated effectively by the extreme right party. It has been able to exploit a specific French understanding of the nation-state: an understanding that sees the nation-state 'in crisis'.<sup>20</sup> Its success has been built upon a message of national renewal and defence, and a desire to uphold the continued existence of the bounded nation-state and an exclusive culturally-defined national identity. Its xenophobic and culturally-determined view of national identity has found resonance in a society faced with wide-ranging political, economic and social transformations which challenge long-standing 'myths' of Republican nationhood, notably those pertaining to the indivisible and sovereign nation.

The rise of the FN lends some support to those who see the emergence of a new cleavage in French politics, based on the idea of the nation. The rise of the extreme right may be linked both to existing processes of realignment and dealignment, and the blurring of lines between Left and Right. The two national debates examined in this thesis split the mainstream blocs and challenged the substance of a unitary political response from Left or Right. Rather than a cleavage based on traditional Left-Right lines, divisions based on differing approaches to nationhood and identity emerged, splitting the mainstream parties.<sup>21</sup> The fitted with the FN's claim to be 'neither Left nor Right'—but 'national!'.<sup>22</sup>

The FN view of national identity is uncritical and essentialist. Le Pen identifies a 'natural' hierarchy: 'I love my daughters more than my cousins, my cousins more than my neighbours, my neighbours more than those I don't know ...'.<sup>23</sup> This view of national identity as a single receive-

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<sup>20</sup> Here I agree with Maxim Silverman, who argues that the rise of the far right is indicative of a crisis of the nation-state in France. See his *Deconstructing the nation. Immigration, racism and citizenship in modern France*, London, Routledge, 1992.

<sup>21</sup> This observation emerged during the 1990s: see for example French political analyst and FN specialist Pascal Perrineau, who identifies a new cleavage between a political, economic and cultural openness and a closed approach (represented by the FN). See *Le Symptôme Le Pen: radiographie des électeurs du Front national* (The Le Pen Symptom: an X-ray of FN voters), Paris, Fayard, 1997.

<sup>22</sup> On the FN interpretation, see Mégret's (somewhat opportunistic) views that the right-left cleavage has come to an end in J-G.Fredet, 'FN: les ambitions de l'extrême' (FN: the ambitions of the extreme), *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 5-11 June 1997.

<sup>23</sup> The idea of a 'natural order' is a leitmotif in Le Pen's speeches and writings. See for example *Les Français d'abord* (French First), Paris, Carrère/Laffont, 1984.

culture is at the basis of the FN's ideology, providing a simple definition of 'who belongs' and who is an outsider. Such an understanding clearly dismisses the voluntarist concept of the nation. However this does not imply that the FN ignores that other component—civic-political—of nationhood, which remains the central reference point for the Republican imagining of the nation. The FN's hostility to European integration and its opposition to the Maastricht Treaty have also been framed in terms of the 'survival of the nation'. Although it is axiomatic to argue that the nation is the FN's central reference point, the complex dual nature of the French 'imagined community' has been underplayed in analyses of the FN success. This thesis utilises the French imaginings of their nation to explain the party's appeal in an integrating Europe and a multi-national society.

### **The FN and the 'national' debates: outline of the thesis**

The thesis examines in detail two distinct challenges to both the political and cultural strands of nationhood which have coincided with, and are closely related to, the rise of the FN. The accompanying 'crisis of national identity' is connected to the national core of FN politics: the continuation of the nation-state as the dominant economic and political actor and the guardian of an exclusive French national identity and culture. Drawing on the FN's policies on immigration and the EU, the thesis seeks to explain the continued appeal of the FN in the framework of the nation. The policies promoted by the FN are not new: their origins may be found in French historical thought and practice. However the party is operating in a new context of national uncertainty and challenges to the nation-state both at a European and global level.

The success of the party is examined in light of the challenges posed to the understanding of the nation in France. My account will analyse major theoretical approaches to the nation, locating intertwined concepts of nationhood in France that inform and shape national identity. This is followed by a detailed examination of the debates on immigration and European integration, and their evolution alongside the emergence of the FN. The thesis draws on a diverse range of literature, taking as its basis the argument that the strength of the idea of the nation in France has facilitated the emergence and implantation of the far right on the political scene. Its participation, and the centrality of FN themes, in the debates meant that it became increasingly difficult to marginalise the party. My analysis of the debates draws on historical, political and sociological analyses both in English and French, covering nation and identity, citizenship, and European integration. The FN is studied using both the extensive amount of secondary literature as well as two of the major newspapers of the far right, *Présent* and the *National Hebdo*, FN political programs and campaign speeches. The mainstream French press, including *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde* and *Libération*, and

weekly news magazines, including *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *L'Express* and *Le Point*, also provide valuable information and analysis, as do the web sites of the political parties and national and EU institutions.

The first chapter reviews the literature on the FN and the definitional debates surrounding the 'extreme right' label. It expands on the central argument with particular reference to the two central debates and the two-model approach to nationhood. Chapter 2 sets the FN within a national context: it examines the extreme right in France, its historical legacy, and the emergence of the FN as a new party of the extreme right. It identifies the major themes of the FN, and locates them within the core framework of the 'survival of the nation'. The thesis then contextualises the ideas of the FN through a detailed examination of the contemporary understanding of the nation and the challenges to it. Chapter 3 analyses the 'two-model' approach to the idea of the nation in France in detail, and critiques the accepted primary understanding of France as a civic and secular nation. A secondary ethno-cultural strand co-exists with the civic-political; moreover, the so-called 'political' strand incorporates cultural elements. The chapter examines the impact of French nation-building, of cultural assimilation within a political framework, and the conscious forging of a national identity.

Moving on to contemporary challenges to understandings of nationhood, the following sections unpick the debates surrounding immigration-citizenship (Chapters 4 and 5) and European integration (Chapters 6 to 8). Integration and difference were at the heart of the debate on immigration—and immigration as a 'problem' formed both a central plank of FN policy and a major explanation for its support. Chapter 4 assesses why immigration became a focal point of political debate and was perceived as such a threat to French identity. The long-standing insistence on individual assimilation into the nation and refusal to recognise group-based identity were questioned in the 1980s and 1990s. While the assimilation process was deemed to be flawed, a mainstream consensus emerged that '*intégration à la française*' was the appropriate response. The tenor and content of the debates on the 'right to difference', including the 'headscarves affair', led to an affirmation of the integration model, allowed the exclusionary ideas of the FN into mainstream debate, and acted to '*dédiabolise*'<sup>24</sup> the party.

Chapter 5 deals with the question of citizenship, the concept of *jus soli* and the challenges to the primacy of this concept. The question of who does or does not belong was made most explicit in the debate on proposed changes to French citizenship law in the 1980s and 1990s. Of T.H. Marshall's

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<sup>24</sup> Literally, to 'de-demonise'—from '*le diable*', the devil.

three pillars of citizenship, the civil, the political, and the social,<sup>25</sup> it is the legal acquisition of citizenship, the political element, which has been at the forefront of debate in France. Rogers Brubaker has argued persuasively that the principle of *jus soli* is grounded in the French understanding of the civic-territorial nation.<sup>26</sup> The acceptance of a non-ethnic base for belonging can explain the historical evolution of French citizenship law. However the long-established right of *jus soli* was called into question by heterogeneous groups in the 1980s. Some called for a 'Republican affirmation', a voluntaristic willed act of choosing to take on French citizenship, while others turned to a more exclusionary model—*jus sanguinis* as the legitimate basis for belonging to the nation. The move for change thus extended far beyond the cadre of the FN, and resulted (briefly) in the amendment of the principle of *jus soli* in the 1990s.

The following three chapters deal with challenges to the nation-state as a sovereign political unit and their relation to far right policies and themes. Chapter 6 considers the implications of European integration for the sovereign nation-state and situates the related debate within the context of the anti-globalisation current in France. FN policies which claim to protect French interests and national identity tap into this current, rejecting '*mondialisme*' (globalisation) and mounting a cultural and economic defence of French interests and identity. The sovereignty discourse of the FN can be seen as a simplistic and over-stated version of a more mainstream rejection of 'Anglo-Saxon' approaches, not only to multiculturalism, but also to economic issues. Anti-neo-liberalism, distrust of free market economics and support for a continuing role for the state are characteristic not only of the FN, but of groups on both the Left and Right of politics.

Chapter 7 turns to the French role in the development of the EU, and the continuing attachment to a '*Europe des patries*', the heralded transformation of the nation-state notwithstanding. From an economic community founded and led by the French polity, and serving French interests, the EU has developed into a threat to the nation-state as sovereignty is 'pooled' at a European level. On the whole, the Gaullist insistence on a national right to veto has given way to a more pragmatic mainstream approach. But current FN policy demonstrates affinity with *souverainiste* arguments from elements on both Left and Right of politics, with a broader reluctance to relinquish sovereignty combined with support for intergovernmental structures. Again, the invocation of the

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<sup>25</sup> T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1950.

<sup>26</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*. The distinctive and deeply-rooted French and German understandings of nationhood are particularly in evidence, he claims, in their citizenship policies for immigrants.

nation—here in opposition to supranational structures—is used to bolster FN support, and like the FN, the ‘pragmatic integrationists’ also evoke the nation as a core referent.

Finally, Chapter 8 considers the impact of the Maastricht Treaty and referendum as new issues confront France in post-Cold War Europe. The chapter examines the themes underlying the opposition to Maastricht put forward by the extreme right and the ‘no’ camp in the referendum debate. Anxieties concerning sovereignty and identity were central: fear of a (further) loss of national independence, particularly in connection with Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the demise of the national currency, and hostility to supranationalism in general, feature strongly. These anxieties correspond to traditional French understandings of nationhood and as such find resonance in the electorate. The successes of anti-EU parties—including the FN—in the European elections of the 1990s point to the continuing salience of the national sovereignty theme in French politics which the FN has exploited to its advantage. The pro-integrationist camp also situates itself in relation to a particular reading of national interest and identity, and its continued intergovernmental approach to integration stresses the importance of the nation-state.

In conclusion, the rise of the FN in the 1980s and 1990s was paralleled by an increasing concern in mainstream French society over the demise of—and the need to preserve—French nationhood and identity. Deeply held assumptions about the French nation-state and French national identity were challenged and as the integration debates show, both cultural and political understandings of the nation were at play. The thesis helps explain the popularity of the *Front national* in twentieth century France within this context, as it has used ideational structures to its advantage. It draws on the FN’s policies opposing the ‘destruction’ of the nation, with particular reference to two key themes: immigration and European integration. Both of these are portrayed by the FN as threatening the continued existence of *La France*. First, the FN rejects multiculturalism and affirms a homogenous French identity and an ethnic view of nationhood. Second, it affirms a political view of nationhood based on traditional nation-state sovereignty in both political and economic arenas. The powerful resonance of FN policy with French understandings of nationhood—of the need to retain the nation-state as the basic unit of political and cultural identity—has been instrumental in the electoral successes and implantation of the FN and its ideas.

The European extreme right in general and the French *Front national* in particular have been the focus of much academic analysis. There is an overall consensus on the existence of an extreme right 'brand', or party family, in contemporary Europe, to which the FN belongs, although the label can vary. While sophisticated analyses of their policies, rhetoric and strategy have led to agreement on the major themes exploited by the FN, there is less consensus on the reasons for the FN's success. This chapter situates the rise of the party within the academic debates on political party development, highlighting the relevance of a 'cleavage politics' approach alongside the role of ideology. It then examines the extensive literature on the FN and the major factors proposed to explain the party's success. Having established the significance of nationalism in the FN's make-up, I then introduce the 'two-model' approach to nationhood that has dominated French thinking on the subject and outline the two major contemporary challenges to these understandings of nationhood. My introduction to the immigration-integration debate and the European integration debate highlights the centrality of the nation in both developments.

### Political party development and the extreme right

Before looking to specific studies of the FN which offer reasons for its success, it is useful to situate the rise of the FN in relation to theoretical models seeking to classify and explain the rise of political parties. The establishment and development of political parties in western democracies has been explained via the notion of cleavages—deep-seated divisions within society which form the basis for party support and underpin the party system. Set out originally by Lipset and Rokkan, this typology of party systems is historically informed. It argues that the development of political systems in western Europe arose out of deep-seated cleavages within society, resulting in a structure of party families based not on ideology but on historical cleavages.<sup>1</sup> According to this model, a number of critical junctures in European history resulted in the formation of such long-term cleavages.<sup>2</sup> These critical

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<sup>1</sup> S.Lipset and S.Rokkan (eds), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, New York, Free Press, 1967. For a Europe-wide outline of parties according to historical cleavages, see Allum, *State and Society*, pp.200-14.

<sup>2</sup> The critical junctures noted by Rokkan include the Reformation, the National Revolution (Church-State), the Industrial Revolution and the International or Bolshevik Revolution. The resulting cleavages were institutionalised: for example, the French Revolution as a defining juncture gave rise to a Left-Right cleavage still apparent today; the later secularising National Revolution resulted in a split between the secular state and the Church, and the centralised state against the periphery. In France, this gave rise to a centralised nation-



junctures are linked to two sets of revolutions, the national and the industrial. The resulting cleavages oppose in the first 'national' case, the secular nation-state and the Church, and the centre and periphery. In the second 'industrial' case, they divide rural and urban interests, and capital and labour. Further, it has been argued that this pattern of divisions has congealed with the same divisions and party systems dominating since the advent of mass suffrage in early 1900s: a 'freezing' of cleavages.

This approach posits an identifiable party family entitled 'neo-fascist and extreme right' which groups together the German National Party (NPD), the *Republikaner*, the Italian *Alleanza nazionale* and the FN as belonging to a single category.<sup>3</sup> This lumping together of new extreme right and neo-fascist parties in a single category based on traditional cleavage structures is ultimately an untidy and misleading interpretation of the contemporary European far right.<sup>4</sup> Studies have shown that while traditional cleavage structures (class, religion, region) are useful in explaining the composition and support of the mainstream parties in France, they appear to play little role in the make-up of FN support.<sup>5</sup> This suggests that either the traditional cleavage model no longer holds in this instance, or a new long-term cleavage is emerging in French society. If the latter is the case, the critical juncture would relate to the developments associated with globalisation: immigration and increased diversity within the nation-state, and economic and political challenges to nation-state authority.

The notion of cleavage politics—and in particular the contention of a 'freezing' of cleavages since the advent of universal male suffrage—has been called into question.<sup>6</sup> Processes of both dealignment (shift away from parties) and realignment (emergence of new cleavages) have influenced party development since the 1960s. In Europe this was seen in the rise of new issue-based politics and the weakening of

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building program based on secular and anti-clerical interests. S.Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1970.

<sup>3</sup> Allum, *State and Society*, pp.182-7, 211-12.

<sup>4</sup> As will be discussed below, there are important differences between the parties with an explicitly fascist heritage and the 'new-style' parties of the extreme right. There are, however, some generally shared characteristics. Cas Mudde's study identifies five major features from a wide-ranging study of literature on the extreme right: nationalism, racism, xenophobia, anti-democratic attitudes and stress on a strong state. Mudde, 'Right Wing Extremism Analysed'.

<sup>5</sup> See M.Minkenberg, 'The New Right in France and Germany: *Nouvelle Droite*, *Neue Rechte* and the New Right Radical Parties' in P.Merkel and L.Weinberg (eds), *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism in the Nineties*, London, Frank Cass, 1997, pp.65-90. Ideology, he argues, has become the driving force behind the FN. Nonna Mayer's two blocs of voters and Perrineau's split of five diverse constituencies also suggest that traditional cleavages do not convincingly account for the FN's support basis. See N.Mayer, *Ces Français qui votent Le Pen* (These French who vote for Le Pen), Paris, Flammarion, 1999; Perrineau, *Le Symptôme Le Pen*.

<sup>6</sup> On the challenge to the 'freezing' hypothesis see R.Dalton and S.Flanagan (eds), *Electoral change in advanced industrial democracies: realignment or dealignment?*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1984. Dealignment stresses the declining role and effectiveness of political parties. Voters will turn to interest groups and other social movements to represent their interests. Realignment notes the declining importance of old cleavages, notably class and religion; and the emergence of new cleavages and therefore new political groupings. Voters go through a process of realignment as they are attracted to new political parties to represent their interests. Both these arguments have relevance to the appeal of the FN.

the major cleavage, that of Left-Right differentiation. Some argue that the decline of cleavage politics may be used to explain the rise of the far right. It has provided both an opportunity and political 'space' for such parties to establish themselves. Further, it has given rise to the politics of protest, based on dealignment and linked to the electorate's disenchantment with the traditional parties.<sup>7</sup> This has some explanatory merit, although the FN is not, or not merely, a protest party. The second process, that of realignment, is also at play, with the emergence of new cleavages. This better helps to explain those 'loyal' voters who identify positively with the FN's message and politics, as well as a wider constituency who are in agreement with, or sympathetic to, its ideas.

If not historical cleavage, then party ideology is commonly used to classify a party as 'belonging' to the extreme right family. Such classification is often bound up in discussion of whether these parties may be designated as 'fascist' or 'neo-fascist', a question which offers few explanatory insights into the sustained success of the far right in France. The majority of French studies prefer the term 'national populist'—with an explicit differentiation of the FN from old-style fascism.<sup>8</sup> The stated position of the FN is that it is neither an extreme right party, nor an anti-system party.<sup>9</sup> Rather, it is pro-French: '*ni droite, ni gauche, nationale*' (neither right nor left, national).<sup>10</sup> The 'national-populist' label is apt, reflecting more clearly the nature of the FN and its message. But while the FN may not be a direct continuation of earlier quasi-fascist groups, nor of Barrèsian integral nationalism, it is a party type whose roots lie in French history, and there are important continuities that have informed its development.<sup>11</sup>

The ideological characteristics of the extreme right that are commonly listed comprise extreme nationalism; anti-democratic tendencies, including a rejection of pluralism and social equality; charismatic leadership; hatred or intolerance of the Other; pro-free market forces; and exaltation of the nation, conceived as an organic body.<sup>12</sup> While this 'shopping list' of attributes is broadly consistent

<sup>7</sup> H-G. Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1994, pp. 27-34.

<sup>8</sup> See P. Perrineau, 'Le Front national: 1972-1992' in M. Winock's edited *L'Histoire de l'extrême droite en France* (The History of the extreme right in France), Paris, Seuil, 1993, pp. 243-97. This will be further explored in Chapter 2.

<sup>9</sup> The concept of an 'anti-system party'—one which does not share the basic value set of the political order in which it operates—has been applied to some parties of the extreme right. On the original concept, see G. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976; also Allum, *State and Society*, pp. 194-7.

<sup>10</sup> Initially they did label themselves as belonging to the right: '*la droite sociale et populaire*' (the social and popular right), while rejecting the 'extreme' label. See P. Hainsworth, 'The Extreme Right in post-war France: the emergence and success of the *Front national*' in his edited *The Extreme Right in Western Europe and the USA*, London, Pinter, 1992, pp. 29-60. The move away from a Left-Right distinction towards the 'national' occurred in the early-mid 1990s.

<sup>11</sup> See Perrineau, 'Le Front national: 1972-1992'. Barrès was an influential intellectual on the extreme right who espoused the idea of the nation as a community of descent. See Chapter 3, pp. 82-86, 112-13.

<sup>12</sup> Mudde, 'Right Wing Extremism Analysed'.

with the FN message, its designation of the FN as neo-liberal and pro-market is problematic.

While economic policies are generally subservient to, and may be inconsistent with, the political stance of such parties, there has been agreement in the literature that parties of the far right have neo-liberal tendencies and support the working of the 'free market'. It is in this area that Le Pen and his party now differ significantly from the 'model' far right European grouping.<sup>13</sup> The move to a protectionist economic agenda might appear more consistent with the other attributes of the far right, such as the protection of the nation (although few scholars have argued that the far right's policies are consistent or indeed realisable!), but this shift is peculiar to the FN. This reflects the difficulties and accompanying insecurities associated with the impact of globalisation and 'Europe', the latter meaning integration within the EU. The French context is vital here in understanding the political progress of the FN. The party does not conform neatly to a general European 'model', merely reflecting a number of items in a list of attributes—some of which are shared by the so-called mainstream parties. This type of classification may indicate some similarities with other far right parties in Europe, but does not form a basis for an explanation of FN's appeal.

#### Analysis, arguments and frameworks: the literature

The spectacular rise of Le Pen's *Front national* from relative obscurity in 1981 to a party that won over 15 per cent of the vote in 1995 has naturally attracted much comment and analysis in both the popular media and academic writing. At first sight, it appears that there may be little to add to the literature on the *Front national*: its antecedents, development, politics, constituency and organisation have been the subject of a deal of research and analysis, and a range of causes for its success have been canvassed and scrutinised. As has been noted, the extreme right phenomenon has generated a veritable publishing industry.

The bulk of academic studies of the FN focus on Le Pen's political development, questions of definition, party organisation, and analysis of the FN's major themes, policies, and constituency. In English, much of this analysis has been in the form of chapters in edited collections—often comparative studies of the extreme right in contemporary Europe<sup>14</sup>—and articles in academic

<sup>13</sup> S.Bastow, 'Front National economic policy: from neo-liberalism to protectionism', *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 5 (1), 1997, pp.61-72.

<sup>14</sup> Edited volumes in English covering various European countries include L.Cheles et al. (eds), *Neo-fascism in Europe*, London, Longman, 1991, revised and updated (minus the neo-fascist label) in their *The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe*, London, Longman 1995; and Merkl and Weinberg (eds), *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism*. Some volumes also include chapters on the North American experience, including A.Braun and S.Scheinberg (eds), *The Extreme Right: Freedom and Security at Risk*, Boulder, Co., Westview,

journals, with entire issues devoted to the contemporary extreme right.<sup>15</sup> Edited volumes also place the FN within an historical perspective, tracing an extreme right 'lineage' in France; others adopt a comparative organisational perspective.<sup>16</sup> Such volumes have the benefit of a wide-ranging comparative approach but do not have the value of a detailed sustained analysis of the FN. Indeed the first full-length treatment in English was only published in 1995: Jonathan Marcus' *The Resistible Rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen*, followed by Harvey Simmons' *The French National Front* in 1996.<sup>17</sup>

The standard English-language texts on the FN point to problems of definition before dealing specifically with FN politics and constituency.<sup>18</sup> The far or extreme right label is generally considered apposite, and a useful differentiation is also made between old- and new-style parties. Building upon this, many political scientists now view the FN as part of a new phenomenon of the radical or extreme right.<sup>19</sup> Ignazi for instance holds that there are two types of extreme right party: first, the old-style traditional party with a fascist heritage, and second, the new post-industrial party. The FN he sees as the 'prototype' of the latter.<sup>20</sup> The old-style party has explicit historical and ideological links with fascism; the new-style party is presented as modern, engaging with problems of contemporary society.<sup>21</sup> Betz goes further in suggesting that the term 'extreme right' is an

1997; P.Hainsworth (ed.), *The Extreme Right in Western Europe and the USA*; and *The Politics of the Extreme Right. From the margins to the mainstream*, London, Pinter, 2000. H-G.Betz and S.Immerfall (eds), *The New Politics of the Right. Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998, also includes chapters on Australia, New Zealand and India.

<sup>15</sup> See *WEP*, Vol. 11 (2), April 1988; *EJPR*, Vol. 22, 1992; *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 45, 1992; *WEP*, Vol. 17 (2), April 1994.

<sup>16</sup> See for example E.Arnold (ed.), *The Development of the Radical Right in France. From Boulanger to Le Pen*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000; P.Ignazi and C.Ysmal (eds), *The Organization of Political Parties in Southern Europe*, Westport, Conn., Praeger, 1998.

<sup>17</sup> J.Marcus, *The National Front and French Politics. The Resistible Rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen*, New York, New York University Press, 1995; H.Simmons, *The French National Front*, Boulder, Co., Westview, 1996. Single-author comparative studies are also rare: Michael Minkenberg, 'The Renewal of the Radical Right', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 35 (2), Spring 2000, pp.170-88, notes there are only four single-author comparative studies: Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism*; H.Kitschelt (with A.McGann!), *The radical right in Western Europe: a comparative analysis*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1995; P.Ignazi, *L'estrema destra in Europa* (The extreme right in Europe), Bologna, Mulino, 1992, and M.Minkenberg, *Die neue radikale Rechte im Vergleich: USA, Frankreich, Deutschland* (Comparing the new radical rights: USA, France, Germany), Opladen/Wiesbaden, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998.

<sup>18</sup> For useful definitional discussions see in particular Hainsworth, 'Introduction. The Cutting Edge: The Extreme Right in Post-war Europe and the USA' in his edited *The Extreme Right in Western Europe and the USA*, pp.1-28; M.Ebata, 'Right-Wing Extremism: In Search of a Definition' in Braun and Scheinberg (eds), *The Extreme Right*, pp.12-35.

<sup>19</sup> As Hainsworth points out, US academics tend to use the term 'radical right', while European scholars refer to 'extreme right'. See his 'Introduction. The Cutting Edge', p.8.

<sup>20</sup> See his 'The Extreme Right in Europe: A Survey' in Merkl and Weinberg (eds), *The Revival of Right-Wing Extremism*, pp.47-64.

<sup>21</sup> Ignazi, 'The Extreme Right in Europe'. This classification becomes problematic, however, in that a major differentiating factor between the old- and new-style party is the neo-liberal agenda of the new: 'the Free Market is exalted by the new ERPs' (extreme right parties), p.60. As will be examined, the FN has shifted to a more protectionist agenda and is highly critical of neo-liberalism and globalisation.

inappropriate label as it implies a rejection of the democratic order. He sets up a category which he labels 'radical right-wing populist parties', distinct from right-wing extremism or neo-fascism. Such populist parties would include the FN, *Republikaner*, FPÖ and Lombardy League.<sup>22</sup> Others insist on the neo-fascist label, which highlights the potential threat of the FN's politics.<sup>23</sup> While attempts at formulating a working definition of the label assigned to the FN, be it 'far right' or 'neo-fascist', are undoubtedly useful, they run the risk of essentialism. Further, the validity of the fascist label is undermined by the FN's careful assertions that it works within the democratic order and abides by democratic principles. While FN rhetoric contains both implicit and explicit messages which do not accord with 'liberty, equality, fraternity', it can be argued that the FN abides by the political rules.<sup>24</sup> It agrees to free elections and ostensibly supports the parliamentary multi-party system, albeit with strong presidential authority. Despite the anti-egalitarian and anti-democratic ethos underpinning much of its ideology, the party is generally careful not to denounce expressly the agreed political order, as will be explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

Looking to French studies, there is a large and growing range of theoretical and empirical literature devoted to Le Pen and his party. On the whole, literature on the far right up until the early 1980s judged that the far right was exhausted as a political force, and was unlikely to recur as a phenomenon. In his 1983 study, *L'Extrême Droite en France*, Jean-Christian Petitfils argued that the far right was finished, an episode of history.<sup>25</sup> The discrediting of nationalism in the wake of the Second World War and the moves to transcend the nation-state in a supranational European framework contributed to this optimistic judgement.

However with the electoral breakthrough of the FN in Dreux in 1983 and its subsequent success in the 1984 European elections, the realisation grew that the FN was disproving this thesis. At the time, the party benefited from high media coverage and the resultant dissemination of its ideas. Hostility towards immigration, the leading message of the party, was viewed as the major contributing factor in the party's appeal. Nonetheless, many still viewed the FN as a temporary and

<sup>22</sup> See his 'The New Politics of Resentment', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 25 (4), 1993, pp.413-27, and his subsequent full length study of the radical right in western Europe, *Radical Right-Wing Populism*, as well as his introduction in Betz and Immerfall (eds), *The New Politics of the Right*, pp.1-10. The FPÖ is the Austrian Freedom Party—*Die Freiheitspartei Österreich*.

<sup>23</sup> In English, see for example G.Harris, *The Dark Side of Europe*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1994; P.Fysh and J.Wolfreys, 'Le Pen, the National Front and the Extreme Right in France', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 45 (3), July 1992, pp.309-26; and for sustained argument on the FN's neo-fascist nature, strongly rejecting the 'national populist' label, their *The Politics of Racism in France*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998.

<sup>24</sup> In fact it has presented itself as an alternative to, and a protest against, the corruption of established political parties that came to light in the 1990s.

<sup>25</sup> J.C.Petitfils, *L'Extrême droite en France* (The Extreme Right in France), Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1983.

'illegitimate' phenomenon that would fade away once the perceived, essentially economic, causes were addressed, or once the charismatic leader of the party disappeared from the scene.

Early full-length studies tended to concentrate on the party's structure, program and electoral base. These included *Le Monde* journalists Edwy Plenel and Alain Rollat's *L'Effet Le Pen*, among the first to engage seriously with the FN following its 1983 electoral success; Birgitta Orfali's *L'adhésion au Front national*, and Perrineau and Mayer's edited *Le Front national à découvert*, which included detailed analyses of the FN's constituency.<sup>26</sup> Local accounts of the party and explanations for its appeal also appeared: Dreux Mayor Françoise Gaspard's account of the FN's rise in that town, J-P Roy on the FN in the Centre region, and Anne Tristan's *Au Front*, set in Marseille.<sup>27</sup> By the end of the decade it was becoming clear that the party was unlikely simply to fade away. The party was implanted in the French political scene, well organised and solidly financed. While Le Pen as an individual was (and is) anathema to the majority of French voters, his ideas were gaining increasing acceptance and legitimacy. Le Pen, according to many, was asking the right questions—even if the answers provided were on the wrong track. The literature came to focus on the normalisation and *banalisation* of FN discourse, and the extent of its implantation across French political life.

More recent French studies have looked to the historical context and political traditions of the far right: a comparative perspective which offers a deeper grasp of the site of FN in French politics and history, and also highlights the multiform nature of the extreme right.<sup>28</sup> Michel Winock's edited volume presents case studies of the extreme right in modern France, with Perrineau's final chapter on the FN identifying continuity with the past but stressing that despite parallels, the FN is a modern, post-

<sup>26</sup> E. Plenel and A. Rollat, *L'Effet Le Pen* (The Le Pen Effect), Paris, Le Monde-La Découverte, 1984; B. Orfali, *L'adhésion au Front national* (Membership of the Front national), Paris, Kimé, 1990; P. Perrineau and N. Mayer (eds), *Le Front national à découvert* (The Front national uncovered), Paris, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (PFNSP), 1989.

<sup>27</sup> F. Gaspard, *A Small City in France*, trans. A. Goldhammer, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1995; J-P. Roy, *Le Front National en Région Centre*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1993; A. Tristan, *Au Front* (To the Front), Paris, Gallimard, 1987.

<sup>28</sup> See Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia, *L'Extrême Droite en France. De Maurras à Le Pen*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Brussels, Editions Complexe, 1996—she refers to the French 'extreme rights'. There were of course earlier studies of French fascism: the standard reference work is Pierre Milza's *Fascisme français: Passé et Présent* (French Fascism: Past and Present), Paris, Flammarion, 1987. See also Zeev Sternhell's controversial research which argues that fascism had distinctive French roots and was not a movement 'foreign' to France: *La Droite révolutionnaire 1885-1914: les origines françaises du fascisme* (The Revolutionary Right 1885-1914: the French origins of fascism), Paris, Seuil, 1978; and *Neither Right nor Left: fascist ideology in France*, trans. D. Maisel, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986 (published in France in 1983). Sternhell's controversial thesis will be discussed in Chapter 2. These works provide historical background to and interpretation of fascism and the far right in France, and clearly have a bearing on the present-day far right in the form of the FN, but were not written in light of its contemporary achievements. Having noted this, the title of Sternhell's 1986 work anticipates a current slogan of the FN: *ni droite, ni gauche: national*.



industrial party.<sup>29</sup> French sociologist Emmanuel Todd sets the rise of the FN in an overall socio-historical perspective.<sup>30</sup> He argues that France has undergone a revolution comparable to that of 1789, resulting in the extinction of the Communist party (a premature judgement, as it turned out) and Catholicism dying out. Todd links the four major parties to different forms of society in France, arguing that the non-egalitarian 'stem' family formed the core electorate for the Catholic Right and socialism, while the egalitarian nuclear family favoured Gaullism and Communism.<sup>31</sup> Current patterns of electoral behaviour are thus traced to traditional forms of social and family organisation within France.<sup>32</sup> Todd argues, then, that the FN will fade away as it has no enduring roots in French history and so is doomed to be a passing phenomenon with no coherent ideology or systematic values. Like the Poujadist movement in the 1950s, the FN would not be able to sustain its appeal. While the split of the party in 1998/99 may be cited as proof of Todd's thesis, the success of the FN in the preceding 1997 legislative and 1998 regional elections, the cooperation between FN and the mainstream right, and finally the continuing support for *lepeniste* themes cast doubt on claims that the extreme right is finished as a political force. Strongly attacked by mainstream Republicans, Todd's thesis also suffers from an essentialist approach which tends to discount the complexity of causes underlying the far right's success.<sup>33</sup>

Le Pen's charismatic leadership has been a crucial component in the FN's rise, and his life has been studied in some detail in works such as *Le Canard enchaîné's* detailed dossier, *Le Pen, le vrai*.<sup>34</sup> Most studies include details of his early development as a student in Paris, and his experience in the Algerian war and later as a Poujadist deputy. The detailed biography by Lionet and Bresson provides a wealth of information on Le Pen's past and his rise to the leadership of the FN.<sup>35</sup> Such accounts privilege his experience in far right circles, whether as a student in Paris, with the army in Indo-China and Algeria, or as a Poujadist deputy, and thus place him within a genealogy of traditional extreme right forces in

<sup>29</sup> Winock (ed.), *L'Histoire de l'extrême droite*, concluding with Perrineau's chapter on the FN.

<sup>30</sup> *The Making of Modern France: Politics, Ideology and Culture*, trans. A. & B. Forster, Oxford, Blackwell, 1991.

<sup>31</sup> The four major parties are the *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR), *Union pour la démocratie française* (UDF), *Parti socialiste* (PS), and *Parti communiste français* (PCF).

<sup>32</sup> In a later work, he uses a similar sociological breakdown to set out the likelihood of assimilation of immigrants in particular environments. He equated the integration of immigrants with the egalitarian environment (i.e. egalitarian family structure equals integration), while differentialist and non-assimilationist culture would be encouraged in the non-egalitarian environment. Wieviorka rejects the argument that immigrants' fates are determined by the family structure into which they move; see his *La Démocratie à l'épreuve. Nationalisme, populisme, ethnicité* (Democracy put to the test. Nationalism, populism, ethnicity), Paris, La Découverte, 1993.

<sup>33</sup> See for example D. Schnapper, *La communauté des citoyens. Sur l'idée moderne de la nation* (The community of citizens. On the modern idea of the nation), Paris, Gallimard, 1994.

<sup>34</sup> Paris, *Les Dossiers du Canard*, 1992.

<sup>35</sup> G. Bresson and C. Lionet, *Le Pen. Biographie*, Paris, Seuil, 1994. Similar in background to Plenel and Rollat, Gilles Bresson and Christian Lionet are journalists at the left-of-centre *Libération*.

France.

The 1990s saw a profusion of full-length studies of the movement assessing its consolidation in French political life. The most notable of these recent works are Guy Birenbaum's *Le Front national en Politique*, Plenel and Rollat's sequel to their 1984 work, *La République menacée. Dix ans d'effet Le Pen*; Jean-Yves Camus and René Monzat's *Les Droites nationales et radicales en France*, and Monzat's *Enquêtes sur la Droite Extrême*.<sup>36</sup> New analyses of the FN's changing electoral base also shed light on the growing diversity of FN voters, in particular highlighting the attraction of national-populism to the working class.<sup>37</sup> Unlike the literature published in English, few studies deal with the French case in a European comparative context, the exception being Anne-Marie Duranton-Crabol, *L'Europe de l'extrême Droite. De 1945 à nos jours*.<sup>38</sup>

Overall, the FN policy platform is well covered in the literature, with campaign programs as well as the speeches and writings of Le Pen forming the basis for analysis. Increasingly, local experience of the FN in power can be cited as a guide to its policies.<sup>39</sup> Standard analyses cover major FN constituencies (both on a geographical and socio-economic basis) and propose a catalogue of possible causes and explanations for the FN's emergence in the 1980s and consolidation in the 1990s. This approach results in analyses of the processes of change in contemporary French politics, economy and/or culture (in greater or lesser detail). The literature tends to focus on a complex of problems or issues that can be grouped into major categories: few attribute the FN's success to a single cause or category of causes.<sup>40</sup> Rather a typology of cause 'types'—socio-psychological, socio-economic, political, international-global—is invoked and particular international/European/national phenomena highlighted according to the perspective of the author. Most judge the emergence of the

<sup>36</sup> G.Birenbaum, *Le Front national en politique* (The National Front in politics), Paris, Balland, 1992; E.Plenel and A.Rollat, *La République menacée. Dix ans d'effet Le Pen* (The threatened Republic: Ten years of the Le Pen effect), Paris, Le Monde-Editions, 1992; J-Y.Camus and R.Monzat, *Les droites nationales et radicales en France* (The national and radical rights in France), Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1992; R.Monzat, *Enquêtes sur la Droite Extrême* (Inquiries into the Extreme Right), Paris, Le Monde-Editions, 1992.

<sup>37</sup> See Perrineau, *Le Symptôme Le Pen*; Mayer, *Ces Français qui votent Le Pen*. As noted above, she identifies two distinct blocs of FN voters: the traditional, socially conservative Right/Extreme Right and the working class voters disenchanted with the mainstream parties and political system.

<sup>38</sup> A-M.Duranton-Crabol, *L'Europe de l'extrême Droite. De 1945 à nos jours* (The Europe of the extreme Right. From 1945 to today), Brussels, Editions Complexe, 1991.

<sup>39</sup> Following the election of FN mayors in the southern French cities of Toulon, Marignane, Orange in 1995, and Vitrolles in 1997. See for example on Jean-Marie Le Chevallier's election and administration in Toulon, V.Martin, *Toulon la noire: le Front national au pouvoir* (Toulon the black: the National Front in power), Paris, Denoël, 1996 and the unambiguously titled C.Ardid and L.Davin, *Ascenseur pour les Fachos* (Elevator for the Fascists), Toulon, Editions PleinSud, 1995.

<sup>40</sup> James Shields, for example, explicitly rejects any single explanatory issue in his 'A new chapter in the history of the French extreme right: the French National Front' in A.Cole (ed.), *French Political Parties in Transition*, Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1990, pp.115-212.



extreme right as multi-faceted and complex, related to the preoccupation with the question of national identity. However it is the specific French context that is crucial—a point acknowledged and explored most effectively by Perrineau, Mayer, Wieviorka and Taguieff. Below I provide an overview of the most commonly debated explanations for the successes of the FN.

### *Immigration and racism*

As will be examined in Chapter 4, the literature on immigration, the cause *par excellence* of the FN, is wide-ranging and growing. 'Immigration' is not only identified as a central theme of the far right, but is also proffered as a major reason for the FN's emergence and success. Alongside the supposedly related themes of law and order and national decadence, secondary tributaries which allegedly feed into this primary source, the presence and settlement of 'non-Europeans' in France is the core subject of research relating to the FN.<sup>41</sup>

There is now an immigrant community of over four million in France, although the existence of cultural 'minorities' within the nation is not officially acknowledged: the Republic is 'one and indivisible'.<sup>42</sup> France is generally portrayed as having welcomed new immigrants, with a historical tradition of a relatively open and generous approach towards immigration. However it was only in the 1980s that the historical extent of migration and the contribution of migrants became the subject of sustained research, starting with the work of historian Gerard Noiriel, whose detailed account of immigration to France was intended to fill this void in the historical literature.<sup>43</sup>

Today there is no dearth of material on the issue of immigration in contemporary France. The politics of immigration is at the forefront of political debate and has a high level of visibility in the daily media, in mass weeklies (for example *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Le Point* and *L'Express*) as well as in academic journals. In English, specific journals on the issue such as *Race and Class*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, and European journals such as *West European Politics* and the *European Journal of Political Research*, have devoted complete issues to the politics of immigration, while *French Politics and Society*<sup>44</sup> and *Modern and Contemporary France* deal extensively with immigration in the French context. Beginning

<sup>41</sup> Both Simmons and Marcus devote a complete chapter to immigration: 'Immigration and Racism' in *The French National Front*, pp.143-68 and 'Immigration as a political issue' in *The National Front and French Politics*, pp.73-99 respectively.

<sup>42</sup> As will be examined in Chapters 4 and 5, French citizens do not officially belong to any ethnic community: the link between citizen and state is paramount and intermediary bodies are met with distrust. This has important implications for the imagining of a single national identity. Further, numbers of any culturally-based group in France—for example the Muslim community—are contested and different government departments supply divergent estimates. Census returns do not allow for categories of ethnic background, only place of birth.

<sup>43</sup> G.Noiriel, *Le Creuset français. Histoire de l'immigration XIXe-XXe siècles* (The French Melting Pot. History of immigration in the 19-20<sup>th</sup> centuries), Paris, Seuil, 1988.

with Stephen Castles' *Here for Good* in 1983, which recounted the settlement of ethnic minorities in Western Europe as well as their conditions of disadvantage, many studies have examined the impact of immigration in Western Europe in general and France in particular. Immigration has shifted from being an economic issue, a factor of production, to a question of political participation, identity and citizenship.<sup>45</sup> Numerous studies have identified and examined the increasing politicisation of immigration, complemented by detailed policy studies of migration control and migrant rights, and the policy effects (e.g. in housing, education and security) of immigration.<sup>46</sup> In general, the literature now acknowledges the far-reaching effects of immigration on French politics and society. The 1990s saw the publication of detailed analysis, both analytical and normative, of the political economy of migration—especially in the context of increasing liberalisation of the global economy; and the impact of migration on the host country, including the rise of the extreme right,<sup>47</sup> and immigrant incorporation literature.<sup>48</sup> I will limit my review to those works which explicitly engage with the ideas of, or relate to the rise of, the FN.

First are those works which deal with the changing patterns of immigration and the growth of culturally different, supposedly 'unassimilable' migrant communities. The studies point to a large settled community of migrants both from former colonial possessions in North and 'black' Africa and from Eastern and Southern Europe. Migration is described in terms of successive phases or waves: labour migration, followed by family reunion, and finally permanent settlement. More recently, this has been complemented by arrivals of refugees (political and economic) and asylum seekers. While statistics vary it is evident that many of the migrant communities, particularly those of North African origin, live

<sup>44</sup> Now renamed *French Politics, Culture and Society*.

<sup>45</sup> See J. Hollifield, 'Immigration and Modernization' in J. Hollifield and G. Ross (eds), *Searching for the New France*, London, Routledge, 1991, pp. 113-50.

<sup>46</sup> On politicisation, see H. Blotvogel et al., 'From itinerant worker to immigrant?' in R. King (ed.), *Mass Migrations in Europe: The Legacy and the Future*, London, Belhaven Press, 1993, pp. 83-100. On immigrant controls in Western Europe, see S. Collinson, *Beyond Borders: West European Migration Policy towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, London, RIIA, 1993; R. Miles and D. Thränhardt (eds), *Migration and European Integration. The Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion*, London, Pinter, 1995. The French case will be examined in detail in Chapter 4. The cited work of Noiriel and studies by Patrick Weil provide detailed accounts of French immigration control policy. See P. Weil, *La France et ses étrangers. L'aventure d'une politique de l'immigration de 1938 à nos jours* (France and her foreigners. The development of immigration policy from 1938 to today), Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1991. Internal policy developments are dealt with, amongst others, by M. Schain, 'Immigrants and Politics in France' in J. Ambler (ed.), *The French Socialist Experiment*, Philadelphia, Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1985, pp. 166-90; A. Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity in contemporary France*, London, Routledge, 1995; and in numerous studies by French specialists such as Wieviorka and Catherine Wihtol de Wenden—an immigration specialist at the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) in Paris.

<sup>47</sup> Or in Betz' terms, the rise of radical right-wing populism.

<sup>48</sup> For an overview, see A. Messina, 'The Not So Silent Revolution. Postwar Migration to Western Europe', *World Politics*, Vol. 49, October 1996, pp. 130-54.

in deprived conditions on the outskirts of the major cities—the *banlieues*<sup>49</sup>—and have a higher proportion of unemployed and ‘excluded’ than the national average. These studies tend to exclude immigrants from European states as they are not considered to be part of the ‘problem’. As will be explored in Chapter 4, this reflects the tendency for the word *immigré* to be used to denote a person of non-European origin. Echoing Le Pen’s comments that immigrants from ‘our European partners’ are not ‘part of the problem’, this highlights the fact that the so-called immigration debate revolves around the question of culture, or cultural difference, above all.

Attempts to understand the success of the xenophobic politics of the FN and the hostile climate towards immigration in contemporary France focus on the fact that the origins of immigrants have changed since WWII, and the visibility and distinctiveness of the immigrant population has consequently grown markedly. Up until 1939 much of the immigration into France came from other European countries—Poland, Belgium, Italy. Despite literature pointing to the fact that these migrants were also initially rejected as not ‘belonging’,<sup>50</sup> current literature inevitably points to the question of immigrant origin. According to this view, many post-war migrants are more culturally distant and the processes of assimilation can no longer be unquestioningly accepted or applied. Overwhelmingly the most significant cultural difference examined is that of religion: Islam. This is the central point of difference and tends to the conflation of ‘immigrant’ with ‘Arab’ (regardless of legal status). Islam is the problem. Immigrant ‘crisis’ and ‘problem’ are commonly used terms in this context.

There is now questioning as to whether France can—or even should—absorb the new immigrants. The majority of the literature acknowledges that France now contains distinct ethnic communities, and that old-style ‘assimilation’ is no longer applicable or appropriate.<sup>51</sup> But most reject the idea of—and policies associated with—multiculturalism. Olivier Mongin’s reference to ‘*le spectre du multiculturalisme américain*’ echoes a widespread consensus: individual integration, rather than the

<sup>49</sup> The English translation as ‘suburb’ does not adequately catch the generally disadvantaged nature of these areas: they are characterised by high-rise, low quality public housing, high levels of poverty and unemployment, and few services. Immigrants—and those of immigrant origin—are significantly over-represented in these areas. Gaspard provides a revealing picture of such developments in her analysis of the rise of the extreme right in Dreux. For analysis of the situation in and of the *banlieues*, see *Esprit*, no. 169, February 1991, entitled ‘La France des Banlieues’. On the term *banlieue* becoming synonymous with ‘ghetto’, see H. Vieillard-Baron’s article—‘Le risque du ghetto’—in the same issue, pp. 14–22.

<sup>50</sup> See for example the research of Noiriel, *Le Creuset français* and Silverman, *Deconstructing the nation*. For a case study of Italian migrant experience in the south of France, see J. House, ‘Contexts for Integration and Exclusion in Modern and Contemporary France’ in A. Hargreaves and J. Leaman (eds), *Racism, Ethnicity and Politics in Contemporary Europe*, Aldershot, E. Elgar, 1995, pp. 79–95. For further analysis, see Chapter 4, pp. 132, 160.

<sup>51</sup> See for example studies by Wihtol de Wenden and Schnapper. The term, and processes, of ‘integration’ are most commonly used in its place. Chapters 4 and 5 will examine the positions set out in official reports from Commission of Nationality and the High Council on Integration. Mainstream views are also reflected in *Le Monde*’s forum on the internet at <<http://www.lemonde.fr/debats/immigration/>>.

maintenance and recognition of specific ethnic groups, is the desired model.<sup>52</sup> Dominique Schnapper, researcher at CNRS and a foremost analyst of immigration and integration, reflects the same opinion and concludes that France has succeeded better with this integrative model than its neighbours.<sup>53</sup> This fits well with the underlying belief that these different communities do not belong, do not form part of the national entity, until they have taken on the universal and secular values of the Republic.

Schnapper argues that a community of citizens is the only viable model of the nation. According to this argument, ethnic ties result in national fragmentation and are a danger to the democratic functioning of the polity.<sup>54</sup> This political model views citizens as individuals, shorn of specific identity or ethnic ties. This approach, which draws on the dualistic concept of ethnic/political nation, can be accused of oversimplification: does all recognition of difference lead inevitably to conflictual division? Again, this can provide a basis for anti-immigrant sentiment and may also be seen as a justification for the superiority of the French model, calling into question the objectivity of her stance.

Multiculturalism, according to a dominant French view, thus results in the creation of ghettos and permanent disadvantage. This is also the position of some commentators outside of France.<sup>55</sup> The Socialist Party's pluralist proposals in the 1970s and early 1980s, and their gradual retraction with an accompanying focus on the drawbacks of pluralist ethno-cultural policies in the French context are well laid out by William Safran,<sup>56</sup> while John McKesson argues the merits of the traditional integrative approach.<sup>57</sup> According to proponents of 'Republican integration', ideas of 'new citizenship' are doomed to failure: nationality and citizenship cannot be dissociated in the French context—unlike, say, in the US, where 'hyphenated Americans' are the norm.

However the literature also concedes that the traditional French approach is running into problems. The idea of the nation as a community of equal citizens, regardless of background, is being challenged by those who reject other cultures, particularly Islam. Studies are showing that racism is a major problem for culturally-distinct minorities and results in significant communities of disadvantage.<sup>58</sup> But the reaction to this is the repetition of the same mantra: that France is a secular Republic based on equality

<sup>52</sup> Mongin, 'Retour sur une controverse'.

<sup>53</sup> In *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 23-29 November 1989: the models in neighbouring European countries include multiculturalism and the exclusionary *jus sanguinis* model.

<sup>54</sup> Schnapper, *La Communauté des Citoyens*.

<sup>55</sup> See for example P. Ireland, 'Vive le jacobinisme: Les étrangers and the durability of the assimilationist model in France', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 14 (2), Spring 1996, pp.33-46.

<sup>56</sup> W. Safran, 'Minorities, ethnics and aliens: pluralist politics in the Fifth Republic' in P. Godt (ed.), *Policy-making in France: from de Gaulle to Mitterrand*, London, Pinter, 1989, pp.176-90. He points to the constraints on ethno-cultural policies while acknowledging that the 'one and indivisible' Republic is a myth.

<sup>57</sup> J. McKesson, 'Concepts and Realities in a Multiethnic France', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 12 (1), Winter 1994, pp.16-38.

<sup>58</sup> See for example P. Bataille, *Le racisme au travail* (Racism at work), Paris, La Découverte, 1997.

of citizens before the law, a political community, and that all individuals can therefore integrate on this basis.

There is also an increasing amount of relevant literature on the nature and extent of racism in France—a sustained phenomenon, as evidenced by numerous opinion polls.<sup>59</sup> Again, much of the literature comprises articles or chapters in edited volumes on racism and violence in Europe. However there are sophisticated sustained analyses of the problem and the role of the FN by major French academics such as Wieviorka and Pierre-André Taguieff.<sup>60</sup> They point to the evidence of 'repli', of withdrawal, a fear of the future. This fits well with studies finding that the FN electorate is characterised by anxiety and fear of the future: there is also an important link to be made between this and the fear of globalising trends leading to a loss of identity and national control.

Taguieff's two-volume edited work *Face au racisme* draws together leading thinkers who debate the rise of racism in France and how it can effectively be countered. Again, the causes suggested are similar to those which underpin the success of the FN: the crisis of urban post-industrial France; loss of identity; individualism; insecurity; the presence of visibly different minorities; the weakening (or at least changing nature) of socialism and Gaullism; the fall of communism, the role of Le Pen and the FN—a list demonstrating the multiplicity of responses and the absence of any one single explanatory framework.

In his earlier *La Force du préjugé*, Taguieff put forward his thesis that contemporary French racism is a type of 'new racism', which is based not on biological superiority but on cultural difference.<sup>61</sup> Culture, then, is substituted for biology and difference for superiority/inferiority. Non-European migrants,

<sup>59</sup> Regular polls published in the mainstream press indicate high levels of racism: *Le Monde*, 30 May 2000, reported that 59 per cent of respondents in a SOFRES poll asserted there were too many immigrants in France. See also more detailed studies by CNCDH (*Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme*), *La lutte contre la racisme et la xénophobie* (The struggle against racism and xenophobia), Paris, La Documentation française, 1990-, CRIDA (*Centre de Recherche, d'Information et de Documentation Antiraciste*), *Rapport 96: Racisme, extrême droite et antisémitisme en Europe*, Paris, CRIDA, 1995, and (EU-wide) from the European Commission and European Parliament.

<sup>60</sup> See P-A. Taguieff (ed.), *Face au racisme*, Paris, La Découverte, 1991; M. Wieviorka, *La France Raciste*, Paris, Seuil, 1992. For a philosophical approach to French racism, see T. Todorov, *On Human Diversity. Nationalism, Racism and Exoticism in French Thought*, trans. C. Porter, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1993. English studies that privilege racism include Fysh and Wolfreys, *The Politics of Racism*. They also stress the importance of the national context in arguing that the FN has been successful due to specific domestic causes: the strength of racism (a historically significant, recurring tendency), and the failure of anti-racism (due, in particular, to the belief in the mythical human-right-protective Republic). Setting out 'to identify what is special about France'—looking beyond the size of the immigrant population or the practice of Islam—is vital, as they note, p.2. However explaining the rise of the FN goes beyond the issue of racism to incorporate additional questions of nation-state identity.

<sup>61</sup> P-A. Taguieff, *La Force du préjugé: Essai sur le racisme et ses doubles*, (The Power of Prejudice: Essay on racism and its counterparts), Paris, La Découverte, 1987; see also F. Adler, 'Racism, *différence* and the Right in France', *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 3 (4), 1995, pp.439-51.

argues the FN, are culturally different and 'unassimilable'. Denying accusations of racism, stating that its argument is not based on ideas of racial superiority, but on the reality of cultural difference, the FN has used the language of multiculturalism to its own advantage. French social science labels this new racism as 'cultural' or 'differentialist' racism, and Taguieff rightly notes how the far right skilfully uses concepts of cultural difference rather than relying on the language of racial superiority.<sup>62</sup> While the doctrine of difference did not originate with the FN, but is drawn from the work of Alain de Benoist and the *Nouvelle Droite*, the FN has skilfully appropriated it and exploited a particular interpretation of it to promote exclusion and scape-goating of the Other.

Taguieff refers to the FN's 'differentialist neo-racism' in *Face au racisme*, and claims that traditional anti-racist movements are directing their attacks at the 'old-style' biological racism and therefore having little impact. He criticises the traditional anti-racism of the Left and claims that by using the same language and concepts as the FN, the Left is effectively unable to counter the FN's arguments. It should be noted that Taguieff's response draws strongly on the traditional themes of 'Republican integration': to promote the Jacobin ideal of an integrated community of individuals, defend universal values in education in particular and to address social problems.

Meanwhile Wieviorka's *La France Raciste* demonstrates that the distinction between old and new racism, between biology and culture, is not clear cut.<sup>63</sup> Officially, the FN may use the language of cultural difference, which enables them to counter accusations of racism. In practice, the implication is similar: that cultural difference is immutable, hereditary, deterministic. The word 'race' does not have to be used. Racism is conflated with cultural difference, not (explicitly) with aspects of biology and descent. Taguieff's 'new racism', as used by Le Pen, is not in practice so different from the old.<sup>64</sup> It does, however, require a sophisticated response.

Given that immigration and the place of foreigners in French society is at the heart of extreme right politics, these are certainly factors which need to be brought into the explanatory arena. As will be analysed in Chapter 4, this is a complex debate which is only partially about immigration *per se*. There are undoubtedly fears of uncontrolled illegal immigration and an 'influx' of migrants from the poorer east and south, and resentment against immigrants who are portrayed as unjustified competitors in the

<sup>62</sup> See also his 'The New Cultural Racism in France', trans. R. Moore, *Telos*, no. 83, 1990, pp.109-22. He describes the theory of differentialist racism as 'predicated on the imperative of preserving the group's identity, whose purity it sanctifies' (pp.117-18): thus appropriating the 'right to be different'. According to this principle, Le Pen claims; 'I love North Africans but their place is in the Maghreb': this, then, is opposed to traditional, biologically-based discriminatory racism. On this *néo-racisme différentialiste*, see also his contributions in *Face au racisme*.

<sup>63</sup> Wieviorka, *La France Raciste*.

<sup>64</sup> This point is also made by M.O'Shaughnessy, 'New and old racisms, same old integration', *Modern and*

French economy.<sup>65</sup> But this is also a debate about and a response to the politics of difference and the establishment of settled ethnic minorities in France. It may be seen as a culture-based, post-materialist position, and draws on the change of status of migrants from workers/economic units to 'Muslim'/ethnic.<sup>66</sup>

### *Socio-economic dilemmas*

The second strongly articulated set of causes concerns dilemmas of post-industrial French society. First, the modernisation thesis posits that at a time of increasingly rapid change and uncertainty, with social atomisation and loss of traditional links, there is a need to belong and a desire for certainty.<sup>67</sup> This thesis was also used to explain the rise of fascism in inter-war Europe. It links in to psychological arguments that stress the human need to belong, as well as a broader move towards identity politics in the 1990s.<sup>68</sup> At a local level, the breakdown of community and resulting *anomie* is particularly well illustrated by Gaspard and Tristan in their studies of local FN organisations in Dreux and Marseille. The alienation, atomisation and social breakdown—the 'need to belong' characteristic of modern society—is tellingly portrayed by Anne Tristan as she describes how the FN provides a group identity and a sense of belonging for those in areas (in this case, the outer suburbs of Marseille) where traditional bonds of family and neighbourhood life no longer hold. The party acts as a quasi-alternative family and network.<sup>69</sup> The fragmentation of society in post-industrial capitalism is thus seen as a contributing factor to the rise of new communities of identity.

Second, economic problems, deprivation and unemployment are also significant in explaining the FN's successes. Economic factors, in particular the economic recession and high rates of unemployment, are a near-universally accepted factor in the rise of the extreme right. Scape-goating is characteristic of the

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*Contemporary France*, NS1 (1), 1993, pp.55-60.

<sup>65</sup> See the analysis of French economist Christian Saint-Etienne in *L'Express*, 11-17 December 1997: uncontrolled migration as a primary cause for FN support; second, inadequate state controls for public security while the 'Etat-providence' spends without counting; third, the difficulty of unqualified workers and their families to integrate into society. The cure: to channel state spending into security and justice (law and order) and ensure that benefits are only paid to legal residents.

<sup>66</sup> Wieviorka elaborates on this in a number of works: see for example 'Tendencies to Racism in Europe: Does France Represent a Unique Case or is it Representative of a Trend?' in J.Wrench and J.Solomos (eds), *Racism and Migration in Western Europe*, London, Berg, 1993, pp.55-66. With some reservations, he sees a broad European trend based on the end of classical industrial society and the decline of the working-class movement. Differences remain, however, between national responses to this racism and in particular the rise of racist political parties, as this thesis argues.

<sup>67</sup> Mayer and Perrineau stress this aspect in their *Le Front national à découvert*; see also their 'Why do they vote for Le Pen?', *EJPR*, Vol. 22, 1992, pp.123-41. Alienation due to the feeling of being left behind, dispossessed by post-industrial economy—and where employment or religion no longer offer hope for the future—leads to identification with groups offering an identity, particularly those on the extreme right.

<sup>68</sup> Wieviorka's *La France Raciste*, based on interviews in the *banlieues*, identifies 'loss of identity' as a significant factor in racist attitudes, and points to a renewed emphasis on questions relating to identity.

<sup>69</sup> *Au Front*. A Parisian journalist, Tristan infiltrated an FN network in the southern city of Marseille.



far right, which lays the blame for scarce resources—housing, jobs, social services—at the door of those who do not belong to the national community. In France particularly, this is exacerbated by the phenomenon of exclusion and an unemployment rate amongst the highest in Europe in the 1990s. Unemployment and exclusion are generally cited alongside the crisis of post-industrial society, for example in the work of Wieviorka, Orfali and Mayer.<sup>70</sup>

Another set of factors may be grouped under the rubric of a 'crisis of representation'.<sup>71</sup> Widespread disillusionment with traditional political parties and disenchantment with political processes, linked to pervasive corruption amongst the political classes, has created an opportunity for the far right to present itself as a new party, untainted by corruption and willing to tackle the so-called 'real problems' of French society.<sup>72</sup> This may also be seen as a 'protest vote' function of the FN, particularly with the decline in the PCF.<sup>73</sup>

#### *FN organisation and leadership*

The role of Le Pen as leader of the movement, uniting the historically disparate strands of the far right, is also seen as crucial.<sup>74</sup> The tendency of the far right to splinter into separate factions, weakening both the vote and the message of the movement, had plagued the far right in the past in France—and is a characteristic of the far right in other countries such as Germany.<sup>75</sup> This aspect is highlighted in work on the history and development of the FN, and the pragmatic behaviour of the party leadership in tailoring its message to fit the audience has also been crucial in developing a solid electoral base. The split of the FN at the end of the 1990s into a modern *mégrétiste* wing and the more traditional *lepeniste* party illustrates the significance of this factor. This was not, at heart, a split on policy: both programs remain similar. It remains to be seen whether both parties can survive and meet with electoral success.

<sup>70</sup> Highlighting the support from such groups—as well as those that fear unemployment—see Mayer's *Ces Français qui votent Le Pen*. Both groups of electorates she identifies are anxious about the future.

<sup>71</sup> Perrineau, *Le Symptôme Le Pen*, concludes that the socio-economic crisis and the crisis of representation form the basis for Le Pen's support in the 1990s.

<sup>72</sup> See N.Doyle, 'The French Malaise: From a crisis of political representation to a crisis of national identity', *Political Expressions*, Vol. 1 (1), 1995, pp.67-82; P.Perrineau, 'Le Front national, d'une élection à l'autre' (The National Front, from one election to another), *Regards sur l'actualité*, May 1990, pp.17-32.

<sup>73</sup> Although this is often mentioned and appears plausible, other analysts have shown that there has been less movement of voters from the PCF to the FN than suggested—see for example Perrineau and Mayer, *Le Front national à découvert*. Moreover predictions of the PCF's demise were premature, with the party polling almost 10 per cent in the 1997 parliamentary elections and entering government with the Socialists and the Greens.

<sup>74</sup> On the conflict and division within the extreme right at the founding of the FN, see Bresson and Lionet, *Le Pen*, pp.353-67.

<sup>75</sup> The German extreme right parties, including the NPD, German People's Union and the REPS, are in virtual competition.



The legitimisation and quasi-respectability of the FN is also portrayed as a major element.<sup>76</sup> A number of factors are at work here: early local and regional electoral alliances with the mainstream right; the appropriation of FN themes by the mainstream right; the acceptance of FN policies as a legitimate part of political debate; and the role of the media.<sup>77</sup> These have helped to legitimise the party and, more significantly, its ideology.<sup>78</sup> This set of explanations also attempts to understand the appeal of Le Pen's message through an examination of his racist discourse and demonstrate how concepts of race and difference have been reinvented by the far right to justify its position. Thus it serves to explain how hitherto unacceptable notions of exclusion have been normalised and FN discourse accepted as part of legitimate political debate.

A related explanation in the literature deals with the *Nouvelle Droite* (ND) (New Right) and the two major strands of this movement, GRECE and the Club de l'Horloge, which have provided a number of FN leaders and activists.<sup>79</sup> The *Nouvelle Droite* bears no relation to the Thatcher-Reaganite neo-liberal and economic rationalist New Right: rather, it focuses on cultural study and the politics of difference, linking French culture with Indo-European roots. Controversially, it rejects any association with the FN, however it is argued that Le Pen's success is due in part to the facade of respectability afforded the FN by this intellectual movement.<sup>80</sup> Vaughan has argued that the New Right prepared the ground for the FN, giving it a 'veneer' of sophistication and intellectual grounding.<sup>81</sup> Douglas Johnson identifies three themes common to both: the rejection of equality; the importance of a harmonious society depending on elites and hierarchy; and the importance of ethnic origins rather than economic

<sup>76</sup> For an early elaboration on this theme, see M. Schain, 'The NF in France and the Construction of Political Legitimacy', *WEP*, Vol. 10 (2), April 1987, pp.229-52. Since then it has been noted by most analysts of the movement in both French and English, e.g. Hainsworth, Marcus, Perrineau, Mayer, Taguieff and Wiewiorka.

<sup>77</sup> For a critical view of the role of the mainstream parties, see in particular Plenel and Rollat, *La République Menacée*; Hainsworth, 'The Extreme Right in post-war France'.

<sup>78</sup> Charles Pasqua (RPR) famously commented that the FN and the mainstream right essentially shared the same values. See *Libération*, 3 May 1988, quoted in P. Hainsworth, 'The Triumph of the outsider: Jean-Marie Le Pen and the 1988 presidential election' in J. Howarth and G. Ross (eds), *Contemporary France*, Vol. 3, London, Pinter, 1989, pp.160-72. Other startling comments include Chirac's references to the 'noise and smells' of immigrants and Giscard d'Estaing's immigrant 'invasion'—for further references, see Chapter 4, p.164.

<sup>79</sup> GRECE stands for *Groupe de Recherche et d'Études pour la Civilisation Européenne* (Group for Research and Study of European Civilisation). On the ND, see Taguieff's definitive study, *Sur la nouvelle droite*, Paris, Descartes & Cie, 1994; and the debate in *Telos*, Winter 1993-Spring 1994. Rollat also examines the ND in his study of the figures on the far right, naming them '*les cousins ennemis*' (the enemy cousins). See his *Les Hommes de l'extrême Droite. Le Pen, Marie, Ortiz et les autres*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1985. In English, see Gill Seidel, 'Culture, Nation and "Race" in the British and French New Right' in R. Levitas (ed.), *The Ideology of the New Right*, Cambridge, Polity, 1986, pp.107-35; Minkenberg, 'The New Right in France and Germany', Adler, 'Racism, difference and the Right in France'.

<sup>80</sup> Leaders of the *Nouvelle Droite* have disclaimed responsibility, asserting that they have no organisational links with Le Pen or the Front and that they do not share Le Pen's politics. However the Front has been able to make use of intellectual work by respected scholars to bolster its arguments and increase its legitimacy.

<sup>81</sup> See M. Vaughan, 'The Wrong Right in France' in E. Kolinsky (ed.), *Opposition in Western Europe*, London, Croom Helm, 1987, pp.289-317.

factors.<sup>82</sup> To this Taguieff (in *Telos*) adds the use of differentialist cultural relativism by the ND, fitting snugly with the FN's praise of and respect for difference, a seemingly anti-racist view if racism is taken to imply the elimination of difference. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, Taguieff has been accused of legitimating ND discourse by entering into a debate on their ideas, notably in *Telos*, and *Telos'* publication of De Benoist, a leader of the ND, has also aroused criticism.<sup>83</sup>

Finally, France's changing place in the world, in particular its declining significance as a world power, is also a causal factor introduced to explain the FN's appeal. A simple 'nationalistic' approach appealing to national power and prominence in the international arena correlates with the FN emphasis on a strong and independent state. The link between independence and grandeur has appeal to those who lament France's decline a world power and its loss of independence within the EU.<sup>84</sup> In particular, the FN's opposition to European integration and any form of supranational governance is attractive to those who fear the erosion of national sovereignty. Hainsworth, for example, notes how the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty was a great opportunity for the FN to campaign on its major themes: 'nationalism, sovereignty, protectionism and identity'.<sup>85</sup>

The set of factors identified above contribute to an understanding of the attraction and legitimation of the FN and its politics, but they do not fully account for the success of the extreme right in France, nor do explain the inability of the mainstream parties and anti-racist movements effectively to oppose its ideas.

In particular, although the modernisation thesis appears intuitively to offer important insights into the basis for extreme right support, the fact that other European countries have undergone similar transformations and experience similar problems *without* the emergence of an extreme right party at that time, suggests that specific and additional national elements are at play. Moreover, the 'need to belong' does not explain why voters have turned to the FN rather than to other new forms of belonging. The fragmentation of society could, in theory, lead to identification with environmental or

<sup>82</sup> See 'The New Right in France' in Cheles et al. (eds), *Neo-Fascism in Europe*, pp.234-44.

<sup>83</sup> See Michael Minkenberg and Gill Seidel.

<sup>84</sup> French foreign policy under de Gaulle was linked inextricably to—and described as—the 'politics of grandeur', see for example P.Cerny, *The politics of grandeur: ideological aspects of de Gaulle's foreign policy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980. The anxiety concerning France's more recent international position is reflected in the title of S.Kramer, *Does France Still Count?*, Westport, Conn., Praeger, 1994. See also Chapter 5, 'Grandeur', in J.Girling, *France: political and social change*, London, Routledge, 1998, and on France's nuclear capability, J.Howorth, 'A Testing Time for the Pursuit of Grandeur' in J.Keeler and M.Schain (eds), *Chirac's Challenge. Liberalization, Europeanization and Malaise in France*, New York, St.Martin's Press, 1996, pp.383-400.

<sup>85</sup> 'The Front National and the New World Order' in B.Jenkins and T.Chafer (eds), *France: From the Cold War to the New World Order*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996, pp.193-203. These four elements formed the FN's 'ideological agenda', p.199.

other groups espousing new post-materialist issues.

Similar observations also apply to the issues surrounding immigration and integration: post-war migration from non-European countries was not restricted to France and does not, of itself, explain the rise or the successes of the FN. Immigration may be a central theme of the FN, but that does not mean 'immigrants are the problem'. The assumption that new and different cultural minorities will somehow 'automatically' engender resentment and hostility is questioned by Hargreaves and others.<sup>86</sup> Finally, the typology of causes can often be a list of overlapping and connected phenomena which point more to contemporary problems in post-industrial western Europe than to reasons why France has been so susceptible to a party of this type. Rather, analysis must also look to French political culture and the context of the FN's emergence to explain the appeal of the 'national' politics of the far right that allowed its growth and consolidation.

The work on the FN is important as it highlights the influence of ideas and their legitimating effect. However this influence is generally underplayed in most overview or comparative studies of the European extreme right. Shields is correct in pointing to the importance of the specific national perspective and it is the national ideational context which will be analysed in detail in this thesis.<sup>87</sup> The particular French understanding of nationhood—its founding myths, historical memories and political culture—has allowed the rise of a party championing the cause of 'la nation'. If the cornerstone of *lepenisme* is nationalism, as most analysts affirm,<sup>88</sup> then both the FN's use and contemporary understandings of the term need closer examination.

<sup>86</sup> See his *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*. Tore Björge and Rob Witte's introduction to their *Racist Violence in Europe*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1993, also questions the assumption that levels of racist violence are linked to the size or growth of a minority. Similarly, in his detailed study of the Centre region, Roy points out that there is not necessarily a correlation between the FN vote and numbers of immigrants. FN bastions often have an above average proportion of migrants at the macro level—as noted in C.Ysmal's analysis of the 1995 presidential elections, 'La Droite modérée sous la pression du FN' (The moderate Right under the pressure of the FN), *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 13 (2), Spring 1995, pp.1-9, with the 'bastions' of the Parisian region, Alsace-Lorraine, Rhone Alpes, and Nord/Nord-est, described as 'characterised by a strong presence of foreigners'. However at the department or commune level this does not necessarily hold true. See C.Husbands, 'The Support for the FN: Analyses and Findings', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 14 (3), 1991, pp.382-416.

<sup>87</sup> Shields, 'A new chapter in the history of the French extreme right'. He argues that no single factor explains the ascent of the FN in the 1980s. It is inadequate to cite unemployment, law and order, immigration, recession: specific context is what matters. As with Hainsworth, Betz and Ignazi, he sees FN as a new phenomenon in extreme right politics in France.

<sup>88</sup> A common and agreed position—see for example P.Hainsworth, 'From Joan of Arc to Bardot: Immigration, Nationalism, Rights and the Front National' in L.Hancock and C.O'Brien (eds), *Rewriting Rights in Europe*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2000, pp.53-68, in particular p.59; M.Vaughan, 'The Extreme Right in France: "Lepénisme" and the Politics of Fear' in Cheles et al. (eds), *Neo-fascism in Europe*, p.221. However the implications of this statement in the French context are often undeveloped.

### Nationhood and belonging: models of nationhood

As noted in the introduction, this thesis highlights the FN's policies opposing the 'destruction' of the nation utilising the 'two model' approach to nationhood, examined in more detail in Chapter 3. This approach classifies nations as conforming to a civic-political model or an ethno-cultural model, setting up these two visions in theoretical opposition to one another, despite the fact that they co-exist and overlap in most cases. Classically, the French nation has been viewed as a territorial-political community. Belonging to this community is viewed as voluntaristic—an act of will—rather than determined by ethnic or cultural attributes. In theory, then, it is open to all, regardless of ethnic background. This concept is rooted in the legacy of the Enlightenment and the Revolution: the nation as the source of sovereignty, legitimacy and authority. The political French nation, then, is the basis for democracy.

The two-model approach holds that France is the 'model' political nation, in contrast to the opposing ethno-genealogical model. In the French context this does not mean that there is no allowance for difference; rather, that a strict separation of public and private spheres supposedly permits the concept of the civic nation to co-exist with the reality of different private beliefs/cultures. If the nation is one and indivisible, as the constitution proclaims, it **must** and can only be, a civic nation. France is cited as the classic example of the nation-state: the first 'true' nation-state, according to some.<sup>89</sup> Further, as the concept of the nation was 'born in France', it has been a central concept in French political discourse.<sup>90</sup>

The concept of the nation as a self-governing body of citizens also highlights the close tie between nation and state; in France, the two are practically indissoluble. The nation-state is the inevitable corollary of the understanding of the nation as a political body. Within this nation-state, moreover, the affective bond is between the individual citizen and the state. There is no allowance for the linking of particular communities and the state, but rather a focus on the individual-state relationship. This understanding is reflected in the system of classification used in the French census, which does not allow for any sub-category under the overall heading of 'French' (citizens), as opposed to '*étrangers*' (foreigners), regardless of ancestry or group belonging. In theory, separate communities and group

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<sup>89</sup> See B.Jenkins, *Nationalism in France. Class and Nation since 1789*, London, Routledge, 1990, p.11. This is an oft-repeated—and generally accepted—claim in France. See also Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots*, trans. A.Wills, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952: 'If all the peoples, everywhere, had become sovereign—as was hoped—none could take away from France the honour of having been the first to begin', p.105. Leah Greenfeld judges that sixteenth century England represented the birthplace of the modern nation—see her *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1992, p.6. Notwithstanding, the French perception of their ground-breaking role in the creation of the modern political nation retains currency.

<sup>90</sup> Jenkins, *Nationalism in France*, p.11.

identities within the nation are not acknowledged. But in reality there has been a shift towards an acknowledgement of the *de facto* existence of specific cultural communities within the French 'nation'. The concept of the 'one and indivisible nation' is being challenged by the recognition of multiple communities, while the concept of the political sovereign nation is challenged by a shifting of sovereignty to the European level or an abdication to the market.

Co-existing with, and less acknowledged than, the civic model, the ethnic strand of the nation is also present. It has come to the fore in the past, most notably in the Dreyfus Affair, in the integral nationalism espoused by Maurras and the *Action française*, and during the collaborative Vichy regime during the Second World War. In late twentieth century France an ethnic understanding of nationhood is making a resurgence, not only in the ideology and politics of the FN but also within the mainstream right and more broadly within society. This is most clearly evidenced by the significant rise in anti-immigrant—or more precisely, anti-foreigner—sentiment, and the xenophobic politics of the FN has acted as both cause and effect. Immigration is at the forefront of political debate—a debate conducted in terms of national values and cultural difference. The 1993 change of nationality law to move away from the much lauded *jus soli* towards a more restrictive definition of citizenship is indicative of such a shift and indicates the strength of the 'ethnic' strain of nationhood, as (formerly) epitomised by the German *jus sanguinis* basis for citizenship.<sup>91</sup>

At the same time, the simple dichotomy of 'civic' versus 'ethnic' is somewhat misleading: most nations are of course a hybrid of the two.<sup>92</sup> There is also a recognition that both the civic and ethnic models of nationhood incorporate elements of culture: that the political nation does not exist in a vacuum. In this way, the secular Republic is not value-free and the ties of belonging are not merely contractual. In the French case, the state has had a long history of active nation-building, promoting the assimilation of its citizens into a dominant mould.<sup>93</sup> There is an acknowledgment that France, notably during the Third Republic, has consciously pursued assimilationist policies to build and strengthen the Republic and the attachment of the individual to the nation-state: a process of official nationalism. While such policies may be based on the values of the secular Republic, they nonetheless contain cultural elements. This

<sup>91</sup> The election of a socialist government in 1997 led to the overturning of this law. However the fact of its introduction by the previous right-wing administration indicates the extent to which such thinking had permeated the mainstream. Meanwhile in Germany legislation has been introduced to allow citizenship on the basis of birth place.

<sup>92</sup> Anthony Smith has proposed a definition that includes both aspects of the civic and the ethnic in his *National Identity*, London, Penguin, 1991, pp.8-15. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>93</sup> See for example Smith, *National Identity*, p.13: he notes the emergence of a 'linguistic nationalism' alongside the civic understanding, 'reflecting pride in the purity and civilizing mission of a hegemonic French culture'.

recognition has been accompanied by challenges to the effectiveness and the acceptability of such policies.

It appears that political values alone—the idea of France as a political nation—are not sufficient to constitute an inclusive national identity. The FN poses a serious challenge to a Republican model that portrays an inclusive community created and supported on the basis of a contractual relationship. The FN focuses on the politics of difference and French ‘exceptionality’: a skilful use of the politics of identity which relies on an exclusionary cultural and statist understanding of French nationhood and French national identity.

### *The national debates*

It is evident from the above sketch of national understandings that both civic and ethnic strains have been challenged by significant political, economic and social developments in late twentieth century France. Two issues in particular—the evolution of the EU, and the permanent settlement of ethnic minorities within France—have contested the powerful understandings of nationhood. These two developments are at odds with both the classic political conception of French nationhood and its less acknowledged ethnic strain. The thesis concentrates on the two major debates surrounding these phenomena, which have coincided with the rise of the FN. Both sets of debates privileged the concept of the nation.

### *Immigration–integration*

The first debate centred on the emergence of distinct settled ethnic groups, at odds with the French assimilationist model of nationhood. This development conflicts with the concept of the nation both as an ethnic community of belonging and as a purely political community. Although France has traditionally been a country of immigration, this is now portrayed as threatening to French national identity. As noted, despite evidence which shows that each immigrant wave experienced hostility and resentment in the past, there is a widespread belief that immigrants can no longer assimilate as they once did. The belief that French citizens can be ‘formed’ has declined, and the classic tools of integration—school, army, employment, trade unions—used to mould this community of belonging are generally perceived as losing their effectiveness.<sup>94</sup> This is commonly attributed to the fact that much of the earlier immigration was from European countries ‘more like us’—Poland and Portugal, for example. According to this view, the more recent post-war immigration is increasingly of non-

<sup>94</sup> This is the usual narrative; however there are voices of dissent, e.g. that of Patrick Ireland, ‘Vive le jacobinisme’, who refers to ‘the durability of the assimilationist model’, arguing that the conventional view is mistaken and that the French assimilationist model ‘is more robust and has more potential for dealing with ethnic pluralism than many think’, p.33.

European origin, in particular from the Maghreb countries of North Africa, and visible cultural difference, as well as adherence to the Islamic faith, prevents integration.<sup>95</sup> The very term '*immigré*' (immigrant) has come to signify someone of North African origin, who may well be a French citizen. It is not, for example, used to refer to EU nationals living and working in France. France's colonial past in North Africa cannot be overlooked in this context: as an explanation for both the origin of migratory flows and a particular attitude by the ex-colonisers towards the colonised.

A climate of xenophobia, where 'immigration' is presented as a major cause of concern, is illustrated in opinion polls and in support for FN policies, and has been fostered via the constant attention to the immigration issue in mainstream politics and the media.<sup>96</sup> It is commonplace to find multiple references to, or articles on, immigration in the French press and weekly journals on a regular basis. The FN has contributed to, and profited from, the preoccupation with the 'problem of immigration' and previously taboo subjects have been taken up into mainstream discussion.

Ideational approaches to the analysis of immigrant settlement, integration and citizenship have been developed by comparative sociologists such as Yasemin Soysal, Rogers Brubaker and Adrian Favell. This thesis takes up their arguments that reference to cognitive matrices and structures enables a better understanding of contemporary political developments both in this area and in relation to the EU. Soysal and Brubaker use discursive and institutional legacies to explain differences between integration and citizenship policies in Western European countries.<sup>97</sup> Favell argues that there are differing 'philosophies of integration' that shape the different policies relating to immigrant incorporation. Where they differ—above the number and choice of countries chosen—is that Soysal argues that international norms and values have contributed to the emergence of a post-national citizenship or mode of belonging. Nationality and citizenship (rights) are being de-coupled due to the expansion of the idea of rights based not on nationality, but on universal personhood and residence. Brubaker stresses the differences between French and German understandings of nationhood—state-centred and assimilationist in France; *Volk*-centred and differentialist in Germany—and uses these to explain the differences between the two citizenship and integration policies. Building on Brubaker's thesis, Favell argues that there is now a generalised

<sup>95</sup> The extent of integration may in fact be open to question: there is evidence to suggest that cultural integration is in fact taking place. See Chapter 4, pp.154-5.

<sup>96</sup> Under the previous Juppé government, citizenship laws were changed and the struggle of the *sans papiers* became a *cause célèbre*. A reworking of the immigration and citizenship laws since 1997 has kept the question of immigration in the headlines, to the benefit of the extreme right.

<sup>97</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*; Y. Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship. Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1994; A. Favell, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998.



consensus in France, at the mainstream political level, on the virtues of integration (arguably, assimilation) and a willed, 'Republican' citizenship.

These approaches do have some shortcomings: Soysal's post-national citizenship does not explain the cross-national differences between the treatment of migrants, and tends to over-emphasise the role of transnational bodies and norms. Moreover, it could be argued that the importance of citizenship as a means of immigrant integration is under-played: Germany provides ample evidence to suggest that 'citizenship matters'. Citizenship remains an indispensable element (necessary, but not sufficient) of effective 'integration', especially for second- and third-generation immigrants. While Brubaker's arguments are convincing, his approach may be seen as too path-dependent, an inevitable path taken based on cross-party consensus.<sup>98</sup> Citizenship is not impervious to change: it is not a prisoner of the 'cultural idiom' of the nation-state. However Brubaker is correct to point to its formative, constitutive and expressive elements. The politics of citizenship is a politics of identity, of defining who belongs to the nation. It is not a politics of interest—hence instrumental readings are misleading: it 'pivots more on self-understanding than self-interest'.<sup>99</sup> Finally, I agree with Favell that the construction of 'integration' as part of a Republican historical narrative plays an important role, although I differ on the reading of a 'consensus'. Patrick Weil, for example, has argued the need for some recognition of ethnic disadvantage, and has criticised the staunch Jacobin interpretation of Republican citizenship—although he rejects moves towards any type of ethnic criteria in, for example, the debate on black/berber participation in the army and elsewhere.

As will be developed in Chapter 5, the Republican philosophy of national identity and citizenship did not only correspond to the received 'political' version of nationhood, but also neatly incorporated elements of a cultural understanding, thus providing some support for arguments of the extreme right. This thesis will add an additional layer of national self-understandings which both strengthen and complicate the arguments of Brubaker and Favell: namely, there is an influential secondary understanding of nationhood which privileges a cultural reading of French identity. At first sight, the growth of culturally-distinct communities would seem to challenge an ethnic understanding of nationhood, while the development of a supranational regime would seem to challenge the political understanding. At closer inspection, however, both models are at play in both debates.

<sup>98</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, Brubaker's thesis does not square easily with recent German legislative moves from a purely ethnic interpretation of citizenship (*jus sanguinis*) to one which incorporates the civic, although it does explain the significant opposition to this seemingly reasonable and moderate development. Nationhood traditions may indeed stress an ethnic understanding of nationhood, however this does not preclude a turn or a deviation towards a more generally accepted (especially in the EU arena)—and acceptable—political-civic concept of citizenship and nationhood.



Faced with increasing cultural heterogeneity, and support for the racist policies of the extreme right, the French approach has been to revert to an integration model, reinforcing the understanding of nationhood based on political community. This model rejects the cultural understanding of nationhood at the same time as it holds that the existence of diverse cultural groups within the national community is unacceptable. Integration does not necessarily mean giving up one's culture, according to its proponents: rather, culture remains within the private sphere. An ethnic basis for national belonging is officially rejected. This approach however underplays the cultural underpinnings of both the official line and the debate itself, as well as the disadvantages experienced by the Other on account of cultural difference. Membership of the nation (citizenship) is open to foreigners who have 'internalized its norms', who have been socialised in France. Silverman has illustrated that 'while open at the level of political incorporation, the assimilationist aspect of this idiom is closed to cultural difference'.<sup>100</sup> According to Silverman, membership of the national community is dependent on cultural conformity and thus the state is guilty of a 'national racism' at the same time as 'liberal republicanism'—'they are part of the same process'.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, the immigration debate—despite being theorised in a supposedly neutral, secular public sphere—revolves around questions of cultural identity and difference. This can be overlooked. Overall, the immigration debate tends to privilege a cultural reading—a marked difference from the British debate, for example, which has had a much stronger class focus—and the FN has been able to capitalise on this.

The political-civic understanding of nationhood is also at issue in the immigration debate. Despite the recognition of France as a multicultural society (in the purely descriptive sense of containing many cultures), there is widespread rejection of multiculturalism as a policy, as will be examined in Chapter 4. Indeed multiculturalism is castigated as a misguided Anglo-Saxon concept that results in division and dissent, in the development of ghettos and the fragmentation of the nation. The recognition of cultural communities infringes upon the French model of a polity predicated on the bond between individual and nation-state, with intervening (or, some fear, competing) levels of identification. With the aid of the FN—but not entirely attributable to it—the question of immigration and the policy towards the settled immigrant communities within France is at the forefront of contemporary political debate. This has led to a questioning and re-evaluation of citizenship and, like the question of Europe, has contributed to new divisions within French society which overlay and transcend the traditional Left-Right cleavage. This leads to the second development which undermines the political understanding of the nation as a sovereign body of citizens: namely, European integration.

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<sup>99</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, p.182.

<sup>100</sup> Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation*, p.176.

*European integration*

Largely coinciding with the above debate, the sovereignty of the French nation-state, bound up in the political understanding of statehood, has been called into question via the deepening European integration process. The 'pooling of sovereignty' of member states within the EU throws up multiple challenges to the French understanding of the nation. As already noted, nation and state have been closely linked in France. The nation has been presented as owing its existence, and not existing prior to the state. Moreover, the nation is imagined as a sovereign political community. The understanding of the nation as a political entity is challenged by the development of the EU with the pooling of sovereignty in an increasing number of spheres. The FN's rise in support has occurred against a background of increased integration and an intensified debate on the future of European integration. Adding to the attraction of this topic for the FN—and complicating a purely civic-political reading of the European challenge—the emergence of a European identity can be promoted as defending a European Christian (white) community, thus engaging cultural aspects of French-European identity.

Significant divisions have emerged on the question of further European integration. The party-political / elite consensus has been undermined, with splits within the mainstream political parties, most notably within the neo-Gaullist RPR, but also within the UDF and PS. Nonetheless the majority of elected leaders and parliamentarians support European integration. The more substantial split is that between the elite and the electorate: a divide also becoming apparent in other European countries following the signing of, and public debate over, the Maastricht Treaty in 1991. The overall level of support for European integration has waned.<sup>102</sup> While integration was deemed to be in France's interests and when France was seen as the major player and leader, European integration was accepted without great public debate. Under de Gaulle, the right of national veto was endorsed and French political dominance affirmed. Despite political aims (dominated by the desire to control Germany), the Europeanised fields of competence were essentially economic, notably the common market, the Single European Market, and the 1992 project. These were perceived as complementary, rather than threatening, to the interests of the French nation-state.

A number of important developments were to transform this scenario at the end of the 1980s: first, the unification of Germany and the fear of loss of leadership within the Community; second, the overtly political nature of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union (MTEU); and third, the effects of the single internal market and a less regulated economic model in conjunction with an acceptance of liberal market forces and economic globalisation. With Maastricht's symbolic inclusions of a European

<sup>101</sup> *Deconstructing the nation*, p.33.

<sup>102</sup> See biannual surveys from the European Commission in *Eurobarometer. Public Opinion in the European*

citizenship, as well as a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), criticism and opposition to further European integration have increased. Some are now referring to the debate over France's participation in and further development of a European Union as France's new Dreyfus affair.

Opponents to further integration reject any further loss of French sovereignty, stressing the concepts of independence and exceptionalism. Their camp was strengthened during the debate surrounding the 1992 Maastricht referendum which resulted in a so-called '*petit oui*' by the electorate. Opposition is found within all political parties—Gaullist, Centrist and Socialist—and Maastricht has been officially rejected by the Communist Party and *Front national*. There is some question of whether this opposition foreshadows a shift in France's European policy with a return to the Gaullist notions of national independence and grandeur. It is notable that over 65 per cent of Gaullist voters voted 'no' to Maastricht in September 1992. President Chirac's approach to the question was decidedly ambiguous in his 1995 presidential campaign, but once in power, he embraced the European cause and promoted EMU. The FN has appealed to disenchanted Gaullist voters with a 'Europe of the nation-states' policy, drawing on traditional Gaullist themes and constructing a particular image of the sovereign nation-state as central to French identity.

According to this construction by the FN, the integration process runs counter to the political idea of nationhood: a sovereign entity embodying the democratic principles of legitimacy and authority. With the handing over of sovereign powers to the EU, in particular those concerning the free movement of people, control of monetary policy and the introduction of a European citizenship, the concept of the nation as sovereign has certainly been challenged.<sup>103</sup> At issue are crucial capabilities and symbols of a sovereign state—who may or may not cross national boundaries, the minting of national currency, who may vote in certain elections.

The FN opposes supranational integration and calls for the 'survival of the nation'. In so doing it can exploit a political understanding of nationhood to underpin its position. However, as in the debates on cultural incorporation, there is ambiguity in use of the 'nation' as rationale for the differing approaches to the EU. Differing concepts of nationhood were used to bolster both the pro- and anti-EU campaigns and as argued in Chapter 8, the 1992 MTEU referendum debate was expressive of these differing conceptions. However overall, the European integration debates have benefited the FN in focussing on a favoured topic—the nation—and further enabled the FN to gain legitimacy and presence in the political arena.

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Union, Brussels, OOEPEC, 1983-.

<sup>103</sup> Despite counter arguments—e.g. that France has more influence in setting monetary policy at a European than a national level—the crucial point is the surrendering of independent powers by the nation-state, moving

The economic implications are also significant for French concepts of nationhood—more so in France than, say, in the UK, which might be considered comparable as an ex-major colonial power now coming to terms with loss of influence. Economically France has been a statist society. Both Right and Left, the Gaullists and the PS (and of course the PCF) traditionally attributed great importance to state intervention, planning and running of the economy. This tradition of *dirigisme* has been slowly shifting: first with Mitterrand's acceptance of the European Community and a more market-driven economy in 1983; then in 1986 with the signing of the Single European Act and the removal of non tariff barriers between EC member states.<sup>104</sup> The French state is thus increasingly unable to promote its national economic 'champions', although some argue that this ability has merely been transferred to a European level.

As will be examined in Chapter 6, there is a growing opposition to elite-driven free market ideology. *La pensée unique*—the derisory term used by its critics to refer to the new liberal orthodoxy, particularly in connection with the stringent budgetary measures necessary for French participation in the single European currency—is nonetheless the guiding principle of both Left and Right in government.<sup>105</sup> Such policy has not gone unchallenged: the surprise election of the Left, led by Lionel Jospin, in the 1997 parliamentary elections was widely interpreted as a rebuff to Chirac's turn to economic stringency in order to meet the criteria for EMU participation.<sup>106</sup> But the traditional statist interventionist approach is disappearing in favour of a more market-oriented, competitive approach, partly as a result of the Single Market and the conditions of EMU.<sup>107</sup> Opposing such policies, the FN sets itself firmly against economic and monetary union, and promotes a '*Europe des patries*'.<sup>108</sup> The party has moved from being a champion of free trade and minimal state intervention to a more protectionist stance. As noted, this shift sets the FN apart from other movements of the far right in western Europe and is in tune with Le Pen's claim to the mantle of 'defender of the nation'.

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beyond close international cooperation towards a transnational organisation of semi-sovereign units.

<sup>104</sup> On French *dirigisme* in general, see *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 5 (2), 1997. Vincent Wright in his introduction, '*La fin du dirigisme?*', argues that this also implies, to some extent, the end of French exceptionalism. The 'end of exceptionalism' argument holds that differences between France and other western democratic countries are narrowing. For the seminal work sparking the debate, see F.Furet et al., *La République du centre. La fin de l'exception française* (The Centrist Republic. The end of the French exceptionalism), Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1988. For an overview, see R.Elgie and S.Griggs, *French Politics. Debates and Controversies*, London, Routledge, 2000.

<sup>105</sup> On *la pensée unique*, see S.Hoffmann, 'Look Back in Anger', *New York Review of Books*, July 17 1997.

<sup>106</sup> During his 1995 election campaign Chirac promised to heal the 'social fracture'; on being elected, he turned to economic austerity to meet the criteria for the single European currency.

<sup>107</sup> Both the right-wing Juppé government and Jospin's left-wing coalition government fell in line on the necessity of EMU—after some prevarication (at best) or seeming opposition (at worst) to it during their respective election campaigns. The breaking of promises after winning power is an important contributing factor to French disillusionment with politics and the mainstream political parties.

<sup>108</sup> This was a Gaullist concept that the FN has, to a large extent, taken over, although the Gaullists continue to resist the idea of a European federation and the further development of supranational institutions. On de

It is no coincidence that increased attention is being devoted to the question of 'who is French' at the same time as France is increasingly 'pooling sovereignty' with the other members of the EU. In the national identity debate, the FN has exploited French anxieties over the economic and political processes of European integration. The French aversion to neo-liberal (also referred to as 'Anglo-Saxon') economics is well-documented<sup>109</sup> and has contributed to the attraction of the FN's national-protectionist platform. This aspect of FN policy tends to be underplayed in the academic literature: although analysts agree that the FN is not a 'single issue party', its anti-immigrant policies receive by far the most attention.<sup>110</sup> However this focus has meant that the appeal of its discourse of national identity and sovereignty, and survival of the nation-state, has tended to be overlooked. The FN opposes supranational forms of integration, including moves towards a single European currency, and a common foreign and defence policy, as set out in Maastricht. It has shifted its economic policy focus away from its previous, more neo-liberal economic agenda and now champions protectionism.<sup>111</sup> Again, this stance finds resonance with the electorate as well as amongst Gaullist and Socialist supporters of a strong state, determining economic policy and intervening in the national interest.<sup>112</sup>

In summary, these parallel debates were linked around the organising theme of the nation. Actors on both Left and Right of the political spectrum oppose the development of separate cultural communities and the recognition of official minority groups. Likewise there is cross-party opposition to the development of a supranational Europe. The FN has fed upon these themes, exploiting a 'national' line of division drawing on entrenched conceptions of nationhood and identity. Analysis of FN success requires consideration of the debates on national identity and citizenship, immigration and European integration, and their relationship to the nationalism of the extreme right. The following chapter examines the FN's development and politics with its insistence on the 'survival of the nation'.

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Gaule and European integration, see Chapter 7, pp.265-8.

<sup>109</sup> For more detail on this aversion, see Chapter 6. On moves away from the statist approach, however, see V.Schmidt, *From State to Market? The Transformation of French Business and Government*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996. This is also one aspect of the 'end of exceptionalism' argument.

<sup>110</sup> For an early discounting of the thesis of the FN as a single issue party, see S.Mitra, 'The National Front in France—a single-issue movement?', *WEP*, Vol. 11 (2), April 1988, pp.47-64; on the importance of other issues beyond the immigration-unemployment-insecurity theme to FN supporters, see B.Orfali, 'Le Front national ou le parti-famille' (The National Front or the family-party), *Esprit*, no. 164, September 1990, pp.15-24.

<sup>111</sup> On the shift, see Bastow, 'Front National Economic policy', also noted by Hainsworth, 'The *Front national*: from ascendancy to fragmentation' in *The Politics of the Extreme Right*, p.28.

<sup>112</sup> Wieviorka's observation on the FN electorate in the 1990s is noteworthy in this context. By the mid-1990s, he argues, the FN constituency had shifted to include more diverse strands. He characterises the party as anti-Semitic and racist, but not, necessarily, its electors. See *Libération*, 4 August 1995.

## Chapter 2    *The Front National: the Politics of Nation and Identity*

France ... in the process of colonisation, of cultural and community disintegration, drowning in the magma of Euro-Maastricht and abandoned to insecurity, unemployment, taxation, immigration, has been deceived and betrayed

Carl Lang, FN Secretary-General, 1995<sup>1</sup>

This chapter focuses on the central themes of the FN and identifies those that are crucial to its success. In particular, it highlights the use of the 'nation' in FN programs, policies and rhetoric and the FN's self-described shift from being a party of the Right to being the party representing the so-called 'National Alternative'. Through its use of diverse understandings of nationhood, claiming to stand for the 'survival of France' from both a cultural and political perspective, the party has exploited anxieties relating to long-standing models of nationhood and identity. As well as the wealth of secondary material dealing with the party, this chapter makes extensive use of primary sources, including the far right media (*Présent*, *National Hebdo*), FN election manifestos and Le Pen's major speeches, and interviews in the French mainstream media.<sup>2</sup>

In order to situate the ideas and policies of the FN, the first section will cover the origins of the party, with particular reference to the historical development of the nationalist extreme right in France. There are diverse historical traditions embodied in the FN, and the organisation has built upon earlier movements and ideas on the extreme right of French politics. Notwithstanding these linkages, the FN is (mostly) careful to present itself as a new style of nationalist party, affirming its commitment to democratic processes. The second section will examine specifically the trajectory of the FN and of its dominant politician, Jean-Marie Le Pen. The party program will then be analysed, with particular attention paid to the idea of the nation embodied within.

### **The extreme right: historical traditions and continuities**

The cornerstone of the FN—as noted by most analysts of the movement and common to most other parties on the extreme right—is nationalism: the ardent defence of the nation at all costs. In its diverse manifestations, defence of the nation underpins the policy platform of the party and links it

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<sup>1</sup> In *La Lettre de Jean-Marie Le Pen*, no. 211, February 1995, during the 1995 presidential campaign.

<sup>2</sup> The FN home page is located at <<http://www.front-national.com/>>. From this home page, one may access details of the party organisation, program, speeches, 'cercles' and other news. Details on Bruno Mégret's breakaway extreme right party, the *Mouvement national républicain* (MNR), are accessed from the party web site at <<http://www.m-n-r.com/>>. Unless otherwise indicated, all on-line party information is accessed via these sites.

to nationalist parties in French history. This section will briefly describe the historical antecedents to the party and its politics before moving on to an analysis of its contemporary programs and policies which privilege the nation above all.

The *Front national* is a party of the Fifth Republic, formed on 5 October 1972 from diverse strands on the extreme right of French politics. Although relatively modern, it continues a long line of French radical nationalist thought from a number of sources. While there are aspects of the FN that differentiate it from the past politics of the extreme right in France, there are some noteworthy continuities and traditions that necessitate a brief overview. This is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of the development of multifaceted and diverse currents on the far right; however important movements and themes are highlighted which find echoes in the contemporary nature and policies of the FN.

René Rémond's classic analysis of the Right in France identifies three distinct strands that have evolved since 1739: the traditionalist, liberal and legitimist Rights.<sup>3</sup> The traditionalist strand is Bonapartist in inspiration, populist and anti-parliamentary; the liberal-Orleanist strand is incarnated in the values of the mainstream UDF and is particularly associated with the figure of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing; and the legitimist, or royalist, right is based on a direct repudiation of the Revolution and the values of the Republic. This rejection set the legitimist 'ultra' strand apart from the first two: both the traditionalist and liberal currents are judged as accepting the Revolutionary legacy. Following this typology, FN may be seen as incorporating elements from two of these traditions. First, the legacy of the legitimist-ultras or '*droite intégral*' is one of extreme and intransigent nationalism, hostile to Republican values, the political class and the 'mainstream' of French political life, and prone to conspiracy theory. Second, a less commonly identified historical legacy is that of the Bonapartist, traditionalist right, which asserts the primacy of the nation-state, and the importance of national sovereignty and grandeur.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Originally published as *La Droite en France de 1815 à nos jours*, Paris, Aubier, 1963; substantially revised and updated to explicitly stress 'The Rights' (plural) in France: *Les Droites en France*, Paris, Aubier, 1982. Rémond denied the existence of a French fascism, judging it antithetical to the individualist and decentralised French traditions that reject the notion of an all-powerful state. According to this line of argument, France had no leading fascist movements or leaders: it was 'allergic' to fascism. This is strongly contested—see for example the work of Zeev Sternhell—as will be discussed below.

<sup>4</sup> This is particularly apparent in the FN position on European integration. As will be noted in Chapter 8, a more flexible *girondin* reading of the nation underpins the pragmatic integrationist stance—this may be related (on the Right) to the traditions embodied in the liberal strand.



The contemporary FN asserts its Republican credentials: it explicitly states that it accepts the Revolution and the values it represents.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, increasingly the rhetoric of the FN places it in the Bonapartist tradition, populist and anti-parliamentary. In this respect, the FN might appear to reject the 'ultra' position, and this claimed heritage is perhaps affording the party increased respectability.<sup>6</sup> But aspects of the counter-revolutionary tradition are still present: it would perhaps be taking the FN too much at face value not to identify significant beliefs which do not accord with the equality and fraternity proclaimed by the Republic. However while it can hardly be said to accept the Revolutionary legacy, the FN's ideas did become part of the legitimate political debate in the 1990s. One way in which the party has achieved this is by explicitly rejecting the extreme right label, and increasingly positioning itself as the 'national alternative' by centering its programs and rhetoric on the idea of the nation.

Historical overviews of the extreme right illustrate the extent to which the FN borrows from past French tradition. Michel Winock's edited work on the history of the extreme right in France covers a number of traditions which contribute, in part, to the FN's contemporary organisation and politics: the counter-revolutionary heritage; the 1880s and boulangisme; the Dreyfus affair; Catholic and anti-Semitic culture; *L'Action française*; the ultra-right groups of the 1930s; Vichy; and post-war activism.<sup>7</sup> A number of themes permeate the politics and culture of these traditions, in particular a rejection, or distrust of 'weak' parliamentary systems, a desire for strong executive government, and a (sometimes) underlying anti-Semitism coupled with an exclusive understanding of the nation.

**Counter-revolutionary traditions** The enduring legacy of 1789 was the Right-Left division of politics in France. The anti-revolutionary and royalist Right totally renounced the concept of the political nation—the nation as the source of sovereignty. Its embracing of nation and nationalism under the Third Republic was based on the restoration of the monarchy, and continued to reflect a total rejection of Republican values. The harsh critique of the parliamentary Republic continued with Maurras' *Action française*, sections of the Catholic Church, and into the Vichy collaborationist regime under Pétain during the Second World War.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> On whether he would celebrate the Bicentenary of the Revolution: 'Why not?', asked Le Pen; like Barrès, he asserts that the Revolution is part of French national heritage. See Gildea, *The Past in French History*, pp.338-9.

<sup>6</sup> In a coup for the party—and bolstering this idea of the FN as a successor to Gaullist-style policies with its stress on the independence and grandeur of the nation-state—the grand-son of Charles de Gaulle stood on the FN list in the 1999 European elections.

<sup>7</sup> Winock, *L'Histoire de l'extrême droite*. As noted, the final chapter covers the FN.

<sup>8</sup> On the development of an ethnically-based nationalism within the anti-revolutionary right, see Chapter 3, pp.110-13. As the royalist movement waned, many erstwhile supporters—rather than look to the restoration of the monarchy, where the King represented the nation—turned to the nation itself and accused the state and political class of endangering the nation, of representing cosmopolitan interests rather than the people. This theme is echoed in current FN policy.



**Boulangisme** The boulangist movement was born in the early years of the Third Republic, following defeat in the Franco-Prussian war. Based on a charismatic leader, General Boulanger, the movement called for the creation of a new strong Republic.<sup>9</sup> It rejected the existing Republic as being too weak and argued that the parliamentary system was neither sufficiently solid nor efficient. A heterogeneous grouping rather than a party, combining monarchists, anarchists and socialists, boulangisme moved from a popular democratic basis within the Left towards the Right with an insistence on anti-capitalism, anti-parliamentarianism and a defensive nationalism.<sup>10</sup> The movement also set itself against the 'lay' or secular Republic, stressing the importance of Catholic values. Its attack on the so-called 'judeo-masonic' Republic illustrates a strong anti-Semitic current underlying the movement,<sup>11</sup> and a current reading of *Présent*, in particular, illustrates the continuation of this theme in current day extreme right.<sup>12</sup> These extremist currents against the Republic—royalist, anti-Semitic, Catholic, traditionalist, anti-modern and anti-capitalist—were reunited in the Dreyfus Affair.<sup>13</sup> But no one organisation emerged to unite all these diverse strands as an enduring political force.

**1930s French ultra-right** The extreme right and fascist movements that emerged in France during the last fifteen years of the Third Republic, while not advocating a return to monarchy and tradition, called for the creation of an authoritarian regime, explicitly rejecting parliamentary democracy.<sup>14</sup> Stressing the importance of hierarchy and discipline, these movements extolled the virtues of the strong state representing the will of the people. Here the nation is understood as a single, organic entity. The origins of these movements were not exclusively on the Right—Sternhell argues persuasively that the Left had a major influence within and contribution to French fascism. This applies particularly to the 1885-1914 period when, Sternhell argues, the origins of fascist thought evolved in France as a synthesis between socialism and nationalism.<sup>15</sup> This has some bearing on FN analysis, particularly as the FN moves to a position of '*ni droite ni gauche*' by the mid-1990s and attracts support from both the Right

<sup>9</sup> Marcus refers to Boulanger as a 'demagogue', *The National Front and French Politics*, p.102.

<sup>10</sup> On its origins on the Left, and move to the (extreme) Right, see R.Girardet (ed.), *Le nationalisme français 1871-1914*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1966, pp.129-40; 159-61.

<sup>11</sup> On the development of anti-Semitism at this time, see Girardet, *Le nationalisme français*, pp.141-59.

<sup>12</sup> Le Pen's anti-Semitic outbursts are well known; on anti-Semitism within the FN, see Olivier Guland's *Le Pen, Mégret et les Juifs. L'obsession du 'complot mondialiste'* (Le Pen, Mégret and the Jews. The obsession with the 'global conspiracy'), Paris, La Découverte & Syros, 2000—in particular Chapter 5 on Le Pen's controversial public anti-Semitic statements, pp.77-109; also Simmons, *The French National Front*, pp.123-41.

<sup>13</sup> The Affair will be discussed in the following chapter, along with Maurras and the *Action française*.

<sup>14</sup> The term 'ultra-right' is Pierre Milza's—see his 'L'ultra-droite des années trente' (The ultra-right of the 1930s) in Winock (ed.), *L'Histoire de l'extrême droite*, pp.157-89. He makes the point that such thinking was widespread in France during the 1930s, moving outside of the traditional extreme right milieu. The question of fascism will be dealt with below.

<sup>15</sup> On the alleged French origins of fascism, and the contribution of the Left, see Sternhell, *La droite révolutionnaire* and *Neither Right nor Left*.

and the Left of politics. While the 1930s movements were not born directly of the traditionalist and nationalist Right, the continuation of the central themes common to this lineage is noteworthy.

**Post-1945 extremism** In the post-war environment, with the total defeat of fascism, nationalist thought in general and the extreme right in particular were discredited.<sup>16</sup> The remnants of the extreme right were forced underground. The process of decolonisation—in particular the Indo-Chinese and Algerian colonial wars—was to provide the extreme right with some impetus for renewal, with the formation of violent groups such as the Secret Army Organisation (OAS) fighting for the continuation of French colonial rule in Algeria. While de Gaulle contrived to bring about Algerian independence culminating in the 1962 settlement, many were never reconciled with the fact, and an anti-Gaullist current on the Right persisted throughout his Presidency.<sup>17</sup> But the dismal failure of the extreme right in the presidential election campaign of 1965 (Tixier-Vignancour, supporter of *Algérie française*, was the extreme right candidate and Le Pen his campaign manager) weakened the cause further. In the wake of his presidential defeat, Tixier established a new grouping, the *Alliance républicaine pour les libertés et progrès* (ARLP) which moved towards the mainstream traditional right, particularly after de Gaulle, the main target of hostility, resigned from power.<sup>18</sup>

A second movement of the extreme right which emerged in the 1950s post-war environment was poujadisme, led by Pierre Poujade. The movement is generally assessed as a petit bourgeois revolt against rapid post-war modernisation and industrialisation—essentially a rural protest movement.<sup>19</sup> Poujadisme sought to preserve a particular understanding of national identity said to be threatened by modernisation and commercialisation. The poujadist party, the UDCA, won over 11 per cent of the vote in 1956.<sup>20</sup> Le Pen was one of the elected poujadist deputies. Although the party subsequently disappeared rapidly from the political scene, the FN was later to pick up on some of the themes and style of poujadisme, appealing to disenchanted voters with a xenophobic, anti-Establishment and authoritarian message.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Indeed, it was this general hostility towards nationalism and discrediting of the extreme right which allowed French scholars as late as the 1980s to assert that 'it [the extreme right] no longer exists as a political force'. Petitfils, *L'extrême droite en France*, p.123.

<sup>17</sup> For a useful overview of de Gaulle's settlement of the Algerian crisis, and opposing forces, see C.Sowerwine, *France since 1870: Culture, Politics and Society*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001, pp.309-16.

<sup>18</sup> Future FN member Jean-Pierre Stirbois was a member of the ARLP. See Hainsworth, 'The Extreme Right in post-war France', p.34.

<sup>19</sup> See in particular S.Hoffmann, *Le Mouvement Poujade*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1956; also R.Eatwell, 'Poujadism and neo-Poujadism: from revolt to reconciliation' in P.Cerny (ed.), *Social Movements and Protest in France*, London, Pinter, 1982, pp.70-93; J-P.Rioux, 'From clandestins to activists, 1945-1965' in Winock (ed.), *L'Histoire de l'extrême droite*, pp.222-32.

<sup>20</sup> *Union de défense des commerçants et artisans* (Union for defence of (small) business and artisans).

<sup>21</sup> This is noted by Hainsworth, 'The Extreme Right in post-war France', pp.32-3. Roger Eatwell, *Fascism. A History*, London, Chatto & Windus, 1995, describes Le Pen's use of revolutionary rhetoric—e.g. 'fraternity' and 'freedom'—as a technique learned from Poujade, p.256.

On the whole, however the extreme right in post-war France was essentially banished to the margins. With the fragmentation of the tiny extreme right scene in the 1960s, it was no longer a political force to be reckoned with, according to most political analysts.<sup>22</sup>

While this historical account of extreme right movements in France underscores the continuity of themes and traditions in French political thought, it can also lead to a false sense of security. One might conclude on this basis that the FN, like its predecessors poujadisme and boulangisme, is a temporary phenomenon, one which emerges at various points in French history to express resentment or discontent within the electorate, but which does not have a long-term impact on, or pose a threat to, the French political scene.<sup>23</sup> Some earlier accounts and analyses of the FN were guilty of this type of historicism. Elements of past extreme right movements are clearly identifiable in the policies and rhetoric of the FN: explicitly referenced in speeches (names, events) or more generally as a theme (strong state, single 'national' body, xenophobia). But not all FN themes can be traced to extremist French history: the incorporation of new elements within a new context, plus a moderation in language and tone, has allowed the FN to be labelled a new style of national-populist party in late twentieth century Western Europe.<sup>24</sup> The FN's support has also become more diverse, with studies of the FN electorate indicating that it has little in common with the 'traditional' extreme right constituency.<sup>25</sup>

### *Is the FN fascist?*

The applicability of the fascist label to the FN was a major point of debate in 1980s France. On the whole, the French consensus position rejects the fascist/neo-fascist label: the preferred terms are bonapartist;<sup>26</sup> poujadist;<sup>27</sup> and national-populist, the latter becoming increasingly popular in current scholarly analyses, as noted in Chapter 1.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Petitfils, *L'extrême droite en France*; Rémond, *Les Droites en France*.

<sup>23</sup> This danger is noted, amongst others, by Marcus: 'it would be wrong to see the National Front as simply a resurgence of a long-standing current in French politics', *The National Front and French Politics*, p.102; also on the 'superficial' comparison with poujadism, p.58. Nonetheless, the Le Pen's appeal to disenchanted voters—albeit a separate category from those in the 1950s—is comparable with Poujade's attraction.

<sup>24</sup> On the concept of a 'new-style' extreme right party, including the descriptors of the radical or populist right, see Ignazi, Betz and Immerfall, Kitschelt, and Minkenberg. See also Chapter 1, pp. 17-18.

<sup>25</sup> See P.Perrineau, 'The Conditions for the Re-emergence of an Extreme Right Wing in France: the National Front 1984-1998' in Arnold (ed.), *The Development of the Radical Right*, pp.253-70. The FN's electoral 'map', he points out, in no way corresponds to the boulangist or poujadist distribution—in fact, he argues, it has 'no political coherence'.

<sup>26</sup> Used by both Rémond and Winock.

<sup>27</sup> See W.Safran, 'The National Front in France: From Lunatic Fringe to Limited Respectability' in P.Merkel and L.Weinberg (eds), *Encounters with the Contemporary Radical Right*, Boulder, Westview, 1993, pp.19-49; P.Bréchon and S.Mitra 'The National Front in France: The Emergence of an Extreme Right Protest Movement', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 25 (1), October 1992, pp.63-82.

<sup>28</sup> On FN as national-populist, see P-A Taguieff, 'La Doctrine du national-populisme en France', *Etudes*, January 1986, pp.27-46; Perrineau, 'Le Front national: 1972-1992'; Pierre Buzzi's chapter on the FN in P.Bréchon (ed.), *Le discours politique en France* (Political Discourse in France), Paris, La Documentation française, 1994, 15-36. Perrineau defines the FN as national-populist, essentially a modern post-industrial

In part, this reluctance to classify the FN as fascist reflects the former mainstream French position on fascism—Robert Soucy labels it the ‘consensus school of French historiography’—namely, that fascism never caught on in France, that it was a foreign ideology which could not penetrate France’s individualist and anti-authoritarian political culture. Fascism was an imported ideology. In Rémond’s well-known description, France was ‘allergic’ to fascism (even under Vichy).<sup>29</sup> However this position was called into question by a number of historians and political scientists in the 1980s. Sternhell argues that fascist thought was born in pre-WWI France, while Soucy, less controversially (on this point at least), considers fascism a serious political force in France, pointing to the importance of definition.<sup>30</sup> In short, he argues that the ‘immune thesis’ was able to be sustained only through an unrealistically narrow definition of fascism as a radical social and economic movement, which excluded the largest fascist groupings in 1930s France.<sup>31</sup>

The whole debate automatically raises the problematic question of definition. Roger Griffin refers to the ‘chronic lack of consensus’ on this question amongst scholars, and even the impossibility of arriving at an objective definition.<sup>32</sup> But he does posit an ‘ideal type’, and establishes what he refers to as an ‘ideological fascist minimum’: namely, ‘a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism’.<sup>33</sup> On the basis of this

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party (similar to Ignazi’s ‘new-style’ extreme right parties), notwithstanding links and parallels with past extreme right movements.

<sup>29</sup> Rémond, *Les Droites en France*. In addition to Vichy, see also his analysis of the 1930s ‘leagues’, Chapter 10. Despite his denials of an indigenous French fascism, there were clearly fascist leagues in France in the 1930s, notably the interwar *Croix du Feu* and a (proto)-fascist party, the *Parti populaire français* (PPF) led by Doriot. See Sowerwine, *France since 1870*, pp.141–4; 182–3. Milza refers to the ‘ultra-right’ of the 1930s, which includes the Leagues and the *Croix du Feu* as well as the explicitly fascist PPF. See his ‘L’ultra-droite des années trente’.

<sup>30</sup> R.Soucy, *French Fascism: The Second Wave 1933–1939*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1995. He defines fascism as ‘primarily a new variety of authoritarian conservatism and right-wing nationalism that sought to defeat the Marxist threat and the political liberalism that allowed it to exist in the first place’, p.17—an economic and socially conservative movement, then, placing fascism clearly on the political right. (This is criticised by Eatwell, who argues that it completely overlooks the revolutionary aspect of fascism). The consensus French approach, Soucy argues, defined fascism as setting out a radical social and economic program and thus excluded many significant French movements, notably the *Croix du Feu*.

<sup>31</sup> A further observation made by a number of scholars, particularly when assessing the hostile reaction to Sternhell’s work, relates to a reluctance to confront unpleasant aspects of French history which run counter the more commonly-held image of France as the country of the rights of man, upholding liberty, fraternity, equality. That is, it is more a question of sensitivity than methodology. The rejection of the ‘immune thesis’ came initially from foreign scholars—Sternhell from Israel, Soucy from the US, Nolte from Germany. Some have likened the reception as similar to that afforded to Paxton’s pioneering work on wartime collaboration in Vichy France. See Soucy, *French Fascism*, introduction and conclusion.

<sup>32</sup> Roger Griffin (ed.), *Fascism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995. See in particular his introduction, pp.1–12. Another divisive element of the debate refers to the origins of fascism: does it ‘belong’ to the Right or the Left? Although generally associated with the (extreme) Right, there are those who see its intellectual origins also emanating from the Left—the Terror; populist; plebian, anti-conservative. See for example the work of Milza, Sternhell and Rémond.

<sup>33</sup> Griffin (ed.), *Fascism*, p.4. The term ‘palingenetic’ refers to the concept of rebirth—decay and national regeneration.

definition, he excludes the FN from his reader on fascism on the grounds that it is not sufficiently revolutionary—it does not call for a total rebirth of the national. However the idea of decay and rebirth is strong in the discourse of the FN, and both its populist and ultra-nationalist nature—core elements of its make-up—link the party to fascist characteristics.

Soucy points to the unrealistic comparisons made between French extremist movements competing for power in a democracy on the one hand, and the results of the German and Italian fascism on the other.<sup>34</sup> Drawing on the work of sociologist Michel Dobry, Soucy argues that French historians had created a 'suitably imaginary' idea of fascism by using the results of the German and Italian experiences which then did not apply to the French political groupings.<sup>35</sup> Further, he notes that the ideology and rhetoric of the French radical movements were not dissimilar to the early 'moderation' of Hitler and Mussolini, neither of whom professed totalitarian agenda before they came to power. An opportunistic commitment to electoral politics, then, is interpreted in a distorted light by scholars of the consensus school: common fascist denominators, including hostility towards democratic forms of politics, a rejection of class politics in favour of a unified national approach, and virulent anti-communism, were identifiable in France in the 1930s as well as in other European countries. This has application in any verdict on the contemporary FN situation: the FN's discourse and actions while not in power may be radically different from its actions if it were ever to gain power. Overall there has been a reluctance of French scholars to label the FN as a neo-fascist movement, although it has been included as such in some French analyses plus a number of external ones.<sup>36</sup> Eatwell identifies a fascist core in the FN, and Soucy notes that the fact that the FN's rejection of the fascist label does not prevent the party from spreading fascist ideas.<sup>37</sup>

Further, the FN's development into a party that is allegedly '*ni droite, ni gauche*', representing the 'national alternative', is too eerily reminiscent of fascist doctrine to be overlooked. The party's shift towards more protectionist economic policies, away from the free-market rhetoric of the 1980s, also

<sup>34</sup> Soucy, *French Fascism*, pp.23-4.

<sup>35</sup> Soucy, *French Fascism*, p.319.

<sup>36</sup> Articles and editorials in *Le Monde Diplomatique* routinely refer to the FN as fascist; likewise the publications of the French anti-racist organisations CRIDA and Scalp-Réflex. See for example *Le Monde Diplomatique*'s lead story, April 1998, by Ignacio Ramonet, entitled 'Neo-fascism', referring to the '*élus néo-fascistes*' of the FN in the regional elections. The epithet is also used in dailies such as *Libération* and *Le Monde*. On post-war neo-fascism in France, see Milza, *Fascisme français*. He subscribes to the view that (neo-)fascism is socially and economically radical—but more of the Left than the Right. In English, those who label the FN unambiguously as a neo-fascist party include Fysh and Wolfreys. Those stressing (fascist) historical continuities include Von Beyme, and Merkl and Weinberg. A number of comparative works on the extreme right in Europe, committed to exposing the dangers posed by the extreme right, do not hesitate to label the movements neo-fascist; for example, Harris, *The Dark Side of Europe*, and publications by anti-racist organisations such as Statewatch and Searchlight (UK) and Antifa (Germany).

<sup>37</sup> Eatwell, *Fascism*, Soucy, *French Fascism*, p.315.

suggests affinities with fascism.<sup>38</sup> The argument that the FN is not fascist as it is insufficiently 'revolutionary' does not take account of the fact that the FN calls for the establishment of a Sixth Republic. This would mean over-turning the present constitution as well as renegotiating France's foreign policy commitments, most notably within the EU. Further, its seeming non-revolutionary nature might be a factor of its position in opposition rather than a strongly-held ideological stance.<sup>39</sup>

French historiography bears some responsibility for this 'received version' of fascism as foreign to France and unlikely to be accepted by an individualist and anti-authoritarian electorate. This account tends to downplay the darker aspects of the FN, and ignore its fascist elements, and allows mainstream politicians to engage with—and even adopt—elements of FN policy without seeming embarrassment. A final observation on fascism and respectability comes from those who claim that the FN is afforded a quasi-respectable intellectual backdrop by the *Nouvelle Droite*. The writings of its most important member, Alain de Benoist, fall within the fascist tradition, with their critique of liberal democracy, egalitarianism and materialism, emphasising concepts of national decadence and revival, and elaborating theories of difference and diversity based on separation.<sup>40</sup>

Yet a simplistic affirmation of a resurgence of fascism underplays important differences in both style and substance of the FN.<sup>41</sup> Further, it tends to dissociate the party from contemporary developments in French politics and society, assessing it in historical perspective. Overall, the 'fascist' debate has given way to more complex multi-faceted analyses of the FN. This thesis argues that continuities with past extremist traditions are less significant than the party's critiques of contemporary developments portrayed as threatening the nation, both at a political and a cultural level. The French consensus on the FN as a 'national populist' party has the merit of stressing the party's use of the 'national' element within its policies. Crucially, this allowed the FN to enter the national identity debate and to assert its Republican credentials in defending the French nation-state from external threats. The sudden political emergence of the extreme right after decades of marginalisation and failure is linked to its participation in central contemporary debates on national identity and belonging.

<sup>38</sup> Orfali also notes the references by FN supporters to the theme of the 'family', and the appeal of the values embodied in the '*travail, famille, patrie*' motif reminiscent of the Vichy regime. See her 'Le Front national ou le parti-famille'.

<sup>39</sup> On the useful concept of 'stages' of fascism in this context, see Robert Paxton, 'The Five Stages of Fascism', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 70 (1), March 1998, pp.1-23. In the second of his five stages, fascism adapts itself to ally with the conservative Right in order to access power. This corresponds to Mégret's approach in the 1990s.

<sup>40</sup> On the ND as fascist see Eatwell, *Fascism*. On its relationship with the FN, see Chapter 4, pp.141-43.

<sup>41</sup> The FN is also more 'moderate' than other ultra-right '*groupuscules*' within France—a point noted by Chebel d'Appollonia, *L'Extrême Droite en France*, p.353.

### The party: its origins and development

The post-war extreme right scene in France was not only marginalised, but also fragmented, up until the formation and consolidation of the FN under the leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen. The origins of the party certainly point to its extremist nature. The immediate organisational antecedents of the FN consist of a number of groups with differing traditions: of these, the radical *Ordre Nouveau* (ON) is the most significant.

In the aftermath of the Algerian war in the 1960s new small extremist groups were emerging, disappearing and re-forming constantly on the far right. One of these radical groups was *Occident*, created in 1964 and opposed to both Tixier-Vignancour's more conservative ARLP (formed 1965) and to de Gaulle. Led by an avowed fascist and *Algérie française* activist by the name of François Duprat, *Occident* attracted mainly a student membership and concentrated on active opposition to the Left. After *Occident* was banned in 1968, a new extreme nationalist activist movement entitled *Ordre Nouveau* was formed in 1969 to take its place.<sup>42</sup> With Duprat amongst its leaders, the ON developed into the major group of the extreme right at this time. It took the Italian *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI) as a model for increasing its support and membership: it aspired to be a 'rassemblement', combining both fascist and non-fascist elements of the extreme right.<sup>43</sup> The party identified opposition to immigration as a potential vote-winner; however it failed to attract the more broadly-based membership and electoral support it had hoped for, with membership dominated by violent right-wing extremists.

By 1972, two of the ON's leaders, Duprat and François Brigneau, had decided that in order to broaden the base of the party they needed to set up a separate organisation, a self-styled 'national front'. This aimed to bring together the disparate forces of the extreme right—Catholic fundamentalists, royalists, nationalists and ex-*Algérie française* supporters—in a single umbrella organisation. Jean-Marie Le Pen, acceptable to the various strands and with experience as a national deputy, was appointed president of this new organisation, the FN, formed October 1972.<sup>44</sup> However it was a fragile organisation, and did not manage to encompass all the forces of the extreme right. In the FN's first year of existence its membership fluctuated markedly with the resignation of a number of key members, due to ideological divisions and personal differences.

<sup>42</sup> This was also an extreme right response to the events of May 1968 and the formation of new Leftist groupings. As well as new political movements such as ON, intellectual extreme right movement also developed. The ideas and influence of the intellectual extreme right will be examined further in Chapter 4.

<sup>43</sup> On the formation and ideology of ON, see Eatwell, *Fascism*, pp.250-2.

<sup>44</sup> The executive group consisted of Le Pen and a close associate, Pierre Durand; two members of ON; Pierre Bousquet (ex-Waffen SS member and leader of a 'third way' group entitled *Mouvement Nationaliste de Progrès*), and Roger Holeindre (former OAS supporter). See Hainsworth, 'The Extreme Right in post-war France', p.36.



By 1973 major splits were emerging within the new umbrella organisation.<sup>45</sup> Major currents within the party included Le Pen's (so-called) parliamentary Right; the counter-revolutionary and 'maurassien' Right of Brigneau; and the pro-European revolutionary activism of Alain Robert and Pascal Gauchon (also from ON). Le Pen and his supporters increased in strength; while Brigneau and Robert had assumed that they would be able to control the movement through Le Pen, they now realised that they needed to reassert their control. When Le Pen sacked Robert from his position as Secretary-General, two separate groups claimed the 'FN' name: a matter ultimately settled by the courts in Le Pen's favour.

Brigneau, Robert and other militants then formed the rival *Parti des forces nouvelles* (PFN) in 1974; however neither party was to achieve success in the 1970s.<sup>46</sup> Locked in a bitter and sometimes violent struggle<sup>47</sup> both political parties were totally marginalised in 1970s French politics: their ideas and their position as extremist parties rendered them unacceptable to the French electorate.<sup>48</sup> While the PFN was able to claim the—albeit trivial—mantle of the major organisation of the extreme right, both parties were insignificant in electoral terms at this time. In the 1979 European elections, for example, the PFN attracted a mere 1.3 per cent of the vote, while the FN polled 0.3 per cent in the 1981 legislative elections.

Unsurprisingly, the verdict on the extreme right by the late 1970s was that it no longer existed as a credible political force. Dead and buried, its ideas and development were consigned to the history books. Yet within a decade the FN was to emerge from obscurity as the undisputed party of the extreme right in France, wielding significant influence and attracting increased support. Following the initial period of instability, the party coalesced around Le Pen's leadership and a stronger, more stable party was forged.<sup>49</sup> Le Pen's leadership and organisational skills were crucial in this evolution—indeed, much of FN's success is due to the skilful way in which Le Pen managed to maintain and control a single 'front' incorporating hugely divergent elements.<sup>50</sup> A charismatic leader, not only did Le Pen personify the FN, but some have gone as far to claim that '[T]he political philosophy of

<sup>45</sup> On the early years of the FN, see Perrineau, 'Le Front national: 1972-1992', pp.243-50.

<sup>46</sup> See FN electoral results set out in Table 2.1, p.69.

<sup>47</sup> Duprat was killed in a car bomb attack in 1978.

<sup>48</sup> Perrineau, 'Le Front national: 1972-1992', pp.243-5.

<sup>49</sup> On the structure and organisation of the party, see Gilles Ivaldi, 'The Front National: The Making of an Authoritarian Party' in Ignazi and Ysmal (eds), *The Organization of Political Parties*, pp.43-69. He notes its hierarchical nature—with national, regional, and departmental bodies—and the dominance of the national executive.

<sup>50</sup> The split of the FN in 1998/99 into two rival (although essentially similar) parties, and the subsequent weakening of the party, serves to underline this point. Camus and Monzat, *Les droites nationales et radicales*, identify four separate tendencies within the FN in the 1980s: integral Catholicism; neo-paganism (linked to GRECE); liberals (linked to the Club de l'Horloge); and monarchists.



the FN is largely reducible to Le Pen's writings and speeches'.<sup>51</sup> His background and development, underpinning his extreme nationalism and xenophobic politics, merit a brief overview here.

### *Le Pen's formative influences*

Le Pen's life has been described and analysed in detail in a number of publications: one of the most detailed and enlightening is Bresson and Lionet's biography.<sup>52</sup> His childhood in Brittany, education by the Jesuits and subsequent law studies in Paris where he frequented extreme right milieux, followed by his entry into politics as a poujadist deputy and his experiences in the French colonial wars of the 1950s and '60s—including inconsistencies and ambiguities—contribute significant insights into his political development.

Born into a fisherman's family in Brittany in 1928, Le Pen describes his background in *Les Français d'abord*, noting the significance, for him, of his Breton roots and his family heritage.<sup>53</sup> The defeat of France in 1940 came as a complete shock to the young boy, at odds with his image of his country. His father was drowned in 1942 and while his maternal grandfather took over his upbringing, he was officially 'pupille de la nation': Le Pen noted that 'I was more French than the others, since I was doubly so'.<sup>54</sup> While Le Pen felt sympathy for Pétain, he claimed that he joined the resistance as the war in France was coming to an end.<sup>55</sup>

Le Pen's Jesuit education played a major role in his development. In particular two sentiments were to mark his political development: fervent anti-Gaullism, and anti-communism. He believed that Pétain,

<sup>51</sup> Vaughan, 'The Extreme Right in France', p.222. While I would agree with this claim in the 1980s and early 1990s, by the mid 1990s the influence of Mégret and the 'modern' wing of the party became apparent, and Le Pen's dominance of the party was no longer unquestioned. The final split of the party into two rival entities resulted from Mégret's impatience with Le Pen's leadership as well as reflecting a strategic-tactical split within the party. For analysis of Mégret's rise to *délégué général* within the FN and his distancing from Le Pen, see P.Longuet, 'Crise au Front National: Chronique d'un divorce annoncé' (Crisis in the National Front: Chronicle of a predicted divorce), *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 17 (1), Winter 1999, pp.17-36. For early analyses of their differences, see *Le Monde*, 30 April-2 May 1995; *Libération*, 2 May 1995. On more recent developments, see also Schain, 'The National Front and the French Party System', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 17 (1), Winter 1999, pp.1-16; V.Rillardon, 'Front contre Front' (Front against Front), *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 8 (1), 2000, pp.99-103.

<sup>52</sup> Bresson and Lionet, *Le Pen*. In English, Simmons' *The French National Front*, in particular Chapters 1 to 3, provides an excellent overview of Le Pen's development and situates it well in the context of the major political issues of the time. Two semi-authorised bibliographies—Jean Marcilly, *Le Pen sans bandeau*, Paris, Granger, 1984 and Roger Mauge, *La Vérité sur Jean-Marie Le Pen*, Paris, Famot/France-Empire, 1988—present some similar material with differing interpretations and emphases. Here, Le Pen is a patriot, 'résistant', army volunteer and anti-communist who fought for his country and was its youngest deputy.

<sup>53</sup> See Rollat, *Les Hommes de L'Extrême Droite*, pp.13-40: 'La naissance d'un chef'—the birth of a leader.

<sup>54</sup> French 'à double titre'. Quoted in Bresson and Lionet, *Le Pen*, p.22. In campaign material he describes himself as a 'war orphan'—see 'Les Priorités de Jean-Marie le Pen' in *La Lettre de Jean-Marie Le Pen*, no. 211, February 1995.

<sup>55</sup> This however is disputed: there is little evidence to support his claim. See Bresson and Lionet, *Le Pen*, pp.25-7.

rather than de Gaulle, was acting in the best interests of France; the actions of the communists at Liberation shocked and appalled him. Opting to study law in Paris and enrolling in 1947, he became involved in nationalist student movements and anti-communist activities and eventually became president of the right-wing faction of the National French Student Union (UNEF). His involvement in demonstrations and street fights against the Left, and with Vichy sympathisers at this time, indicates his ongoing political development on the nationalist right, and the continuities with his education.<sup>56</sup>

Le Pen never completed his studies, choosing in 1953 to join the French foreign legion: the Third Paratroop regiment involved in the colonial war in French Indo-China (Vietnam), fighting the Communist Việt-minh. For Le Pen, this was an opportunity to be part of the anti-communist struggle. Much to his disappointment—but probably luckily for him—he arrived too late for the battle of Diên Biên Phu, and returned to Marseilles, and thence to Paris, in 1955, with his hatred of communism intensified.

#### *Entry into politics*

Back in Paris, his prestige enhanced by his experience and status, Le Pen became a leader of a militant group of extreme right law students who denounced the weaknesses of the Fourth Republic and Pierre Mendès-France, who had 'lost' the war in Indo-China and was proving incapable of maintaining order in Algeria. Leading the *Jeunes indépendantes de Paris* (JIP), Le Pen decided to stand for election and was introduced to UDCA leader Pierre Poujade. Subsequently appointed as the movement's youth leader and national spokesman, Le Pen was elected to the National Assembly as a poujadist deputy in January 1956 at the age of twenty-seven.<sup>57</sup>

The UDCA was meant to transcend party political lines as a broadly inclusive movement, although its support was based in 'petit bourgeois' shopkeepers and business people and attracted a strong protest vote. It was decried as 'fascist' by the Left—a debatable label—but was certainly nationalist and xenophobic. However, as noted, it was also short-lived movement: from a high-point in 1956, when it unexpectedly returned fifty-two poujadist deputies to the National Assembly, it fell to less than 3 per cent of the vote by 1958, when de Gaulle was returned to power in a crisis situation. However the poujadist experience provided Le Pen with a platform and practice for his impressive oratorical and combative argument skills.<sup>58</sup> Aspects of poujadist tactics—for example, the use of revolutionary and nationalist rhetoric—can also be seen in current FN practices. The poujadist election slogan for the

<sup>56</sup> See 'Les Années de la Corpo' in Bresson and Lionet, *Le Pen*, pp.39-79.

<sup>57</sup> On Le Pen's brief career with the poujadist movement, see Bresson and Lionet, *Le Pen*, pp.119-49.

<sup>58</sup> See Bresson and Lionet, *Le Pen*, p.119.

1956 elections—'*Sortez les sortants*'—is now familiar as a battle-cry of FN election campaigns.<sup>59</sup> Likewise, the poujadist theme of the treachery and weakness of the political class is echoed in current FN rhetoric—the 1950s 'betrayal' of French interests in its colonial empire resonates with the 1990s 'betrayal of the nation' by the political class in signing the Maastricht Treaty.

Breaking with Poujade over the question of Algeria—for Le Pen, it was *Algérie française*—and Suez (Poujade voted against military intervention), Le Pen left the parliament on six months' 'leave'. Rejoining his parachute regiment, he was sent to Egypt and subsequently to Algeria in late 1957.<sup>60</sup> While in Algeria he was accused of the torture of a young Algerian—an affair which has never been officially resolved, but which nevertheless has continued to be associated with him and which is generally mentioned in many (even brief) analyses of his political position. Le Pen himself denies the charge and condemns those who attempt to discredit the parachute regiment.<sup>61</sup> Le Pen, then, personally experienced the post-war decolonisation process, and the loss of French empire, as one of French national humiliation and defeat.

Dismayed by the loss of Algeria,<sup>62</sup> and losing his parliamentary seat in 1962, Le Pen reappeared on the extreme right political scene with Tixier-Vignancour's presidential campaign in 1965, drawing on *Algérie française* support. Following the failure of the campaign (winning a mere 5.3 per cent of the vote), Le Pen split with Tixier. Unable to bring together enough support for a new political grouping on the extreme right, he faded from the political scene until the early 1970s. The events of May 1968 were anathema to him, but it was only with the formation of the *Front national* in 1972 that his interest in politics was rekindled. With 'the ideal profile of a man of action, involved in all the battles of the extreme right, yet politically respectable'<sup>63</sup> he appeared to be the ideal leader for this disparate federation on the extreme right.

### The FN: the policies and programs of the 'national alternative'

The major policies of the FN are based around the idea of the French nation and claim to be motivated by a desire to defend the nation from contemporary threats. This becomes increasingly

<sup>59</sup> Eatwell, *Fascism*, pp.243-4.

<sup>60</sup> He resumed his parliamentary seat in 1957, although as an independent, having left the poujadists.

<sup>61</sup> He may be suffering the same form of amnesia as the French government, who until 1999 continued to insist that there was no 'civil war' fought by France in Algeria, in which 500 000 to 600 000 people died, but rather it was an 'operation for keeping order'. The debate continues over whether the use of torture was abuse by a minority or whether it was widespread and authorised. See *Le Monde*, 3-4 December 2000; *L'Express*, 30 November-6 December 2000.

<sup>62</sup> The Evian Accords, which formally granted Algerian independence, were signed in 1962, following an April referendum.

<sup>63</sup> N.Mayer, 'The French National Front' in Betz and Immerfall (eds), *The New Politics of the Right*, p.12.

clear in the party's 1990s electoral programs where both the divisive immigration and European debates are used to bolster a message of 'national survival'.<sup>64</sup> The FN rejects the idea of a founding ideology, but stresses the 'common sense' aspect of its programs. This is explicitly set out in the FN's 1993 program for the legislative elections. The introduction stresses that the FN is 'not the product of an ideology or of a doctrine', but rather represents a response to threats to the future of France, a country suffering from unemployment, insecurity and immigration.<sup>65</sup> Presenting itself as a new and original party,<sup>66</sup> albeit with important roots in French history and culture,<sup>67</sup> it rejects comparisons with the fascisms of the past. Moreover, it denies being a 'mere' protest party, but rather presents itself as a party fighting for the survival of the French nation, a party characterised by courage, liberty and justice.<sup>68</sup>

The FN initially placed itself clearly on the Right of the political spectrum: as Hainsworth notes, it posed as '*la droite sociale et populaire*' (the social and popular right)—'the true right against the soft right'.<sup>69</sup> While claiming to represent the 'true right' it denounced all the mainstream parties of the Left and Right: RPR, UDF, PS, PCF.<sup>70</sup> Derisively referred to as 'the band of four', the mainstream parties are accused jointly of decadence and corruption, and of the betrayal of the nation through the hegemony of '*la pensée unique*'.<sup>71</sup> Only the FN, then, offers a real national alternative.

<sup>64</sup> See the 1993 FN election program, *300 mesures pour la renaissance de la France: Front national programme de gouvernement*, Paris, Éditions Nationales, 1993. The 1995 presidential program is set out in a special supplement to *La Lettre de Jean-Marie Le Pen*, no. 211, February 1995, entitled 'Les Priorités de Jean-Marie Le Pen'; see also the FN's *Le Contrat pour la France avec les Français*. Marcus likens this to the US Republican 'Contract with America'—see 'Advance or Consolidation? The French National Front and the 1995 Elections', *WEP*, Vol. 19 (2), April 1996, pp.303-20. For the 1997 legislative elections, see *Le Grand Changement: Et si on essayait le Front national?*.

<sup>65</sup> *300 mesures*, Introduction. This is reminiscent of fascist movements that also denied an ideology and appealed to 'common sense.' Likewise the references to regeneration and rebirth: fascist thought also holds that the nation as a 'people' is a natural, quasi-organic entity where the nation as a collective has primacy over the individual. See Griffin's introduction to his edited *Fascism*, pp.1-12.

<sup>66</sup> The program explicitly rejects that idea that it is a mere continuation of a past political party traditions: 'The FN is not an inherited reconstruction of the past', *300 mesures*.

<sup>67</sup> The distortion of history to legitimise the party is commonplace: for example, *300 mesures* refers to the FN as '*résistant*'; battling against powerful forces, and situates the party within the Republican tradition, pp.18-19. On the importance of understanding the French historical context, see Plenel and Rollat, *La République menacée*, prologue and introduction.

<sup>68</sup> The three characteristics of an FN government, according to their introduction to *300 mesures*, pp.12-21.

<sup>69</sup> Hainsworth, 'The Extreme Right in post-war France', p.48.

<sup>70</sup> The FN's first electoral program in 1973, entitled '*Défendre les Français*', attacked the RPR and UDF and called for the birth of a new right. See Simmons, *The French National Front*, pp.63-5.

<sup>71</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, this encompasses a general acceptance of the power of the market and the primacy of free market forces. Tony Judt in 'The Social Question Redivivus', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76 (5), 1997, pp.95-117, defines *la pensée unique* as globalisation and 'the hegemony of the Anglo-American model of minimal state and maximized profit', p.97. The phrase's closeness to '*le marché unique*', the (European) Single Market, also adds to its significance and incisiveness.

This self-definition has shifted with Le Pen's growing reluctance to deal with the mainstream right in the 1990s and his depiction of the party as neither of the Right nor the Left, but 'national'—a theme which will be taken up later in this chapter. However, the core of the FN's policies has remained relatively stable. The major qualifications to this are a broadening of policy agenda, increasingly sophisticated presentation,<sup>72</sup> and a shift in economic policy.<sup>73</sup>

The presentation of the party program varies according to audience (or readership) and the extent to which the targeted audience is sympathetic to the extreme right. Increasingly in the late 1990s (pre-split), the presentation also varies according to speaker, notably whether Le Pen or Mégret. But while both priorities and language can vary, the underlying message remains consistent. The party literature, speeches and, centrally, the election programs organise FN policies around the notion of '*Les Français d'abord*' and the preservation of national identity. In the name of national identity and survival of the nation, a whole range of policy programs is elaborated, from the repatriation of immigrants to economic protectionism to the introduction of a parental income. The cleverly-devised presentation of FN policies is set out under such headings as social justice, prosperity and fraternity, however the underlying themes recur within each section.<sup>74</sup>

The party sets out to paint a desperate picture of the state of contemporary France, summed up well by party official Carl Lang's piece in a 1995 election campaign article. France, he claims, is 'in the process of colonisation, of cultural and community disintegration, drowning in the magma of Euro-Maastricht and surrendering to insecurity, unemployment, taxation, immigration'. France has been 'deceived and betrayed'.<sup>75</sup> Alternatively, the party sets out a list of 'choices' for the future: 'Civilisation or barbarism?'; 'National Values or the Ideology of Globalisation?'; 'The People or the Oligarchy?'; and defines the FN in relation to these depicted threats.<sup>76</sup> The dominant contention is that France is in the grip of a national crisis, and that FN policies are valid responses to contemporary threats to the French nation. These 'threats' are regularly listed as unemployment, immigration, insecurity, *mondialisme*,<sup>77</sup> and the political class: not necessarily in the same order and often intertwined. Of these, the most significant is immigration.

<sup>72</sup> This is well dealt with, among others, by Simmons, *The French National Front*, pp.216-28. He notes the veneer of respectability gained by the FN via their less extremist discourse and language.

<sup>73</sup> Bastow, 'Front National economic policy'. The shift to economic protectionism and the defence of 'French jobs' is subsumed into an overarching 'defence of the nation' argument.

<sup>74</sup> See for example the 1997 legislative program—*Le Grand Changement*—on the FN web site. Each of the sections incorporates reference to the importance of the national idea.

<sup>75</sup> See Lang in a special election supplement to *La Lettre de Jean-Marie Le Pen*, no. 211, February 1995, p.4.

<sup>76</sup> Introduction, *300 mesures*, pp.12-21.

<sup>77</sup> Best translated as globalisation, it is directed at a range of contemporary globalising forces, often with reference to the US. In *300 mesures*, it is denounced as the single most important threat to (French) identity. Some have seen it as a 'code-word' for internationalism with undertones of (anti-Jewish) cosmopolitanism.

*Immigration: the threat to national identity*

Strident anti-immigration discourse and policies are common to parties on the extreme right in Europe, and certainly a form a cornerstone of FN programs.<sup>78</sup> This aspect of FN policy is extensively covered in the general literature on the FN, as well as in detailed studies of immigration, racism and xenophobia in France.<sup>79</sup> The term 'immigration' is somewhat misleading and hides a complex reality: in practice, it relates not only to migration flows into France—legal or illegal—but also to the existence of settled minority cultures in France, whose members may or may not be citizens. While the context of this policy will be explored in more detail Chapter 4, a brief overview of the Front's related policies will be given here.

From the outset, the FN's anti-immigrant position has formed an important part of its discourse. Immigration is likened to an 'invasion' which threatens the survival of the French nation. This theme remained constant through the 1980s and appeared to attract increasing support.<sup>80</sup> The FN's immigration policy is found in most detail in two policy programs from the early 1990s. First, on 16 November 1991, Bruno Mégret presented a 50-point immigration policy at an FN symposium in Marseilles. Entitled 'Fifty Measures for solving the problem of immigration', its message was clear enough: immigration equals problem.<sup>81</sup> The solution? A system of national preference—that is, positive discrimination for '*Français de souche*' ('native French')—, a halt to immigration, and a variety of anti-immigrant legislation.<sup>82</sup> Most controversial was the proposal to reform legislation so

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Marcus, *The National Front and French Politics*, translates its use by the FN as 'internationalism', p.101, but in its increasing general use, globalisation is a more accepted term.

<sup>78</sup> As many have taken effort to point out, extreme right wing parties should by no means be described as 'single issue' parties. But immigration is consistently cited as a primary concern, and headed up the first section of the first chapter ('Identity') of the 1993 FN election program. While employment (for the French, naturally)—'*Du travail pour les Français*'—headed the 1997 program, immigration is prominent in the list of causes, and repatriation and national preference figure in the proposed solution. According to *Le Grand Changement*: 'Unemployed immigrants should return to their country of origin. The same thing applies to those immigrants who have a job and whose departure would free up jobs which could then be offered to unemployed French people'.

<sup>79</sup> A brief overview of such literature includes Marcus, *The National Front and French Politics*, Chapters 4 and 5; Simmons, *The French National Front*, Chapter 7; Schain, 'The Immigration Debate and the National Front' in Keeler and Schain (eds), *Chirac's Challenge*, pp.171-97; Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*.

<sup>80</sup> This was backed by such think-tanks as the Club de l'Horloge and publications such as their *L'Identité de la France*. Le Gallou sums up the stance in his chapter, 'Identité nationale et préférence nationale' (National identity and national preference), pp.243-55: 'The national identity of France, a European nation served by a secular state and made possible by the desire of French people to live together, is threatened by immigration', p.246.

<sup>81</sup> See *Guardian Weekly*, 1 December 1991. On the use of language—the 'verbal strategy'—of the FN, see Gilles Tordjman in *L'Événement du Jeudi*, 11-17 December 1997, pp.44-5. He notes how phrases such as the 'problem of immigration' become commonplace and repeated by 'sincere Republicans', thus granting legitimacy to the theses and arguments of the FN. This is a conscious FN strategy, Mégret noting that 'we intend to lead and to win the battle of vocabulary'.

<sup>82</sup> For an early elaboration of the idea, see Le Gallou, 'Identité nationale et préférence nationale'. The primary concern of the Club de l'Horloge, he asserts, is the defence of national identity and national sovereignty; and

that access to citizenship would be based on *droit du sang*, and to apply this retrospectively. This was reminiscent of practices under the Vichy regime, where citizens were stripped of already acquired status and rights by virtue of their 'origin'.

The 1993 party manifesto, '300 Measures for the Rebirth of France', retains the anti-immigrant focus, although it is somewhat broader in scope.<sup>83</sup> Drawing on the earlier 50-point policy (although dropping the retrospective aspect of citizenship reform), the major policies centre on the concept of '*Les Français d'abord*', itself the name of a 1984 Le Pen publication. The manifesto again sets out a system of national preference and a raft of anti-immigration legislation.<sup>84</sup> Based on the misleading logic of three million immigrants = three million unemployed, the policies envisage mass repatriation of immigrants, and a halt to all migration, including family reunion, resulting in the freeing up of jobs and resources for the 'real' French and removing the threat to French national identity.<sup>85</sup> The proposed system of 'national preference' would grant priority to French citizens in such areas as housing, employment, education and social services. This is presented as a system of 'positive discrimination' for the French, and hostility towards it denounced as 'anti-French racism'. Immigration, then, is presented as both an economic and a cultural threat to the nation.

The manifesto is professionally produced: a glossy, 400-page publication, divided into five chapters, headed Identity, Prosperity, Fraternity, Security and Sovereignty.<sup>86</sup> The introduction (pp.12-21) entitled '*La renaissance nationale*' (national rebirth) sets the theme and tone for the ensuing chapters and establishes the main policies centred on the theme of the rebirth of the French nation. Threats to the survival of the French nation are portrayed by means of setting up three crucial choices which define the national-populist approach of the FN: first, civilisation or barbarism; second, national values or *mondialiste* ideology; and third, the people or the oligarchy. Within these central themes, primacy is given to the anti-immigrant message and xenophobic policies. The question of immigration forms a major part of the 'negative' in the first two choices: both '*barbarie*' and '*idéologie mondialiste*', and figures in the third, '*l'oligarchie*', with an attack on anti-racist legislation. The program also attacks the EU and globalisation as threats to national culture and identity, and proposes a 'Confederation of Europe' based on (unspecified) European

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these are best defended via the introduction of national preference legislation, p.251. See also in the same volume the references to 'massive waves of immigration' that put at risk the existence of French institutions, civic harmony, national sovereignty and French identity, pp.38-49. These were to be countered by a program of 'national preference': that is, 'to reserve for the French the benefit of legislation conceived in relation to their needs and the development of their country', p.72.

<sup>83</sup> FN, *300 mesures*. See also Marcus, *The National Front and French Politics*, pp.100, 107.

<sup>84</sup> For analyses at the time, see *Le Monde*, 17 November 1991; *Guardian Weekly*, 1 December 1991.

<sup>85</sup> The immigrants in question were those who were not seen as belonging to French society, those originating from North Africa and Black Africa. Le Pen was explicit on this, stating that the measures would not apply to those who came from a European culture or background.



values and the reintroduction of frontier controls. Further, the EU is presented as a threat to the political understanding of the nation. The program, then, focuses in on the two great integration debates of the 1990s, appropriating the 'national' response.

The first issue dealt with in the opening 'Identity' chapter, is immigration. Entitled 'Immigration. Reverse the Flow', it reiterates the hostility towards both immigrants and French citizens with different cultures, as well as highlighting immigration as the major source of problems besetting French society. The program calls for a 'deep-rooted community rather than a multicultural society', rejecting the latter as an inevitable source of future conflict.<sup>87</sup> The only answer, given that these 'immigrants' are unable to assimilate (due to their large numbers and belonging to a totally different civilisation, according to FN logic) is repatriation, reform of citizenship legislation, the application of national preference and overturning the Schengen accords to reinstate frontier controls. Measure number nine is worth noting individually as it spells out the agenda behind the generic 'immigrant' language: that is, 'to oppose the political influence of Islam'.<sup>88</sup>

Alongside constant references to the importance of national identity, *300 mesures* depicts immigration as central to contemporary problems ('at the heart of the French crisis', according to the section sub-heading, p.25): insecurity, cultural and moral decline, and unemployment. The immigration-insecurity couplet is particularly stressed. Immigration also informs the first three 'priority actions' for the FN as set out in the conclusion: namely, a policy of national preference; the reform of citizenship legislation in favour of *droit du sang*; and the abolition of the ten-year renewable residency visa. This serves as a reminder that despite all three hundred proposed measures and the broadening of the FN's political agenda, the party continues to prioritise harsh (and racist) anti-immigrant policies. The FN calls not for 'La France pour tous' (Chirac),<sup>89</sup> but for 'La France pour tous les Français'.<sup>90</sup>

While the immigration policies in the 1993 program largely draw upon the ideas put forward in the 1991 policy, immigration is now included under the overall chapter heading of 'identity', thus placing the debate in the broader context of national identity, globalisation and difference. Hence the introduction to the chapter, without using the term 'immigration', can attack globalisation (*mondialisme*), painting a grave picture of its effects: destroying the nation, mixing people and cultures,

<sup>86</sup> *300 mesures*.

<sup>87</sup> *300 mesures*, p.36: '*communauté enracinée contre société multiculturelle*'. As will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, this rejection of multiculturalism in France is not an extreme position, but is taken on—albeit with a different logic and purpose—by much of the Republican mainstream.

<sup>88</sup> *300 mesures*, p.43: '*s'opposer à l'influence politique de l'Islam*'.

<sup>89</sup> Although even this call has overtones of deciding who belongs. His election tract for the 1995 presidential elections called for national unity, social cohesion and an end to 'exclusion': J.Chirac, *La France pour tous*, Paris, Nil éditions, 1994.



abolishing frontiers and difference (p.23). The influence of Mégret is at work here, couching policy in more 'respectable' terms: the use of culture instead of race being one notable example.<sup>91</sup>

The same set of policies relating to immigration appeared in Le Pen's 1995 presidential campaign: his opening campaign speech included a promise to repatriate three million immigrants and end all immigration into France.<sup>92</sup> The natural corollary to the anti-migrant message—the Mégret-inspired policy of national preference—was again strongly promoted.<sup>93</sup> However, immigration was not dominant to the virtual exclusion of all else: rather it was placed in a context of national survival, both political and cultural. The presidential campaign document, a sixty-five-page program entitled *Le Contrat pour la France avec les Français*, and the slogan—*en avant pour la VI<sup>e</sup> République*—assert the primacy of the nation and 'national survival': thus threats come not only from 'foreigners', but also from trans- and international economic and political forces.

### *Insecurity*

Insecurity, allied with the law-and-order theme, is generally closely linked to the FN's anti-immigrant discourse. The FN portrays France as gripped by insecurity, urban violence and fear, with the existence of no-go areas where Republican law no longer holds. The 1993 program devotes a section to 'Justice and Security'; the 1997 program a section on 'Security in the City'. Specifically referring to a murder in Marseilles, it claims that 'immigration is at the heart of a significant amount of delinquency'.<sup>94</sup> Unsurprisingly, it accuses the political class of failing to provide a secure environment for French citizens, advocates a tough line on crime and on drugs, and calls for the death penalty to be reinstated.

The theme of insecurity is also introduced via policies on 'defending our frontiers'. The disappearance of border controls, particularly in the context of the Single Market and the Schengen Agreements, is blamed for the increase in international crime, immigration and terrorism (immigration being sandwiched between these serious developments as though part and parcel of the same problem).<sup>95</sup> The nation will only be secure again when frontier controls are re-established and decisions are taken at a national level.

<sup>90</sup> This call is reinforced in *La Lettre de Jean-Marie Le Pen*, no. 211, February 1995, in the special election supplement where he sets out his priorities.

<sup>91</sup> On the FN's use of language, see also K.Gorjanicyn, 'Race, Culture and Identity in France: Constructing the "other" in Political discourse' in S.Alomes and M.Provis (eds), *A Changing France in a Changing World*, Melbourne, INSFAR, 1994, pp.51-70.

<sup>92</sup> On Le Pen's 1995 campaign, see Marcus, 'Advance or Consolidation?', pp.303-20.

<sup>93</sup> Marcus, 'Advance or Consolidation?', describes it as the 'keynote' of the 1995 campaign.

<sup>94</sup> *Le Grand Changement*: 'La Sécurité dans la cité'.

<sup>95</sup> *Le Grand Changement*: 'Pour une autre europe'. 'The Brussels Commission has imposed the abolition of frontier controls ... large-scale international crime groups, immigration and terrorism will benefit from this'.

*Anti-political class: betrayal of the nation*

FN programs also include a strong attack on the political and economic elites—as seen in the attack on the ‘oligarchy’ in the FN’s 1993 campaign. As Nonna Mayer argues, by the mid-1990s the FN program had broadened to include a direct attack on the establishment elites and a strong anti-political class message.<sup>96</sup> This accompanies the FN’s assertion that it is not aiming to integrate into the discredited and decadent political class: it is aiming, in no uncertain terms, to destroy the old system—‘*en cassant le système ancien*’—and set up a new Republic.<sup>97</sup> The plethora of political corruption scandals in the 1980s and 1990s has allowed the FN to portray itself as ‘clean’, in comparison to a corrupted establishment.<sup>98</sup> By 1997, one of the main points of the FN program focuses on disillusion with the establishment, and particularly with the other political parties. FN presents itself as a respectable, credible, alternative which looks to national rather than factional or personal interests.

Part of this anti-establishment discourse includes a strong ‘conspiracy theory’ streak, whereby the FN claim that the media and the political class act in concert to deny both the party and its leader access to the public via the mainstream media, and also systematically attack their credibility. The FN portrays itself as a victimised, persecuted party.<sup>99</sup> In the 1995 presidential campaign, for example, Le Pen claimed that media had ignored him, up until the first round of voting. The FN home page on the web greets the reader with the following: ‘**Far from all censorship and media boycott**, the official site of the National Front is a source of information for all those who wish to discover, to better understand or simply to communicate with Jean-Marie Le Pen’s movement’ (my emphasis).<sup>100</sup> The 2000 legal judgment which disqualified Le Pen from sitting on the Provence-

<sup>96</sup> Mayer, ‘The French National Front’, pp.11-25.

<sup>97</sup> 300 mesures, p.13.

<sup>98</sup> Yves Mény has examined political corruption in France in detail—see *La Corruption de la République*, Paris, Fayard, 1992; ‘France: the end of the Republican ethic?’ in Y.Mény and D.Della Porta, *Democracy and Corruption in Europe*, London, Pinter, 1997. The concentration of power—in particular the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic as a ‘Republican monarchy’—and the lack of pluralist traditions in France result in vulnerability to corruption, he argues. See also C.Fay, ‘Political Sleaze in France: Forms and Issues’, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 48 (4), October 1995, pp.663-76. Most recently, highlighting its increasing salience, a dossier devoted to political corruption in *French Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 19 (1), Spring 2001, pp.42-69. On the issue of political corruption in general, see *Political Studies*, Vol. 45 (3), 1997.

<sup>99</sup> See for example the claims in *National Hebdo*, 19-25 February 1998, p.1. The banner headline ‘Non à la Chasse au FN’ heads up a ‘dossier of anti-national persecution’; the front page editorial asserts that the ‘FN is persecuted ... It has its martyrs. Eight dead and 100 injured since 1986’. Continuing the theme, see also the issue dated 26 February-4 March 1998.

<sup>100</sup> FN web site home page: ‘*Loin de la censure et du boycott médiatique le site officiel du Front national est un outil d’information pour tous ceux qui veulent découvrir, mieux connaître ou simplement communiquer avec le mouvement de Jean-Marie Le Pen*’.

Alpes-Côte d'Azur regional council met with a similar reaction: 'Not downcast by this loss', notes *Le Monde*, he describes it as 'persecution'.<sup>101</sup>

The party, then, is a victim of a media and establishment conspiracy that aims not only to marginalise and ignore, but also to 'diabolise' the FN and its electorate. The 'racist' and/or 'neo-fascist' epithets aimed at the party are strongly decried and denounced by the party leadership. The party is merely patriotic, it claims, standing up for French national interests and protecting the French from anti-French racism.<sup>102</sup> This search for respectability—particularly by Mégret in the 1990s who was at pains to 'dédiabolise' the party, in particular to allow it to forge alliances with the mainstream right—has met with some success.<sup>103</sup>

### *The protection of nation-state sovereignty*

The FN presents itself not only as a defender of the cultural nation in a fight against immigration and the infiltration of foreign cultures, but also as defender of the political sovereign nation. The 1993 program's final chapter, 'Sovereignty', establishes this as a crucial theme in the FN campaign, but its application is not confined to this section and recurs within the proposals for the protection of national identity.

The program argues that the sovereignty of France needs to be protected both from the increasing power of the EU ('Brussels'), and from the so-called ravages of an unregulated free market. Stridently opposed to the EU, the FN attacks the Union for creating a Europe which denies the 'reality of nations' and in particular for introducing the single currency, the euro, which will deprive France of its sovereignty. Having campaigned strongly against the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in the previous year, the FN stance on this issue was well known: France should not be 'dissolved' into the European 'miasma'.<sup>104</sup> The party calls for cooperation, not integration. The language recalls the original Gaullist stance on European integration: for a *Europe des patries*, each country retaining its sovereignty. In the 1995 program, the primacy of French law and retention of national sovereignty remain important themes. Related to this, attacks on the Schengen agreement and the danger of open borders bolster the basic message of national survival. This sovereignty theme is amplified in the 1997 program, despite the ratification of the MTEU, and also in the 1999 EP election campaign, despite the introduction of the euro. The FN continues to oppose the single currency and calls for the renegotiation of the EU Treaties: 'National sovereignty would thus be restored in the political, monetary, economic

<sup>101</sup> *Le Monde*, 24 February 2000.

<sup>102</sup> On FN attempts to 'banalise' its discourse, to break taboos on racist speech and behaviour, see *L'Événement du Jeudi*, 11-17 December 1997, pp.44-5.

<sup>103</sup> On Mégret's attempts to promote a more 'politically correct' version of the FN program, see Mayer, 'The French National Front'.

and social domains'.<sup>105</sup>

The second threat to French sovereignty, allegedly posed by unfettered globalisation, is developed in some detail. Globalisation is described in purely negative terms, as undermining sovereign powers, damaging the French economy, and depriving the people of the right to determine their future.<sup>106</sup> In *Le Grand Changement*, the FN calls for the defence of the French national economy and the regulation of world trade: namely, 'The Economy in the service of France and French people'.

### *Economic protection*

FN economic policy appears to have shifted in the 1990s. In general, economics have been very much subordinate to the major 'political' themes in FN policy programs and rhetoric.<sup>107</sup> However the current stance fits well with the FN platform of 'defence of the nation': that is, a pragmatic protectionism on either a national or a European level, stressing the need for national sovereignty to protect national interests. As noted, the issue of employment is also associated with immigration: the political and the cultural defence of the nation overlap.

This is a marked change from the FN's original liberal economic position. Its 1978 program, '*Droite et Démocratie Economique*', followed a neo-liberal, *laissez-faire* economic agenda, 'Reaganite before Reagan'.<sup>108</sup> Despite newer currents joining the party during the late 70s/80s, including figures such as Stirbois, a national populist, and Antony, a fundamentalist Catholic, the same neo-liberal economics were still in very much evidence in Le Pen's 1985 *Pour La France: Programme du Front National*.<sup>109</sup> Strongly pro-Thatcher and pro-privatisation, this position was also followed by FN deputies in the National Assembly from 1986-88.<sup>110</sup>

However from the early 1990s FN policies move towards a pragmatic protectionism, on the basis that the increasing power of the EU and the free market is damaging French interests. This argument also signals a shift in FN economic policy: while still acknowledging individual economic freedom and the market, the FN portrays itself as a party opposed to the interests of 'big business' and US-style capitalism. Liberalism, then, has its limits: the nation must be respected and its

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<sup>104</sup> The French approach to globalisation and the EU will be examined in Chapters 6 to 8.

<sup>105</sup> *Le Grand Changement*, 'Pour une autre europe'.

<sup>106</sup> See in particular the section entitled 'Economy. For economic strength' in the 'Prosperity' chapter of 300 *mesures*.

<sup>107</sup> The primacy of the political over the economic is noted by Bastow, 'Front National economic policy'.

<sup>108</sup> Hainsworth, 'The Extreme Right in post-war France', p.48.

<sup>109</sup> Le Pen, *Pour La France: Programme du Front National*, Paris, Albatros, 1985.

<sup>110</sup> Hainsworth, 'The Extreme Right in post-war France', p.48.

interests protected.<sup>111</sup> At the same time, the FN program attacks the state for too much intervention, and for placing too great a tax burden on business. This illustrates an uneasy co-existence of economic liberalism with a stress on the defence of national sovereignty and serving the national interest. However the 300 measures program marks a significant shift from the 1970s/80s with the FN identifying the economic interests and actions of (external) third parties as threatening the French nation: the USA; the EU; the forces of the 'free market'.

Over the course of 1992-94, a new policy of national protection evolved, directed against free trade and the GATT. In the 1997 program the theme of employment heads up the first chapter (in the place of immigration)—although, naturally, still for the French: *Du Travail pour les Français*. This chapter sets a figure of one million jobs currently taken by immigrants that could be freed up for the French. The program also advocates higher minimum wages and the introduction of a 'parental income'—an attempt to court the unemployed and disadvantaged, with an emphasis on social cohesion. Defence of the nation is broadened to include attacks on globalisation and the defence of national sovereignty.

*Le Grand Changement* explicitly targets the global free market as a dangerous development under the control of the Americans, threatening French economic and cultural interests. Part of this critique is bound up in an attack on the so-called hegemony of the New World Order.<sup>112</sup> More specifically, the program states that the economy must be protected from the 'savage competition' created by the opening up of borders: French businesses should be protected from businesses in low-wage and low-standard countries.<sup>113</sup> However while attacking the forces of the free market and globalisation, it also continues to reject what it terms 'socialist statism'. The program describes its proposals as 'pragmatic' and 'non-ideological'; others might argue that its objectives are essentially irreconcilable.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> The sixth priority action of the 1993 program, as set out in the conclusion, is the regulation of free trade and the global economy, calling for 'a pragmatic form of economic protection the frontiers of Europe'. This is however inconsistent with calls for protection of the French economy at the national level.

<sup>112</sup> See section entitled '*La Grandeur pour la Nation*', France is described as 'disarmed' and 'weakened', rendered 'powerless in the face of the hegemony of the New World Order'.

<sup>113</sup> These measures are afforded priority in Chapter 1, 'Employment for the French'. The global free market, and in particular offshore manufacturing, is squarely blamed for loss of employment and salary reduction. Free trade, it argues, has negative effects on French prosperity and undermines national sovereignty.

<sup>114</sup> *Le Grand Changement*, section entitled 'The Economy in the service of France and the French'. Following the calls for trade regulation and import taxes, are proposals to fight statism (*l'étatisme*) and reduce business taxation. At the same time, the program defends the public service. It does not specify how the proposed tax cuts would be funded—except by an attack on waste. On the incompatibility of its aims, see for example J. Shields, '“*La Politique du pire*”: the Front national and the 1997 Legislative Elections', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 15 (3), 1997, pp.21-36.

Hainsworth describes the movement from economic liberalism to protectionism as part of the reaction to a New World Order (post-1989), one which has allowed or led to the 'opening up' of common ground between the different trends within the FN.<sup>115</sup> What is notable, however, is that many of the FN critiques (if not its proposed solutions), particularly in the economic sphere, resonate with critiques emanating from the Left. The dangers of globalisation, the retreat of the nation-state and the relative powerlessness of democratically-elected bodies in the face of global economic developments are all familiar themes. This has enhanced FN's perceived legitimacy as well as allowing the FN to draw on Republican language and imagery in its defence of the 'political' nation. It certainly suggests that the attraction of the FN's message cannot be attributed to individual policy areas as such, but rather to an overarching appeal to the idea of the nation.

Perrineau notes that the FN electorate has 'no political coherence': while its socio-demographic profile indicates a (relatively) poorly educated, young, urban, male—and increasingly working class—constituency, this pattern does not draw on established political traditions.<sup>116</sup> Further, this profile has weakened in the 1990s to indicate an increasingly broad political base.<sup>117</sup> Minkenberg also argues that traditional cleavage structures play no significant role in the FN's support; moreover, the most distinctive characteristic of the FN constituency does not relate to socio-demographic profiles, but rather, specific values and issues—'a strong concern with 'Frenchness, nationalism and immigration ... and high levels of insecurity, pessimism and authoritarianism'.<sup>118</sup> Reinforcing this conclusion, Mayer notes that in the 1990s the FN electorate moved from a protest vote to an 'attachment' vote, identifying positively with FN candidates and FN issues.<sup>119</sup>

The FN has used the politics of identity to support its defence of the nation/national identity. This has moved beyond an extension of its anti-immigrant politics and fits into the strategy of increased respectability,<sup>120</sup> relying on the reformulation of phrases and policies to appear more 'politically correct'—a policy especially espoused by Bruno Mégret.<sup>121</sup> Identity, rather than immigration, is the

<sup>115</sup> Hainsworth, 'France in the New World Order'.

<sup>116</sup> Perrineau, 'The Conditions for the Re-emergence of an Extreme Right Wing'. He refers to the working class element of the vote as '*gaucho-lepénisme*'. See also his 1995 analysis: 'La dynamique du vote Le Pen: le poids du gaucho-lepénisme' (The dynamics of the Le Pen vote: the weight of leftist-lepénisme) in P. Perrineau and C. Ysmal (eds), *Le vote de crise. L'élection présidentielle de 1995*, Paris, PFNSP, 1995, pp. 243-61. For a breakdown of the 1997 electorate, see Shields, 'La Politique du pire', pp. 25-8.

<sup>117</sup> Schain, 'The National Front and the French Party System', pp. 3-4.

<sup>118</sup> Minkenberg, 'The New Right in France and Germany', p. 78.

<sup>119</sup> Quoted in Shields, 'La Politique du pire', p. 25. This is backed up by polls which show an increasing identification with the party and with its attitudes and values (notably ethnocentrism) in the 1990s.

<sup>120</sup> Or as Safran more correctly calls it, 'limited respectability': see his 'The National Front in France: From Lunatic Fringe to Limited Respectability'.

<sup>121</sup> The split in the party resulted at least in part from leadership divisions on the question of compromise and attempts at respectability—notably concerning Mégret's wish for the *dédiabolisation* of the party. At the 1999 MNR University Summer School, Mégret stated his wish to 'make ideas known for what they are, freeing

leitmotif, especially when communicating with the general public.<sup>122</sup> The overall message is two-sided: defence of the political nation against globalisation and the EU; and defence of the cultural nation against immigration and ethnic minorities.

### The national message: the far right press

The following section will examine in some detail the platform of the FN in the mid-1990s as set out in its literature aimed at its constituency, notably *Présent* and *National Hebdo*, and speeches to the party faithful.<sup>123</sup> Here too the central message relates to the 'survival of the nation'. The periods studied cover the 1997 and 1998 legislative and regional elections respectively—elections in which the FN polled over 15 per cent of the vote as indicated in Table 2.1.

### 1997 legislative elections

The timing of these elections came as a shock (as did the subsequent results!): President Chirac had a large parliamentary majority and there seemed little need to call an early ballot. The FN was able to seize on the early call as an example of political opportunism which showed scant regard for the electorate and the national interest. Articles in *Présent* described Chirac's dissolution of the Assembly and calling of parliamentary elections as 'political indecency'; his government denounced as '*l'Etat Chirac*' and his claims described as absurd.<sup>124</sup>

Le Pen's preface to the party platform *Le Grand Changement* denounced Chirac's dissolution of parliament in the strongest possible terms. This attack on Chirac continued throughout the FN

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them from FN's error-ridden language and Le Pen's outbursts. We wish to release them from the extreme right stance which marked them during the time of the National Front. From this perspective, we intend to engrave them in the framework of the Republic, that is to say ... in the framework of this country's democratic institutions'. Referring to this as both 'national and republican', Mégret claims he wishes to have nothing to do with the reactionary and dated approach of the old FN. Speech published on MNR web site, 17 September 1999.

<sup>122</sup> The FN's own media or conferences still have many 'unreconstructed' references to the 'problem' of immigration, and Le Pen is prone to racist / anti-Semitic 'outbursts'. However in policies and speeches designed for general consumption, the choice of language tends to be more guarded. As noted above, the MNR is mindful of this issue and has clear guidelines for language and expression.

<sup>123</sup> The *National Hebdo* is the weekly FN publication, while *Présent* reflects the extreme Catholic-fundamentalist strand of politics. Its editor, Jean Madiran, spells out that it is paper '100 per cent committed to the fight for a French France', 22 April 1997. Both publications uncritically present the FN program in the language of the FN and tend to be pro-Le Pen, with less weight given to the *mégretiste* wing. *Présent* persists in denouncing an alleged agreement between the mainstream Right and the B'nai B'rith, in which the Right has allegedly agreed not to ally themselves with the FN in any circumstances. The anti-Semitic tone, alongside appalling cartoon-caricatures, highlights the deeply racist and anti-Semitic nature of the extreme right, especially when addressing its own electorate. Indeed, *Présent* is more openly and virulently anti-Semitic than the *National Hebdo*.

<sup>124</sup> *Présent*, 22 April 1997.

campaign: 'Chirac, c'est Jospin en pire'.<sup>125</sup> Le Pen argued that Chirac chose to dissolve the parliament to get a 'blank cheque' for five years in order to 'dissolve the French nation in Maastricht'.

**Table 2.1 FN election results: regional, national and European elections**

<i>Election</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Seats</i>
1973 Legislative	122 498	0.5	-
1974 Presidential	190 921	0.7	-
1978 Legislative	210 761	0.8	-
1981 Presidential	-	-	-
1981 Legislative	71 345	0.3	-
1984 European	2 227 837	11.0	10
1986 Legislative	2 727 870	9.7	35
1986 Regional	2 658 500	9.5	137
1988 Presidential	4 375 894	14.4	-
1988 Legislative	2 391 973	9.8	1
1989 European	2 154 005	11.9	10
1992 Regional	3 423 176	13.8	239
1993 Legislative	3 229 462	12.7	-
1994 European	2 050 086	10.5	11
1995 Presidential	4 656 107	15.3	-
1997 Legislative	3 827 544	15.0	1
1998 Regional	3 270 118	15.3	275
1999 European (FN)	1 005 225	5.7	5
1999 European (MNR)	578 774	3.3	-

Source: Perrineau, *Le Symptôme Le Pen*; 1998 regional elections from *Le Monde*, 17 March 1998; 1999 European Parliament elections from *Le Monde*, 15 June 1999.

The threats posed to the nation by Europe—or more accurately, the EU and EMU—dominated much of FN electioneering in the far right press. This was due, in part, to the context of the election, it being widely judged that Chirac called the poll in order to bolster his position given the prospect

<sup>125</sup> See for example *Le Monde*, 24 May 1997. Attacks on the Right were however accompanied by attacks on the Left, the FN portraying itself as the only alternative to the corrupt mainstream to ensure the survival of the nation—hence, 'le grand changement'.



of further austerity measures linked to meeting the EMU criteria over the next two years. According to the front-page headline of *Présent*: 'Chirac conceals the real question. Silence on the euro and the surrender of France'.<sup>126</sup> This attacked Chirac's election 'tribune' published in fourteen provincial newspapers, claiming that the actions of the political class he represented were governed only by self-interest and privilege, and ignored the good of the nation.<sup>127</sup> In Le Pen's traditional 1 May speech in Paris—an election speech, in this case—he claimed that Chirac had turned his back on de Gaulle's idea of Europe.<sup>128</sup> His call for a Europe made up of independent nation-states has distinct similarities with traditional Gaullist rhetoric on the question of European integration, focusing on the defence of the nation-state. Come the second round of the elections, the anti-Maastricht issue was to take centre stage.

*Présent* published Le Pen's 'tribune' in full. Above all, the FN was portrayed as the promoter of national sovereignty and independence, the defender of the nation. The major points of Le Pen's program called for the rescue of French sovereignty through rejecting Maastricht and globalisation; 'intelligent protectionism', giving jobs to the French; reversing the immigration trend through the modification of the nationality code and introduction of national preference; and the re-establishment of law and order ('public security and republican order') in particular in matters relating to 'corrupt politicians'.<sup>129</sup>

Unemployment and attacks on 'euro-globalisme' took priority over the more traditional issues of immigration. A *Présent* report on 14 May, covering Le Pen's appearance on *Club de la presse d'Europe 1*, reported that when interviewers on the program noted that he was no longer talking about immigration, Le Pen denied this—and referred to his Nice speech the previous evening! However the defence of the nation was the all-important pivotal theme, with abundant references to the values of the Republic.

A second set of campaign points were published in *Présent*, 29 April 1997: here one can note plenty of references to the multi-faceted nation, to be protected through a policy of 'national preference', economic protectionism and a rejection of supranational participation. The five-point campaign strategy called for:

#### *Social Justice*

- apply a system of national preference;
- end 'mondialisme', protect the national economy;

<sup>126</sup> *Présent*, 8 May 1997.

<sup>127</sup> *Présent*, 8 May 1997. *Présent* conceded that the Communists, Chevènement and de Villiers were also anti-EMU, but argued that Communists only opposed it in the name of the international proletariat, and de Villiers to ensure that the mainstream right would not lose anti-MTEU voters to the 'national opposition' (the FN).

<sup>128</sup> *Présent*, 3 May 1997.

- increase the minimum wage (SMIC);
- introduce a family-income.

#### *French First*

- national preference in all domains;
- defend French interests: re-establish national sovereignty, renegotiate European treaties, reject EMU, restore national frontiers;
- solve the 'problem' of immigration by reversing migratory flows, organising migrant repatriation, expelling illegals;
- reform citizenship law : '*être Français, cela s'hérite ou se mérite*'.

#### *Re-establishment of Republican order*

- equal rights for all citizens;
- security: bring back the death penalty, apply Republican law in the *banlieues*;
- use of more referenda.

#### *Giving the French their money back*

- reduce taxation, reduce public expenditure, limit state regulation;
- eradicate corruption.

#### *Preservation of national independence*

- defend French identity and its physical, intellectual and spiritual heritage;
- avoid the disappearance of the nation (in *euro-mondialisme*) by asserting French power in the international arena and ensuring French independence.

In the 570 constituencies contested, 132 FN candidates still remained after the first round—32 more than in 1993. Of the second-round contests, 76 were *triangulaires*, or three-way contests; 56 were head-to-head (23 with the Left; 33 with the Right).<sup>130</sup>

This put Le Pen in a position of some power. Initially he indicated that would prefer a Jospin victory.<sup>131</sup> This upset many of his supporters and pointed to internal FN disagreements.<sup>132</sup> Le Pen's supporters argued that the FN should be the basis for a new politics and that an alliance with the mainstream right would lead to disaffection of their left-wing support.<sup>133</sup> Le Pen eventually agreed

<sup>129</sup> *Présent*, 10 May 1997.

<sup>130</sup> Parties receiving over 12.5 per cent of the vote in the first round proceed to the second round. For figures and consolidation of the FN vote, see Shields, "*La Politique du pire*"

<sup>131</sup> See comments and analysis in *Libération*, 25 April 1997 and 23 May 1997.

<sup>132</sup> 'Mutiny in the FN', *Libération*, 19 July 1997, also reported in *Le Monde*, 22, 23, 24 July 1997.

<sup>133</sup> See Shields, "*La Politique du pire*", quoting Maréchal (supporting Le Pen). This official line was later confirmed at an FN seminar in July 1997.

not to endorse the Left in the second round, but positioned himself as 'arbiter'. FN voters, he stated, should consider which candidates would explicitly agree to the following positions to guarantee the 'survival of France': first, against Maastricht; second, for national preference.<sup>134</sup>

FN publications specifically targeted 16 candidates, listing Le Pen's 16 'proscriptions'—of which 3 were PS-PC and 13 RPR-UDF—and 8 'indulgences'—6 of which were RPR-UDF, 1 MPF, and 1 CNI.<sup>135</sup> Le Pen claimed that all 'indulgences' had committed to fight Maastricht.<sup>136</sup> His anti-EU position took centre stage: defence of the nation-state as a political as well as a cultural entity.

### 1998 regional elections

Le Pen's speech opening the FN's 1998 regional election campaign in Nice, 19 October 1997, portrayed '*une seule force d'opposition: Le Front national*'. Opposed to the '*socialo-communistes*', and depicting the parliamentary opposition (the Right) as powerless and 'imploding', the FN was the only national alternative: moreover, it was an alternative that worked! The 1998 slogan: '*la gestion FN, ça marche!*' was a direct reference to the four towns then controlled by the FN.

The language and imagery of the political nation recurred in the FN campaign, with a focus on national sovereignty and the 'betrayal of France' by its institutional, political and technocratic elites. Further, the FN laid claim to both national and republican values—Mégret stressing the link between the Republic and the Nation at an FN colloquium and in his election speeches.<sup>137</sup> While the FN represented the 'true values of the Republic', the state was imposing an anti-national strain of *la pensée unique* and increasing the division between the *pays réel* and *pays légal*. Nation and nationalism, according to Mégret, were part of the French revolutionary heritage which should not be denied or wiped out, and the FN was guardian of this heritage.<sup>138</sup>

*National Hebdo* editorialised strongly on the threat to national sovereignty posed by EMU. Its front page headline—'Final election before the EURO-route: Le Pen holds out his hand to France'—was followed by a long editorial pointing out that no further elections would take place between these regional elections and the introduction of the euro. At issue, then, was 'the survival of France'. The editorial attacked the political parties for not holding a referendum on the euro (although the 1993

<sup>134</sup> The slogan for the second round—*sortez les sortants*—was one of the various 'borrowings' from French political history: see also his '*soutien sans participation*' (support without participation), borrowed from Communist support for the 1936 Popular Front.

<sup>135</sup> See *Présent*, 31 May 1997, the last edition before second round.

<sup>136</sup> Also reported in *Le Monde*, 28 May 1997.

<sup>137</sup> *National Hebdo*, 5-11 February 1998, p.10. The article by F. Monestier on 'Les Vrais Valeurs de la République' (The True Values of the Republic), covered a colloquium run by Bruno Mégret on 'The Nation and the Republic' and opened by the four FN mayors.

<sup>138</sup> *National Hebdo*, 5-11 February 1998, p.10.

Maastricht Treaty had established EMU and its timetable).<sup>139</sup>

The real dilemma in the campaign resulted from Le Pen's six-point compromise offer to the Right in return for FN support.<sup>140</sup> Arguing that only an alliance with the FN would stop 'socialo-communist' regional presidents, Le Pen proposed a basis for discussion with a minimal platform.<sup>141</sup> Notably, this platform did not include the policy of national preference, at Mégret's insistence.

In five regions, the Right accepted the votes of the FN in order to retain power.<sup>142</sup> In the furore that followed, the mainstream figures involved were all expelled from their party (the UDF). These developments illustrate two conflicting tendencies. First, the alliances themselves indicate that some within the mainstream right are prepared to negotiate and work with the FN, and do not regard their political values and programs unpalatable enough to warrant rejection at the price of losing power. At the same time, the expulsion of these figures indicates the extent to which the FN is rejected by the national leadership as a fit, or electorally-appropriate, political ally.

### Left – Right? National!

Le Pen's closing speech at the Tenth FN Congress, 29-31 March 1997 in Strasbourg, finished with the rallying cry to the party faithful: '*Ni droite, ni gauche, France!*'.<sup>143</sup> The question of where the party 'fits' in the national spectrum, still commonly portrayed as a continuum from far left to far right, has been an issue both within and without the party ranks. A repositioning of the FN in the 1990s to stress the 'national', arguably to attract a broader following, has met with some success.<sup>144</sup> It has fed upon the divisive debates on immigration and European integration, where the multifaceted concept of the 'nation' is a central reference.

From its beginning as *la droite sociale et populaire*, inheritor of a national-populist strand of the French Right, situating itself on the Right while rejecting the 'extreme' label, the FN's self-definition has shifted—regardless of outside labels—to stress the 'national' aspect of its politics. Marcus sees the *Front national de jeunesse* (FNJ) summer school in September 1995 as marking a

<sup>139</sup> *National Hebdo*, 12-18 March 1998.

<sup>140</sup> On the dilemma for the Right, see *Libération*, 16 March 1998.

<sup>141</sup> *National Hebdo*, 19-25 March 1998. The main points included no higher taxes; lower expenses; strengthening security on transport and in schools; defence of national and regional cultural identity; reducing unemployment through training schemes; and the introduction of proportional representation.

<sup>142</sup> See W. Downs, 'The Front National as kingmaker ... again: France's regional elections of 15 March 1998', *Regional and Federal Studies*, Vol. 8 (3), Autumn 1998, pp.125-33. For condemnation of this course of action, see Ramonet, 'Néo-fascisme', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 1998.

<sup>143</sup> See complete text of the closing address published on FN web site, April 1997.

<sup>144</sup> This is supported by studies that indicate a broadening of the FN electorate: see for example Mayer, *Ces Français qui votent Le Pen*; Schain, 'The National Front and the French Party System'.

shift towards a new 'national' position.<sup>145</sup> The mainstream parties, according to this perspective, all advocate the same policies, while only the FN stands up for the French nation and national sovereignty. While the FN has always attacked both Left and Right—their early denunciation of the mainstream parties as the 'Band of Four' attests to this—Le Pen by the mid 1990s no longer claimed to represent the 'true' Right of French politics, but rather, an alternative national position.<sup>146</sup>

Le Pen's 'national' message was reinforced with the 1996 publication of Samuel Maréchal's *Ni droite, ni gauche, ... Français! Contre la pensée unique*.<sup>147</sup> The FN here no longer positioned itself within the traditions of the populist right, but simply as 'national'. While this may be attributed to the unwillingness of the mainstream right to be associated with the FN, at least at the national level, it would appear that the FN—and Le Pen in particular—sees greater scope for success through this strategy. While Le Pen's personal animosity towards Chirac is well-documented, this move suggests that the party sees more advantage in using the 'defence of the nation' to denounce what it refers to as the discredited and anti-national policies of the Establishment. Mayer also notes how the party in the 1990s attempted to overcome the Left-Right cleavage, positioning the FN against the other political mainstream parties and attacking them as the Establishment in collusion with the media.<sup>148</sup> By 1997 the FN had become the party of the National Alternative, or the National Opposition, as set out in the introduction to *300 mesures* back in 1993. This certainly came through clearly in the 1997 legislative elections and is a common theme in *National Hebdo*.

Only the FN, then, will ensure the survival of the nation: national preference and protectionism are the dual antidotes to the evils of immigration and globalisation. Also significant is its exploitation of the national idea, claiming to defend both the political and cultural understandings of nationhood. The FN utilises multiple levels of discourse and a sometimes sophisticated manipulation of language. One of the constant strands is the appeal to the cultural understanding of nationhood, embedded in French history and tradition. However it also draws on Republican traditions, with the language of national sovereignty and democracy exploited to ensure the continued survival of the nation, politically understood.

<sup>145</sup> Marcus, 'Advance or Consolidation?'.  
<sup>146</sup> It is worth noting the resonance of this new 'Third Way' rhetoric with that of the earlier fascist movements as described in Sternhell's work on the origins of French fascism. Le Pen's move may also, of course, have been designed to weaken the position of his increasingly ambitious deputy, Mégret, who was promoting alliances with the mainstream right as a means of attaining power.

<sup>147</sup> Paris, Alizés, 1996. Maréchal is Le Pen's son-in-law, and President of the FNJ.  
<sup>148</sup> Mayer, 'The French National Front', p.17. At the same time, it is clear that their only possibility of alliance is with elements from the Right.

In summary, the nation is the all-important basis for FN policy and increasingly has taken centre stage in its policy platforms. Whether denouncing Europe and globalisation, or immigration and cultural difference, the nation is the central point of reference, to be defended at all costs. Similarly, the scourges of corruption and crime, insecurity and poverty, are all cited as dangers to the national order. These messages met with some extraordinary successes, both in terms of winning votes and influencing mainstream debate.<sup>149</sup> This can be better understood through an examination of the meanings and power of the national idea in France. In the following chapter, the ideas of the FN are contextualised through an examination of the contemporary understandings of the nation and the challenges to it.

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<sup>149</sup> Perrineau estimates that 25 per cent of French voters have voted for the FN at least once since 1983. See *Le Symptôme Le Pen*, p.186.

### Chapter 3 Models of Nationhood: the Nexus of Politics and Culture

She [Germany] has a conception of the nation which is that of the *Volk*, that is to say, an ethnic conception. She must be helped to forge another idea of the nation, the idea of the nation of citizens, in order to have a better dialogue with France

Jean-Pierre Chevènement, Interior Minister, 2000<sup>1</sup>

Following the early successes of the FN in the early 1980s, its electoral results stabilised around the 15 per cent mark in the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> The party was increasingly accepted as part of political scene—its existence normalised and themes legitimised. Initially it was tempting to attribute the relative electoral success of the FN to the so-called 'protest vote'. Deepening recession, combined with high rates of unemployment, the fall of communism and in particular the sharp decline of the French Communist party, and more generally a public increasingly disenchanted with the established political parties—all these factors undoubtedly contributed to the gains made by the far right and strengthened the 'party of protest' interpretation. Others tended to see its success purely in terms of immigration and the associated themes of law and order, the fight against drugs and crime—a 'single-issue' phenomenon. However while the FN carries a strong anti-immigrant, or anti-foreigner message, analysis of its policies illustrate that it is not a single-issue party. Its racist and anti-immigrant discourse may have been pivotal to its earlier electoral successes, but its policy platform is now rooted in the broader questions of national identity and the nation-state.

As noted in the Introduction, this thesis posits that the FN has exploited French understandings of nationhood to its advantage in a period characterised by new challenges to the nation-state. The dominant political questions of the 1980s and 1990s—immigration and European integration—allowed the FN to manipulate concepts of nationhood and belonging, thus providing support for its policies and influencing the overall character of the debate. The party portrays itself as the defender of the nation-state: the stress is on an authoritarian, strong state and a total commitment to the preservation of French identity (according to the FN's own definition) within the framework of the sovereign nation-state. Claiming to represent the true popular spirit of the nation, the FN presents itself as the 'national alternative'. The party has always attacked the mainstream parties—'*la bande des quatre*'—and their policies on immigration, but has also become an increasingly strong opponent of globalisation and what it refers to as the forces of '*euro-mondialisme*'. This aspect

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<sup>1</sup> Since resigned over the Corsican issue. See *Libération*, 23 May 2000.

came to the fore in the mid-1990s, linked in part to the external shocks provoked by the end of the Cold War. Anxieties concerning German unification and the future of the EU—an organisation perceived as advancing France's interests and preserving an important national role in both regional and global politics—were brought to the forefront during the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty on European Union in 1992. Le Pen was a prominent 'no' campaigner in the referendum, portraying the treaty as ushering in the 'dissolution' of France into a 'European magma'.<sup>3</sup> While such anti-EU convictions are unsurprising, given the nationalist principles of the party, they have been stressed in the FN's 1990s programs and campaigns as part of an overall position that attacks both an increasingly interdependent Europe and the globalising forces of the free market.

This increasing emphasis on the multifaceted concept of the nation by the FN, and its resonance with the French electorate, illustrates a preoccupation both with questions relating to the internal aspect of nationhood (national identity and belonging), and the external aspect (the nation as a sovereign political unit). This chapter examines the concepts of nationhood, drawing on the 'two model' (civic-ethnic) approach. In the French context it analyses the accepted primary understanding of France as a 'civic' and secular nation and the strong nation-state nexus, as well as the nation as symbol of French grandeur. The chapter also introduces two important qualifications that complicate this reading and which have played a role in the FN's successes. First, political nationhood encompasses a cultural dimension: the idea of the 'neutral' state is a myth. In the French context, this encompasses the recognition of forced cultural assimilation, and the conscious forging of a national identity: official nation-building by the State. Second, the ethno-cultural strand of nationhood has been understated: a cultural understanding of nationhood persists and co-exists with the asserted civic understanding, even moving to the fore at various periods in French history. Increasingly, the FN has portrayed itself as a defender not only of a cultural reading of Frenchness but also of the political nation via its claim to protect national sovereignty and thus French national identity.

Examined through this lens, the FN is associated with the so-called crisis of national identity. Le Pen portrays himself as a strong defender of national identity, and propagates the comfortingly simple image of a homogenous, historically-rooted identity which undoubtedly has some appeal in

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<sup>2</sup> See FN election results in Chapter 2, Table 2.1, p.69.

<sup>3</sup> Paradoxically, elections to the European Parliament, based on proportional representation, have been favourable to the FN (and other smaller parties), allowing them representation at this level over two decades. Following its initial breakthrough in 1984, the FN has been represented in all EPs. See Table 2.1 for EP election results, and Chapter 8 for more details on the party's anti-EU campaigns.



the face of uncertainty in a period of rapid change. This appeal is bound up with the quasi-obsession with national identity in France in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>4</sup> Associated with this obsession is the question of (national) memory. A crisis of memory was identified alongside the crisis of national identity, and the hotly contested 1989 celebrations focused attention on the theme of nationhood. How should the nation's past be remembered? Central questions—'did 1989 signify the 'end of Revolution?; 'did the Revolution encompass 1793 as well as 1789?'—led to a stress on the importance of the commemoration of the past. A large number of significant 'national' anniversaries and official commemorations from the mid-1980s—including 1987 as the thousand-year anniversary of the crowning of the first Capetian king (and hence of France as constituting a nation for 1000 years) and the 1989 bicentenary—fuelled the memory-identity debate.<sup>5</sup> For many, these anniversaries also pointed to a crisis of forgetting: the old transmission methods were perceived as no longer work and national memory as fading. If this were the case, what symbols should be invoked to recall the nation? A number of works invoked the memory-identity couplet. Pascal Ory, in *Une nation pour mémoire*, argued that a nation is a memory, 'une belle histoire'.<sup>6</sup> Most importantly, Pierre Nora's *Lieux de mémoire* (Sites of Memory) with its multiple volumes on *La République*, *La Nation*, *Les France* elaborated on the subjects and objects that form the collective national memory.<sup>7</sup> In the *La Nation* volumes he noted the revitalisation of the sentiment of national belonging.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, the traditional model of 'Republican integration', the assimilation of foreigners into French society, was being challenged. With the recognition of settled ethnic minorities within France came a questioning of the process of assimilation and of the extent to which France could—and indeed should—absorb the new migrants. Both the value and practicality of assimilation were called into question and a new uncertainty developed concerning the future of French identity. Moreover, the discourse of French universalism and assimilation was confronted by an increase in diversity and pluralism, and by new multicultural philosophies that were based on the right to

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<sup>4</sup> Identity is a contested notion—the existence of multiple, mutable, overlapping or even antagonistic identities is acknowledged; however national identity—that is, identity based on one's adherence to a particular nation—was at the forefront of the debates in France.

<sup>5</sup> See Alain Kimmé, *Vous avez-dit France?* (Did you say France?), Paris, Hachette/CIEP, 1992. He noted that the 1989 anniversary in particular bought a consensus on the pre-eminence of universalism.

<sup>6</sup> P. Ory, *Une nation pour mémoire, 1889, 1939, 1989*, Paris, PFNSP, 1992.

<sup>7</sup> P. Nora (ed.), *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Paris, Gallimard. Such 'sites' include commemorations, monuments, festivals, songs, flags and textbooks. The largest section, in the enormous three volumes devoted to *Les France*, is that on conflict and division: pointing to historical disunity and the importance of the politics of memory in France. See also for a detailed examination, Gildea, *The Past in French History*.

<sup>8</sup> For significant works on national identity, see also Introduction, notes 6 to 8.

difference and the politics of recognition. While the politics of group identity was also at issue in other countries at the time, it posed a particularly difficult problem in France, where the nation was conceived as 'one and indivisible', the citizen-state relationship was privileged and ethnicity discounted in the public sphere. For some, then, the 'myth' of one indivisible republic had been challenged, if not overthrown altogether.

Finally, the continuing process of European integration culminated in the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, and a subsequent referendum in September 1992. The political import of the Treaty and its consequences for traditional functions of the nation-state became clearer as the referendum debate progressed. Alongside a contested erosion of nation-state sovereignty, the processes of globalisation also fuelled the arguments of those who claimed that the French nation-state was under threat.

These concerns have close associations with the programs and rhetoric of the far right. At the core of the FN's nationalist beliefs lies a particular concept of the French nation—an ethnically determined unit—associated with xenophobic and racist policies. However the party has also drawn on the dominant political understanding and utilised Republican language to justify nationalist policies, and this too has formed a basis for their support. The concept of the nation needs to be explored in this context—and closely allied and inter-linked with this, that of the nation-state. This is a famously contested area and the lack of a generally accepted definition of both nation and nationalism is well known. However there are a number of useful approaches and critiques that are helpful in explaining the multi-faceted nature and understandings of nationhood. Further, the French context is crucial, both in its particular emphases and its traditional bond to the democratic state order. This chapter will analyse several concepts central to an understanding of the FN's appeal. First, it will scan the differing theoretical constructions of the nation, and following from this, the related concepts of nationalism. Finally, it will examine the particular construction of the nation-idea in France.

### **Nation and nationalism: theoretical approaches**

The concepts of both nation and nationalism are difficult to pin down. Not only is their ideological basis contested, there is no consensus on definition, nor on their relationship, in the historical or contemporary literature. In the aftermath of World War Two, it was commonplace to describe both

nations and nationalism as *passé*, no longer relevant.<sup>9</sup> In particular, the destruction wrought by war and the crimes of German Nazis led to a total discrediting of nationalism, and the wish, on the part of many Europeans, to transcend the nation-state form. In this context, and in the dominant ideological conflicts of the Cold War period, it is perhaps unsurprising that the study of nationhood and nationalism was largely disregarded and even judged as redundant.

However, as Benedict Anderson points out in the preface to his acclaimed *Imagined Communities*, this neglected area of research was transformed in the 1980s, and has continued to be a focus of study into the new century.<sup>10</sup> In the past two decades scholars such as Armstrong, Breuilly, Gellner, Smith and Hobsbawm, among others, have made significant contributions to a more sophisticated study of the creation and development of nations and nationalism.<sup>11</sup>

### *The nation*

Anthony Smith and John Hutchinson note that the nation is contested in two ways: in rival academic theories and definitions, and as a form of collective identity that competes and overlaps with other identities.<sup>12</sup> This chapter will concentrate on the rival theoretical approaches and definitions, given the FN's primary preoccupation with the nation-idea.

The history of the idea of the nation from its medieval origins to the present day has been traced in some detail.<sup>13</sup> From the origin of the word in the Italian '*natio*', literally, 'something born', it became a community of opinion in the medieval universities of Europe and then acquired the meaning of an elite before its crucial transformation in early sixteenth-century England to denote a sovereign people. This semantic transformation, Greenfeld claims, 'signaled the emergence of the

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<sup>9</sup> This was not confined to that period: the Enlightenment era was also thought to herald the dawn of a new era where regressive and ascriptive ties were to be renounced in favour of a liberating discourse of freedom and rationality.

<sup>10</sup> B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev.ed., London, Verso, 1991.

<sup>11</sup> Anderson claims in *Imagined Communities* that this research has rendered much of the traditional literature on the subject obsolete. In general, the literature on the nation now looks to the subjective aspects of nationhood—the nation as an imagined construct. The role of the state in nation-building and the role of modernisation have also been stressed. Anderson's famous definition of the nation illustrates aspects of this interpretation: the nation as 'an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign', p.6.

<sup>12</sup> See J. Hutchinson and A. Smith (eds), *Nationalism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, p.4. This is not to deny the importance of other forms of collective identity—race, class, gender—whose interplay with national consciousness is complex and ambiguous. However the analysis of the FN programs and electorate indicate that it is the appeal to 'nation' that both underpins their programs and is a determining factor in its support.

<sup>13</sup> For analysis of the origins and changing meanings of the word, see Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, pp.4-9.

first nation in the world ... and launched the era of nationalism'.<sup>14</sup> The final modification came with the emergence of particularistic nationalisms, a further shift in meaning to signify a **unique** sovereign nation.

Thus the nation, which earlier denoted an elite grouping of people, gradually moved towards the idea of membership in a broader community: a sovereign and then unique people. While there is no analysis of why the concept proved so durable, it does highlight the bond between the modern idea of the nation and sovereignty: between a form of national identity and political power.

Early studies of the nation looked to objective characteristics of a common language, culture or 'race', with Stalin's stringent list of compulsory characteristics perhaps best exemplifying this trend.<sup>15</sup> Later scholars have stressed the subjective or 'imagined' nature of nationhood. At its extreme, the nation may be seen as purely ascriptive. English historian Hugh Seton-Watson, for example, concludes after a major study of the question, that nation exists when a significant majority of a community believes it to exist.<sup>16</sup>

While this is overly vague and offers little assistance in itself in defining the 'nation', it does illustrate the extent to which the national community is a social construct. However there is disagreement on the bases for its imagining, or construction. The major scholars in the area tend to be grouped into a number of different categories according to the bases of their definitions. On one side are those who look to the ethnic origins of nations: their language, culture and history.<sup>17</sup> On the other side are the 'modernists' who stress the essentially modern aspect of the nation, and study the impetus for the development (or at its more extreme, construction) of the nation.<sup>18</sup> Smith makes a

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<sup>14</sup> Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p.6.

<sup>15</sup> J.Stalin, 'The Nation' in *Marxism and the National Question*, quoted in Hutchinson and Smith, (eds), *Nationalism*, pp.18-21. His definition of a nation as 'a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture' is followed by the qualification that if one of these characteristics is absent, then the nation ceases to exist.

<sup>16</sup> H.Seton-Watson, *Nations and States. An Enquiry into the Origins of States and the Politics of Nationalism*, London, Methuen, 1977. He states that 'a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation or behave as if they form one' (p.5).

<sup>17</sup> See Anthony Smith's book of the same name. He is usually cited as the foremost proponent of this thesis.

<sup>18</sup> On cultural homogeneity as a requirement of modern industrial society, see in particular Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*. On the potential for construction of a nation, see for example the instrumentalist approach of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983. Invented traditions, according to Hobsbawm, attempt to 'establish continuity with a suitable historic past' (p.1). He argues that the history that 'becomes part of the fund of knowledge or the ideology of nation, state or movement is not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalised by those whose function it is to do so' (p.13). He uses the example of the French Third Republic in forming images of the Revolution—see Chapter 7, 'Mass-

somewhat different distinction, using similar terminology, although situating himself outside of the main paradigm. The first school of thought he classes the 'perennialist', incorporating a 'primordial' outlook. According to this reading, nations are based on ties of language, race, religion, ethnicity and territory: they are an extension of kinship. Further, such an approach views the nation as a natural, pre-determined entity, only needing some catalyst to call it into being. The second approach he classifies as 'modernist', and this would include the work of Anderson and Gellner. This approach views nations as being neither natural nor necessary, but rather a product of modern developments, of capitalism, bureaucracy and secularism. Modernists, then, see the nation as an 'offshoot of modernity and modern civilisation'.<sup>19</sup>

While this contest is unresolved, there is clear evidence that the nation-building policies of the modern state have influenced the development of the national idea. Moreover, Anderson's compelling arguments on the effects of print-capitalism and the rise of secularism on the development, if not construction, of an imagined community cannot be discounted. The contemporary nation is clearly an imagined community: at the very least, this is presumed by its scale. It is also political: the sense of nationhood pre-supposes the desire for a form of political self-determination. But the extent to which the nation is built upon pre-existing ethnic ties and practices does not necessarily have crucial bearing on its continuing strength as an idea. Some of the most ardent defenders of the nation-idea freely admit the important influence of nation-building measures and the conscious choice of a national story or history. Just as there is no single collective memory, so there is no single idea of the nation. Further, if the nation is constructed as a myth, then this very construction serves the ends of the community that elaborates it. A central question for this thesis is the content of the national imaginary: what ideas does the nation-envelope contain?

Intellectual thought on this question has been dominated by a crucial divide since the 1800s: that of the 'civic-territorial' nation versus the 'ethno-cultural' nation.<sup>20</sup> The recognition that contemporary

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Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914', pp.263-307. The conscious construction of the nation, its associated symbols and histories, is at odds with those who point to practices and rituals rooted in tradition and history.

<sup>19</sup> A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986. He rejects the assumptions of both perennialists and modernists and places a strong emphasis on the importance of the past—an ethnic past—in the development of nations. This may be described as a position between the primordialists and the modernists. He uses the concept of an *ethnie*, defined as possessing some of the following elements: collective name; common myth of descent; shared history; distinctive shared culture; association with a specific territory; a sense of solidarity. Without the prior existence of an *ethnie*, he argues, there cannot be nations or nationalism: thus states and nations 'need an ethnic core to be durable'.

<sup>20</sup> For an overview of this divide, see P. Alter, *Nationalism*, trans. S. McKinnon-Evans, London, Edward Arnold, 1989, pp.14-18.

nations are a blend of the two does not weaken the logic of this explanatory conceptualisation. Either in order to explain its development and make sense of the nation-idea, or to bolster political aims, politicians and scholars have established this split into differing 'types', setting out two contrasting models, each associated with diametrically opposed characteristics. Thus the political-cultural split is evinced in such common couplets as:

Civic	Ethnic
Political	Cultural
Inclusive	Exclusive
Voluntaristic	Deterministic
Universal	Particular
French	German
West	East

The political nation, then, is inclusive, where membership is not based on ethnic criteria but is open to all, regardless of background. In its ideal type it is a voluntary community composed of free and equal citizens. The characteristics of the political model of the nation, according to Smith, are that it is an imagined political community, sovereign, obeying common laws within a defined territory. Inherent in this model is the idea of citizenship as active social and political participation. The ethnic model, in opposition, is characterised by a common culture, with shared meanings and values, and implies a certain level of cultural homogeneity. At its most extreme, it is exclusive, its membership based on presumed descent and blood ties; belonging is determined at birth and is immutable.<sup>21</sup>

A similar dual categorisation is put forward in the guise of *Staatsnation* and *Kulturnation*, as first suggested by the German historian Meinecke in 1908. He counter-poses nations grounded on political rights and made up of politically aware citizens to those where membership is not determined by choice but by cultural criteria—a common language, religion, descent.<sup>22</sup> Both categories are viewed as emanating from different philosophical traditions: the French-style political nation having its basis in the Enlightenment,<sup>23</sup> while the cultural category is classed as a

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<sup>21</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, pp.8-15.

<sup>22</sup> F.Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*, quoted in Alter, *Nationalism*, p.9. Meinecke and Renan are generally viewed as celebrating the cultural and political view of the nation respectively.

<sup>23</sup> France is often referred to as the *Staatsnation par excellence*, its birth as a nation-state based on the principles set out in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* and still explicitly referred to in the preamble to the constitution of the Fifth Republic.

legacy of the Romantics, particularly the German philosopher Herder, who viewed a common language and culture as the basis for national consciousness and identity. This is closely bound up with German history, where the consciousness of belonging to the nation preceded the formation of the German state.<sup>24</sup>

As noted in Chapter 1, this bipolar comparison is also used by Rogers Brubaker to explain the politics of citizenship in the two states—citizenship models which epitomise the opposing understandings of the political and ethnic models of nationhood, hence *jus soli* in France and *jus sanguinis* in Germany.<sup>25</sup> As French nationhood is understood primarily as a political concept, 'conceived in relation to the territorial and institutional framework of the state' (p.1), so French citizenship is state-centred and assimilationist, automatically (in theory) transforming immigrants into citizens. German nationhood, in contrast, is conceived as an ethno-cultural community of descent, and this citizenship can only be inherited. The dominant 'cultural idiom', Brubaker contends, has determined the form of citizenship in each country.

This insight is valuable in assessing the strength of the French attachment to a political model of nationhood, and particularly in understanding the potency of the assimilationist-integrative approach in immigration policy. It also highlights the significance of the link to the state, as will be discussed in more detail below. At this point, it is useful briefly to comment on the frequent interchange—and, arguably, misuse—of 'nation' and 'state'. The state, in Weber's classical definition, is the 'territorial entity which lays successful claim to the legitimate use of violence' and, as Walker Connor asserts, 'the major political subdivision of the globe'.<sup>26</sup> The two entities are not necessarily congruent.<sup>27</sup> Some political theorists stress the state-centred nature of the nation. Giddens, for example, states that the nation only exists 'when a state has a unified administrative reach over the territory over which its sovereignty is claimed'.<sup>28</sup> He refers to the nation-state as a 'bordered power-container' and so views the nation as intrinsically linked to the development of the

<sup>24</sup> This duality is also reflected in the German definitions of societies as *Gemeinschaft* or *Gesellschaft*: the former (also referred to as *Volksgemeinschaft*) pertaining to cultural communities and the latter to political communities.

<sup>25</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*. The central thesis of the book is that differing understandings of nationhood in France and Germany underpin their opposing approaches to citizenship, and that this is particularly notable in relation to the politics of immigrant citizenship.

<sup>26</sup> W. Connor, 'A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group, is a ...', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 1 (4), 1978, pp.379-88. On the distinction between nation and state, see also J. Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1982, particularly the conclusion.

<sup>27</sup> I would also take issue those who describe countries such as Japan as an unusual example of the 'perfect' nation-state.

modern capitalist state.<sup>29</sup> This perspective incorporates both power and territory: the Weberian monopoly of legitimate forms of violence and the 'boundedness', finite nature of the nation-state. Statehood, then, is joined to nationhood via citizenship.

The two-model approach is theoretical—and problematic.<sup>30</sup> While it provides a useful analytical base, over-simplification of this model makes it an easy target for criticism. In practice, all nations have elements of both political and ethnic principles.<sup>31</sup> Maxim Silverman has argued the models should not be regarded as polar opposites, in direct contradiction with each other.<sup>32</sup> This is certainly correct: both models contain elements of culture, a point also made strongly by Will Kymlicka and the liberal nationalist school of thought.<sup>33</sup> The two models overlap and have common features, including an historical homeland or territory; common historical myths and memories; a national economy; a mass public culture; and citizens with equal rights and duties and mobility across the national territory. Hence the generic nation may be defined as:

a named human population, sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members.<sup>34</sup>

The differentiating elements are the nature and relative power of the various features: a generic definition cannot identify the particular strength, salience or meaning of these various features in the national context. The nation, then, is determined in part according to the relationship between the two elements: 'Conceptually, the nation has come to blend two sets of dimensions, the one civic

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<sup>28</sup> A. Giddens, *A contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism, The Nation-State and Violence*, Cambridge, Polity, 1985, p.119.

<sup>29</sup> It would appear that such a definition of the nation cannot include such groupings as the Jews or the Kurds. Such communities can only be described in terms of culture—informed by a unique sense of history, language and religion. In a sense they are self-ascribed: they exist as collective, named identities due to their choice and their will to belong. However the quest for political self-determination is evident in both cases.

<sup>30</sup> Critiques of the model will be dealt with in the following sections on nation and nationalism in France. Silverman's critique in *Deconstructing the Nation* is particularly trenchant.

<sup>31</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, refers to 'an inherent instability in the very concept of nation which appears to be driven ... back and forth between the two poles of ethnic and state which it seeks to subsume and transcend', p.150.

<sup>32</sup> Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation*. The two models should not be regarded as opposites, he argues, the rational Enlightenment model versus emotional German romanticism, universalism versus particularism, contractual versus ethnic, but need to be considered as an integral unit.

<sup>33</sup> W. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: a liberal theory of minority rights*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995.

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, p.14.



and territorial and the other ethnic and genealogical, in varying proportions'.<sup>35</sup> These are explored in their French context later in the chapter.

### *Nationalism*

Just as the concept of nation is multi-faceted and used in a variety of meanings, so there are many interpretations and differing forms of nationalism. There is even a debate on whether it merits the description of an ideology: an 'ism'. Nationalism is certainly a hybrid. It changes through space and time, and varies according to political and philosophical underpinnings: there can, arguably, be liberal nationalism and fascist nationalism, and it would be difficult to draw out many similarities based on the nationalist label. Certainly there is no one founding intellectual of nationalism, nor a core text that sets out its basic premises. Moreover, it can be misleading to use the writings of nationalist thinkers themselves. Nevertheless the philosophers Rousseau, Herder, Fichte and Hegel have all contributed to our understanding of nationalism, and there is a general consensus that it is a modern phenomenon.<sup>36</sup>

The term 'nationalism' was first used by German philosopher Johann Herder in 1774, but was not in general usage until the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>37</sup> In France its first usage appears to be by Abbé Barruel in 1798,<sup>38</sup> although it was not widely used until the 1890s when it was adopted by sections of the Right. Nationalism is a phenomenon of both the Left and the Right in France, but is based on differing sets of premises for each, as will be explored.<sup>39</sup>

There is a two-sidedness to nationalism. It can be a liberating force when placed in the context of democratic struggles for self-determination against an invading or dictatorial power. However the post-war consensus held that nationalism—far from being a liberating discourse—incorporated aggressive chauvinistic and xenophobic tendencies, dangers all too apparent in twentieth-century history. The 'dark side' of nationalism—its inherent dangers—was stressed early by such writers as Lord Acton and later by scholars such as Kedourie.<sup>40</sup> A bitter critic of nationalism, Kedourie viewed it as an inescapably evil force, a response to the economic, political and intellectual changes

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<sup>35</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, p.15.

<sup>36</sup> See A.Birch, *Nationalism and national integration*, London, Unwin Hyman, 1989.

<sup>37</sup> Alter, *Nationalism*, p.7. See also E.Kamenka (ed.), *Nationalism. The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, Canberra, ANU Press, 1973.

<sup>38</sup> See A.Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, London, Duckworth, 1971, p.167.

<sup>39</sup> See in particular Jenkins, *Nationalism in France*.

<sup>40</sup> Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, p.8.

wrought by modernity, and linked nationalism with irrationalism and political messianism.<sup>41</sup> As noted, the FN is commonly described as a nationalist movement, a label that implies intrinsically negative characteristics. Nationalist, extreme right, and neo-fascist are terms that are commonly used interchangeably, thereby obscuring the fact that nationalism is not necessarily a destructive movement.

A more positive view of nationalism is posited by scholars such as Yael Tamir, who attempts to reconcile liberal and nationalist beliefs.<sup>42</sup> Thus 'liberal nationalism' is not an oxymoron, or dichotomy between the reasonable and the irrational; liberalism and nationalism are closer than is generally believed. Further, the state plays a significant—and legitimate—role in promoting national culture and language. According to this view, culture is intrinsic to both political and ethnic models of nationhood. Tamir admits that national ties and values play an important role in constituting identity, but emphasises the role of choice and individual freedom—hence the 'liberal' aspect of nationalism as non-aggressive, inclusive and capable of accommodating change. Kynlicka notes a 'growing consensus' around the legitimacy of forms of liberal nationalism, citing the work of Miller, Tamir and Taylor, amongst others.<sup>43</sup> He argues that the Republican alternative—a unitary Republican citizenship—with 'traditional pretensions to ethnocultural neutrality' is no longer sustainable and that the liberal multicultural model has become dominant.<sup>44</sup> This, however, is not the case in France, as will be examined below.<sup>45</sup>

Nationalism should be distinguished from patriotism, or love of one's country—a more benign sentiment that is not necessarily linked to political action. Nationalism is a political phenomenon above all. Smith highlights the political aspect of nationalism in distinguishing between national sentiment and nationalism: nationalism is a political doctrine, 'an ideological

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<sup>41</sup> E.Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford, Blackwell, 1993. Kedourie sees nationalism as an evil force, based on German philosophical roots. He explicitly rejects the classification of civic/ethnic types, a 'good' versus a 'bad', arguing that violence is inherent in the nationalist project. He also denies the possibility of a liberal nationalism based on tolerance and individual rights.

<sup>42</sup> Y.Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1993. Aspects of this argument are undeniable, and it may be that the positives of nationalism need to be more clearly articulated in opposition to the nationalism of the extreme right.

<sup>43</sup> *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.39-45. See also D.Miller, *On Nationality*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995; C.Taylor, 'The Politics of Recognition' in A.Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp.25-74. The recognition that the state is not neutral, but is heavily weighted in favour of the majority group, lends support to a politics of liberal multiculturalism.

<sup>44</sup> *Politics in the Vernacular*, p.43.

<sup>45</sup> Further, the FN does not share the moderate vision of a liberal, open nationalism and a democratic dilemma arises when such values are not shared.

movement for the attainment and maintenance of self-government and independence on behalf of a group, some of whose members conceive it to constitute an actual or potential "nation" like others'.<sup>46</sup>

As a political movement, nationalism comprises two related components. First, nationalists work towards the formation and/or the maintenance of the nation-state as the political representative of the nation, thus nationalism refers to the desire of a nation (however conceived) for self-determination, usually in the form of a nation-state. In Gellner's words, the core of nationalism is a 'political principle which holds that the political and the national be congruent'.<sup>47</sup> Second, nationalists accord total primacy to the preservation of national identity and the interests of the nation.

Both of these aspects immediately raise the question of how the national unit—the nation—may be defined, or imagined. Any movement espousing a nationalist doctrine is likely to make use of—or create—a powerful idea of 'nationhood' to further its political aspirations. Both aspects also point to the centrality of the state. Indeed, while Smith asserts that nationalism necessarily entails affection for the **nation**, it is difficult to unravel the nation/state nexus, especially in cases such as France, where not only did the formation of the national state precede the emergence of the (political) nation, but the state is seen as representing the nation.

Thus in utilising 'nationalist' as a descriptor of the FN, and in order to understand the multi-faceted nature of nationalism, it is useful to refer back to a dual concept of the nation. Kohn splits the phenomenon of nationalism into 'Western' and 'Eastern' types, arguing that Western nationalism is based on concepts of individual liberty and rational cosmopolitanism.<sup>48</sup> Further, it is inherently more liberal because state preceded the nation. The Eastern model is more illiberal, hostile to democracy—perhaps because economic and social conditions that might allow nationalism and liberty to coalesce did not yet exist. It is at once imitative of and hostile to the Western model. This categorisation is taken to task by Smith, who argues that, rather than use geographic terminology, the classification should be based on a 'voluntarist' versus 'organic' interpretation.<sup>49</sup> The voluntaristic nation, made up of politically aware citizens, is counter-posed to the determinist

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<sup>46</sup> Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, pp.171-4.

<sup>47</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p.1. He takes a functional approach to the development of nationalism, stressing its importance to the development of the modern nation-state and viewing it as a conscious response to modernisation and industrialisation.

<sup>48</sup> H.Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York, Collier-Macmillan, 1967.

<sup>49</sup> Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, pp.196-8—although he concedes that the philosophical distinction is useful.

model, where the nation is not chosen, but a given, based on a common heritage, language, religion or birth—still closely linked with Kohn's classification of nationalisms. Accordingly, Smith breaks down theories of nationalism into two categories based on his perennialist-modernist categorisation of the nation.<sup>50</sup>

While nationalism may be classified according to the type of 'nation' it represents—and indeed nationalist movements such as the FN are likely to promote such an understanding—other scholars discount this relationship. Breuilly, in his 1982 *Nationalism and the State*, takes a realist approach in stressing that nationalism is a form of politics—and therefore is primarily concerned with power—and that the modern state is the most important feature in that context, in that power is primarily about control of the state.<sup>51</sup> He argues against the theories of nationalism predicated on nationalist-dependent (i.e. held by nationalists themselves), psychological, functional and identity approaches. Nationalism, according to Breuilly, is not connected with national identity, but with power. While he admits the importance of a distinctive cultural identity,<sup>52</sup> he underlines the key role played by the state in shaping nationalism.

The rebirth of more virulent nationalisms post-1989 appears to give credence both to those who focus on the power of the exclusive nature of national belonging and identity, with renewed calls for autonomy based on ethnic claims, and to those who interpret nationalism in terms of power politics. Contemporary world politics appears to support the claim that national identity is a major—perhaps the major—focus of collective identity in the contemporary world.<sup>53</sup> The breakdown of former states into separate so-called nation-states—the former Yugoslavia being a tragic example of this process—calls into question the legitimacy of the Wilsonian right of national self-determination. Yet the nationhood being claimed by such communities differs markedly from that invoked in France. In the French context, the appeal of the FN's claim to represent the nation, alongside the national responses to the immigrant integration and European integration debates,

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<sup>50</sup> Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations*. He admits that nationalism is a modern phenomenon, but argues that the 'ethnic roots' of a nation must be studied and understood as determinants on the nature and limits of modern nationalism and nations.

<sup>51</sup> Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*. See his definition, p.2: '... nationalism is used to refer to political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such action with nationalist arguments'.

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 16 of *Nationalism and the State*.

<sup>53</sup> Smith refers to it as 'perhaps the most fundamental and inclusive', *National Identity*, p.143. He attributes this to the ubiquity of nations and the division of the world into nation-states (that is, states which claim to be nations), linked to the ideas of popular sovereignty and democracy. Such arguments are grounded in the perceived reality of independent nation-states. Other forms of identity, he argues, may influence but have rarely undermined the potency of national identity. The 'end of ideology' argument has also been used to buttress this development and focus attention on identity politics as crucial in the 1990s.

suggests that the two models of nationhood are a determining factor in the persistence of the national.

### **Nationhood in France: the two-model approach**

While regional demands in France have not been lacking, France has long defined itself as a 'one and indivisible'. The abundance of literature invoking and questioning the continued existence of a French national identity in the 1980s and 1990s, especially around the bicentennial of the Revolution, attests to its continuing centrality in French thought. However, the concept of the nation is slippery. Raspail in *Le Figaro* may ask 'Will we still be French in thirty years?', with the implication that French national identity contains some unchanging essence, that identity itself is static—and more besides, the article promoting an essentially racist view of a threatening Islamic 'invasion'.<sup>54</sup> But the question is more complex, particularly given the quasi-appropriation of 'the nation' by the extreme right. Who can lay claim to the French nation? What are its determining characteristics? Is it under threat? Finally, why has the nationalism of the FN proved so appealing? The multiple meanings that are contained in the French nation-envelope—both complementary and apparently opposing—need to be drawn out to place the debate over immigrant and European integration in context.

The organising theme of the FN, as examined in Chapter 2, is the defence of the nation, defined according to both political and ethno-cultural understandings. The understanding of nation and national identity in France—and perceived threats to their continued existence—provide one explanation for the success of the far right in that country. The idea of the nation is central to French political discourse and this thesis argues that its use / misuse by the far right in contemporary debate has significant appeal based upon a long tradition and reinforced by current political, economic and social developments.

The following sections do not attempt a comprehensive description of the evolution of the concept of nationhood in France. This would be to underestimate the complexity and mutations of the idea, as well as imposing a linear historical view that does not necessarily apply. Rather, I aim to illustrate that the idea is multi-faceted with overlapping and contradictory meanings and histories, claimed by different groups within the political spectrum.

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<sup>54</sup> Raspail, 'Serons-nous encore Français dans trente ans?'.

As noted in the Introduction, the 'received version' of the nation in France is that it exemplifies the civic-political model. The French nation is an inclusive entity, open to all, where belonging is based on choice, not on determinism. It is, moreover, the basis for democracy and sovereignty. The 'two-model approach' is used to differentiate the French from the German nation, with each country taking on the mantle of the civic and the ethnic model respectively.

The proponents of such a view refer primarily to two seminal texts: namely the 1789 Declaration and Renan's celebrated 1882 address, 'What is a nation?', where objective criteria are renounced in favour of a will to belong.<sup>55</sup> These texts are generally used to bolster the political understanding of nationhood as based on choice—in Renan's terms, a 'daily plebiscite'. Noiriel, in his classic work on immigration in France, refers to the influence of Renan's address and other such 'founding myths' on French intellectual thought as follows:

one can see that, over the long term, intellectual reflection on the national question (and hence immigration) in France has been constantly trapped in a system of thought structured by the opposition between contract and origin.<sup>56</sup>

Along with other scholars such as Silverman, he points to the dual understanding of the nation inherent in Renan's text and the need for more critical analysis.

A second crucial part of the understanding of the French nation as a political construct is that the nation takes its political form in the secular and rational state. In relation to this state, the nation is made up of equal individual citizens, with no intermediate organisations to mediate between the state and the citizen. Thus the citizen-state nexus in France is both direct and central. Intermediary organisations based on notions of community are met with distrust, if not hostility. As will be examined in the following chapters, this has led to a stress on formal citizenship as the basis for belonging and an approach which can claim to disregard questions of cultural difference. Hence the claim that 'the Republic does not welcome communities, it only recognises citizens'.<sup>57</sup> Citizenship is the bond between statehood and nationhood.

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<sup>55</sup> On such an approach as 'typically French', see R. Aron, 'Is Multinational Citizenship Possible?', *Social Research*, Vol. 41, 1974, pp. 638-56. He notes that his approach to the question of multinational citizenship — to consult the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen — 'was no doubt typically French', p. 638.

<sup>56</sup> Noiriel, *Le Creuset français*, p. 28. In Chapter 1 he sets out the influence of the two-fold model — 'un système de pensée structurée par l'opposition contrat/origine' — on intellectual reflection on French nationhood.

<sup>57</sup> See Robert Bistolfi in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 1994, 'Façonner un modèle européen d'intégration' (Fashioning a European model of integration).

A third element of this version, tied to the incarnation of the nation in the state, is the idea of France as '*la grande nation*', a first among equals with a '*mission civilisatrice*' (civilising mission) and a particular claim to greatness and grandeur.<sup>58</sup> De Gaulle's writings and speeches exemplify the idea both of France's illuminating quality and mission, and its inherent grandeur, from the idea that France was 'devoted to an eminent and exceptional destiny' to his assertion that 'France cannot be France without grandeur'.<sup>59</sup> By the same token, France's current foreign minister refers to France as a power with a global reach, offering an alternative model to the world.<sup>60</sup>

The following sections examine and critique the dominant 'political' understanding of the nation, and explore the less-identified cultural aspects of this understanding, as well as the more explicit secondary ethno-cultural understanding of the nation in France. This analysis places FN policy opposing the 'destruction of the nation' in historical and cultural context.

#### *France as a political nation: sovereignty, statehood and citizenship*

The 'received version' of the French nation is that it exemplifies the civic-territorial model. This primary understanding is epitomised in the Larousse dictionary definitions of the nation. While the dictionary entry describes two possibilities or prototypes of the nation, both include the 'political' dimension. The first definition emphasises the cultural and particular attributes of the nation as a 'group of human beings living in the same territory, belonging to community of origin, culture, traditions sometimes language, and constituting a political community'.<sup>61</sup> The second emphasises political unity and sovereignty: the nation as an 'abstract, collective and indivisible entity, distinct from the individuals who form it and the holder of sovereignty'.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> French historian Michelet in *Le Peuple* states that 'France is unique in everything, superior in its intellectual power and its overall achievements to all other nations'. Quoted by Z. Sternhell, 'The Political Culture of nationalism' in R. Tombs (ed.), *Nationhood and Nationalism in France. From Boulangism to the Great War 1889-1918*, London, Harper Collins Academic, 1991.

<sup>59</sup> The much-quoted opening from his *Mémoires de Guerre. L'Appel, 1940-1942* (War Memoirs. Call to Honour), Paris, Plon, 1954, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> See Hubert Védrine, *Les Cartes de la France à l'heure de la mondialisation* (France's Cards at the Time of Globalisation), Paris, Fayard, 2000, quoted in T. Judt, 'The French Difference', *New York Review of Books*, April 12 2001, pp. 18-23.

<sup>61</sup> *Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopédique Larousse*, Paris, Librairie Larousse, 1984.

<sup>62</sup> *Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopédique Larousse*.

While a 'blend' of political and cultural in the composition of modern nations is generally asserted, France is still frequently quoted as the model civic-territorial nation.<sup>63</sup> The idea of opposing models, with France's inclusive model held up as the ideal, is used in contemporary French political debate: in a 2000 radio interview the (then) French Interior Minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, directly and controversially compared German conceptions of the nation—that of the ethnically determined '*Volk*'—to the superior French version. He went on to suggest that Germany had still not cured itself of its Nazi past and needed help to forge a more inclusive version of the nation which would allow better relations between the two countries.<sup>64</sup>

The territorial-political reading claims strong foundations in French history, starting with the naming of France as an identifiable country at least as far back as 987. The historical continuity of the country can be taken to extreme (and selective) lengths—the foreign ministry outlines a continuous two thousand year history on its web site, from 58BC!<sup>65</sup> 1987 saw the celebration of France's '1000<sup>th</sup> birthday'—the anniversary of the crowning of Hugues Capet on 3 July 987.<sup>66</sup> *Le Point*'s depiction of this event as 'the day when France was born' is perhaps questionable—but the idea of a unified national territory with a long and continuous history is powerful. De Gaulle's comment that '*La France vient du fond des âges*' is representative of this historical understanding.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, Jospin referred to France as an 'old and great nation' in his 2001 new year's speech.<sup>68</sup> France has a long history as a united territory, and has existed within its current

<sup>63</sup> See for example Smith and Brubaker: both concede that nations are a blend of the two, yet both cite France as the model of the civic nation. This trend is equally pronounced in French popular, and much of the scholarly, literature.

<sup>64</sup> 'Currently there is a German tendency to imagine a federal structure for Europe which corresponds to its own model. Basically, Germany is still dreaming of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire. She has not yet been cured of the historical derailment of Nazism. She has a conception of the nation which is that of the *Volk*, that is to say an ethnic conception.' Chevènement, 21 May 2000 on France 2, reported in *Libération*, 23 May 2000, criticising the federal European model put forward by Joschka Fischer, the German Foreign Minister. The fact that the German government introduced reforms in 1999 to allow *jus soli* for the first time did not appear to qualify the French Minister's criticism.

<sup>65</sup> See web site at <[www.france.diplomatie.fr/france](http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/france)>. This official overview of French history is illuminating in its omissions as well as its inclusions. Notably, the years of the second world war, 1939-1945, are described as 'defeat and occupation', with de Gaulle leading the resistance from London and Algiers. No mention is made of the Vichy regime. Likewise, the section entitled 'Founding Ideas and Values of the Revolution', noting the proclamation of the Third Republic in 1870, asserts that 'France has been a Republic ever since!' The official history is clearly taking to heart Renan's warning that a nation needs to forget as well as remember.

<sup>66</sup> See the commemorative articles in *Le Point*, 5 January 1987, pp.49-76.

<sup>67</sup> See his *Mémoires d'espoir: Le renouveau 1958-1962* (Memoires of Hope: Renewal 1958-1962), Paris, Plon, 1970, p.7.

<sup>68</sup> '*La France est une grande et vieille nation ...*'. Jospin's address reported in *Le Monde*, 2 January 2001.



borders, with minor changes, since the mid-1700s.<sup>69</sup> Even the idea of 'natural' borders: the Alps, Mediterranean, Pyrenees, Atlantic, still holds some currency. This territorial aspect is underlined in the common use of the term '*l'hexagone*' to denote the country, based on the geographical shape of metropolitan France.<sup>70</sup>

The territorial unity of the nation was enhanced following the Revolution with the division of the country into eighty-three departments, of roughly similar dimensions, further subdivided into '*arrondissements*' and districts. Each division was to have the same relationship with the citizen and with the central power, thus providing the new nation with a formal, geometrical unity set within a concrete territorial framework.<sup>71</sup> Pierre Nora's *Lieux de Mémoire* volumes on 'La Nation' contain a complete section on 'the territory'. He notes that 'whoever refers to the nation refers to the consciousness of limits, or rootedness in territorial continuity, thus memory. Especially in France'. This is linked to territorial sovereignty—no matter what the regime.<sup>72</sup> Sovereignty is a central focus of the 'political' nation.

It is in the claim that France was the birthplace of the political nation that the political-civic understanding of the nation comes to the fore. (As usual) the Revolution provides the basis. The founding reference for the French understanding of the (political) nation is the revolutionary Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789. The Declaration explicitly and indissolubly linked sovereignty and nationhood: 'the principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation'.<sup>73</sup> Simone Weil's description of France as the first political nation, born of the Revolution, states that 'The Revolution melted all the peoples subject to the French Crown into one single mass, and that by their enthusiasm for national sovereignty ... For to be French, thenceforward, meant belonging to the sovereign nation'.<sup>74</sup> The Declaration set out a progression from authority and order based on privilege and birth, towards a democratic order based on equality and citizenship.

If the nation is sovereign, then, its very meaning is bound up with notions of power and democracy—of political self-determination. Hence the claims that as a *political* concept the nation had little meaning before 1789 and that this meaning was born in France.<sup>75</sup> A number of caveats

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<sup>69</sup> G. Wright, *France in Modern Times*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., New York, Norton, 1987.

<sup>70</sup> On the use of '*l'hexagone*' see R. Bernstein, *Fragile Glory*, London, Penguin, 1991, pp. 11, 16, 36-7.

<sup>71</sup> See P. Rosanvallon, *L'État En France. De 1789 À Nos Jours* (The State in France. From 1789 to Today), Paris, Seuil, 1990, pp. 101-3.

<sup>72</sup> Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoire, La Nation*, Vol. 2, preface to 'Territoire'.

<sup>73</sup> Article 3 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.

<sup>74</sup> Weil, *The Need for Roots*, p. 105.

<sup>75</sup> Jenkins, *Nationalism in France*, pp. 11-12.

can be made: France before 1789 was already a centralised state, situated within fixed boundaries; it was a major European power; and there is evidence of an increasing sentiment of national identity, if not unity. As one of the foremost proponents of the French nation as a community of citizens readily concedes, the nation was not born in a vacuum, but was built upon centuries of monarchical centralisation and a tradition of a strong centralised state.<sup>76</sup> Schnapper argues that the idea of the nation did not exist prior to this point, but concedes that the centralisation of state power within a unified territory over a number of centuries played a significant role in its creation.

Despite an increasing consciousness of being French, or at an elite level, the existence of a unique French identity, related to the monarchy and/or Catholic Church, France was still a country of subjects under the *ancien régime*. Under the monarchy it could not form a 'nation', understood as a political community of citizens. This understanding was only acquired with the coming of the Revolution and overthrow of the *ancien régime*.<sup>77</sup> The nation was to embody the ideal of a democratic, sovereign people and was seen as a positive force for change, symbolising the move from an autocratic hereditary monarchy to an albeit limited version of democracy, a move from subject to citizen. As Smith maintains, the French Revolution bestowed authority and legitimacy upon the 'sovereign' nation, which was a political entity above all.<sup>78</sup> Only after the French Revolution were the people recognised as forming the sovereign 'nation'. The Revolution, then, 'completed' the nation, which became one and indivisible.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Schnapper, *La Communauté des citoyens*, pp.13-14: 'the nation, understood as the source of sovereignty, was not born from nought, with Sieyès and article 3 of the declaration of the rights of man ... the nation, which proclaimed itself in 1789 as a new historical actor, inherited all the work towards political centralisation and the elaboration of the central state that the monarchy had undertaken over the centuries'.

<sup>77</sup> See Jenkins, *Nationalism in France*, pp.11-12. Greenfeld's study of nationalism also covers the evolution of the meaning of the term 'nation' and notes this shift in revolutionary France. As noted earlier, Greenfeld identifies England as the birthplace of the first political nation. This argument is rarely heard in France, although Thatcher had the audacity to note this interpretation on her 1989 visit to Paris!

<sup>78</sup> Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, p.191. He notes that this was in fact enacted by the Third Estate, by theoretically granting rights to French citizens who now constituted the nation. Abbé Sieyès' 1789 pamphlet, 'Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?' (What is the Third Estate?), answered the titular question with 'la nation': which, he maintained, was not merely the 24 million members of the Third Estate, but the entire population. See G.Rudé, *The French Revolution*, New York, Grove Press, 1988, 'The bourgeois revolution', pp.36-46.

<sup>79</sup> Given the highly contested history of the French Revolution—its origins, events and outcomes—the concept of the Revolution as the creator of the nation varies widely. On the contested historiography of the Revolution, see for example Rudé, *The French Revolution*, in particular pp.12-24; Gildea, *The Past in French History*, pp.13-61. Earlier historians of the Revolution stressed its political-ideological aspect; later socio-economic, or socialist, readings (particularly Marxist) became the orthodox interpretation under leading French historians, including Mathiez, Lefebvre and Soboul. This was followed by a period of bitter conflict as the 'class conflict' understanding came under attack, led by François Furet in his 1978 *Penser la Révolution française*. Furet argued the Marxist approach was unsustainable: further, the Revolution might have carried the seeds of totalitarianism. While there is no agreement on either the legacy or the origins of the Revolution, the so-called 'revisionist' school of Furet and his allies dominated the 1989 bicentenary commemorations. On the intense

The second seminal text is Renan's address almost a century later, when he posed the question: 'What is a nation?'. As noted in the Introduction, he explicitly dismissed the deterministic concept of a nation based on language, religion and race, and stressed, in opposition, the nation's contractual nature.<sup>80</sup> Despite the close association between Renan's ideas and the fate of the 'lost' (largely German-speaking) provinces of Alsace-Lorraine, which passed into German hands following the 1870 Franco-Prussian War, his description of the nation as a 'daily plebiscite' ('*plébiscite de tous les jours*') has retained much currency. The nation is a community of citizens based upon consent, upon free will.

Renan references abound in contemporary writings. Over a century after his address, the conclusions of the 1987 'Commission on the Nationality Code' included the following: 'the tradition of the philosophy of the Enlightenment and of Renan has bequeathed us a voluntaristic conception of the nation, constituted by individual free will and consent'.<sup>81</sup> The French World Cup victory in 1998 was also reported in these terms. A French team made up of 'the so-called "passport" French, with Berber, Arab, African, neo-Caledonian or Armenian names', led by an Algerian-born migrant captain, was proof, according to the editor of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, that France afforded opportunities to all ethnies, all religions, all classes.<sup>82</sup> Drawing on the language of the voluntaristic nation, he wrote of the team expressing the will to belong to the nation—a will expressed 'by devotion to the rituals of the anthem and the symbol of the flag ... the conscious will to join both a tradition and a project'.<sup>83</sup>

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intellectual conflict during the bicentennial preparations and celebrations, see S.Kaplan, *Farewell, Revolution. Disputed Legacies, France, 1789/1989*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1995. He also notes a counter-revolutionary 'white' resurgence, locating national identity in pre-revolutionary, Catholic France. See in particular book one, 'Framing the Bicentennial', Chapters 2 and 3. Furet built on the revisionist account in *La République de centre*: i.e. France was no longer fundamentally divided on the Revolution; the Revolution had distinct phases and should not be judged as a whole (hence 1789 good, 1793 bad); and the era of French political exceptionalism was over. France was now a 'normal' western pluralist democracy. Certainly the Revolution has been, as William Safran argues, 'demythologised'. See his *The French Polity*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., New York, Longman, 1995, pp.60-1. The shift of focus onto French national identity may be, in part, because the legitimacy of the current system (i.e. the Republic) is no longer disputed.

<sup>80</sup> Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?'

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Salem Kacet, *Le Droit à la France*, Paris, Belfond, 1991, p.181. An Algerian-born Frenchman, Kacet sat on the government-appointed Nationality Commission which reported on proposed citizenship legislation. The debate on citizenship, and the work of the Nationality Commission, will be examined in detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>82</sup> Jean Daniel, 'Ce qu'il reste d'une victoire' (What remains of a victory), *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 23 July 1998.

<sup>83</sup> Daniel, 'Ce qu'il reste d'une victoire', my emphasis. He continued to draw parallels between the victory celebrations and sentiments expressed by and about the French team, and the French idea of the nation. Drawing on the orthodox interpretation of the French (civic) versus the German (ethnic) nation, the former being explicitly recognised as the superior, he argues that 'this sentiment (the will and acceptance of

The French nation seen in this light has little in common, it is argued, with an ethnic (German) model of nationhood. It is a social contract, informed by an enlightened world view which accords the individual citizen an equal place and role within society. Its antecedents are the 1789 Declaration and Renan's 1882 address. The nation, then, is grounded in democracy and reason, inextricably attached to the ideals of the Enlightenment.<sup>84</sup>

A detailed study on the modern idea of nation by the leading French sociologist Dominique Schnapper takes this further by rejecting any idea of an 'ethnic' nation.<sup>85</sup> According to Schnapper, there is but one model of the nation. Indeed, the very notion of an ethnic nation is a contradiction according to the logic of her definition. Reproaching scholars of the nation for ignoring its political aspect, she defines the nation as a community of citizens whose existence legitimises the internal and external actions of the (necessarily secular) state.

Gildea identifies the Revolutionary establishment of a body of citizens—as opposed to a *Volk*—as a 'cardinal principle' of the Republic, alongside universal, secular and free education; equality of citizens under the law with no heed to gender, class or race; and a centralised, unitary state articulating will of the sovereign people.<sup>86</sup> These principles are all linked into a 'received version' of French nationhood. The distinct French model of a nation, a product at least in part of the Enlightenment and thus of its historical context, stresses the voluntaristic nature of the nation, made up of individual, equal and sovereign citizens and is inextricable from the development of the French nation-state.<sup>87</sup>

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belonging) has been commented upon with an embarrassed admiration in other countries, such as Germany, where, because of the law of *droit du sang* ... it is inconceivable that a Turk could ever be captain or member of the national team'.

<sup>84</sup> This fits Kohn's thesis that nationalism in western Europe evolved along liberal democratic lines, while in the east it was based on fundamentally illiberal ideas.

<sup>85</sup> Schnapper, *La Communauté des citoyens*. Her somewhat lengthy definition, p.28, runs as follows: '... as with any political entity, the nation is defined by its sovereignty which it exercises, internally, to integrate its population (*pour intégrer les populations qu'elle inclut*) and externally, to affirm itself ... in a world order based on the existence of and the relations between political national units (*nations-unités politiques*). But its [the nation's] specificity lies in the fact that it integrates populations into a community of citizens, whose existence legitimises the internal and external action of the State'. This has similarities with Stanley Hoffmann's dual classification of the nation as possessing internal/external characteristics—see 'Thoughts on the French Nation Today', *Daedalus*, Vol. 122 (3), Summer 1993, pp.63-80. The concept of the nation as a legitimising force plays an influential role in the current debate on the EU. See Chapter 8, pp.301-5.

<sup>86</sup> R.Gildea, *France since 1945*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp.110-46, on the 'one and indivisible Republic' and what he refers to as its 'founding myths'. Deconstructing these myths, see in particular the section entitled 'Believers and Immigrants', highlighting the difficulties facing Jews and Muslims, pp.135-41.

<sup>87</sup> Three distinct processes (both geographical and chronological) are invoked in the formation of nation-states. First, the integrating nation-state based on a shared political history and the transformation of princely absolutism. Examples of these nation-states built on the idea of self-governing citizens, of the political nation,

*The importance of state and citizenship*

The dominant understanding of the nation as a political community of citizens is tied in with the central role of the state as the embodiment of the nation. This is acknowledged by both French and international scholars as a crucial element, not just in marking the distinction from the cultural understanding of nationhood, but as a vital accompaniment to the nation. Brubaker describes the nation in France as 'conceived in relation to the territorial and institutional frame of the state'.<sup>88</sup> Simone Weil is equally explicit: 'there is no other way of defining the word nation than as a territorial aggregate whose various parts recognise the authority of the same state'.<sup>89</sup> Jean Leca notes that 'The foundation of France as a modern society is not cultural community ... France is above all a political community built around a state'.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, nation-state is rendered as '*État-nation*' in France, giving precedence to the state.<sup>91</sup>

The fact that the state existed before (and to some extent created) the nation in France is of profound significance. Unlike Germany, for example, where moves to found a national state came after the recognition of a form of collective 'German-ness' (*Deutschum*) based on language and culture, the nation in France was not originally conceived in these terms.<sup>92</sup> The nation—state linkage was thus, in part, a product of historical circumstances. As noted, a powerful, centralised state had a long history in France, and unlike most of its continental neighbours, the French state's development had preceded that of the nation—however understood. Thus the idea of the nation in France is bound up with the idea of popular sovereignty and statehood, and cannot be divorced from these concepts.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, France was a powerful international actor, with an active and sometimes aggressive foreign policy that used its military prowess to focus patriotism and a sense of national pride onto the institution of the state.

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include France, England, and the Netherlands. Second, the nation-state based on idea of cultural nationhood—examples being nineteenth century central and southern European states—and third, the culturally-based nation-states of east and south-east Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See Alter, *Nationalism*, p.98.

<sup>88</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, p.1.

<sup>89</sup> Weil, *The Need for Roots*, p.95.

<sup>90</sup> J.Leca, 'Une Capacité d'intégration défaillante?' (A weakening capacity for integration?), *Esprit*, no. 102, June 1985, p.10.

<sup>91</sup> On the strength of the statist tradition in French history and politics, see S.Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, in particular pp.151-77. On France as the 'most complete form of the nation-state', see Wieviorka, 'Last words on "politically correct" French-style'.

<sup>92</sup> Based on Romantic thought, the idea of a German identity was closely tied to a common culture and in particular to the use of the German language. At no time has this coincided with political boundaries.

The nation-state nexus also carries the implication that there are no minorities in the public sphere. All citizens are equal and have a direct unmediated relationship to the nation-state. Thus there is little recognition of intermediate organisations; the most important link is between the individual and the state, and group-specific policies are rare. Citizenship is a crucial ingredient in this conception, with recognition only of the individual qua citizen. Vida Azimi quotes the revolutionary Tallien in 1795: 'The only foreigners in France are the bad citizens'. As Brubaker notes, this indicates the extent to which citizenship of the nation dominated ethno-cultural conceptions of membership or belonging.<sup>94</sup> This approach continues to influence understandings of citizenship, as Chapter 5 will illustrate.<sup>95</sup>

Detailed historical studies point to several flaws in this understanding. Sternhell, for example, argues that the concept of the nation as an 'aggregate of citizens' only existed in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, when the nation was seen as the source of power, opposed to royal power.<sup>96</sup> Jenkins posits that under Napoleon, the nation developed into 'an organising principle imposed from above, repressive, integrative, stressing the imperative of obedience and loyalty to institutions'.<sup>97</sup> The revolutionary rhetoric of the nation had lost its appeal, and under Napoleon, active citizens were transformed into passive subjects. According to Jenkins: 'If the call to nation in 1789 had turned subjects into active citizens seeking their own emancipation, ten years later loyalty to the nation implied obedience to the state, respect for the Church, pride in the Army, commitment to the leader'.<sup>98</sup> This did not represent a complete break with the past, but the idea of nationhood extended and developed in meaning during this time. In particular, the state and its institutions took on an increasingly important role, becoming conflated with the nation.

Nation-state sovereignty was a core theme of the FN through the 1990s and has enabled the party to stand as a defender of the 'sovereign nation'. This rhetoric corresponds to a powerful strand of

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<sup>93</sup> Again, this is in opposition to those scholars of nationalism who argue that the recognition of a nation need not legitimise the claim for national sovereignty and statehood. See for example Tamar, *Liberal Nationalism, 'The Right to National Self-Determination'*, pp.57-77.

<sup>94</sup> V. Azimi, *L'Etranger sous la Révolution*, quoted in Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, p.47.

<sup>95</sup> Another primary reference for this understanding is Sieyès' *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers état?*, which set out common rights and civil equality for all citizens. See Brubaker's analysis in Chapter 2 of *Citizenship and Nationhood*, 'The French Revolution and the Invention of National Citizenship', pp.39-40.

<sup>96</sup> Sternhell, 'The Political Culture of Nationalism', p.30. He argues that the correlation between the nation and popular sovereignty only existed in the early years of the French Revolution.

<sup>97</sup> Jenkins, *Nationalism in France*, in 'State and Nation under Napoleon', pp.27-41; quote on p.41. This understanding, he argues, was not necessarily complementary to the evolution of a political nation as a community of sovereign citizens.

<sup>98</sup> Jenkins, *Nationalism in France*, p.37.

French national self-understanding, and given the stance of the '*souverainiste*' camp in response to the challenges of globalisation and European integration, has proved difficult to combat.

In summary, the nation in France is perceived as a product of the Enlightenment and Revolution, a territorial entity made up of equal and sovereign citizens (despite the fact not all men could be citizens initially and certainly no women—women in France did not get the vote until 1944/5).<sup>99</sup> This has a profound effect on the discourse surrounding the nation. Enshrined in the principles of 1789, the nation is open to all, regardless of background. National citizenship provides unmediated membership of the nation-state and extends access to political and civic rights.<sup>100</sup> This conceptual (if somewhat misleading) basis has been accentuated through liberal and widespread usage of and reference to Renan's celebrated 1882 address at the Sorbonne in French public and academic discourse.

As noted, Renan dismissed objective criteria as a basis for nationhood. He maintained that belonging to a nation was a matter of consent and the desire to live together. But this did not prevent him using historical and culturally based descriptions and analogies to back up his argument. Alongside this voluntarism and openness his criteria also included a common heritage of memories, and the desire to exploit the nation's joint inheritance. The fact that Renan appealed to the importance of memory—its loss or recall—signifies that there are aspects of belonging to a nation that are not entirely contractual.<sup>101</sup> Clearly there are tensions and linkages between the two differing models of the nation. There are two aspects to this which the FN has been able to utilise and which explain the appeal to national identity as more than a pure 'civic-political' concept. Both are closely tied to the debates on immigration and integration.

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<sup>99</sup> On the twentieth century fight for women's suffrage, see Sowerwine, *France since 1870*, pp.123-9, and on their first electoral participation, pp.235-7.

<sup>100</sup> This is directly contrasted with the German model of the nation, tied to a community of descent and ideas of hereditary belonging. While the Enlightenment and Romantic concepts of the nation can be directly opposed, stressing the universal-particular dualism, some modern critiques are more nuanced—for example in the works of Brubaker and Silverman.

<sup>101</sup> For a critique of Renan, see Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation*, pp.20-1. As noted earlier, the notorious 1985 article in *Le Figaro Magazine* on national identity and immigration invoked Renan's idea of the nation, but specifically quoted from the passage concerning collective historical memory, rather than the more often quoted non-deterministic aspects of nationhood. The over-simplification of Renan's address into a glorification of civic nationhood overlooks such passages and it is significant that the right-wing magazine should opt for a more deterministic and culturally rooted reference.



*The political-cultural nexus: the neutral state and nation building*

First, the political ineluctably includes cultural dimensions. Most obviously, the neat division into separate public-private spheres does not create a neutral public sphere, any more than it conforms to a more messy reality. Drawing on the ideas of the Enlightenment, Julia Kristeva may assert that the 'optimal rendition' of the nation is achieved through a legal and political pact between free and equal individuals, as embodied in the French Republic. However, she also admits that this is not a reality; further, she concedes that this contractual model has cultural elements.<sup>102</sup> The role of official nationalism—the nation-building state—is crucial in explaining the political-cultural nexus in France. The incorporation of cultural elements into the political model is also apparent in the French response to the concept of multiculturalism. The political-cultural nexus provides an opportunity for the FN to attract support for its defence of the nation—not merely by defending the political, sovereign unit, but through the conscious incorporation of broader 'national identity' themes.

Second, it is misleading to refer to a single collective understanding of the nation: parallel and often opposing understandings have also persisted or developed. A conceptually distinct, particularist cultural understanding of nationhood co-exists with the political. This is in part based on (at least the perception of) long-standing historical cultural communities and the resulting sentiment of a particular national cultural identity. Anthony Smith has highlighted the significance of ethnic roots in the formation and development of nations and argued that without the existence of at least some of these determining criteria, there would be no nations or nationalism.<sup>103</sup> The ethno-cultural understanding of nationhood by no means absent from the French imaginary, and this too has contributed to the FN's appeal.

*The myth of the neutral state*

Despite the continuing adherence to a secular nation-state and a neutral public sphere that theoretically does not concede or recognise the existence of cultural difference, the civic-territorial version of the nation encompasses cultural aspects. As has been noted, there is increasing recognition that the cultural neutrality of the civic nation is a myth.<sup>104</sup> Larousse accords two

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<sup>102</sup> J. Kristeva, *Nations without Nationalism*, trans. L. Roudiez, New York, Columbia University Press, p.40.

<sup>103</sup> Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*.

<sup>104</sup> See Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, pp.39-45. This point is also recognised by scholars such as Tamir and Miller, who both stress the importance of the state in supporting and enhancing community, as well as the impossibility of a culturally neutral state / public sphere. However the mainstream French view on the public-



definitions to nationalism, both of which explicitly set out the political nature of nationalism. However the first entry also acknowledges the importance of the cultural attributes of nationhood, referring to 'a political movement of individuals who are conscious of forming a national community due to the links (language, culture) which unite them'.<sup>105</sup> Even while Renan was extolling the virtues of the contractual model of the nation, he called on common memories and symbols. 'The memory of great things that we have done together', he claimed, is an integral part of nationhood.<sup>106</sup> Likewise, the paradox inherent in the rights of man (universal and inclusive) and citizen (particular and exclusive) at the founding of the Republic points to a more nuanced reality.

In the modern world, nation and state can only coincide, in theory, from the viewpoint of the political nation. But if 'political' merely signifies the expression of the nation as a state, it runs the risk of becoming a truism/tautological. Furthermore, additional aspects of the political nation as a community of equal citizens in the public sphere and the strict separation between public and private spheres need to be taken into account.

Anderson's description of the idea of the nation as an 'imagined political community'—both limited and sovereign—is useful to 'fill out' the civic-ethnic framework.<sup>107</sup> It is clear that the nation is imagined due to its geographical size and number of citizens. However this definition also implies that it is necessary for the nation to invoke some form of collective identity and social consensus that make up community. Apart from incorporating Deutsch's insights into the importance of developing a dense system of internal communication to create a sense of common identity, it also suggests that this national community must represent a minimum of shared values: it must 'stand for' something. In this light, the political element of the nation retains its importance, along with a minimum of shared values and identity. The question of the importance of the ethno-cultural make-up of the nation remains.<sup>108</sup> Can the nation-state be a multicultural state?

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private split, and the conviction that the secular, culturally neutral nation-state is the optimum form of representative governance, persists.

<sup>105</sup> *Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopédique Larousse*. The second definition is based on political theory which stresses 'the predominance of national interest in relation to the interests of classes and groups which constitute the nation or in relation to other nations in the international community'.

<sup>106</sup> Not only memory, but forgetting is vital: the 'essence of a nation', claimed Renan, not only resides in having many things in common but also in having forgotten many things: 'every French citizen must have forgotten St.Bartholomew's Eve, the massacres in the Midi in the 13<sup>th</sup> century...'. *Oeuvres Complètes*, I, p.892.

<sup>107</sup> Following his celebrated definition in *Imagined Communities*, p.6.

<sup>108</sup> When using the terms 'ethnic' and 'ethnicity' I am drawing on Anthony Smith's definition of an *ethnie*, as referenced in note 19. See also his *National Identity*, p.21. The term is not widely used in French political science—see e.g. P.Birnbaum's preface, aimed at an English-speaking audience, in his *Jewish Destinies. Citizenship, State and Community in Modern France*, trans. A.Goldhammer, New York, Hill & Wang, 2000.

The French response to this question has generally been negative. While it might be supposed that a multicultural France exists by virtue of a number of different cultures being established on French territory, there is no allowance, in theory, for a public expression of these collective cultures. The nation is one and indivisible; in the public sphere, culture does not come into play. Despite generalised assertions to the contrary, the multicultural argument is rejected in France in favour of the concept of the unitary Republic.<sup>109</sup>

The politics of multiculturalism, while denounced as divisive and harmful in France, have nonetheless highlighted the importance of community and forms of communal identification, and the idea of immigrant assimilation into a dominant culture is no longer unquestioningly accepted. The term 'assimilation' is now deemed inappropriate, and the more nuanced 'integration' is favoured. Moreover, the conviction that French values are universal is being called into question, weakening the logic of assimilation and integration.

The reference to the 'spectre' of American multiculturalism in a 1995 issue of *Esprit* and the reaction to Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' thesis attests to a generalised rejection of multiculturalism.<sup>110</sup> Writing in *Le Monde Diplomatique* on the occasion of Itzhak Rabin's death in 1995, Dominique Vidal takes issue with the many references to the 'Jewish community' in France. She cautions that they do not have a single spokesperson and do not wish to be 'ghettoised'. Moreover, she claims that France is not a conglomerate of religious or ethnic communities: 'Since 1789 no true nation has existed in France except the secular nation'.<sup>111</sup> While objections to this statement can be raised on a number of levels, it underlines a rejection of any form of ethnically-based communities within the national body. The public recognition of ethnic communities would

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He describes the term as 'alien to the French political tradition', p.viii. Other French scholars refer to ethnicity as an 'Anglo-Saxon' concept—see for example Vieillard-Baron, 'Le risque du ghetto', p.16.

<sup>109</sup> On the contrary argument, see Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, pp.42-5. The French response to multiculturalism will be developed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>110</sup> See articles published under the overall heading of 'Le Spectre du Multiculturalisme Américain' in *Esprit*, no. 212, June 1995. Mongin—while questioning the French stance—notes that 'it is difficult for a Republican to conceive of an individual's identity being based on any other community of belonging than that of the political nation'. Hence for him the debate on multiculturalism has a 'profound political dimension' (*la controverse sur le multiculturalisme épouse une dimension profondément politique*), p.85. See his 'Retour sur une controverse'. Todorov in the same issue refers to group identity based on race/colour/ethnicity in the US as essentially negative, a negation of personal autonomy. See his 'Du culte de la différence à la sacralisation de la victime' (From the cult of difference to the sacralisation of the victim), pp.90-102.

<sup>111</sup> D.Vidal, 'Attention, ghetto', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 1995, p.17: 'Depuis 1789, il n'y a de nation véritable, en France, que laïque'. This can raise the objection that a secular community is as much a community based on values as a sacred community—that the values are different, but not the sentiment. It also raises the more direct objection that the state in France promotes a Catholic heritage—Mitterrand's Catholic

represent a dangerous turn towards an exclusionary and divisive vision of national society, one which determines belonging according to culture and where the individual as a rational agent can no longer make informed choices. However the continuing insistence on upholding the 'Republican myth' of the political, sovereign nation where all citizens are equal before a colour-blind law is problematic and difficult to sustain in the long term. The nation cannot be viewed solely as a political construct based on voluntarism and 'Republican values', and there are difficulties surrounding the public-private division which underpins the French approach to a *de facto* multicultural society.

The negative connotations of group identity based on ethnic belonging, perhaps justifiably stronger today than at any time in the post-war era, have persisted. Yet the very rejection of the idea of multiple cultural communities in the public sphere incorporates some notion of a national cultural community. The nation in France has not been conceived in such purely political terms as it may at first appear. A selection process has been at work in the development of national understanding. Historians such as Renan and Michelet, while promoting the political model, at closer inspection also incorporated cultural elements. Their focus on consent and will is an interpretation which initially appears to be at odds with the conceptualisation of the nation as a historical community of blood and race, based on a particularist understanding. But there are elements that go beyond the elective, the chosen. Memory (and forgetting), history and culture, are constitutive of national identity and belonging. The public sphere, then, contains a cultural component: it does not exist in a vacuum, but implies the assimilation of French culture.<sup>112</sup> Further, the portrayal of the couplet as one of good-evil, us-them, over-simplifies the relationship. It has been argued that all forms of community rely on more than a contractual basis for survival. Relationships based on partiality, on care, attachment and connectedness, are also important.<sup>113</sup>

Another approach to models of nationhood comes from Tzvetan Todorov. He sees the internal dimension of the nation as a 'space of equality' for citizens, while the external denotes one nation in relation—or opposition—to another.<sup>114</sup> For Todorov the difference is between spheres of

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funeral mass may be cited as evidence of this—and Catholicism remains a significant, if contested, cultural referent.

<sup>112</sup> In a general context, this forms part of the argument put forward by Tamir. On the French case, see for example Hoffmann, 'Thoughts on the French Nation Today'.

<sup>113</sup> See for example J. Moon, *Constructing Community*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1993. He argues the case for political liberalism as the best response to a pluralist, multicultural society. Chapter 7, pp. 146–62, examines feminist critiques of a contractual basis for community and the problematic public (universal)—private (particularist) distinction.

<sup>114</sup> Todorov, *On Human Diversity*, pp. 175–6.

equality and inequality. This reading appears at first sight to be the polar opposite of the standard argument. Todorov argues that the cultural, or internal, form of nationalism leads to universalism, promoting the national culture as one of many. Civic nationalism, on the other hand, is 'a preferential choice in favour of one's own country over the others' and thus an anti-universalist choice.<sup>115</sup> However from a purely Franco-French perspective, the internal form of nationalism does imply some form of assimilation into the dominant (national) culture.

So while the civic-ethnic distinction remains a useful tool, the models are not completely distinct. Most importantly, both the civic and the ethnic models contain cultural components, and both are political. The cultural content may vary: it may include religious values; it may promote choice and individualism; it almost always includes language (the state language). Apart from the continuation of the traditional culture of the region or country—the ethnic origins, to paraphrase Anthony Smith—the dominant culture is also shaped through the actions of the state.

*Nation building: a national identity beyond the civic*

As noted, there is much to suggest that unity of the modern nation has been consciously constructed.<sup>116</sup> The demands of modernisation, for an educated labour force feeding the growth of modern industrial economies, and for a common educational system, have helped to instil a common national culture.<sup>117</sup> The nation-building role of the state in France has been exemplary in this sense, and there is widespread acknowledgement of the role of the nation-state in consciously forming a French national identity.

Although cultural determinants were not in evidence in the founding declaration of the French nation, and despite the dominant rejection of objective criteria for nationhood, the nation-state nonetheless strove for a form of national cultural unity: a national identity based on language and culture. Brubaker concludes that French elite self-understanding is that the state created the nation. In particular, the role of the Third Republic in forming a culturally homogeneous nation less than one century ago, is widely recognised.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Todorov, *On Human Diversity*, p.172.

<sup>116</sup> See Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, on the mutually-dependent relationship between the modern state and national culture.

<sup>117</sup> Such an analysis, however, does not fully explain its continuing power and its potential for devotion and sacrifice—the new 'secular religion'. Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, also points out that the national idea preceded modernisation (not only in France, but also in England, Germany, the US and Russia).

<sup>118</sup> This might tell us something about the importance of forgetting previous (regional) histories. However it reinforces Smith's point: that despite this relatively short history of a national identity, there was a historical

But it was in the revolutionary period that the nation-building process began in earnest. Along with the geometric arrangement of the territory into quasi-identical units and sub-units, as noted earlier, the new French state set in motion a process aimed at national uniformity using language, common systems of weights and measures, the shaping of a collective memory, a central monopoly over money, and increasing centralisation of governance and administration which sought to reduce, if not nullify, all intermediary bodies between state and citizen.<sup>119</sup>

Nonetheless, as Eugen Weber amply illustrates in *Peasants into Frenchmen*, it would be erroneous to suggest that France was in any way a homogeneous cultural entity before WWI. Referring to the Third Republic, Weber labels it a 'cultural jigsaw' with a myriad languages, cultural traditions and beliefs, at best working towards some kind of unity.<sup>120</sup> Although the schoolbooks of the Third Republic taught that France was one people, one nation, this unity needed to be learnt. Alongside the modernising influences of improved transport and communication, industrialisation and urbanisation, the role of the French state was crucial.<sup>121</sup> In particular, the introduction of compulsory primary education and the centralised nature of the education system were to exert an enormous influence on the process of nation-building, from a cultural as well as a political viewpoint.<sup>122</sup> Conscription was another implement in this conscious nation-building exercise and

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core on which to draw and this has been incorporated into a civic-cultural understanding of nationhood. Of these, Christianity and Catholicism—France as the eldest Daughter of the Church—are still strong, despite the dominant public approval of the secular state. Islam, however, is not seen as belonging to the French national 'story'.

<sup>119</sup> On the early nation-building role of the state, see Rosanvallon, *L'État en France*, in particular pp.95-138.

<sup>120</sup> E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1976. Part I, 'The Way Things Were', pp.3-191, details the extraordinary diversity within the Third Republic. On language, for example, see 'A Wealth of Tongues', pp.67-94.

<sup>121</sup> On the role of the state, see Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, in particular Chapter 7, 'Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914', pp.263-307. Hobsbawm argues that the Third Republic could 'reach into the store of Republican symbolism', p.267—so 'inventing' tradition to safeguard the Republic against both the Right and socialism. He notes three major innovations:

- the secular equivalent of the Church: primary education;
- the invention of public ceremonies, such as Bastille Day in 1880. 'Its general tendency was to transform the heritage of the Revolution into a combined expression of state pomp and power and the citizens' pleasure';
- the mass production of public monuments, for example, Marianne, the female symbol of the Republic, and bearded civilian figures, 'notables'. They utilised general symbols—not revolutionary, which were considered to be too divisive—such as the tricolour, RF (*République française*) monogram, Liberty-Equality-Fraternity motto, and the Marseillaise. All these formed a culturally-informed 'civic' national identity.

<sup>122</sup> On the networks of schools established under Jules Ferry and the development of the Republic's curricula—including the influence of G. Bruno's *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants, devoir et patrie* (The Tour of France by two children, duty and fatherland) and other patriotic texts—see Weber, pp.303-38; also Sowerwine, *France since 1870*, pp.36-8. Elsewhere Sowerwine notes *Le Tour's* 'consciously constitutive discourse whose mass diffusion was extraordinary'—see 'Pressures on French Culture: "Tu Seras Immigré"' in Alomes and Provis (eds), *A Changing France*, pp.28-9. Nora devotes a chapter (by Jacques and Mona

was especially significant in the national spread of the French language.<sup>123</sup> The concept of the nation, then, always state-centred in France, increasingly incorporated cultural attributes. The regional jigsaw that Weber spoke of was becoming a single piece, made up of equal but increasingly similar citizens, and a significant 'cultural' element was developing within the civic-territorial understanding of nationhood.

Historically, it is significant that the idea of the nation as a sovereign people was not accepted by all groups in society. If a *popular* sense of nationhood and national identity began to emerge in the second half of the nineteenth century, groups opposed to the Revolution, such as monarchists and Catholics, still did not identify with the Jacobin ideal of the nation.<sup>124</sup> This form of community, based on the rights of man and popular sovereignty, was attacked by the Right, along with the principles of rationality, democracy and universality.<sup>125</sup> Left and Right, as Jenkins argues, developed differing views on the idea of the nation: while the Right came to terms with the Republic, its understanding of nationhood was culturally rather than politically inflected.<sup>126</sup>

A further problem with the constant references to the founding texts of the nation is the undeniable tension between the universalistic and particularistic assumptions inherent in the dual conception of the rights of Man—a universal—and of Citizen—a particular.<sup>127</sup> While the founding declaration pronounced all men equal, it privileged French citizens. As citizenship law evolved, those citizens accrued rights that were exclusive and only with difficulty reconciled with the idea that such rights were open to all. Just as the idea that citizenship is a choice or a voluntary act, when in fact most French citizens have that citizenship attributed at birth by virtue of birthplace, not due to any conscious expressed desire, so the theory glosses over the reality.

A further tension is inherent in the French portrayal of the country as the *Staatsnation*, the western rational model of the nation, implicitly superior.<sup>128</sup> Here it is not merely one amongst equals, but is

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Azouf) to this 'The Little Red Book of the Republic' in his *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Vol. 1, 'La République', pp.291-321.

<sup>123</sup> Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, pp.292-302.

<sup>124</sup> See Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*.

<sup>125</sup> See J.McClelland (ed.), *The French Right from de Maistre to Maurras*, London, Jonathon Cape, 1970, pp.16-23.

<sup>126</sup> Jenkins, *Nationalism in France*.

<sup>127</sup> This distinction is noted by Kristeva, *Nations without Nationalism*, pp.26-7 and further explored by Silverman, *Deconstructing the nation*.

<sup>128</sup> This is a view that has been reinforced—with some justification—with the outbreak of bloody 'national' wars, such as that in the former Yugoslavia, following the collapse of communism. It manifests itself in distrust (in France) of the perceived Anglo-American model of multiculturalism and the assertion that the French model is superior. See for example Kacet, *Le Droit à la France*, who explicitly denounces and rejects

founded in a revolutionary ideal of France as '*la grande nation*', with a messianic vocation to liberate the peoples of Europe and help them achieve self-determination. Michelet wrote of 'France, glorious mother who does not belong only to us, but should deliver all nations to freedom!'.<sup>129</sup> The notion of France at the forefront of progress, showing other nations the way forward, is bound up with the idea of France's superiority. This idea of France as the first among equals, the model upon which other nations should base themselves, leads to a degree of national chauvinism—the word 'chauvinism' itself being of French origin. The difficulties involved with this view today are multi-faceted. Most obviously, while France is an important international actor, it is no longer a world power and its political leadership of the EU can no longer be taken for granted.<sup>130</sup> Second, if the reality of France as '*la grande nation*' is open to question, so is the whole concept of universality and progress. Ideas of the ultimate rationality and progress of humankind towards an ideal no longer hold. Notions of identity and belonging previously considered to be irrational and soon obsolescent have re-gained currency, and the whole project of modernity has been called into question.

The focus of the French model of nationhood falls upon the individual rights of the citizen within the nation-state, rather than rights of the group or collective within the state. But this does not of itself engender a national identity. Weber revealed the extent to which France, as recently as 1900, was made up of disparate regions, with little collective identification with 'La France', with the nation.<sup>131</sup> The conscious nation-building efforts of the Third Republic—the tools including secular schooling and national service—contributed to the construction of a common national community, to Republican integration. Such instruments, along with employment, are still invoked today as the

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the ethnic segregation 'resulting from Anglo-Saxon policies; D.Schnapper, 'La France a mieux réussi que ses voisins' (France has succeeded better than its neighbours) in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 23-29 November 1989—i.e. 'success' via individual integration rather than recognition of ethnic groups. Mongin describes the extent of the agreement at the beginning of the 1980s: from *Esprit* to *Temps Modernes*, from Furet to Finkelkraut, he notes—see 'Retour sur une controverse', p.84.

<sup>129</sup> Michelet, *Le Peuple*, p.246, quoted in Girardet, *Le nationalisme français*, p.13.

<sup>130</sup> For a sometimes cynical analysis of the continuing belief in French superiority and a desire to offer a pre-eminent (alternative) model of social and political order, see Judt, 'The French Difference', critically reviewing Foreign Minister Védrine's *Les Cartes de la France*. Védrine identifies the 'cards' as cultural influence, economic and technological strength, EU membership and a homogeneous identity. Unequivocally realist, he classifies France as a 'power of world influence' in a global hierarchy of states based on power and influence.

<sup>131</sup> Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*. In Chapter 7, 'France, One and Indivisible', responding to his opening question—'When did France become one?'—Weber describes the extent of regional and local divergences, pp.95-114. The national 'awareness of great things', he concludes, was less than one might imagine.



major means of immigrant integration, if not assimilation. The debate that surrounded Chirac's decision to end national service is indicative of such views.<sup>132</sup>

The understanding of the nation as an essentially political unit does not affect the recognition that national unity was essentially constructed in the late nineteenth<sup>b</sup>–early twentieth century in France, nor that it is an 'imagined' community. The role of the State in accomplishing this unity—and the expectation that it will continue to play a role—is generally accepted, and is not viewed as detracting from the virtues of the French model. However this does underline the importance of the ways in which the imagined nation is constructed. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the emergence of the FN overlapped with the debate over the 'crisis of memory'. Pierre Nora's collection of essays celebrating the 'Sites of Memory'—of the Republic, of the nation and of the Frances (plural)—is a reminder of how shared historical memory is a consciously chosen and created phenomenon. His claim of the demise of memory—'There is so much talk of memory because there no longer is any'<sup>133</sup>—is not restricted to France, but is a more general European characteristic, according to by Eric Hobsbawm. Hobsbawm asserts the destruction of the links between past and present in contemporary Europe, commenting that the majority of people at the end of the twentieth century 'grow up in a sort of permanent present lacking any organic relation to the public past of the times they live in'.<sup>134</sup> However the increase in, and popularity of, recent works dealing with national history and memory in France is indicative of the significance attached to the importance of remembering, and commemorating, a national story.

<sup>132</sup> On 28 May 1996 Chirac announced the end of obligatory military service in France, beginning in 1997. In its place, the government proposed a '*rendez-vous citoyen*'—a week-long educative session for young men, including, from 2002, young women. National service will become voluntary, with openings in three areas: security (police, fire service), social cohesion and solidarity (the fight against exclusion, educational support), and international missions/humanitarian aid. Overall, the right-wing majority supported the move; on the Left, there was opposition amongst the socialists and communists. 'C'est Valmy qu'on enterre' (We are burying Valmy), stated Alain Boquet, CPF president in the National Assembly, invoking the origins of military service in France and the first victory of the Republic. There were also claims that this was abandoning one of the instruments of republican assimilation—a 'school for citizenship' and that such changes would reinforce the social cleavages. *Le Monde*, 6 June 1996, called for a referendum on the issue. In a televised speech on May 28, Chirac defended the notion of the 'Republican ideal'—equality, solidarity, patriotism—but noted that many young people already avoided military service and opted for civilian service. Also, conscription no longer served as a *creuset republicain*—it was neither egalitarian nor obligatory. Research showed that those with means and/or networks avoided it, while the less favoured had to participate. Further, there was evidence of institutionalised racism within the armed services. See J. McKenna, 'Towards the army of the future: domestic politics and the end of conscription in France', *WEP*, Vol. 20 (4), October 1997, pp.125–46.

<sup>133</sup> Nora, *Lieux de Mémoire*, see introduction to Volume I.

<sup>134</sup> E. Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991*, London, Abacus, 1994, p.3. He comments on Mitterrand's Sarajevo visit in on 28 June 1992, noting the significance of the date chosen. This



In summary, cultural elements are unavoidably bound up in the civic model of nationhood. Smith cites France as the model 'political' nation, but also describes France as 'a community of citizens defined by common laws, territory and culture'.<sup>135</sup> The state has been active in promoting a single culture, particularly in terms of language and history. Further, the concept of a neutral state is problematic and the French reaction to and rejection of multiculturalism implies that there are elements of national identity which are more than contractual. However, these elements do not, necessarily, have to be inherited: they can be learnt or acquired. This is at odds with the concept of an inherited culture or ethnicity as often cited in the German case, where citizenship up until 1999 was based on *jus sanguinis*.<sup>136</sup> The more exclusionary, extreme *Blut und Boden* notions also have strong roots in French thought, however. The two strands actually run through French history, and while one might be dominant, the continued existence of the other suggests a more complex picture. Not only do the contemporary debates on assimilation and integration echo this tradition, but the success of the FN in appealing to an essentialised, exclusive 'cultural' nation confirms its resonance in contemporary France.

#### French nationhood: particularist understandings

Despite the dominant political understanding of the nation, there is—as the Right's early rejection of the political reading suggests—a parallel cultural dimension. This particularist concept of the nation has a strong tradition and roots in French history, articulated in its most extreme, although varying, versions by groups and individuals of the far right, from Barrès and Maurras through to Le Pen. It is based on an ethnic understanding of nationhood, and reliant on notions of a continuous historical community with inherited culture. As noted earlier, this contrasting view did not develop simultaneously with the Republican, political idea of the nation. The revolutionary idea of the nation—embodying the idea of popular sovereignty—was initially rejected totally by the Right, which looked to church and monarchy for legitimation and attacked the values of the Revolution and the Enlightenment—rationality, universality and democracy.<sup>137</sup>

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marked the anniversary of 1914 assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand that led to WWI. But 'the historical memory was no longer alive'—the anniversary was not generally remembered.

<sup>135</sup> A. Smith, 'The Nations of Europe after the Cold War' in J. Hayward and E. Page (eds), *Governing the New Europe*, Cambridge, Polity, 1995, pp. 44–66; quote on p. 46, my emphasis.

<sup>136</sup> See Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*.

<sup>137</sup> Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*. Monarchists and Catholics could not identify with the idea of the nation as it was exclusively linked to the Republican idea of the sovereign nation.

The Right, then, initially rejected the idea of the nation as a sovereign entity—under the Restoration (1815-30), the term nation was almost ‘totally absent from political discourse’ and the regime never appealed to democratic principles to legitimate its rule.<sup>138</sup> Given the term’s association with the Jacobin Left and later the Paris Communards, the Right appeared to have no claim to the nation-idea. However this changed under the Third Republic, when a differentiated meaning for groups on the Left and Right of the political spectrum developed, resulting in opposing claims to the content of the ‘national’.<sup>139</sup> The Left claimed to represent the political idea of the nation: the sovereign people claiming power from the privileged classes under the *ancien régime*. This was rejected by the Right, still anti-Republican and anti-parliamentarian. However the Right’s continuing electoral failure in the 1870s contributed to an ideological shift. Opting to embrace the concept of nationhood as ‘their ticket of admittance to democratic politics’, the Right took on explicitly ‘nationalist’ policies in an attempt to broaden their appeal to the electorate.<sup>140</sup>

Differing markedly from the political notion espoused by the Left, the Right’s concept of the nation led to a particular brand of nationalism far removed from the supposedly liberating universalistic and democratic ideas which were present at its birth and so dominant in the French theoretical concept. The idea of the nation, for the Right, was not based on popular sovereignty and democratic ideals, but informed by history and belonging. These views gained currency and strength in a country demoralised by defeat and lacking in confidence.<sup>141</sup> This shift coincided with the period of France’s colonial expansion under Prime Minister Ferry in the 1880s, a process which served to restore French pride and power, as well as confirming France’s civilising mission, her vocation as ‘la grande nation’.<sup>142</sup> It was not the revolutionary concepts of the nation as a sovereign

<sup>138</sup> Jenkins, *Nationalism in France*, p.47.

<sup>139</sup> For the evolution of the competing notions of the nation for the Left and Right in France, see Jenkins, *Nationalism in France*. Up until the defeat in 1871, the Republican revolutionary concept of the nation predominated. Military defeat, in particular the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, was to influence its development on the Right—see also Girardet, *Le nationalisme français*.

<sup>140</sup> See Weber, *The Nationalist Revival in France, 1905-1914*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1959, pp.151, 154.

<sup>141</sup> Girardet, *Le nationalisme français*, writes of the ‘return to an exclusive and jealous love for a humiliated and wounded fatherland’, p.14. The cult of the army, the ‘*arch sainte*’ and symbol of national unity, also became significant.

<sup>142</sup> Ferry asserted that to attempt to impart values (*rayonner*) without acting, without becoming involved in world affairs, was to abdicate—see *Débats parlementaires*, 28 July 1885, quoted in Girardet, *Le nationalisme français*, pp.104-7. This expansionist nationalism was countered by opponents who believed that such conquests were exhausting and wasting French resources (Girardet, pp.107-15); however such criticism gradually decreased. On the justification for colonialism—the assimilation of ‘backward peoples’ into a ‘great nation’ with universal values—see also Todorov, *On Human Diversity*, pp.252-8. He attacks universalism as a form of inverted ethno-centrism.

people, but race, ethnic tradition, and 'rootedness' that were the main concepts employed.<sup>143</sup> This formed the basis for an integral nationalism grounded in xenophobia and anti-Semitism, distinguishing between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel*—the latter embodying the positive values of the 'real France'. It was the Right with its version of the nation and its conservative nationalism—the culturally-determined, aggressive nationalism of the nationalists—that took over the term and claimed a monopoly of meaning.<sup>144</sup> This version remains dominant in the contemporary extreme right—and also exists, to a degree, amongst the mainstream right.<sup>145</sup>

The views of two of the Right's leading spokesmen on the nation, Barrès and Maurras, illustrate this deterministic concept of the nation, calling on notions of an inherited national identity. For Maurice Barrès (1862-1923), intellectual and author of the influential *Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme*, the nation is 'the shared possession of an ancient cemetery and the will to continue to maintain the prominence of that undivided heritage'.<sup>146</sup> His idea of the nation is the antithesis to the 'French' political model so often invoked. Barrès stressed the importance of the Land and the Dead—the past being a total determinant of the nation. This determinist view, whereby external forces govern the individual, negates the idea of individual freedom and opposes change and reform. It also argues that people suffer when removed from their roots, thus precluding the possibility of, or at least any positive outcome from, movement or change.<sup>147</sup> The nation as a community of blood automatically excluded foreigners and Jews who, according to Barrès, served

<sup>143</sup> Girardet notes that the term *parti national* was used from the time of Boulanger episode to denote those who wished to bring down the (republican) political system. See *Le nationalisme français*, pp.173-4. Various tendencies accompanied the patriotic nationalism of the Right: Catholic defence in the face of the threats of secularism and anti-clericalism—enemies of the Church also being equated with enemies of the Army—and social defence in the face of the workers' movement. The term 'anti-France' was used to signify those of the Left, intellectuals, atheists, Jews, and Free-masons. Such sentiments are apparent today within the fundamentalist Catholic wing of the FN, especially in Bernard Antony's group and in the columns of the weekly *Présent*.

<sup>144</sup> Jenkins argues that nationalism undertook 'a thirty year journey from left to right', epitomised by the Dreyfus case, where the exponents of the nation based their arguments on stability, the importance of order and discipline, of the Army, Church and state. See *Nationalism in France*, p.98. Factors which influenced this evolution included first, the boulangiste movement, which was opposed by the majority of Republican parties; second, conservative forces supporting the General, particularly his anti-parliamentarianism; and third, the growing influence of internationalism on the Left, which developed in opposition to nationalism. See also Girardet, *Le Nationalisme français*, pp.159-61.

<sup>145</sup> See for example the use of the same language—*pays légal / réel*—by the FN, see Chapter 2, p.72.

<sup>146</sup> Maurice Barrès, *Scènes et Doctrines du Nationalisme*, I, Paris, Plon, 1925, p.114. The two volumes collect his major political writings. For significant extracts of his writings, see McClelland, *The French Right*, pp.143-211.

<sup>147</sup> His novel *Les Déracinés* stresses the importance of roots and the negative consequences of uprooting, of cosmopolitanism.

to undermine social stability.<sup>148</sup> His doctrine, then, was inherently anti-foreigner, and especially anti-Semitic. His 1898 Nancy program called for a purge of foreigners and Jews in France 'to restore the harmony of the nation'.<sup>149</sup> Such views were widespread, and the Dreyfus case served both to symbolise and humanise opposing positions. It also led to the formation of one of the most important political movements on the far right in French history, the *Action française*, led by Charles Maurras.

The controversy surrounding the Dreyfus Affair—central referent and seminal event in French history—is well known and extensively documented. In summary, a Jewish army officer, Captain Dreyfus, was wrongly convicted of treason, based on a forged letter. Arrested 15 October 1894, he was sentenced to life imprisonment in December of that year and transported to Devil's Island. His case was taken up in late 1897 and the ensuing controversy divided French society.<sup>150</sup> His supporters, including Jaurès and Zola, with his famous '*J'accuse*' letter, saw the issue as one of justice: Dreyfus was being attacked by anti-Semitic and anti-republican forces. His opponents, however, believed the security (army) and the unity of the nation were threatened and that this should override all other considerations. The nation was the ultimate virtue and all other interests, including that of individual justice, were secondary. For Barrès, the forged letter was irrelevant—Dreyfus was Jewish, therefore he was guilty of treason.<sup>151</sup> Girardet claims that it was the Dreyfus affair which fixed the *parti nationaliste* on the right or extreme right of the political spectrum.<sup>152</sup>

One of the major figures in the anti-Dreyfus camp was Charles Maurras. A royalist, Maurras rejected all those 'outsiders' who did not belong in his conception of the nation. In his typology, this would include Jews, freemasons, protestants, and anyone of foreign origin residing in France—a far cry from revolutionary ideals of Tallien and Sieyès.<sup>153</sup> Maurras held that these 'outsider'

<sup>148</sup> This foreshadows later fascist thought—for a discussion of the linkages see for example R. Soucy, *Fascism in France: the case of Maurice Barrès*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972. Historians such as James Joll also see the similarities between Barrès' thought and the German reaction to modernity, the cult of the *Volk* emphasising the purity of race. See *Europe since 1870*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., London, Penguin, 1990, pp.150-2.

<sup>149</sup> See *Scènes et Doctrines*, pp.429-40.

<sup>150</sup> See Joll, *Europe since 1870*, pp.63-6.

<sup>151</sup> On the re-trial of Dreyfus, Barrès concludes that Dreyfus is guilty of treason because of his 'race'. See *Scènes et Doctrines*, pp.152-3.

<sup>152</sup> Girardet, *Le Nationalisme français*, pp.173-4. The *parti nationaliste* was a loose grouping rather than a unified party, covering a range of political and ideological positions including bonapartist, communard, Jacobin nationalists and fundamental Catholics. Its move to a more traditional right-wing constituency came after the fall of Boulangisme, and the Dreyfus Affair 'definitively fixed the *parti nationaliste* on the right or the extreme right of the political horizon', p.173.

<sup>153</sup> On Maurras' 'integral xenophobia', see Winock, 'L'Action française' in his *L'Histoire de l'extrême droite*, pp.125-56, in particular pp.126-32.

groups were not, and could not be, committed to France, and were a threat to French security. Maurras' major preoccupation was political, and he founded the *Action française* to represent these views.<sup>154</sup> Although the movement never won mass support, its ideas were influential. It foreshadowed the later emergence of the right-wing groups of the 1930s—*Croix de Feu*, *Jeunesses patriotes*—and later still the Vichy regime drew upon its ideology and rhetoric.<sup>155</sup> Sternhell sees the emergence of a genuine French fascism under Maurras in the *Action française*.<sup>156</sup> The controversy surrounding his thesis that fascist ideology emerged first in France prior to World War I—that it was indigenous to France rather than a German or Italian import—has taken on renewed significance as it has become clear that the ideologies that nourished such movements are far from dead.<sup>157</sup>

The second crucial period in which the ethno-cultural nation dominated was under the Vichy regime (1940-44). Events and movements of the preceding decade had indicated the survival of anti-Semitic, exclusive ethno-cultural understandings of nationhood. However it was Pétain's collaborative regime that was to crystallise these understandings, with the state adopting the triptych of '*patrie, famille, travail*' to replace liberty, equality and fraternity.<sup>158</sup> Under Vichy, the *Statut des Juifs* excluded Jews from public life and confiscated their property. The final logic of '*La France aux Français*' resulted in the Jewish population being rounded up and physically excluded, handed over to the Nazi regime.<sup>159</sup>

While a history of '*la France résistante*' dominated the immediate post-war period, a more sober assessment of the Vichy era has developed since the 1970s, resulting in the war criminal trials of

<sup>154</sup> Unlike Barrès, whose nationalism Girardet regards as essentially educative and moral, pp.216-17, Maurras called for political action. See Sternhell, *La Droite révolutionnaire 1885-1914*. On the nationalism and monarchism of the *Action française* see also Chebel d'Appollonia's study in *L'Extrême-Droite en France*, pp.145-58.

<sup>155</sup> Maurras was condemned to life imprisonment in 1945 for his support of the Vichy regime.

<sup>156</sup> See in particular his account in *La Droite révolutionnaire 1885-1914*.

<sup>157</sup> See also *Neither Left nor Right*. There is little consensus on which parties or groupings were 'fascist' in France: in the 1930s. Only Doriot's PPF is consistently viewed as fascist, while the authoritarian, but essentially conservative (non-revolutionary) aspects of movements such as the *Croix de Feu* may be viewed as disqualifying them from the fascist family. However the point (made by Soucy and others and developed in Paxton's five stages of fascism)—that it is difficult to compare those parties in power with those in opposition—is valid. In the case of the FN, there is no consensus: although it fits Eatwell's 'fascist core' there are marked differences. See Chapter 2, pp.48-51.

<sup>158</sup> On the reactionary principles of the Pétainist regime, see Chebel d'Appollonia, *L'Extrême Droite en France*, pp.224-73, in particular pp.226-32.

<sup>159</sup> Hoffmann makes the point that the Vichy regime was by no means monolithic, with different political strands represented. He identifies a conservative 'nationalist-traditionalist' element dominating at the outset, shifting by end 1943 towards a fascist-style collaborative regime. See his 'Vichy' in *Decline or Renewal? France since the 1930s*, New York, Viking Press, 1974, pp.3-25.

Touvier and Papon in the 1990s. The issue here is not the painful process of remembering, but rather that the emergence of an exclusive and culturally-determined concept of the nation under Vichy points to its coexistence with the more inclusive or civic understanding, and that this has long been under-stated.<sup>160</sup> The denial of French complicity and the over-statement of the Resistance history suggest that there are problems in acknowledging a 'darker' side to French nationhood.<sup>161</sup>

The deterministic view of the nation has parallels with, and contributes to, the fear of the 'other', the rejection of those not perceived as ethnically pure French. It resonates in the contemporary debate on not only the rights of foreigners, or non-citizens, in French society, but also of those French citizens of North African ancestry. As we shall see, the largest group of non-citizens in France is the Portuguese: however the debate over immigration and citizenship is not directed at this group, but rather at those who are visibly culturally different, and in particular, at the Islamic religion. That is, it is not a strictly a legal or constitutional debate, but is, at least in part, a conflict over cultural belonging; over the separation between the public and the private spheres; over the idea of the nation.

The particularist elements tend to imply that the nation is a fixed entity, with unchanging attributes fixed in time and space. Yet an understanding of the historical and cultural grounding of the nation and the discourse that surrounds it needs to be taken into account. Dual concepts of nation and nationalism were developed throughout the Third Republic and persisted in the twentieth century. However the differences can be overplayed: both sides were to include aspects from the other tradition and despite differences in understanding, both Left and Right promote(d) the idea of a culturally homogeneous France and are opposed to a France made up of separate *ethnies*.<sup>162</sup> This leads to the final point regarding the use of the nation-idea by the FN and the challenges which have contributed to the party's appeal.

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<sup>160</sup> The Vichy period has been regarded as 'outside' of the French national story—an aberration. Jean-Pierre Azéma notes in his analysis of Vichy that it should not be regarded as a curiosity, 'in parentheses', but as part and parcel of French history. See his 'Vichy' in Winock (ed.), *L'Histoire de l'extrême droite*, pp.191, 212-13.

<sup>161</sup> It is noteworthy that Dreyfus' formal rehabilitation only occurred at the end of 1995, when newly-elected President Chirac apologised for the wrong done. As recently as 1987 the army refused to house a statue of Dreyfus in the *Ecole Militaire*. See M.Burns, *France and the Dreyfus Affair. A Documentary History*, Boston, Bedford/St.Martin's Press, 1999, p.189. A century after the publication of Zola's famous letter, Chirac wrote a public letter to the descendents of both Dreyfus and Zola, praising their actions and morals: 'their faith in our common values, the values of the Nation and the Republic'. See letter reproduced in Burns, pp.191-2.

<sup>162</sup> On this point, see McKesson, 'Concepts and Realities in a Multiethnic France'. He states that political parties, intellectuals and the public are all virtually unanimous in rejecting the idea of a multicultural France. The effects of this position and its links to the FN will be explored in Chapters 4 and 5.

### Challenges to political and ethnic understandings of French nationhood

While the critiques of the two-model approach identify how in practice the two models intertwine and overlap, the models are nonetheless useful as an analytical framework for the successful use of the 'nation' by the FN—even, some would argue, the party's quasi-appropriation of both nation and national identity in the political debate. As the nation concept continued to come under pressure from wide-ranging political, economic and social pressures, so the appeal of the FN grew. The first challenge relates to immigration as a potential threat to national culture and national models of integration and citizenship. The second challenge relates to the development of the EU and its challenge to national sovereignty. Related to this, a further development that requires examination in this context is that of globalisation, with increasing economic and political interdependence that weakens the idea of the nation as a sovereign people and constrains the ability to make independent choices.

Analysis of the development of FN program shows that the party has increasingly sharpened its attack on globalising and supranational forces that it portrays as threatening to the future of France. The more single-minded focus on the immigrant as the source of threat to the nation has been supplemented by the spectre of 'euro-mondialisme' and the dissolution of the French nation into 'Europe'. The added strength of this message derives from its similarity, at a superficial level at least, to critiques emanating from the Left. The language denouncing the forces of globalisation and neo-liberalism in *Le Monde Diplomatique* is not far from that found in the 1993 program of the FN, *300 mesures pour la France*. While it was relatively straightforward (although not necessarily successful) to denounce FN policy and discourse on migrants, its anti-globalisation approach will prove more difficult to counter.<sup>163</sup>

*La nation—pour quoi faire?* asks Stanley Hoffmann in an article of the same name.<sup>164</sup> He sees the nation from two perspectives: internally, as a unifying myth; externally, as a sovereign people and

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<sup>163</sup> For example, French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin made a strong case for the regulation of the global economy in an article in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 10 September 1998, entitled 'La crise mondiale et nous' (The global crisis and us). Stressing the important role of the State, he calls for a world order where 'nations, representatives of the peoples, frameworks for democracy' must remain active in global politics. However unlike the FN, he does not reduce this to a matter of national sovereignty but considers that the EU framework as a force for stability is a model for future developments. EMU, then, is a step in the right direction in the regulation of capitalism and the lessening of political and economic risks posed by unfettered globalisation. This tension will be developed in Chapters 6 to 8.

<sup>164</sup> 'The Nation—What For?', in *Essais sur la France: déclin ou renouveau?*, Paris, Seuil, 1974. This formula is reproduced some twenty years later, in a special issue of *Daedalus*, 'Reconstructing Nations and States', in



territory. While all forms of identity will be shaped in part from the outside, defined in relation to the Other, this exploration of the French nation will focus both on the internal perspective—in Hoffmann's terms, the 'unifying myth'—and the external, the sovereign people and territory. This idea is not unique to Hoffmann: Schnapper refers to both the internal and external actions legitimised by the nation, the community of citizens.<sup>165</sup> The differing internal-external dimensions of the nation may be seen as a secondary 'dual model' which complements and complicates the political-ethnic model. For this view does not correspond neatly to the political-ethnic understanding: in the French case, both strands co-exist in the internal unifying myth and in the external dimension of the French nation-state. The FN takes this on board in its politics: the unifying myth it suggests is a cultural myth; the external dimension is based on an independent sovereign French nation-state.<sup>166</sup>

The following chapters will examine the use of the idea of the nation in the debate on two of these major issues concerning its future: immigration and the integration process, and Europe and the integration process. Both challenge the notion of '*la République une et indivisible*' and both form integral parts of the political campaigns of the nationalist far right. The concept of a unitary national French culture—however defined—both forms and informs the discourse of the more strident and aggressively nationalist movements in France in the 1990s. This is not to identify it with the 'integral' nationalism expounded by Barrès, or Maurras and his followers in the *Action française*. The mystical links to the soil, the Catholicism and Royalism inherent in the French nation—these are no longer overt elements in the FN's public discourse. Rather, the party's intellectual impetus in the 1970s came from the *Nouvelle Droite*, inspired by the Gramscian left and based on the power of ideas, while their language in the 1990s increasingly borrows from the Gaullist vocabulary—a far more legitimate and attractive source. De Gaulle's concept of the nation as eternal, transcending politics, owes little to the ideas of republican citizenship embodied in the Revolution, but does contain the idea of France as '*la grande nation*' as well as the important connection with the state. He emphasised the singular

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his article entitled 'Thoughts on the French Nation Today'. The conscious building of the idea of nation has two elements, he argues: internal, as a form of national specificity and external, in the form of the nation-state.

<sup>165</sup> Schnapper, *La communauté des citoyens*.

<sup>166</sup> Silverman, for example, makes the link between the current 'obsession' with immigration in France and a crisis in the structure of the nation-state: a crisis which Le Pen is exploiting to his advantage. See *Deconstructing the Nation*.



greatness and destiny of France; a country that could develop within a '*Europe des patries*' but should never give up its sovereign identity.<sup>167</sup>

Challenges have emerged within the political as well as the cultural definitions of the nation. The nation is no longer an entity which can be simply linked to cultural distinctiveness / superiority or political and territorial sovereignty. Yet the power of the idea is such that the ideology of nationalism, despite its negative image, exerts an attraction that has been translated into political success for such groups as the FN. The continuing power of the national idea is reflected in the mainstream French decisions concerning both immigrant and European integration in the 1990s.

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<sup>167</sup> Exemplifying this stance, see Pierre Lefranc's article 'Pour un référendum sur l'Europe', *Libération*, 17 September 1998. Lefranc was de Gaulle's chef de cabinet. The current RPR is almost inevitably split on the question of European integration, the more traditional Gaullists viewing increasing political integration (and EMU in particular) as betraying one of the founding principles of Gaullism, that of national independence. The division of the RPR on the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, to be dealt with at more length in Chapter 8, is illustrative of this legacy.

## Chapter 4 Defending the Nation: Immigration, Integration and Difference

The end of immigrants or the end of France?

Jean-Yves Le Gallou, FN Political Bureau member, 1985<sup>1</sup>

'There are too many immigrants in France': 31 percent 'totally agree'; 28 per cent 'somewhat agree'  
*Le Monde*, 30 May 2000<sup>2</sup>

As noted in Chapter 1, immigration became a central theme in French politics in the 1980s and has remained at the forefront of the political agenda since that time.<sup>3</sup> At heart, the immigration debate is centred on the question of identity, and in particular, national identity. In the French context, much of the national identity debate—and indeed the perceived 'crisis'—has centred on the perceived challenges to the French nation posed by immigration and in particular, North African immigration. This has been the cause *par excellence* of the FN, at the forefront of its policies and high on the agenda of its voters. The immigration 'problem' has challenged embedded Republican assumptions about French identity and the nation-state as a socialising and assimilatory mechanism; by its very existence it undermines the dominant French idiom of the so-called 'political' model of nationhood.<sup>4</sup> Clearly, it also subverts an ethno-cultural understanding of nationhood.

This chapter will illustrate how the immigration debate has brought to light (unstated) cultural assumptions. For all the rhetoric of individual equality of citizens, the nation-idea in this debate has strong cultural—and deterministic—underpinnings. This explains how the policies of the extreme right met with so much support. The ideal of the political nation, of a single community of citizens with equal rights, continues to co-exist and figures highly in the rhetoric of the mainstream response. However the immigration debate highlights an attachment to the idea of the nation as a continuing cultural community whose existence is compromised by the settlement of separate communities of '*immigrés*' or '*étrangers*'. This labelling bears little or no relation to whether the individuals were born in France or not. As Barrès would have argued, these are not the 'real' French, not a continuation of territorial '*enracinement*', a community based on history, blood and

<sup>1</sup> 'La "fin des immigrés" ou la fin de la France?': title of Chapter 2, Le Gallou et al., *La Préférence nationale*, p.24. Le Gallou moved from the Giscardian *Parti républicain* to the FN in 1985. He is now Delegate-General of the MNR—Mégret's second-in-command.

<sup>2</sup> Responding to the assertion that '*Il y a trop d'immigrés en France*': 31 per cent '*tout à fait d'accord*'; 28 per cent '*plutôt d'accord*'.

<sup>3</sup> See also Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*.

<sup>4</sup> For a mainstream, received version of immigrant assimilation / integration, see for example the statement of Raymond Forni, newly-installed President of the *Assemblée nationale*, on TF1, reported in *Le Monde*, 18 April 2000. He refers to his gratitude to the Republic: 'that of yesterday, that of tomorrow, the Republic which welcomes, educates, brings together, without distinction of race, origin, colour or religion'. Forni is the son of an Italian immigrant, and has been a PS deputy since 1973.

soil. In the words of the conservative historian Pierre Chaunu a century later, they do not belong to this diverse stock held together by ancient blood ties.<sup>5</sup>

This links back to a recognition of the extent to which national identity was constructed during the Third Republic, and the extent to which these processes are still effective today. At the turn of the century, as noted in Chapter 3, there was little sense of a national identity outside of the Parisian area and governing elites.<sup>6</sup> Such an identity was constructed through the course of the Third Republic by virtue of the Republic's strong institutions, most notably education and the army, and aided by the spread of modern communications, industrialisation and literacy.<sup>7</sup> *Peasants into Frenchmen* illustrates this process at length—although not explaining how a construct, the nation, took such a strong and enduring hold. Nevertheless, a model of individual assimilation based on loyalty to a centralised nation-state came into being. Pluralism was eschewed and any idea of sub-national community groupings was seen as a threat to the Republic 'une et indivisible'.

There is a widespread (mis)perception—not confined to the ranks of the nationalist far right—that post-war immigration constitutes a threat to the survival of French national identity. The rhetoric of the extreme right, taken on board by elements within the mainstream and reflected in the media (e.g. the 1985 article 'Serons-nous encore Français dans 30 années?'), represented—and possibly helped provoke—fears of a future multiethnic France. From an Australian viewpoint, such views of a multicultural society—accepted and even celebrated here—may appear misplaced and even regressive. However the notions of French Republican identity, constructed or otherwise, have a profound impact on the way in which both the national and the immigrant community is imagined, and shape the ideals to which this community is expected to conform. As noted in Chapter 3, there are cultural underpinnings to the political-civic model of nationhood; further, a culturally

<sup>5</sup> P. Chaunu, *La France*, Paris, Laffont, 1982, referring to 'the length and the continuity of an ancient people'—quoted in Noiriel, *Le Creuset français*, p.64. Hoffmann, less exclusively, describes the enriching of political and voluntaristic nationhood via 'l'héritage': historical weight and continuity giving 'roots and substance' to the abstract. See his 'Thoughts on the French Nation Today'. However the content of this heritage is contestable and can be distorted: in the context of the immigration and national identity debate, it tends to be used to exclude and serve deterministic views on who may or may not belong to the national community.

<sup>6</sup> Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, pp.104-10. He notes the 'Republican tinge' to assimilation in the 1880s: 'it was not mere residence or work in France that was credited with assimilatory virtue; it was participation in the newly republicanized and nationalized institutions of school and army', p.107. Gellner argues that industrial modernisation and improved communications are at the heart of national identity formation, a pre-requisite for the modern industrialised nation-state with its need for literate workers. See his *Nations and Nationalism*: 'its economy depends on mobility and communication between individuals, at a level which can only be achieved if those individuals have been socialized into a high culture, and indeed to the same high culture. ... So the economy needs both the new type of central culture and the central state; the culture needs the state; and the state probably needs the homogeneous cultural branding of its flock ...', p.140. Such arguments are used to argue against the possibility of a (non coercive) European super-state due to the diversity of cultures within Europe.

deterministic model co-exists with the political. Both these factors have allowed the anti-immigration, differentialist policies of the far right to gain support. The relationship between nation and immigration is multi-faceted, and although many today argue that recent immigration is of a fundamentally different nature to that in the past, this past bears some reflection.

After a brief overview of French immigration, this chapter will examine central debates concerning immigrant integration, notably the opposition to a politics of difference and the headscarves affair. These debates have favoured the FN as they highlight its central message of 'defence of the nation', and have provided a favourable environment for its policies. The FN is able to defend a culturally based vision of nationhood while drawing on the store of Republican values and symbols. Hence it has capitalized on the crisis of the nation as a political-territorial entity, as well as a crisis of the nation as an ethno-cultural entity.

### An immigrant past

France has a long history of immigration. While it is clear the '*nos ancêtres les Gaulois*' is a less than accurate description of French genealogy, and the idea of a common descent is in fact mythical, the concept of a particular French identity built upon history and memory is powerful. Renan's 1882 address is cited as a seminal text relating to a national identity built on political will and voluntarism, but it also acknowledges cultural factors to be of great significance. One important aspect of this is a national historical memory—a national past—and accompanying this importance of remembering is its obverse, the importance of forgetting. Thus Renan noted in the same address: 'forgetting, and I would even say historical error, are essential factors in the creation of a nation, and thus the progress of historical study is often dangerous for nationality'.<sup>8</sup>

A crucial aspect of this forgotten history in France is that of immigration. The nature and extent of immigration into France have not been well documented until recently. This is significant in the contemporary debate on immigration, because it means that at the level of collective memory and 'founding myths', the immigrant experience is absent. According to Noiriel, 'the role played by immigration in the make-up of present-day French society remains completely repressed in the French national memory'.<sup>9</sup> While the US and Australia are recognised 'countries of immigration'—written into their national histories—France is seen as an ancient territorial entity

<sup>8</sup> Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?': *'le progrès des études historiques est souvent pour la nationalité un danger'*.

<sup>9</sup> Noiriel, 'Difficulties in French Historical Research on Immigration' in D. Horowitz and G. Noiriel (eds), *Immigrants in Two Democracies. French and American Experience*, New York, New York University Press, 1992, p.67.

with a linear history and a population belonging to and embedded in that history. In an attempt to redress this national lacuna, Noiriel has completed detailed analytical studies on the history of French immigration. A (now) much-cited fact, based on his research, is that more than one third of the French are descended from foreigners going back to great-grandparents.<sup>10</sup> The percentage of foreigners resident in France in the 1930s—some 6.6 per cent—was slightly higher than today. But the fact of past immigration has to a great extent been forgotten and its contribution largely ignored, as Noiriel notes. This allows contemporary migration to be placed in a misleading context. De Wenden points to the perception of the French nation as a 'finished product'—one to which newcomers must conform.<sup>11</sup>

Two major factors may be seen at play in the history of immigration into France: one related to the economy and the other to demography. Generally seen as 'pull' factors, as Hargreaves notes, these were the major reasons 'inclining France to accept and in some cases actively recruit inflows of foreigners'. 'Push' factors included economic and political hardship and persecution. The fact that France had been seen as a refuge, committed to universal human rights, also made it attractive for some.<sup>12</sup>

A further important factor influencing French immigration is France's status as a colonial power. First, this influenced both the source and destination of immigration. Following decolonisation, the close links forged between France and its colonies, particularly in North Africa, played a major part in determining the destination of emigrants from these countries. As the literature on immigration movements makes clear, immigration is not a purely 'functional' response to poverty and hardship or perceived wealth and well-being elsewhere. The significance of colonial ties in determining the choice of emigration and destination is one aspect of this. The 1962 Evian Agreement between France and Algeria also guaranteed freedom of movement between the two countries.

A second set of points concerning the colonial legacy concerns the French attitudes towards its colonial subjects and the process of decolonisation. The brutal Algerian War of Independence and the movement of the *pieds noirs* (French settlers in Algeria) back to mainland France following Algerian independence play a role here—one which suggests a certain hostility both to the newly-independent country and its people. Another legacy of colonialism lies in its contribution to ideas of racial superiority (if not hostility) towards 'undeveloped' peoples governed and administered by

<sup>10</sup> Noiriel, *Le Creuset français*. Noiriel claims that this fact has been ignored by French historians, and insights 'de la longue durée' are required. See in particular Chapter 1, 'Non-lieu de mémoire', pp.13-68.

<sup>11</sup> See C.Wihtol de Wenden, 'North African immigration and the French political imaginary', trans. C.Hughes, in M.Silverman (ed.), *Race, Discourse and Power in France*, Aldershot, Gower, 1991, pp.98-110.

<sup>12</sup> Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*, p.6.

the French. This view inevitably shapes the attitude of the governing power: the colonial master, and introduces elements of a hierarchy of ability and worth.

### *Immigration pre-1945*

Noiriel refers to immigration as a 'Republican invention'.<sup>13</sup> While the creation of the category of 'étrangers' (foreigners) pre-dates the origins of the Republic, the introduction of more stringent laws concerning the rights of nationals and distinguishing foreigners as a separate legal category led to an increasing identification and classification of immigrants during the revolutionary period.<sup>14</sup> This distinction was heightened in the Napoleonic era. Figures from the first modern census in 1851 show the proportion of immigrants among the total French population.<sup>15</sup> Mass immigration into France began in the mid-nineteenth century, and increased further under the Third Republic. In the immigrant policy literature, the major division is between those countries which practised a 'rotation' system, such as Germany, and those where permanent migration was the norm, such as Sweden and the UK.<sup>16</sup> Immigration policy in France tends to fall between these two categories. Nineteenth-century immigration was driven primarily by the French economy: immigrants were drawn from other (mostly nearby) European countries, to feed the growing demand for labour. There was no official national immigration 'policy' and no German-style rotation policies were introduced.

As France industrialised in the nineteenth century, and particularly during the 'boom' years between 1850 and 1870, Italian and Belgian immigrants were attracted to the country and the new industries. Between 1861 and 1900, the immigrant population grew from some 300 000 to over half a million. By 1901, 168 539 Belgians and 193 178 Italians were resident in France, out of an official total of 550 058.<sup>17</sup> Noiriel points out that this immigration was crucial in nineteenth-century

<sup>13</sup> See Noiriel, *Le Creuset français*, pp.71-86, section entitled 'Une invention républicaine: l'immigration'.

<sup>14</sup> As noted by Silverman, this co-existed in tension with the newly proclaimed rights of man and citizen, which called for the equality and dignity of all (men).

<sup>15</sup> Roxanne Silbermann describes 1851, which introduced the category of 'nationality', as the 'traditional starting point' for the counting of foreigners in France, although some earlier census and head-count records did include some data on foreigners. See her 'French Immigration Statistics' in Horowitz and Noiriel (eds), *Immigrants in Two Democracies*, pp.112-23.

<sup>16</sup> See for example Blotvogel et al., 'From itinerant worker to immigrant?', pp.83-100. This categorisation may be taken further to distinguish between those countries with exclusionary immigration policies (Germany), multicultural policies (Sweden, possibly UK); and Republican policies (France, possibly UK 'imperial'). The Republican model holds that immigrants should be integrated into the political community and that, in time, they will also become culturally integrated. See S.Castles and M.Miller, 'New Ethnic Minorities and Society' in *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998, pp.212-52.

<sup>17</sup> Statistics taken from Statistique Générale de la France, *Recensements de 1901, 1931, 1936*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, and reproduced in Noiriel, *Le Creuset français*, p.407.

French industrialisation, and that despite difficulties, the perception grew that Belgian and Italian immigrants and their descendants that remained in France were, for the most part, assimilated.<sup>18</sup>

As noted earlier, immigration to France was also influenced by demographics. With a negative population growth since the nineteenth century, immigration was seen as a necessary response to a demographic crisis.<sup>19</sup> France's birth rate remained low into the twentieth century, while the massive loss of life in World War I further increased the need for immigration. In the early twentieth century, the dominant new immigrant groups were Spanish, Portuguese, and Polish. The 1931 census counted some 1.65 million foreigners—6.6 per cent of the total population. Of these the major groups were all European: Italian (485 958); followed by Polish (305 117); Spanish (200 136); Belgians (144 670); and Portuguese (41 080).<sup>20</sup> Finally, immigrants tended to be concentrated in the larger urban areas: primarily Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Lille and Bordeaux.<sup>21</sup>

Again, the Republican processes of assimilation were deemed to take place and despite problems, and some violent incidents, including the expulsion of workers during the Depression, there was little question but that these individuals and their children would in time become incorporated into French society. Thus they would become 'French' both in terms of legal status (citizenship) and the public sphere politico-cultural nexus via the Republican institutions of education, first and foremost, and army.<sup>22</sup> Within this supposedly neutral public sphere, these institutions ostensibly did not recognise cultural difference and sought to treat all on an 'equal' basis. What has tended to be disregarded in this view is the extent of xenophobic hostility—and at times, violence—that was

<sup>18</sup> See Noiriel, *Le Creuset français*, pp.297-312. In a further work, Noiriel highlights the work-related nature of migration in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France, and the lowly status of the migrants: '...the French pattern of immigration foreshadowed by a half-century, perhaps even a century, a process that would become widespread in Europe following WWII: general recourse to immigrant labour as an exploited work force used in the most devalued sectors of the industrial labor market', 'Difficulties in French Historical Research', p.67.

<sup>19</sup> On link between fertility and migration, see M.Teitelbaum and J.Winter, *A question of numbers: high migration, low fertility, and the politics of national identity*, New York, Hill & Wang, 1998. See in particular, Chapter 2, "Marianne and the Rabbits": The French Obsession', pp.31-47. They note that demography in France is 'front page news', p.32, with high levels of concern over the declining birthrate.

<sup>20</sup> See percentage of foreigners / foreign workers, based on the census figures from 1931 and 1936, by Eric Guichard, *Atlas de l'immigration en France entre les deux guerres* at the Ecole normale supérieure (ENS) web site, <<http://barthes.ens.fr/atlasclio/>>, June 1999. Figures also set out in Noiriel, *Le Creuset français*.

<sup>21</sup> See ENS atlas of immigrant population; also G.Ubbiali, 'France: Towards the Institutionalisation of Prejudice?' in B.Baumgartl and A.Favell (eds), *New Xenophobia in Europe*, The Hague, Kluwer Law International, 1995, pp.118-30.

<sup>22</sup> Edgar Morin, writing in *Le Monde*, 5 July 1991, gives the 'ideal' example of the integration process via education, as a type of quasi-religious experience: 'I am a witness to this: as the son of an immigrant, it was at school and via French history that a process of mental identification took place within me. I identified myself with the person of France ('la personne France'), I suffered her historic sufferings, rejoiced in her victories, adored her heroes, I assimilated this substance which allowed me to exist within her, of her, because she integrated not only that which was difference and foreign, but that which is universal'.

directed against these foreigners.<sup>23</sup> The scape-goating of foreign workers, and the forced repatriation of immigrant workers during the Depression tends to be overlooked—an aspect of Renan's and Noiriel's forgetting—and dissolved into the myth of non-problematic past assimilation. Silverman describes the idea that France has been an assimilatory, welcoming country as a myth which, if repeated enough, becomes an accepted version.<sup>24</sup> Hence the supposed 'traditions' are often misleading, or erroneous, and allow a construction of the contemporary situation as qualitatively different, a 'cultural problem' endangering a French national identity based on a tradition of unproblematic assimilation.

### *Post-war immigration*

Before 1945 France had no official national immigration policy—it was a country of immigration without an immigration policy.<sup>25</sup> Up until 1973 it developed what may loosely be described as a 'laissez-faire' policy. Post-war competence for elaborating a national immigration policy was given to the *Haut Comité de la Population et de la Famille* (notably not to an employment ministry)—whose Secretary General Georges Mauco had advocated an ethnically-based immigration policy in the pre-war years and during Vichy!<sup>26</sup> Despite the ethnically-based recommendations of the Committee, the interior ministry adopted a neutral line: the final ruling of 2 November 1945 introduced residence permits for one, then three, and finally ten years, applying to all foreigners regardless of nationality or origin.<sup>27</sup> It could be argued that this was a labour recruitment program with little or no regard to non-economic aspects—certainly it was not a planned, coherent

<sup>23</sup> The work of Noiriel—*Le Creuset français* and *La Tyrannie du national* (The Tyranny of the national), Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1991—notes the tension between the myth and reality of immigrant integration. See also Patrick Weil, 'La politique française d'immigration: au-delà du désordre' (French Immigration Policy: beyond the confusion), *Regards sur l'actualité*, no. 158, February 1990, pp.3-22. He describes a number of official steps taken against immigrants by the French government during the 1930s, a period of high unemployment and social unrest.

<sup>24</sup> Silverman, *Deconstructing the nation*, pp.95-106. On the perpetuation of this version, note Jospin's letter, 1 July 1997, to Patrick Weil requesting a report on immigration. It starts with the statement that 'France is an old country of immigration and republican integration'.

<sup>25</sup> As noted by Weil: 'the public powers had until that time reacted in a contradictory fashion, according to different pressures or interests—economic, demographic, political', 'La Politique Française de l'Immigration depuis 1945' in B.Falga et al., *Au miroir de l'autre. De l'immigration à l'intégration en France et en Allemagne* (In the mirror of the other. From immigration to integration in France and Germany), Paris, Éditions du CERF, 1994, pp.253-69. Although there was no legislation governing who was/was not allowed to enter the country, there was however a citizenship policy. For details see Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, in particular the development of *jus soli* in the late nineteenth century, pp.85-113. The following chapter will deal with the politics of citizenship and identity in the 1980s/1990s.

<sup>26</sup> Mauco's office initially put forward an ethnically-determined policy. Its ethno-national 'desirability order' privileged Nordics, then Mediterraneans, then Slavs, followed by 'others'. See Weil, 'La Politique Française de l'Immigration depuis 1945', pp.258-63.

<sup>27</sup> For details of the 1945 'ordonnances', see Weil, *La France et ses étrangers*, pp.75-90.



immigration policy. Although egalitarian in theory, in practice discrimination did take place. Implicit in the policy, however, was that immigrants were primarily workers.<sup>28</sup>

The interior ministry also set up a government agency in 1945 to recruit and manage foreign workers, the *Office National de l'Immigration* (ONI). The ONI was intended to have a monopoly on the recruitment of European foreign workers, with offices in the major (chosen) source countries. In 1946 it was placed under the employment ministry and the population ministry, more accurately reflecting the dual motives for its creation.<sup>29</sup> As throughout the previous century, it was assumed that large numbers of immigrants would be assimilated into French citizens. If not, then the workers would return home when their roles as workers were completed. Between 1946 and 1949, 214 000 immigrants came to France via the ONI, plus an estimated 265 000 Algerians; in 1950-55, the estimates are for 155 000 Algerians and 110 000 ONI foreign workers.<sup>30</sup> Many more migrants simply arrived independently, found work and then gained the necessary work permits. From 1956, the government authorised industry to take on workers who had arrived without going through the ONI.

During the *trente glorieuses*<sup>31</sup>—the post-war period of reconstruction, economic growth, increased prosperity and (near) full employment—recruitment and 'spontaneous' immigration were of little interest. Public debate on this phenomenon—and indeed on the scandalous conditions in which many of the workers lived and worked—was virtually non-existent. Immigrants were seen as economic units, temporary workers who lived on the edges of major towns and cities (shanty

<sup>28</sup> For a detailed study of French immigration policy and administrative organisation, see V. Viet, *La France immigrée. Construction d'une politique 1914-1997* (Immigrant France. The construction of a policy 1914-1997), Paris, Fayard, 1998. It highlights the way in which the administration—at both local and national levels—influences the conduct of policy, as well as the ambiguous and internally inconsistent aspects of French immigration policy. Here state immigration policies will not be reviewed in detail: rather, changes in and perceptions of the nature and extent of immigration and integration will be examined so as to better understand the politicisation of the issue and its linkage to the politics of national identity.

<sup>29</sup> See J. Costa-Lascoux, *De L'Immigré au Citoyen*, Paris, La Documentation française, 1989, pp.14-15. Hargreaves refers to the figures involved in post-war migration policy being driven by different motives: Monnet according to economic/labour considerations, Sauvy and Mauco according to population growth. *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*, p.10.

<sup>30</sup> Estimates provided by Costa-Lascoux, *De L'Immigré au Citoyen*, pp.17-18. Algeria was deemed an integral part of France, and Algerians, as per the law of 20 September 1947, were entitled to entry and employment (although not full citizenship rights).

<sup>31</sup> Referring to the French post-war economic boom and economic modernisation, the term is derived from a book describing the modernising 'revolution'—J. Fourastié's *Les Trente glorieuses, ou la Révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975*, Paris, Fayard, 1979. Notably, Le Pen refers to these as the '*trente honteuses*': from glorious to shameful. See his 1999 speech at the *Bleu-Blanc-Rouge* (Blue-White-Red) Festival: he asserts that the FN opposes 'the politics of decadence, corruption, weakness and resignation practised by governments on the Left and Right during the 30 shameful years, particularly in matters of immigration, family and demographic policy, independence and national defence, employment and social security in its broadest sense'. Speech published on FN web site, November 1999.

towns, or '*bidonvilles*', developed in the suburbs of Paris, Lyon and Marseille), and were all but invisible in French everyday life and consciousness. In this 'first stage' of post-war migration, then, migration was seen as an economic phenomenon.<sup>32</sup> Immigrant workers remained isolated on the fringes of society, and had little impact on the socio-political arena. The *laissez-faire* immigration policy, based on providing residence permits for incoming workers—mainly young and male, in unskilled and semi-skilled employment, to feed the French economy—remained essentially unchanged. Even before the economic crisis of the 1970s, this attitude towards and treatment of the new migrants foreshadowed problems ahead.<sup>33</sup>

Developments in the 1970s were to change the *laissez-faire* policy and attitudes, and the processes thereby set in train saw an immigration debate develop in two ways. First, from an economic perspective, immigrants began to be perceived in negative terms; second, the debate took a 'cultural' turn. For both these reasons, immigration became politicised.

The most important economic development in this period was the 1973 oil crisis that led to recession and increasing rates of unemployment across western Europe. The implicit assumption that the immigrant workers would leave France if economic conditions deteriorated was proven fallacious. In economic terms, immigrants were labelled as a drain on the economy, taking 'French' jobs and welfare hand-outs. In this light they were still, however, perceived mainly in economic terms.

The second development that sparked the identity and integration debates was the post-1973 phase of family reunion—a result in part of changes in French immigration policy. The 1973 oil crisis and subsequent recession led the newly-elected President, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, to put a stop to further labour immigration in 1974.<sup>34</sup> At close inspection, the measures taken were aimed at those

<sup>32</sup> On the three stages of post-war migration to western Europe, see S.Castles et al., *Here for good: Western Europe's new ethnic minorities*, London, Pluto Press, 1984, pp.1-15. These comprise mass labour (guest worker) migration; family reunification; and permanent settlement with the development of new ethnic minorities.

<sup>33</sup> As explained by Sami Naïr, *Le regard des vainqueurs. Les enjeux français de l'immigration* (The gaze of the victors. The French stakes in immigration), Paris, Grasset, 1992. He describes the development of immigrant slums and territorialisation of migrants as a direct result of the lack of integration or coherent immigration policies, and argues persuasively that this lack of action in the 1960s formed the basis for the future crises of the outer-suburban '*banlieues*', pp.16-24.

<sup>34</sup> Giscard issued two '*circulaires*' to suspend new labour immigration and also to put a stop to family reunion. This latter step was overturned by the Council of State in 1975. For an overview of French regulations and legislation in the 1945-1974 period, see Costa-Lascoux, *De L'Immigré au Citoyen*, pp.13-30; in greater detail, Weil, *La France et ses étrangers*, pp.41-124. It was only in 1980s that the first law (*loi Bonnet*) on immigration was passed: up until that time, it was regulated by decree, or administrative 'circular', free from parliamentary and judicial oversight. Silverman points how this accords with the view of the immigrant as an object of administrative control, not in relation to the rule of law and individual human rights. See his *Deconstructing the Nation*, pp.129-30.

from non-European countries. Discrimination was both official and non-unofficial.<sup>35</sup> However immigration based on family reunion continued and indeed increased. Increasing numbers of existing migrants—mainly male and single—sent for their families. The period of permanent settlement had begun. Migrant children born in France, moreover, were automatically entitled to French citizenship. The recognition of this phenomenon accompanied a change in perception: migrants were no longer only assessed in terms of the economy, but in political and cultural terms.<sup>36</sup> As Michel Wieviorka states, immigration 'stops being perceived, and perceiving itself, as a question of manpower ... and becomes an immigration of settlement'.<sup>37</sup> The increasing visibility of migrants in the public sphere, coupled with an increasing focus on culture and identity (the 'ethnic revival', not limited to France) resulted in new debates over the place of migrants in French society.<sup>38</sup> It started to become clear that immigrants were not temporary 'units': they formed family units and were becoming permanently settled on French territory. By the mid-1980s, migration had moved to the forefront of the political agenda, and prominent in the political debate was the question of cultural difference.

There are two sets of relevant figures: one set provides the 'stock' of settled (foreign national) immigrants in France; the second provides a snap-shot of the numbers entering (but not leaving) France in any given year. According to the OECD's *Trends in International Migration*, some 3.6 million immigrants were resident in France at the time of the 1990 census, forming 6.3 per cent of

<sup>35</sup> See for example 'aide au retour' introduced by the French government in 1977, which offered 10 000 francs to those who chose to return to their country of origin. While aimed mainly at the North African population—and those immigrants deemed 'less assimilable' in general—it was in fact the Spanish and Portuguese who chose to participate. Due to its unforeseen (and almost certainly unwanted) consequences, the government excluded Iberians from the policy in July 1980; it was dropped altogether in 1981. Meanwhile the administration of the numerous rules and regulations governing immigrant presence in France was not only complex and confusing, but also enabled discrimination against non-European migrants in practice. See P. Ireland, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity. Immigrant Politics in France and Switzerland*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1994, pp.48-50; Weil, *La France et ses étrangers*, pp.129-52.

<sup>36</sup> At a government level, this was reflected in the Seventh Plan (1975-1981), which referred to immigration outside of the political-economy arena for the first time. See Ireland, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity*, pp.48-9. This was also paralleled in the migrant lobby and support groups: in the 1970s, these mostly focussed on economic and work-related issues; in the 1980s, they were forced on the defensive as the debate shifted to one of national identity and culture. See also Noiriel, *Le Creuset français*, pp.9-10—he refers to a 'displacement of definitional criteria towards the "cultural" or "ethnic" domain'.

<sup>37</sup> Wieviorka, 'Last words on "politically correct" French-style'.

<sup>38</sup> An edited volume of immigration history notably deals with each ethnic/national group separately: a chapter on Algerian immigration, followed by 'Black African', Turkish, Portuguese, then refugees 'mostly Third World': it then endorses the de-coupling of nationality and citizenship. See D. Assouline and M. Lallaoui (eds), *Du chantier à la citoyenneté? Un siècle d'immigration en France. Tome 3, 1945 à nos jours* (From the worksite to citizenship? A century of immigration in France), Bezons, Au nom de la mémoire, 1997.

the overall population.<sup>39</sup> This is broadly in line with historical levels, and the numbers in themselves—a relatively static proportion, as Table 4.1 indicates—do not explain why such immigration had become so controversial and politicised.

**Table 4.1 France: percentage of foreigners in total population**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1926	6.0
1931	6.6
1936	5.3
1946	4.4
1954	4.1
1962	4.7
1968	5.3
1975	6.5
1982	6.5
1990	6.3

Source: INSEE, *Recensement de la population de 1990, 1992*.<sup>40</sup>

As will be explored in greater detail below, the immigration figures in themselves do not 'cover' the extent of the immigration debate—which is about integration and difference, and the place of settled ethnic minorities in France, as much as about 'immigration' *per se*. Nonetheless they are of importance.

A detailed breakdown of the figures, as shown in Table 4.2, reveals that the largest national minority group in 1990 was the Portuguese, followed by Algerian and Moroccan nationals.<sup>41</sup> However it is the supranational 'North African' community which is now generally identified as the largest immigrant grouping. Taken together, the North African population—originating in

<sup>39</sup> SOPEMI, *Trends in International Migration*, Paris, OECD, 1998, Table A.1.6: 'Stocks of foreign population in selected OECD countries'.

<sup>40</sup> These figures are based on the census. There is consistently a discrepancy between INSEE (*Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*—the national statistical office) figures (census-based) and those published by the interior ministry. For example, INSEE counted 3.6 million foreigners in 1990; the interior ministry 4.45 million. However it is noted that in both sets of statistics, the growth in numbers of 'foreigners' (i.e. non-citizens) is falling. See Ubbiali, 'Towards the Institutionalisation of Prejudice'. There has also been debate over the representation of demographic trends by INED (*Institut national d'études démographiques*). Teitelbaum and Winter, "'Marianne and the Rabbits': The French Obsession", examine the conflict within INED and the accusations that the organisation aided the cause of the extreme right by misrepresenting 'native' birthrate figures, pp.31-47.

Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, known as '*maghrébins*'—made up some 39 per cent of the foreign (non-citizen) population in 1990 (1.39 million). The majority of immigrants are concentrated around major towns in three regions: Paris (Ile de France); Lyons (Rhône-Alpes) and Marseille-Nice (Provence-Côte d'Azur). Historical analysis of the figures points to the increasing diversity of immigrant origins, as well as to an increasing socio-economic gap between migrants and French nationals.<sup>42</sup>

**Table 4.2 France: foreign population by nationality, 1990**

<i>Country of Citizenship</i>	<i>'000s</i>
Portugal	650
Algeria	614
Morocco	573
Italy	253
Spain	216
Tunisia	206
Turkey	198
Others	887
Total	3 597
—of which EU	1 312
—of which Maghrebi	1 393

Source: SOPEMI, *Trends in International Migration*, 1998.

Certainly, when comparing the nationalities of immigrant 'stock' from the 1954 census, a major change in the origin of immigrants had occurred by 1975—a trend which has continued in subsequent measurements. Namely, the relative proportion of European immigrants has decreased, and both the numbers and proportion of immigrants from Africa have increased. In 1954 there were 230 000 African immigrants compared to over 1.4 million Europeans.<sup>43</sup> By 1975 these numbers had grown to well over 1 million African immigrants, and 2.1 million Europeans. By 1982 there

<sup>41</sup> SOPEMI, *Trends in International Migration*, 1998, Table B.1.6: 'France, stock of foreign population by nationality'.

<sup>42</sup> Costa-Lascoux, *De L'Immigré au Citoyen*, pp.19-21.

<sup>43</sup> The 1954 census figures show a total population of 42.78 million with 1.77 million foreigners (4.1 per cent). Of these, 1.43 million were European (mainly Italians, Polish, Spanish); and 229 505 were African, including 211 675 Algerian, 10 734 Moroccan and 4800 Tunisians.

were 1.57 million African and 1.76 million European migrants. By 1990 there were more Maghrebi immigrants than Europeans.<sup>44</sup>

The second set of figures referred to above reflect the inflow of migrants: again, as would be expected from the above statistics, the recent inflows are dominated by non-European migrants.<sup>45</sup> The highest flows were recorded between 1990 and 1993.

The context was further complicated in the late 1980s and 1990s with new categories of migrants coming to the fore: asylum-seekers, refugees, and '*clandestins*' (illegals), many from developing countries.<sup>46</sup> Across western Europe in general, the late 1980s saw a rise in the numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees. Once welcomed as fugitives from illegal and repressive regimes, these post-Cold War migrants from the East were no longer unconditionally welcome. Moreover, asylum-seekers from third world regimes were arriving in greater numbers than previously. Within this flow of asylum-seekers, a new class of so-called 'economic refugees' was identified, who were fleeing not political or religious persecution, but famine and extreme deprivation. OECD figures show the inflows of asylum-seekers into France increased from 27 600 in 1987 to a 'highpoint' of over 61 400 in 1989; dropping back to 21 400 in 1997.<sup>47</sup>

In the context of globalisation, with increasing mobility, increasingly porous borders, the lifting of the Iron Curtain, and increasing disparities between the 'developed' and 'developing' countries, rates of illegal migration have also increased. Figures are naturally fuzzy on the number of these '*clandestins*' and range from the conservative to the alarmist. Government figures judge between half and one million illegal migrants are resident in France.<sup>48</sup> In the 1990s, the emergence of the '*sans-papiers*' (literally, 'without papers')—foreign residents (often resident in France for many years) but lacking the correct papers, many with legitimate claims to 'regularisation'—has also been a political hot potato. These new migrants, and conditions complicated the overall

<sup>44</sup> The 'European' category does not include Turks.

<sup>45</sup> See SOPEMI, *Trends in International Migration*, 1998, Table B.1.1: 'France, inflows of foreign population by nationality'.

<sup>46</sup> These categories are not fixed but overlap: an economic refugee might well become a '*clandestin*', for example. Given current trends, it may not be useful—and certainly not fair—to make such distinctions; however the description here is intended to highlight the wide range of contemporary migration processes.

<sup>47</sup> SOPEMI, *Trends in International Migration*, 1998, Table A.1.4: 'Inflows of asylum seekers into selected OECD countries'. Compared to the 438 000 in Germany in 1992, or even the much-reduced 104 000 in 1997, the French numbers appear small. This does not however prevent the perception of many thousands of illegals attempting to gain entry, aided by unscrupulous traders—in danger of accepting, in fact, '*tout le misère du monde*', in the words of former PM Rocard—and the legislation has been progressively tightened during the 1990s.

debate,<sup>49</sup> while the increased flows gave rise to apprehension. Accompanying and linked to these debates was a renewed focus on the question of national identity: who should be considered a legitimate member of the French nation.

Overall, contemporary immigration is viewed as a 'problem' and in this context the origins of the post-war migrants is often invoked. The FN explicitly points to the non-European origin and practices of the 'migrants' and blames cultural difference for the new problems of immigrant integration. Historical research shows otherwise. Similar arguments were used in the 1880s and 1930s when the new migrants of the day, Italians, Spanish and Poles, were described as 'unassimilable', and were the targets of discrimination and violence, notwithstanding the fact these immigrants came from European Catholic countries.<sup>50</sup> The so-called integration of these earlier migrants did not happen as seamlessly and peacefully as some analyses imply. Nonetheless, the national story of France as a generous, integrative country persists, and is used widely by public figures on the Left and Right. Upholding the idea of a welcoming and integrative polity, President Chirac, on the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the abolition of slavery in France, confirmed the 'French model of integration' as indissolubly linked to the Republican ideal and social pact. France, he claimed, had 'welcomed and integrated successive generations of men and women who have chosen to settle on our soil into the national community'.<sup>51</sup>

### Immigration: a threat to national identity?

Chirac's rhetoric notwithstanding, the FN has been successful in portraying immigration and the development of settled ethnic minorities in France as a threat to national identity. Its racist and xenophobic policies cannot be divorced from racist violence, aimed largely at the Maghrebi population. Drawing on a deterministic imagining of the nation, the FN portrays cultural minorities as threatening a (mythical) homogeneous national identity, and invokes Islam in particular as alien to French culture and tradition. More insidiously, manipulating the received political understanding of nationhood, the FN portrays cultural minorities as not conforming to French Republican traditions. The mainstream downplaying—or rejection—of cultural assumptions implicit in the

<sup>48</sup> Quoted by C.de Brie, from a parliamentary report on illegal immigration, report no. 2679, submitted 9 April 1996 by Philbert (PR) and Sauviage (RPR), in 'La France au Seuil de l'Intolérance' (France on the Threshold of Intolerance), *Le Monde Diplomatique*, June 1996.

<sup>49</sup> One example being the idea of 'Bons étrangers et mauvais clandestins' (Good foreigners and bad illegals), the title of critical piece by Danielle Lochak, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, November 1997. A fallacious distinction, she argues that a family fleeing from brutal poverty and famine ('economic refugees') may be just as entitled to asylum as those fleeing political or religious persecution. According to such argument, the old categories are meaningless and unfair.

<sup>50</sup> See Noiriel, *Le Creuset français*, pp.247-94.

political understanding of nationhood (for example the assertion that a secular state is value-free or neutral) has added to the potency of the FN's message.

### *Terminology*

Having briefly examined the figures, the use and meaning of the terms employed in the so-called 'immigration' debate in France require some consideration. First, the use of the term 'immigration' to denote the subject of debate is misleading. The term 'immigration' has a double set of meanings:

1. to describe the process of immigration (legal and illegal) into France, usually resulting in permanent residence in that country. Here figures relating to inflow of migrants and asylum-seekers dominate, together with debates on the nature and extent of illegal migration.
2. to describe the permanent residence of ethnically different (usually, but not exclusively Arab) population, many of whom were born in France and are French citizens. Here the debates centre on culture and identity, nationhood and Republicanism.

Thus while at first sight the term appears to designate the former category, in practice it also relates to the latter; as Alec Hargreaves notes, it is used very much in connection with post-migratory processes.

The Anglo-Saxon usage of such terms as 'ethnic minorities' and indeed 'race relations' has been spurned in France, in part due to French reluctance to acknowledge ethnically based categories within the unitary nation (*'une et indivisible'*). Pierre Birnbaum, in an explanatory preface for English-speakers in the translation of his *Destins juifs*, contrasts the liberal-pluralist experience, which encouraged decentralisation and ethnic representation, with the French experience. He states that the term 'ethnic' 'does not exist in the French political vocabulary and is alien to the French political tradition'.<sup>51</sup> This is also due in part due to a reluctance to come to terms with the reality of permanent settlement of migrants from differing cultures.

This has contributed to the misleading and incorrect use of *'immigré'* and *'étranger'* in the context of the immigration debate. Legally speaking, the terms *'immigré'* and *'étranger'* have two distinct meanings: *'immigré'* applies to residents of France who were born outside French territory and did

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<sup>51</sup> *Le Monde*, 24 April 1998.

<sup>52</sup> Birnbaum, *Jewish Destinies*. Originally published as *Destins juifs: De la Révolution française à Carpentras*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1995. (Carpentras was the site of the desecration of a Jewish cemetery in May 1990). Hargreaves refers to ethnicity and related concepts being 'mistrusted' in France: see *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*, p.27.



not possess French nationality at birth. They may or may not be citizens. An '*étranger*' is someone residing on French territory who does not possess French citizenship; that is, the category only relates to citizenship status.<sup>53</sup> Legally, foreigners are distinct from immigrants; in practice, the two terms tend to be used interchangeably. Thus the relationship between immigration and foreignness is confused, as explained by Hargreaves:

The common sense equation that is often drawn between foreigners and immigrants is seriously flawed. Not all immigrants are foreigners; nor are all foreigners immigrants; significant numbers of people are neither foreigners nor immigrants but are often perceived and treated as such.<sup>54</sup>

The issue of perception and treatment is a crucial point. 'Immigrant' is not a label applied to German / British / American business people residing in France. By the same token, it is rarely used to designate the largest group of foreigners on French territory in 1990, the Portuguese (see Table 4.2).<sup>55</sup> Rather, as noted by Virginie Guiraudon, 'the term *étranger* or *immigré* immediately invokes the settled communities of North and West African origin and their children'.<sup>56</sup> 'Immigrant', 'foreigner' are labels applied to those who are culturally different, in particular, the North African (Arab) minority population in France. As has commonly been noted, '*immigré* = *arabe*'. Thus the immigration debate is fundamentally concerned with the question of ethnic minorities in French society, their place, representation, integration and influence. More specifically, it relates to an (certainly) ethnically- and (possibly) class-designated 'Other', 'outsiders' perceived as constituting a threat to a particular idea of Frenchness, notably those of African origin. In practice, of course, these immigrants may be legally French; that is, they may well be French citizens.

The language of this debate is favourable to the emergence of racist parties, if not racist violence, and cannot be divorced from the rise of the FN. The incidence of racial violence suggests that it is

<sup>53</sup> See the definitions provided by INSEE for the 1999 census in *INSEE Première*, no. 748, November 2000; also on the INSEE web site at <www.insee.fr>. The 1999 census counted 4.31 million immigrants (7.4 per cent of the population), of which 1.56 million possessed French citizenship: i.e. one in three immigrants are French citizens. INED also provides a useful glossary of major terms at <www.ined.fr/>.

<sup>54</sup> Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*, p.3.

<sup>55</sup> Such tendencies also emerge in the contemporary debates on the nature and possibility of a 'European identity', particularly in the context of the EU. Attempts to foster or forge a sense of 'Europeanness', based on some of the attributes of nationhood, have been criticised as conducive to racism and the exclusion of those who do not appear to belong to a common European 'civilisation'. On the other hand, many argue that Europe is too diverse for such a feeling to emerge. See in particular, A. Smith, 'National Identity and the Idea of European Unity', *International Affairs*, Vol. 68 (1), 1992, pp.246-67. He concludes by asking 'Is not the logic of cultural exclusion built into the process of pan-European identity formation?'. It is also clear that much of the anti-EU sentiment of the far right is based on xenophobic logic—a point that will be examined in more detail in the chapters on the EU.

citizens or residents of Maghrebi origin who are the major targets of animosity.<sup>57</sup> The 1996 report of the National Consultative Commission on the Rights of Man points to the high levels of violence directed at Maghrebis in particular: for example, of the 737 registered acts of racial violence committed between 1980 and 1995 in France, 569 were directed at Maghrebis; of the 33 deaths, 29 were Maghrebi.<sup>58</sup> The Maghrebi population, concludes the report, represents a 'privileged target'.

The current 'immigration' debate, then, centres on non-European migration into post-war France and issues surrounding post-migratory processes. While the next chapter deals with the specific question of citizenship, here we will focus on three major debates located at the nexus of the immigration-national identity controversy. All relate to the peculiarly French imagining of the nation, and (perhaps surprisingly given the myth of the political nation) privilege a cultural reading of nationhood that has exclusionary implications. The controversial debates have been accompanied by a broader shift which allowed FN policies to gain both support and legitimacy. This is not to argue that the overall French reaction to immigration has been as hostile and racist as the FN reading. Rather, the quasi-blindness of the Republican attitude towards minority rights is intrinsically problematic and has provided an opportunity for the extreme right to manipulate the terms of the debate to its advantage. The FN has used both political and cultural imaginings of the nation to portray immigration as a threat to national identity.

Despite the continued emphasis on, and attachment to, the 'political' idea of the nation, the immigration debate illustrates that cultural elements remain significant. As noted earlier, this observation is two-sided. Most obviously, claims that the French nation idea is solely political are misplaced and underplay the rôle of an *ethno-cultural* understanding of the nation. Second, even a pure political vision inevitably incorporates the cultural: Renan is clear on this point—despite his appropriation by the mainstream proponents of the political (and state-sponsored) idea of the nation.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> 'The Reaffirmation of the Republican Model of Integration', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 14 (2), Spring 1996, p.47.

<sup>57</sup> Often referred to as *beurs*—the children of North African immigrants. On the genesis of the term, see Hargreaves, 'The Beur generation: integration or exclusion?' in Howorth and Ross (eds), *Contemporary France*, Vol. 3, pp.150-2. It first appeared in the *Petit Larousse* in 1986.

<sup>58</sup> CNCDH, *La lutte contre le racisme et la xénophobie*, Paris, La Documentation française, 1996. Reported racist attacks were concentrated in Ile de France, PACA and Rhône-Alpes—all areas where the FN has been relatively successful. The report also finds that antipathy towards 'Arabs' and 'Muslims' are the two highest of all minority categories.

<sup>59</sup> This is neither to disagree with the proponents of the Republican, secular, indivisible nation, nor to undermine their motives. However the straightforward assertions of what constitutes the 'ideal' nation, and support for traditional models of integration need to be challenged.

The FN has played a major role in the politicisation of the immigration debate. Its appeal to French nationhood and its focus on national identity has found resonance in a society where 'immigration' is perceived as a challenge to traditional understandings of nationhood. Two central debates within the overall context of the immigration debate allowed the FN to make headway: first, the French response to a politics of difference and multiculturalism; second, the 'headscarves' affair and the future of the secular state. These will be examined before moving on to an analysis of the 'identity' politics of the FN and its manipulation of the national identity crisis.

*From droit à la différence to intégration à la française*

By the mid-1980s, the traditional view of French nation and identity was under fire. Immigration had come to be described as a threat to national identity. The 'ideal' model of integration—the incorporation of immigrants into the mainstream and the maintenance of French Republican identity upheld within a neutral public sphere and secular state apparatus—was being challenged. Most clearly articulated as the basis of the 'problem' and finding most popular resonance, was the opinion that many 'foreigners' were not assimilating into French society—that is, they were not becoming French through their involvement and acculturation via traditional processes and institutions: education, army, Church, unions, the workplace—due to their non-European background.<sup>60</sup> Further, it was unclear how Islam could be reconciled with the secular state. On the one hand, the Republican, assimilationist model was criticised as no longer 'working'. On the other hand, the multicultural and exclusive models practised elsewhere were rejected as neither appropriate nor desirable.<sup>61</sup> Nonetheless, the existing processes needed reconsideration; tentatively, new ideas were put forward. This section examines the support for the 'right to difference' (*droit à la différence*) position in the 1980s, and its subsequent demise, with a view to unpicking the strands of French national self-understanding and French attempts to come to terms with a multiethnic society. The subject of the debate—national identity—was a favoured theme of the extreme right and allowed the FN to play a major role.

In 1981, a new Socialist government came to power, the first since the founding of the Fifth Republic. The new President, François Mitterrand, promised a 'new citizenship', and a new deal for France's immigrant community.<sup>62</sup> The Socialist Party (PS) promised to end discrimination and insecurity, and to establish a new era of equality between French nationals and foreigners. The PS election agenda promised 'New Rights for Immigrants', including protection from deportation and

<sup>60</sup> On the shortcomings of the traditional tools of integration, see Schnapper, *La France de l'Intégration. Sociologie de la national en 1990*, Paris, Gallimard, 1991.

<sup>61</sup> On the differing models, see Castles and Miller, *The Age of Migration*, pp.244-50.

discrimination; guarantee of equal rights with French workers; rights of association; local voting rights; and the control and prevention of illegal immigration and illegal labour.<sup>63</sup> As part of an overall change in policy, Mitterrand endorsed the concept of the 'right to difference', and, supported by his Minister of Culture, Jacques Lang, promised that minority cultures would be recognised. Brubaker assesses this move as reflecting an embarrassment with Republican assimilationist tradition, emanating more from the French (Left) than from the immigrants themselves.<sup>64</sup> However, as a move to acknowledge a more plural society, and to grant new rights and recognition to cultural minorities, it was approved as progressive and in touch with modern-day France. The Giordan report, presented to the government in 1982, recommended that the nation be defined in culturally plural terms.<sup>65</sup> Submitted within the context of administrative decentralisation in the early Socialist years, the report is based on regional (French) *cultures communautaires*—and not post-war immigrants. Nonetheless it is significant that the report describes France as a culturally plural society and belies the myth of a monolithic national culture. The state, it argued, should finance the study of minority languages and support their cultures:

In States where there are ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, people belonging to these minorities should not be deprived of the right to have ... their own cultural life, to profess and practise their own religion or to use their own language.<sup>66</sup>

Thus a policy of 'insertion' was deemed the most appropriate for immigrants. This policy supports the maintenance of an immigrant's 'identity of origin', preserving cultural specificities and ways of life. Insertion stresses the 'conditions of welcome for the foreigner with the maintenance of their original particularisms'.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>62</sup> See J. Shields, 'Immigration Politics in Mitterrand's France' in G. Raymond (ed.), *France During the Socialist Years*, Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1994, pp. 222-49.

<sup>63</sup> The proposals were contained in the PS' *110 propositions pour la France*, published at the Créteil party congress, 24 January 1981. The three propositions concerning immigration were nos. 79-81. They are set out in full in the *Que sais-je?* series, L. Richer's *Le Droit de l'Immigration*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1986, p. 7.

<sup>64</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, pp. 148-9.

<sup>65</sup> Henri Giordan, *Démocratie culturelle et droit à la différence. Rapport au Ministre de la culture* (Cultural Democracy and the right to difference), Paris, La Documentation française, 1982. Safran describes the Giordan report as 'the most radical public document as far as ethnic minorities are concerned', 'Minorities, ethnics, and aliens', p. 180. See also J. Vichniac, 'French Socialists and *Droit à la Différence*: A Changing Dynamic', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 9 (1), Winter 1991, pp. 40-56.

<sup>66</sup> Giordan, *Démocratie culturelle*, p. 16.

<sup>67</sup> Costa-Lascoux, *De L'Immigré au Citoyen*, p. 12. She examines three models: insertion, integration and assimilation.

One of the first actions of the Socialist government was to repeal the law that had prohibited foreigners from setting up their own associations. This new freedom of association led rapidly to the establishment of a number of new, independent immigration associations, which not only fought discrimination, but also expressed their cultural difference.<sup>68</sup> Among such groups were SOS-Racisme and France-Plus.<sup>69</sup> Their language too—at that time—was that of 'insertion', whereby immigrant groups should no longer have to give up their distinct cultural identity in order to participate in French life. The old notion of assimilation—with its implication of superior-inferior cultures and devaluation of immigrant cultures—was beginning to be perceived as inappropriate for contemporary France, especially on the Left, where the term dropped out of use.<sup>70</sup>

Again, the shift of emphasis from the material, socio-economic condition to that of culture and identity is evident. This not only confirmed a change in perception of the migrant—from an economic to a cultural unit—but also heralded the possibility of the transformation of the traditional Jacobin model of cultural uniformity: assimilation and centralisation.<sup>71</sup> William Safran posited the 'eclipse of Jacobin ideology' in 1985,<sup>72</sup> and Diana Pinto's 'The Atlantic Influence and the Mellowing of French Identity' also foresaw an increasingly plural and tolerant 'France'.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> This early characteristic is noted by Hargreaves, '...during the early 1980s, their new freedom of association was seized on by many immigrant groups keen to assert what was termed *le droit à la différence* ... but insistence on being different is now far less to the fore than demands for an end to material inequalities and the right of ethnic minorities to participate in the decision-making processes'. See 'The Beur generation', pp.156-7.

<sup>69</sup> In the context of the early integration debate, France-Plus tended to support the '*droit à la différence*' position: as an organisation it aimed to empower its largely Franco-Maghrebi constituency in electoral politics. SOS-Racisme (created in 1984 as an anti-racist organisation and led by Harlem Désir) leant towards a '*droit à la ressemblance*' (right to resemblance) and has tended to concentrate on economic rather than cultural issues—in particular, on the rights of the Maghrebi population to integrate economically and politically. See W.Safran, 'The French and Their National Identity: The Quest for an Elusive Substance?', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 8 (1), Winter 1990, pp.64-5.

<sup>70</sup> Costa-Lascoux, *De L'Immigré au Citoyen*, provides a 1989 evaluation of the three terms pertaining to this debate as reflecting attitudes from the most 'imperialist' to the most 'respectful'—corresponding to a large degree to the Right-Left schematic. Thus, she argues, assimilation tends to be favoured by those who promote 'national preference' (a central plank of FN policy); 'insertion' was launched by the Left, central to the PS Fabius government's '*Vivre ensemble*' campaign in 1985. Integration is less ideologically bound, and emphasises 'the dynamic construction of a unity', p.10. Costa-Lascoux judges it the most-favoured term by 1989.

<sup>71</sup> Another of Mitterrand's major changes—and enduring, in this case—were decentralisation policies, to give more power to the regions and mitigate the dominance of Paris.

<sup>72</sup> W.Safran, 'The Mitterrand Regime and Its Policies of Ethnocultural Accommodation', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 18 (1), October 1985, pp.41-63. He identifies the Jacobin tradition as one that stresses universal aspirations; where the centralised and powerful state is the ideal agent of change and progress, and where intermediary agencies or actors (be it provincial or 'tribal') are inherently retrogressive and destructive of democracy.

<sup>73</sup> D.Pinto, 'The Atlantic Influence and the Mellowing of French National Identity' in Howorth and Ross (eds), *Contemporary France*, Vol. 2, pp.117-36.

Moreover, as Safran points out, new terminologies began to emerge: *ethnicité*, *identité communautaire*, *conscience minoritaire*—terms alien to the French political tradition.<sup>74</sup> The emergence of these terminologies enabled the imagining of a pluralistic nation, made up of a number of sub-cultures, while remaining French. Espaces 89's *Identité française* also canvassed this idea: that French society should be open to change, and identities should not be exclusive and competing, but multiple and complementary—and evolving. Elisabeth Badinter expresses the essence of this view: 'French first, but not French only'.<sup>75</sup>

### Opposition to *droit à la différence*

The 'right to difference' approach came under attack from disparate sources, drawing on very different traditions and interpretations of French nationhood and identity. Unsurprisingly, vehement opposition was voiced from the extreme right, and in particular from the FN, which was emerging as a force in domestic French politics in the 1980s. Providing some intellectual respectability for the FN's position, the *Nouvelle Droite* was also critical of policies supporting a multicultural France. However, intense opposition to *droit à la différence* was also voiced by supporters of the Republican model—from Gaullist orthodoxy on the Right to Jacobin Socialists on the Left.<sup>76</sup>

By the beginning of the 1990s, the move towards a more culturally inclusive and pluralist idea of the nation had all but dwindled out. Two landmark reports, the 1988 Commission of Nationality report and the 1991 report of the newly-created High Council for Integration (HCI), affirmed 'integration' as the appropriate national strategy. The reason for this is commonly asserted to be 'immigration' and the FN.<sup>77</sup> Certainly, the FN played a major role in the debate and gained support for its so-called defence of national identity. However the FN also benefited because dissent came from multiple sources: the idea of the nation being threatened by pluralism was voiced not only from the extremes but also from within the mainstream. Some opponents of cultural pluralism certainly drew on the neo-racist arguments of the extreme right, backed up by an ethno-cultural understanding of nationhood. Republican opponents, however, drew on political imaginings of the French nation and reasserted the citizen-state relationship within the neutral public sphere: a

<sup>74</sup> Safran, 'The French and Their National Identity', p.59. As noted, Birnbaum stresses that the term 'ethnicity' is alien to French political traditions in his preface to the English translation of *Destins juifs*.

<sup>75</sup> Espaces 89, *L'identité française*, pp.24-5: 'Français d'abord mais pas Français seulement'. The volume comprises a collection of papers from a conference on French identity organised by the PS.

<sup>76</sup> There was also opposition from 'pluralists' who viewed the right to difference as condescending towards minority cultures, but the extent and impact of this point of view was minimal.

<sup>77</sup> See for example Vichniac, 'French Socialists and *Droit à la Différence*'. The short response to the question of why *droit à la différence* fell out of favor is, she avers 'immigration and Le Pen', and the ability of the extreme right to keep immigration at the forefront of debate.

reaction Wieviorka refers to as 'politically correct French-style'.<sup>78</sup> The FN was also able to utilise this set of arguments. This 'Republican withdrawal' found resonance in society that was concerned by 'immigration', broadly defined, and with the seeming problems of immigrant integration. Overall, the country was deemed to be experiencing a crisis of national identity. Both models of nationhood were at odds with a culturally diverse polity. Thus the FN's rejection of the right to difference was able not only to draw on an exclusive ethno-cultural reading of French nationhood, but also to manipulate Republican traditions which reject difference in the public sphere.

### *FN opposition*

Unsurprisingly, the far right rejected the 'right to difference': its exclusive ethnically-based understanding of French national identity insisted upon a homogeneous French national identity. The anti-immigration message of the far right in general, and the FN in particular, is well documented. According to Le Pen and his followers, '*les immigrés*' threaten 'national identity'. Using the language of cultural difference rather than racial superiority, the FN argues that French culture is being swamped by immigration, and consequently needs protection.

The immigrant politics of the FN rests on a contradiction: on the one hand, the FN argues that migrants should assimilate, should not introduce new values and cultures into France; French national identity should be protected from such influences. The FN has perverted the logic of '*droit à la différence*' to refer to the right of the French to 'remain French'—to protect **their** cultural difference. On the other hand, the FN argument also holds that 'foreigners'—those who do not come from a common 'European civilisation'—are inherently different: they neither have the will nor the ability to integrate.<sup>79</sup> In Le Pen's words, anti-immigrant measures 'obviously do not apply to citizens of the EC and beyond, those of our European culture, religion and civilisation'.<sup>80</sup>

More restrictively, Le Pen has stated that French identity is in fact inherited: it is in 'the blood'. This notion underpins the FN's stated policy that citizenship in France should not be automatically granted via *droit du sol*. Some argue that the FN exclusively call for citizenship attributable via *droit du sang*. Certainly, the automatic granting of citizenship based on place of birth—a central tenet of the French Republican tradition, as will be examined in the following chapter—is unacceptable to the FN: citizenship should be inherited, or merited. Le Pen's 1999 speech at the

<sup>78</sup> As referred to in the title of his lecture at the University of Melbourne: 'Last words on "politically correct" French-style'.

<sup>79</sup> This also points to a second contradiction: namely that although a great defender of national identity, the 'European' / civilisational dimension is often used to underpin FN policies. FN policies on European integration are therefore somewhat contradictory: the EU is dangerous because it threatens national identity and sovereignty, but the EU is also useful as a bulwark against 'alien', non-European, cultures.



Bleu-Blanc-Rouge Festival (again laying claim to national symbols—here the flag): 'For us, French nationality must be inherited, or merited'.<sup>81</sup>

The fact that similar conclusions could be drawn from totally opposed lines of thinking, such as that of Jean Daniel, can appear to put the FN into respectable company. FN arguments, though, are centred on the concept of the French nation as a static, culturally-determined entity, where difference is not allowed.

The FN's view that nationhood is culturally-determined, inherited, picks up on an aspect of French nationhood that has been underplayed, but nonetheless apparent, to a greater or lesser degree, throughout French history: that is, the idea of the nation as an 'ethnic' entity. The (relatively) recent experiences of Vichy, and North African colonialism, strongly colour this view. The language and concepts of nation construction—even invention—are foreign to this mode of thinking. The FN portrays a frightening vision of a France riven, if not destroyed by, cultural difference. Based around three related themes of identity, insecurity and immigration, its policy holds that the French nation may only be protected as a culturally unified, exclusive unit. The right to difference, then, does not exist.

### *Intellectual foundations*

As noted earlier, the FN has been backed up by the intellectual French 'New Right', the *Nouvelle Droite* (ND). The New Right stresses difference and the right to preserve group identity.<sup>82</sup> Major think-tanks include the *Club de l'Horloge* and GRECE, the latter under the leadership of Alain de Benoist (although he rejects the 'Right' label).<sup>83</sup> In addition to its own media (*Nouvelle Ecole*,

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in *Le Monde*, 19 November 1991, p.8.

<sup>81</sup> 'Pour nous, la nationalité française s'hérite ou se mérite' (e.g. via fighting for France). Address published on FN web site. The citizenship policy of Mégret's breakaway MNR is quasi-identical to that of the FN—as on most other points. Mégret's *National Alternative* sets out that French citizenship should be inherited, and naturalisation allowed under specific conditions, notably, the desire and will to assimilate into the national community. This is all argued in the context of an 'immigration-invasion' destroying the nation. See Chapter 4 of *L'Alternative nationale: Les priorités du Mouvement national républicain* (The National Alternative: the priorities of National Republican Movement), published on the MNR web site, 2001.

<sup>82</sup> See special issue of *Telos*, nos. 98-99, Winter 1993-Spring 1994, devoted to 'The French New Right. New Right-New Left-New Paradigm?'. The strategy of a reversal of language, defining anti-racists as anti-French / anti-European racists, has been effective, as well as its use of the differentialist argument.

<sup>83</sup> Taguieff splits the ND into three strands: traditional counter-revolutionaries linked to the tradition of Maurras; 'conservative revolutionaries' with a paganist European orientation associated with GRECE; and liberal national populists associated with the *Club de l'Horloge*. Until 1979, both GRECE and the Club followed similar paths. The Club (political wing) was formed in 1974 by two GRECE (cultural wing) members, Yvan Blot and Jean-Yves Le Gallou—subsequently both members of the FN—and by graduates of the elite Parisian *Ecole Nationale D'Administration* and *Polytechnique*. By 1979, the Club's neo-liberalism and pro-western orientation had led to a split with GRECE, and the two are now distinct. See Taguieff, 'From



*Éléments*), the ND's beliefs were given a far wider outlet in *Le Figaro* in the late 1970s via the editorials of Louis Pauwels, described by Gildea as 'hardly more than retranscriptions of texts by Alain de Benoist'.<sup>84</sup> The central messages of the ND are based around three themes: anti-equality / anti-universalism: that the 'crisis' of European civilisation is attributable to universalist and egalitarian principles; the need for elites and a hierarchical society; and the importance of science and socio-biology as the basis for society, not morals or ethics—thus promoting an ethnically-determined view. The value of 'rootedness', of an organic society and the defence of cultural difference are central to ND ideology.

GRECE not only attacked Socialism and Marxism, but shifted to reject the whole Judeo-Christian tradition, with an emphasis on paganism and an alliance with the Third World.<sup>85</sup> GRECE also distances itself from the FN and racism, however—particularly before the late '70s shift—many members of both groups joined the FN, pointing to a closer relationship. GRECE members in the mid-1980s, as well as prominent members of the *Club de l'Horloge*—among them Yvan Blot (formerly RPR and Club President), Bruno Mégret (also formerly RPR) and Le Gallou—joined the ranks of the FN.<sup>86</sup>

Indeed, it was the *Club de l'Horloge*, in the mid-1980s, which provided the main 'direct' intellectual support for the FN. The Club did not explicitly dissociate itself from the FN in the same way as GRECE; it also focused on national (rather than European) identity—a theme close to the extreme right—and did not adhere to the 'paganism' of GRECE. Its organisational aim was 'to develop a body of doctrine for the Right', utilising an anti-egalitarian philosophy rooted in community belonging and traditional structures.<sup>87</sup> With the publication of *La Préférence nationale: Réponse à l'Immigration* in 1985, the Club provided an effective argument and core policy position for the FN. Le Gallou and Jalkh's 1987 volume, *Etre français, cela se mérite*, also fed the FN stance on citizenship.<sup>88</sup> More indirectly, the influence of the ND overall is such that the rhetoric of cultural pluralism and the right to difference can be used as a pseudo-intellectual argument to mask

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Race to Culture: The New Right's View of European Identity', *Telos*, nos. 98-99, pp.99-126. On the foundations of the groups, see also Johnson, 'The New Right in France'.

<sup>84</sup> See Gildea, *The Past in French History*, p.335. The *Magazine* is also known to have strong links to the ND.

<sup>85</sup> See Minkenberg, 'The New Right in France and Germany', pp.71-3. On de Benoist's intellectual development in some detail, see Taguieff, 'Discussion or Inquisition? The Case of Alan de Benoist', *Telos*, nos. 98-99, pp.34-54.

<sup>86</sup> See Johnson, 'The New Right in France'.

<sup>87</sup> Club President Henry de Lesquen, 1989, cited in Taguieff, 'Origins and Metamorphoses of the New Right', *Telos*, nos. 98-99, p.169.

<sup>88</sup> Le Gallou et al., *La Préférence nationale*; Le Gallou and J-F.Jalkh, *Etre français, cela se mérite*, Paris, Albatros, 1987. The Club also published *L'Identité de la France*—another favourite theme of the FN.

the essentially racist aspects of its policies.<sup>89</sup> With its insistence on the importance of cultural (not racial, it stresses) difference, and emphasis on the value of origins, of roots, its fundamental ideas dovetail neatly with the FN's agenda.<sup>90</sup> Ideas emanating from the ND have undoubtedly provided legitimacy for the FN and have conferred a level of respectability upon Le Pen and his neo-racist policies.<sup>91</sup>

The 1985 *Club de l'Horloge* publication reflects such views. Migrants must not only speak French but must totally assimilate into the dominant national culture. They must internalise Judeo-Christian principles—yet they are practically incapable of doing so as their Muslim religion and customs are foreign to French traditions.<sup>92</sup> This line of thinking—closely allied to neo-racism that utilises cultural difference in place of biological superiority—has been adopted by the FN, which uses the semi-respectability of the Club's arguments to support its own more openly racist policies.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Birnbaum sees in the ND 'right to difference' arguments similarities with e.g. Charles Taylor and communitarian authors—only gradually becoming known in France, although Taylor's *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Difference* was translated in 1992. In Birnbaum's eyes, the influence of such movements legitimated the recognition of culturally-based identities, and was hostile to the French universal-Enlightenment model. Birnbaum sees dangers in ethnic identification; and argues for a 'liberal interpretation' of multiculturalism which maintains a separation of public-private spheres and guards against nationalistic identitarian ideology. See his 'From Multiculturalism to Nationalism', *Political Theory*, Vol. 24 (1), February 1996, pp.33-45.

<sup>90</sup> ND strategy in the 1980s, with particular reference to the *Club de l'Horloge*, is taken up by Taguieff in 'The New Cultural Racism in France'. He unpicks ND strategy: first, it uses anti-fascist and anti-racist arguments. For example, socialism is the source of fascism: the New Right opposes socialism and is therefore anti-fascist. On racism, the ND utilises a differentialist argument, and a strategy of reversal of language, defining anti-racists as anti-French/European/Western/White racists. So the ND claims that real racism attempts to impose uniformity and eliminate difference. 'True anti-racism is founded on the absolute respect of differences between ethnically and culturally heterogeneous collectives', p.111. Second, it consciously appropriates positive values: Taguieff sets out seven appropriations: modernity; appeal to the real; praise of established roots: continuity and community; anti-statism/interventionist state; demand for security; the ideal of the national body/nationalism; and republican tradition.

<sup>91</sup> The issue of *Telos* devoted to the ND, and articles by, and examining the ideas of, de Benoist, have been criticised as a 'celebration' of ND ideology. See for example Birnbaum, 'From Multiculturalism to Nationalism'. Taguieff in particular has come under fire in France for his contribution to the debate on the ND—see for example the 1993 campaign in the French press, including the 13 July 'Appeal to Vigilance' by 40 prominent intellectuals. Taguieff identifies the ND as racist, utilising core fascist assumptions, but has also criticised its 'demonisation'.

<sup>92</sup> Club de l'Horloge, *L'Identité de la France*.

<sup>93</sup> On the move from 'old' to 'new' racism—that is, from biological determinism to ethnocultural determinism, from race to culture—see Taguieff, *La Force du Préjugé*. He sets out two forms of racism—'universalist-inegalitarian' and 'communitarian-differentialist'—which are contradictory. Therefore there are two contradictory forms of anti-racism: the former, a variation on assimilation, promoting equal rights for all; the latter supporting the preservation of traditional values and identity as located within a group—'the right to difference'. Anti-racism, he argues, is caught between assimilation and difference, which partly accounts for the failure of anti-racist movements. They are attacking inequality, whereas they are confronted with a racism of 'difference'.

The spread of such arguments—and their apparent resonance in the electorate—pose a number of problems for the mainstream parties. Amongst the Right in particular, the temptation exists to ‘win back’ voters lost to the FN through a more forceful line on immigration; this in turn gives credence to FN policy.<sup>94</sup> The far right has, in fact, managed largely to appropriate the language of national identity to meet its own aims, cleverly using the language of ‘difference’ to support its claims. It uses the concept of the ‘right to difference’ perversely to justify the right of the French to reject foreign influences. According to the FN, racism is in fact directed at the party, and the French nation in general. The banner definition of racism plastered across the pages of *Présent* spells this out: racism is defined as a ‘systematically hostile attitude towards a particular category of people’.<sup>95</sup> This definition is twisted to apply to the FN and the hostile attitude directed at the nationalist movement. In another reversal, the theme of anti-FN racism resumes, aimed at anti-FN protesters. According to *Présent*, the protestors call for murder against *le mouvement national* (i.e. the FN) and mobilise thugs to attack its meetings and assault its militants.<sup>96</sup> Following the ND strategy identified by Taguieff, the far right appropriated the ‘right to difference’ from the anti-racists and exploited concepts of cultural difference to promote a racially-based vision of the French nation: the ‘right to be French’.<sup>97</sup>

In summary, the extreme right exploited three facets of the ‘right to difference’ argument in order to further its anti-immigrant, racist politics: first, that immigrants do not wish to assimilate; second, that the processes and institutions of assimilation no longer function effectively; and third, that the cultural make-up of the majority of immigrants renders them ‘non-assimilable’.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, the FN has used the argument of the ‘right to difference’ to justify the rejection of other cultures. An exclusive, culturally-based definition of nationhood more usually associated with Germanic *droit du sang* policies is clearly on the agenda here, but it can be voiced in terms of Republican traditions and political identity. In both cases, the cultural difference of the migrant communities was underlined: they did not form part of the imagined French national community, political or cultural.

<sup>94</sup> The mainstream right has referred to ‘shared values’ with the FN; of the FN ‘asking the right questions’; and has entered into alliances with the FN at the sub-national level in the 1980s and 1990s. While Chirac has vetoed any alliance with the FN, elements of the mainstream right still call for an open debate on ‘national preference’ (e.g. Balladur, 1986, 1990, 1998), and Giscard has made known his preference for *jus sanguinis* as the basis for citizenship.

<sup>95</sup> See for example *Présent*, 23 April 1997: ‘attitude d’hostilité systématique à l’égard d’une catégorie déterminée de personnes’.

<sup>96</sup> *Présent*, 23 May 1997.

<sup>97</sup> Further on the FN use of such terms, see Taguieff, *Face au racisme*. Arguing that cultural relativism has played into racist hands, Taguieff’s response is to reaffirm the ‘crucible’ (*creuser*) tradition of integration via education and other institutions. For a critique of his proposals, and also of neo-racism (cultural) as opposed to old-style racism (biological), see O’Shaughnessy, ‘New and old racisms, same old integration’.

<sup>98</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, pp.148-9.

*Republican opposition*

The Gaullists and Jacobins argue against the 'right to difference', basing their position on Republican values and a particular reading of the Republican models of nationhood, citizenship and national belonging. This distrusts group representation, and totally rejects the idea of representation based on ethnicity: intermediary agencies or actors (be they provincial or 'tribal') are inherently retrogressive and destructive of democracy. The recognition of difference risks breaking down the individual-state (or citizen-state) relationship, and threatens the universal aspirations of French Republicanism. As discussed in Chapter 3, the political imagining of the French nation does not allow for intermediary, culturally-based organisations. The public sphere is a neutral, secular space, and cultural particularisms should remain in the private sphere. The near-hysterical defence of the secular state (seen in particular during the *affaire du foulard* when the secular education system was passionately defended) demonstrates the importance attached to this model, and the perceived need to protect it from the fragmentary dangers of multicultural practices.<sup>99</sup> At its most extreme, the argument runs that culture has to be internalised: the past '*francisation*' of immigrants and minority cultures within France attests to the success of the model. A single French culture is held to be the ideal, where the bond between individual and state remains strong and national identity is uniform.

The concept of multiculturalism has often been caricatured as an Anglo-Saxon model totally unsuited to the French, resulting in ghettos, violence and discrimination—even civil war. *Le Figaro* claimed in 1989 that the Left's promotion of multiculturalism had 'glorified' the right to be different.<sup>100</sup> *Le Nouvel Observateur*, among others, voiced the fear of an Anglo-Saxon style multiculturalism leading to ghettos and entrenched differences—a 'Lebanisation' of society, rather than integration.<sup>101</sup> According to this line of argument, integration is the anti-thesis of the right (or surrender) to difference. Integration is the process whereby ethnic communities and foreign ghettos can be avoided. The integration process must involve the will to preserve a certain idea of the Republic and the nation; some even go as far as to question the sense of the *droit du sol*, if the children of migrants are not integrated.<sup>102</sup> Rejection of the 'right to difference' came also from feminists on the Republican Left, who argued that cultural difference was often a means of

<sup>99</sup> See *Le Nouvel Observateur*, November 2-8 1989.

<sup>100</sup> Louis Pauwels, *Figaro-Magazine*, 9 December 1989, quoted in Kaplan, *Farewell, Revolution. Disputed Legacies*, p.47.

<sup>101</sup> Jean Daniel's editorial on the new Nationality Code in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 13-19 May 1993, talks of the importance of Republican integration and the danger of multicultural practices resulting in, at best, a US-style society of segregated communities, or at worst, a 'Lebanon'.

<sup>102</sup> See for example Daniel, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 7 November 1999. Promoting the benefits of integration, of not remaining 'different', he argues that the automatic granting of citizenship to the French-born children of immigrants, without careful attention and support being given to their integration

subordinating women, even subjecting them to intolerable practices, such as female genital mutilation. This line of argument will be taken up in the following '*affaire du foulard*' section.

Overall, the politics of insertion and the recognition of cultural difference were brought into question by mainstream Right and Left, and their arguments justified in reference to national political traditions.

### The shift to integration

As noted, key markers of the shift to integration were the publication of two significant reports in 1988 and 1991 respectively, which illustrated a move away from the recognition of difference in the public sphere. The first report arose out of the proposal in the mid-1980s by the right-wing government to reform France's citizenship legislation, to qualify the automatic *droit du sol* right to French citizenship, as will be examined in detail in the following chapter. Specifically, this change was aimed at second-generation immigrants: the argument ran that they should have to consent/volunteer—a concept drawing on a Republican understanding of citizenship, but proposed at a time when the FN was successfully propagating their anti-immigrant message. As part of this process, the government called a major public inquiry, conducted by the Commission of Nationality under Marcel Long, the findings of which were published in 1988.<sup>103</sup> While the inquiry was called in order to examine specifically the issue of immigrant integration, the scope of the report was far wider: it examined what it meant to be French—the nature and meaning of French identity.

As Judith Vichniac notes, the language of the report had changed, when compared with the earlier Giordan report.<sup>104</sup> The pendulum, she concludes, had swung back by the end of the 1980s, with the PS abandoning earlier moves towards an explicitly multiethnic France, and polls indicating that the general population was deeply concerned by the issue of immigrant (particularly Islamic) integration. *EFAD*, rather than continuing the recent trend towards a multicultural approach to the question, reaffirmed the idea of 'essential values' at the core of French identity.<sup>105</sup> The

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into the Republic, 'leads to the creation of ghettos, the affirmation of difference, in short to communitarianism'.

<sup>103</sup> Published as Commission de la Nationalité, *Etre Français aujourd'hui et demain: rapport de la Commission de la Nationalité présenté par M. Marceau Long, président, au Premier Ministre*, 2 vols, Paris, Union Général d'Éditions, 1988. Hereafter referenced as *EFAD*.

<sup>104</sup> Vichniac, 'French Socialists and *Droit à la Différence*', p.45.

<sup>105</sup> *EFAD*, II, pp.88-90. The desire to move away from a multicultural France was explicit even among those representing immigrant and/or anti-racist groupings. See for example the testimony of Jean Pierre-Bloch, President of LICRA: 'LICRA does not believe in a pluricultural France which would marginalize minorities and push them into ghettos' (I, p.394); Dahmani, President of France-Plus: 'What we are claiming today is a

recommendations of this *Comité de sages* favour an elective approach—with reference to the voluntaristic nation—and reject a pluralistic definition which would admit a number of sub-cultures. According to the recommendations, the recognition of multiple cultures would result in discrimination, and national culture is inseparable from political culture and power.<sup>106</sup> The Commission concluded that both the civic and the cultural aspects of French national identity needed reinforcement.

This shift was to be confirmed in the 1990s: integration was to be the order of the day. In 1990 the Rocard government created a new High Commission on Integration—*Haut Conseil à l'Intégration*—led by the same director as the earlier Commission, Marcel Long.<sup>107</sup> On the one hand, the creation of such a body explicitly acknowledged that integration was viewed as a major problem area. On the other, its very title reaffirmed the view that integration was the appropriate way forward. The first report of the Commission, entitled *Pour un modèle français d'intégration*, rejected the idea of 'insertion' and its implicit cultural pluralism proposed in the 1980s with the slogan of (the now unacceptable) *droit à la différence*. It did also reject a narrow Jacobin conception of cultural unity.<sup>108</sup> Integration *à la française* was the proposed way forward, using definitions based on the work of Costa-Lascoux.<sup>109</sup> So while the report recognised and acknowledged the positive contribution that immigrants had made to French society through their energy and their competence, it concluded that their position was endangered; and recommended policies of integration based on 'individual fusion' rather than the US-style ethnic minority groupings.<sup>110</sup> Drawing on French political traditions it argued that structured ethnic communities are inadmissible.<sup>111</sup>

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right to resemblance' (*un droit à la ressemblance*) ... 'Our values are the values of the French Revolution. Our values are the values of secularism. Our values are the values of democracy' (I, pp.473-4).

<sup>106</sup> EFAD, I, p.235.

<sup>107</sup> The Council is made up of nine experts. Its role is to give opinions and put together proposals at the request of the Prime Minister. It also prepares an annual report to the Prime Minister.

<sup>108</sup> Haut Conseil à l'Intégration, *Pour un modèle française d'intégration*, Paris, La Documentation française, 1991. All four reports issued by the HCI from 1991-1993 rejected the notion of a multiethnic society. All published by La Documentation française: *Conditions juridiques et culturelles de l'intégration*, 1992; *Les étrangers et l'emploi*, 1993; *La connaissance de l'immigration et de l'intégration*, 1991 and 1993. For more details, see McKesson, 'Concepts and Realities in a Multiethnic France'.

<sup>109</sup> For Costa-Lascoux's definitions, see *De L'Immigré au Citoyen*. The report takes the Costa-Lascoux definition of integration: 'the choice and the participation of new members', p.12—thus acknowledging the contribution of immigrants to French society.

<sup>110</sup> HCI, *Pour un modèle française d'intégration*, pp.12-13.

<sup>111</sup> The report does however state that the current categories of French / *étranger* (i.e. citizen – non-citizen) are insufficient for understanding specific problems of integration and also for effective policy-making. It suggests that the creation of a 'third' category which recognises that not all French citizens have assimilated could be useful. It refers to research carried out at INED, especially that of Michèle Tribalat, which recommends adding a new category: French citizens with an immigrant parent or

The HCI insists that integrated citizens must take on board on a minimum of (unspecified) shared values: 'Of course, a policy of integration implies the commitment of all to a minimum of shared values'.<sup>112</sup> Despite the supposed 'taboo' nature of assimilation, an expansive interpretation of 'shared values' alongside the idea of migrants becoming '*Français comme les autres*' suggest that this might well describe the desired outcome. Integration, then, is simultaneously a process, an end result, and a desired aim.

This shift in thinking on cultural identity and difference placed the problematic in a broader social context. The redefinition of the integration problem ran as follows: immigrants are only one of a number of groups experiencing difficulties. It should be viewed as problem of exclusion, urban disenfranchisement and disillusion, poverty and unemployment. Immigrant integration should be placed within the broad policy-making context: immigration is not an isolated issue on the agenda, but must be viewed alongside broader problems of exclusion.<sup>113</sup>

### *Integration: meaning?*

The precise meaning of 'French-style integration' is, however, open to interpretation. It is used to apply to a variety of situations, cultural, social, economic and political. Its meaning changes depending on the interlocutor: the political scientist/journalist/politician all use the term differently.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, 'assimilation'—despite its description by some as 'taboo'—is still in use.<sup>115</sup> Some use the term assimilation to denote the process in the cultural sphere, and the term

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grandparent. See HCI, *Pour un modèle française d'intégration*, pp.14-16. The HCI uses intermarriage, crime rates and educational qualifications to measure the extent of immigrant integration into the French national community—integration measured as the extent of participation in French society, but also in terms of 'progress'.

<sup>112</sup> HCI, *Pour un modèle française d'intégration*, p.34: 'Bien entendu, une politique d'intégration implique l'adhésion de tous à une minimum de valeurs communes'.

<sup>113</sup> See Schain's comments in 'The Immigration Debate and the National Front', pp.185-6. One of the charges made against French social scientists working in this area is that they concentrate too much on the 'political' and need to pay more attention to socio-economic factors. This is an attempt to remedy this imbalance, but runs the risk of underplaying ethnic disadvantage.

<sup>114</sup> See for example the analysis of S.Bonnaïfous, 'Le terme "intégration" dans le journal *Le Monde*: sens et non-sens' (The term "integration" in the *Le Monde* newspaper: sense and nonsense), *Hommes-Migrations*, no. 1145, May 1992, pp.24-30. She identifies no less than 96 articles dealing with integration in *Le Monde* between November 1989 and April 1990 (in the immediate aftermath of the *affaire du foulard*).

<sup>115</sup> Its use by such respected scholars as Taguieff and Weil suggests that its 'taboo' nature has been over-emphasised. See for example their "Immigration", fait national et "citoyenneté", *Esprit*, no. 161, May 1990, pp.87-102. They set out four models: assimilation, insertion, integration and new citizenship—the latter criticised as a 'sympathetic utopia', p.93. The European Commission's 1997 report on racism and xenophobia offered either 'assimilation' or 'integration' as the two options for immigrant incorporation. 44 per cent of the French questioned agreed with integration and 32 per cent with assimilation. See 'Racism and Xenophobia in Europe', *Eurobarometer Opinion Poll*, December 1997, pp.5-6.



integration in the socio-economic and political sphere—mirroring the private-public divide.<sup>116</sup> Others prefer to use the term assimilation for the process in the public sphere—hence, they argue, assimilation is a question of rights and obligations. In the private (cultural) sphere, groups are permitted their own distinctive cultural life.<sup>117</sup> According to this mode of thinking assimilation is a public political matter; (private) culture is irrelevant. Aubry and Duhamel concur with this view.

In their 'small dictionary' to fight the far right, Aubry and Duhamel differentiate *intégration* from assimilation, the latter implying the suppression of cultural, religious, social and linguistic difference.<sup>118</sup> They argue for integration which not only grants foreigners rights in the (supposedly neutral) public sphere but also allows them to 'retain their own cultural references'. Nonetheless, they concede that foreigners are of course required to 'respect the essential values of the country: recognition of secularism; rejection of polygamy; tolerance ...'<sup>119</sup> So while integration recognises a right to difference, these differences must not contradict the fundamental values of French society: 'Thus each person obviously has the right to practise their own religion, so long as it remains in the private sphere and does not place constraints on others'.<sup>120</sup> Thus integration, according to the 'little dictionary', implies conformity in the public sphere and the allowance for difference in the private.

A clear and precise accepted definition of integration, then, is difficult to pin down. I would argue that this is partly due to the fuzzy divide between the public and the private. While accepting that 'integration' is the favoured term, the differentiated application of it is problematic. What is included in the 'public' domain? Dominique Schnapper, for example, refers to integration as a process whereby individuals participate in public life; however she explicitly includes in this 'public' description the adoption of family and social behaviour.<sup>121</sup> Aubry and Duhamel list

<sup>116</sup> See for example House, 'Contexts for "Integration" and Exclusion'. He notes the ambiguity of the term integration and argues that its use to cover what he terms assimilation—that is, covering the cultural sphere—leads to confusion.

<sup>117</sup> For this view, see Nair, 'France: A Crisis of Integration', *Dissent*, Summer 1996, pp.75-8. He argues as follows: 'The term assimilation may have a negative connotation for those who think all ethnic groups must necessarily form their own distinct communities .... In the French context, however, assimilation does not mean forgoing one's religion, ethnic identity, or language. Rather it defines *public* behaviour, without precluding expressions of cultural singularity within the private sphere', p.75.

<sup>118</sup> M.Aubry and O.Duhamel, *Petit Dictionnaire pour lutter contre l'extrême droite* (Small Dictionary to combat the extreme right), Paris, Seuil, 1995. However under the heading 'Assimilation' (p.28) the reader is directed to 'Integration' (pp.123-5). They note: "'Assimilation", "intégration", these words are often used interchangeably, while in fact they cover differing conceptions of the treatment of foreigners. They are obviously opposed to segregation and discrimination, but also to Anglo-Saxon communitarianism. But they do not treat the specific attributes of the foreigner in the same way', pp.123-5.

<sup>119</sup> Aubry and Duhamel, *Petit Dictionnaire*, p.124.

<sup>120</sup> Aubry and Duhamel, *Petit Dictionnaire*, p.124.

<sup>121</sup> See her *L'Europe des Immigrés*, Paris, François Bourin, 1992, p.17. She proceeds to examine the immigration debate in western Europe in terms of the 'two-model' approach—political and communitarian.



housing, education and health as examples of the 'public'. However they then set out some central tenets of French values that must be accepted: secularism, and the ban on polygamy. While allowing that integration does not impose 'interior' norms, it certainly has moved well beyond the domain of 'rights and obligations'. This highlights the difficulty of using the public-private categorisation to prescribe precisely where integration needs to take place. The inclusion of family behaviour, in particular, suggests that the private sphere may be extremely circumscribed; indeed, it is difficult to place such an interpretation squarely outside assimilationist modes of thinking.

Jean Daniel in *Le Nouvel Observateur* places integration squarely as the antithesis of the right to difference—or rather the 'surrender' to difference. Integration is the process whereby ethnic communities and foreign ghettos are avoided. French-style integration, according to him, must involve the will to uphold a certain idea of the Republic and of the nation:

...What is the capacity of the French to continue to welcome a significant number of foreigners each year? Above all, what is the capacity of France to integrate those who are already here and who have chosen to remain, into our community? If generosity consists in welcoming the Other, then fraternity implies that we are concerned about how he develops after welcoming him. To which one must add that this concern is placed within **the conscious will to preserve a certain idea of the Republic and of the nation.**<sup>122</sup>

It appears—from the Costa-Lascoux definition and its use in official reports—that integration is intended to include some notion of reciprocity; even so, it is inevitable that it has connotations of a dominant (host) culture and a contributing, secondary culture. What is certain is that integration is viewed as both a process and an end; and given that it has replaced the concepts of ethnic pluralism as the officially and publicly-accepted orthodoxy, it necessarily is taken to cover aspects of both the cultural (private) sphere as well as the public.<sup>123</sup> In so doing, it allows that nationhood incorporates aspects of cultural belonging while rejecting any other form of cultural group identity in the public sphere.

The creation of the 'Integration' Council, and the content of its subsequent reports, marked the end of the French engagement with *droit à la différence* and the pluralist modes of identification that

<sup>122</sup> Daniel, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 7 November 1999: '*la volonté de préserver une certaine idée de la République et de la nation*' (my emphasis). He goes on to clarify that he is arguing for a huge increase in the budget devoted to this area, but nonetheless, this is a warning of the dangers of US-style multiculturalism—a model that leads, in short, to ghettoisation and all the dangers associated with communitarianism.

<sup>123</sup> For confirmation of this view, see for example Guiraudon, 'The Reaffirmation of the Republican Model of Integration'. Also in the same volume of *French Politics and Society*, arguing the durability and viability of the traditional French model of assimilation, see Ireland, 'Vive le jacobinisme'.

were proposed in the 1980s. Cultural pluralism, which could allegedly result in tribalism, segregation, and a divided multicultural society where discrimination abounds, was abandoned.<sup>124</sup> Government publications posit the Republican model, 'the expression of a fundamentally egalitarian and tolerant conception of men and women', against the Anglo-Saxon model—'communitarian, class-based and individualistic'.<sup>125</sup> Republican citizenship is defined as a political contract, one that assumes commitment to common values and 'absolute freedom' in the private sphere. In the public, equality of rights and duties; in the private, respect and freedom re cultural and religious belonging.

This, then is Wieviorka's 'Republican withdrawal' (*repli*): the standard French response to the question of how to live in a *de facto* multicultural society—in the face of immigration, Islam and perceived threats to national identity. This option of a Republican model of integration stresses the separation of private-public spheres and rejects any ethnically-based collective identity which attempts to take on a political role—in Wieviorka's words, 'to penetrate the public sphere'.<sup>126</sup>

As we have seen, dissent came from multiple sources. Each of these put forward arguments founded in French political and historical thought—not restricted to immigration or the far right, but engaging with notions of French national identity and the link between culture and politics. These ideas found resonance in a society that was concerned by 'immigration', with increasing numbers attracted to the ideas put forward by the FN. However, the change in policy cannot be understood without acknowledging the role of mainstream parties. The rhetoric of both the FN and the Republicans serves to underline the cultural difference of the migrant communities: they did not form part of the imagined French national community. The cultural-identity debate was captured, however, by the extreme right, so that any discourse, politics or policies promoted by the mainstream risked making the ethnic claims of the far right more credible.<sup>127</sup> The use of collective (selective) memory to bolster an anti-pluralist agenda has allowed the far right to claim the same Republican heritage for its policies.

In this context, the ideas of the FN *could* be couched in mainstream terms, rendering them seemingly innocuous. So while Marie-France Stirbois, FN member and general counsellor

<sup>124</sup> The language used to describe this threatening phenomenon can verge on the extreme: balkanisation, retribution, victimisation.

<sup>125</sup> S.Naïr, in *Label France*, no. 38, January 2000, p.18.

<sup>126</sup> Wieviorka, 'Last words on "politically correct" French-style'.

<sup>127</sup> See for example the analysis of Jean-Marie Colombani, *La France sans Mitterrand* (France without Mitterrand), Paris, Flammarion, 1992. He states that 'it is difficult today to engage in an identity-based discourse that has not already been developed by the extreme right', p.150.

(*conseillère général*) of L'Eure-et-Loir states baldly that 'extra-European immigration calls into question our cultural unity and thus undermines the basis of the nation which is directly threatened',<sup>128</sup> this is rendered more acceptable—in the context of a general move towards integration and rejection of multiculturalism—by FN General Secretary Bruno Gollnisch, asserting that he will never accept 'balkanisation, communitarianisation of French society'.<sup>129</sup>

### *Integration à la française: a critique*

There are a number of inconsistencies with this general approach—termed by some as a 'new consensus'. As noted, the meaning of the term 'integration' is open to interpretation; the public-private divide is problematic and contested, as is the idea of a neutral public sphere: France's secularism itself is a cultural value. It is also seemingly contravened by the public funding of private, Catholic schools alongside the refusal to fund analogous Muslim schools.<sup>130</sup> Further, the state does engage with ethnically-organised groupings; it does not conform to the ideals set out in the HCI reports which advise against ethnically-based representation. There are, in practice, a number of communities within the 'indivisible' French nation that are identified separately and, in some cases, have differing laws and regulations governing their behaviour. The most frequently cited examples are the Jewish and the *harki* communities.<sup>131</sup> Also attracting similar comment are the attempts of the state to engage with the Islamic community.<sup>132</sup> Despite problems due to the Islamic community's fragmented and sometimes competing nature, the fact that the state has attempted an engagement with representatives of this community in France suggests that the theoretical framework of individual incorporation is not sufficient. Finally, attempts at further integration at national and local levels tend to encourage—if not depend on—interaction between the authorities and representative organisations of the communities in question. Many of these, as a matter of course, are ethnic in character—precisely the type of communitarian organisation that the HCI rejects in its reports.<sup>133</sup> So while various reports and governments have encouraged the community to appoint a representative spokesperson, the

<sup>128</sup> At the FN's 1999 Summer School (its 15<sup>th</sup> 'université d'été') at Orange. See *Le Monde*, 6 September 1999.

<sup>129</sup> Gollnisch: '...jamais la balkanisation, la communitarianisation de la société française', reported in *Le Monde*, 6 September 1999.

<sup>130</sup> On this point, see H. Tinq, *Le Monde*, 10 November 1995.

<sup>131</sup> See for example P. Birnbaum, 'Citoyenneté et particularisme. L'exemple des Juifs de France' (Citizenship and particularism. The example of the Jews of France) in Taguieff (ed.), *Face au racisme*, Vol. 2, pp. 283-95. The *harki* community is made up of Algerians who fought on the French side in the Algerian war of independence—and their descendants—living in France and mostly French citizens. The segregated housing policy for *harkis* is in direct contradiction to the official rejection of communitarian and group-based policy. (Moreover it has led to their exclusion and conditions of relative deprivation—perhaps a justification for the official line).

<sup>132</sup> For details of official Islamic representation, see Chapter 5, pp. 199-200.

same official institutions have explicitly rejected the '*communautaire*' route, arguing that ethnic community representation is dangerous, and alien to the Republican tradition.<sup>134</sup>

Second, scholars have identified a generalised movement towards 'returning to roots', particularly in the post-Cold War era. As Kristeva asserts in her opening sentence to *Nations without nationalism*: 'Recently, everyone has been harking back to his or her origins—you have noticed it, I suppose?'.<sup>135</sup> This 'identitarian turn', the affirmation of the importance of identity, of *enracinement* or 'roots', is not confined to France.<sup>136</sup> It is however here where it is counterposed most directly to a refusal to accept a communitarianisation of politics and society. More specifically, Birnbaum's work has illustrated how Jews are increasingly being cited and seen as a particular 'community'—a development he dates from 1990—thus moving away from the Enlightenment, universalist model to stress their particularistic, separate identity. He points to the dangers of this development: that the popular discourse could lead to 'Jews once again being cast as members of a closed community permanently wedded to cultural practices' and that 'an imposed "communitarization", articulated in phrases resounding with sympathy for the Jewish community, is once again presenting that community as isolated from French society'.<sup>137</sup>

Third, the HCI approach carries the potential for increasing social problems. If the right to be different has been abandoned, there is still a need for communities of identity, especially in the most deprived areas.<sup>138</sup> As Schnapper points out, migrants tend to be concentrated in disadvantaged urban areas. In the 'delinquent' outer suburbs or '*banlieues*' where the Algerian-French are most over-represented, for example, the breakdown of working-class culture and institutions has led to 'anomie'.<sup>139</sup> The value of some form of collective identity in this environment should not be overlooked, and this breakdown has contributed to the growing strength of Islam in some migrant communities to provide a sense of identity and worth.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>133</sup> See McKesson's analysis, 'Concepts and Realities', in particular pp.28-30.

<sup>134</sup> The way they manage to 'square the circle' and justify this seeming deviation from the unmediated Republican model is by making the subtle distinction that this is not 'ethnic' representation, but religious: it can therefore be deemed acceptable because there is an element of choice and free association. Thus this argument allows such developments to fall within an overarching Republican framework.

<sup>135</sup> Kristeva, *Nations without Nationalism*, p.1.

<sup>136</sup> For an overview of the increasing importance of identity politics in contemporary Europe, see L.Holmes and P.Murray (eds), *Citizenship and Identity in Europe*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1999, in particular, the editors' introduction.

<sup>137</sup> Birnbaum, *Jewish Destinies*, pp.3-8.

<sup>138</sup> In a similar vein, although with contrasting results, Anne Tristan describes the *anomie* of the old working class suburbs of Marseilles and the success of the FN in recruiting and providing some sense of identity for the disadvantaged residents. See Tristan, *Au Front*.

<sup>139</sup> Schnapper, *La France de l'intégration*, pp.203-5.

<sup>140</sup> See Wieviorka, *La France Raciste*. The role and strength of Islam are contested. Like Tristan, Wieviorka also notes that post-industrial *anomie* has provided the impetus for the disenfranchised / excluded 'white'

Moreover, with the processes of globalisation and privatisation, the role of the State is decreasing: its role is to manage, rather than shape (let alone control) change. As centralised, nation-state politics arguably decrease in salience and effectiveness and new forms of identity politics come to the fore—gender-, culture- or religious-based movements—that do not require a national frame.<sup>141</sup> Yet while this may lead to greater diversity and more ‘voices’ being heard, there are concerns over the potential for social fragmentation and breakdown of some forms of national unity.

Fourth, the question of integration is not merely cultural. It also relates to economic factors and, in particular, fundamental changes in the move to a post-industrial society. The decrease in the working-class population (into which category most immigrant families fell), both in real and relative terms, has had a huge impact on the integrative abilities of French society. The worsening level of ‘exclusion’—long-term unemployment, poverty, the concentration of ‘excluded’ in high-density substandard housing (ghettoes) on the outskirts of the major cities—which disproportionately affects migrants and their children, is a major factor in their disenfranchisement from society.<sup>142</sup> Linked to this are socio-economic difficulties faced by the population of the *banlieues*. This has become a generational issue, with under-educated youth deprived of opportunities for employment and socio-economic advancement by virtue of their ethnicity coupled with their place of residence. The super-imposition of ethnic and socio-economic handicaps, which has the potential bring into being the feared ‘ghetto’ scenario, needs consideration. The rejection of cultural difference as a factor in policy-making—that is, if the actors in the public sphere neither recognise nor engage with ethnic communities as such—means that policy downplays the importance of cultural difference and does not squarely address the problems of disadvantage experienced, in particular, by second- and third-generation immigrants in these suburbs. Added to this, the focus on ‘formal’ rather than ‘substantive’ citizenship has given priority to legal status rather than practical policy initiatives such as fighting racial discrimination.<sup>143</sup>

This picture is tempered, to some extent, by data that point to a more optimistic vision of integration. While the political debate over integration concentrates on ‘problems’, and the view that the traditional means of integration are breaking down is widespread, there is a body of data which suggests that integration of the immigrant population has, in fact, been relatively

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working classes to join the FN at their local level, as it offers a vision of ‘community’ and joint action: a feeling of belonging.

<sup>141</sup> For analysis of the unravelling of nation-state-citizen in the French context, see M. Silverman, ‘The Revenge of Civil Society’ in D. Cesarani and M. Fulbrook (eds), *Citizenship, Nationality and Migration in Europe*, London, Routledge, 1996, pp. 146–58.

<sup>142</sup> Wieviorka, *La France Raciste*.

<sup>143</sup> On formal and substantial citizenship, see Chapter 5, pp. 173–4.

successful.<sup>144</sup> Most researchers agree on the desire of immigrant populations to 'integrate'. Hargreaves, for example, asserts that 'in their cultural practices and aspirations, people of immigrant origin are increasingly inclined to embrace French values, seeking inclusion rather than exclusion'.<sup>145</sup> Schnapper's 1991 volume on this question states: 'The overwhelming fact, confirmed by all investigations, is the "acculturation" of migrant children educated in France and their desire to integrate'.<sup>146</sup>

Countering the optimism of those who argue that the integration model is more successful than is generally accepted, is the finding that the extent of socio-cultural integration has not been matched in the economic sphere.<sup>147</sup> As Hainsworth notes, SOS Racisme and France Plus both champion integration—and it is French barriers, rather than cultural difference, which are the major obstacle to integration.<sup>148</sup> Racial discrimination in employment is a major problem, and levels of 'day-to-day racism' and discrimination remain high.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>144</sup> A point made by both Hoffmann, 'Thoughts on the French nation today' and M. Tribalat, *Faire France: une enquête sur les immigrés et leurs enfants* (Making France: an inquiry into immigrants and their children), Paris, La Découverte, 1995. The comprehensive study conducted in 1992 by Tribalat reports high levels of 'integration' of those of Algerian-origin in terms of marriage, use of French at home, weak Islamic adhesion/practice, and non-ghettoised residence. This is generally difficult to measure, as census and survey data is only split between the categories of 'French' and 'Foreign'. This makes it difficult to collect data on second- and third-generation migrants, as most of these will have become French citizens and thus 'French' by virtue of the *droit du sol* legislation. Tribalat's 'ethnic' categorisation and methodology has met with criticism—somewhat unfairly—especially the claim that it provides ammunition for the racist FN. See Teitelbaum and Winter's analysis, 'Marianne and the Rabbits'. The 1991 HCI report affirmed its support for the current modes of categorisation (i.e. French - foreigner). Any distinction on ethnic grounds, it argued, would 'run the risk of entering into the logic of the Vichy regime'—see House, 'Contexts for Integration and Exclusion', p.90. For census questions, see examples from 1769 to 1999 reproduced on the INED web site at <www.ined.fr/>.

<sup>145</sup> Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*, p.84.

<sup>146</sup> Schnapper, *La France de l'intégration*, p.167. She concludes that in the key indicators, the measurements for migrants and for 'native' French are coming closer. The key measurement of inter-marriage is particularly high, approximately 50 per cent for Algerian men born in France.

<sup>147</sup> As noted, for example, by C. Wihtol de Wenden, 'La Génération Suivante entre intégration et clientélisme ethnique' (The Second Generation between integration and ethnic clientelism), *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 8 (2), May 2000, pp.234-9. She finds that 'socio-cultural integration is moving ahead, at variance with economic integration, hindered by unemployment', p.236.

<sup>148</sup> Hainsworth, 'From Joan of Arc to Bardot', pp.57-8.

<sup>149</sup> See Bataille, *Le racisme au travail*, who finds major problems in employment for those of North African origin. A 1997 European Commission poll found that 72 per cent of respondents agreed that 'people from minority groups are discriminated against in the job market'—see 'Racism and Xenophobia', 1997, p.5. This was highlighted by the Jospin government in 2000, with specific programs (as yet mainly non-implemented) to combat racial discrimination in employment. See plans announced by Martine Aubry, (then) Minister of Employment and Solidarity, at <www.social.gouv.fr/html/dossiers>. Existing legislation to fight poverty and exclusion did not make specific reference to racial discrimination: see for example the measures outlined in the progress report on the law against poverty and exclusion of 29 July 1998, *Construire ensemble une place pour tous* (Building together a place for all), January 2000, at <www.emploi-solidarite.gouv.fr/>. The more recent plans are at odds, then, with the 'Republican integration' policy agreed on in the 1990s—when the 'integration' debate and outcomes, as I argue, contributed to the FN's implantation in French political life. New (albeit as yet underdeveloped)

Finally, the rejection of multiculturalism, and the sometimes extreme language and settings which are used to denote the threats of 'difference'—references to balkanisation and Lebanon, for example—are problematic, as they play into the hands of the far right. As noted above, the evident racism and xenophobia directed at non-Europeans can be couched in terms of a rejection of communitarianism and fragmentation. A final critique—that the debate is *inherently* ethno-centric, privileging the (dominant) French culture—is barely to be heard in the overall debate. Rather, the French model is held up as 'universal'. The following comments from French philosopher Alain Finkelkraut, an avowed Republican, set this out—the comments could, moreover, have plausibly come from a 'respectable' spokesperson of the far right. Finkelkraut detests the idea of policies based on the right to difference: from his viewpoint, to move to a 'glorification of difference' was to turn one's back on France's Republican traditions and universalist aspirations.<sup>150</sup> Such moves, then, were destined to result in dilemmas exemplified by the 1989 *affaire du foulard*.

### The headscarves affair – *affaire du foulard*

The *affaire du foulard* erupted in 1989 and quickly took centre-stage.

Everywhere we went the atmosphere was heavy with boredom about events in France ... there was one important exception to this, we found. One had but to utter the word 'foulard' and our French friends immediately reverted to that state of hyperkinetic animation about politics which has always made us feel at home.<sup>151</sup>

One author likens the level of passion surrounding the debate to that aroused by the Dreyfus affair<sup>152</sup>—notably one that also hinged on questions of cultural difference and national identity. As with the debates over difference vs. integration, this 'affair' played into the hands of the extreme right.

The basic facts of this controversy are well known. In September 1989, three Muslim girls aged 13-14 were refused entry to their primary school in Creil, some 40km north of Paris, because they insisted on wearing the *foulard*, or headscarf, in the classroom. Sometimes translated misleadingly as 'veil', (or in far right literature as the 'tchador'!), the headscarf nonetheless denotes adherence to Islam. The French state school system is based on the notion of religious neutrality. Struggles to

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anti-racial discrimination measures may well be a step forward and contribute to a decline in the racist appeal of the FN.

<sup>150</sup> See A. Finkelkraut, *La Défaite de la pensée*, Paris, Gallimard, 1987.

<sup>151</sup> Editorial preface, *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 8 (1), Winter 1990.

<sup>152</sup> D. Beriss, 'Scarves, Schools and Segregation: The Foulard Affair', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 8 (1), Winter 1990, pp. 1-13.



uphold the secular nature of state and school (*laïcité*), and the complete separation of Church and State, have played a great part in shaping contemporary Republican values.<sup>153</sup> It dates from the 1905 law separating Church and State, whereby the state is a neutral entity, non-involved in religious matters—a principle later enshrined in the 1946 constitution. Chevènement asserts the central role of secularism in Republican tradition, describing it as 'a guarantee of religious freedom' and a 'universal value'. 'France is the only country where *laïcité* has been elevated to a constitutional principle. She is also the only country which has achieved a complete separation between Church and State'.<sup>154</sup> Nonetheless, the principles might appear to have been of limited help in engaging with, or fostering, a French Islam. More often, Islam in France is seen as a challenge to these principles.

The *foulard* affair crystallised in a single issue the crux of debates concerning immigration and integration of migrants and their children. While complex, the battle-sides were soon drawn up in black and white terms. Either one agreed that the Republican, secular school-system was inviolable and symbols of religious adherence were inadmissible, or conversely, held that a pragmatic approach to integration should be the order of the day, and the overall aim of integration would be better served by maintaining the girls within the public education system. The fact that very few students chose to wear the *foulard*—and for some of these, it is argued, it is a means of the ensuring family support for their studies—did not lessen the vehemence or the all-pervasive nature of the debate.

Central aspects of French nationhood—the secular state, the non-admission of cultural values within the public sphere—were at stake. However the affair also reflected the growing preoccupation with questions of community/identity and the nation. The place of Islam in French society was questioned: Is Islam compatible with French norms? What is the future of immigrant integration? Is French 'national identity' under threat? With *laïcité* being described as an essential ingredient of French Republicanism, this debate was analysed by Republicans as a threat to a

<sup>153</sup> See K. Chadwick, 'Education in secular France: (re)defining *laïcité*', *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 5 (1), 1997, pp.47-58. She describes *laïcité* broadly as the 'non-confessional nature of the French state' (p.47) and argues that the concept of *laïcité* is central to French identity along with the three Republican ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality. To see it purely in terms of a separation between Church and State is too narrow a view. However she points out that it does not take into account the multicultural nature of France, and calls for a tolerant and dynamic *laïcité*, rather than regression to hard-line intolerance and rejection.

<sup>154</sup> J-P. Chevènement, 'L'Islam en France', *Esprit*, no. 247, November 1998, p.49. He goes on to claim that 'Secularism in France today is a unanimously shared value. It is, for all our fellow citizens, a form of freedom which guarantees each person the choice of religious belief; it is identified with tolerance towards all religions', p.50. 'Reason' remains in the public sphere and religion in the private.



founding principles of the Republic. However, as Wieviorka points out, there were a number of identifiable 'crises' at play.<sup>155</sup>

The crisis of *laïcité*, as exemplified in the headscarves affair, suggested that the central conflict was no longer between the secular and the 'free' school (*l'école libre*), but bound up in other critical debates: 'immigration', national identity, the role of Islam. Further, as Wieviorka notes, the FN managed to conflate these with other problems (urban decay, unemployment, education, post-industrial society) to gain popularity.

Ideologically-speaking, response to the affair was divided into two historically-based, opposing (and stereo-typed) positions. Division on the *foulard* issue did not follow traditional party lines. Most parties were split, with the notable exception of the FN. What was apparent was a new cleavage line, similar to that emerging during the Maastricht referendum in 1992, where a particular 'vision' of the French nation-state, be it a Republican or culturally-determined, was of paramount importance.

The anti-*foulard* camp, included, first, the strict Jacobin assimilationist position, where the 'right to be different' is equated with the development of ghettos—the feared Anglo-Saxon model of segregation. The admission of the *foulard* would threaten the existence of the Republican secular school system.<sup>156</sup> In maintaining this system, then, some particularisms have to be repressed, or confined to the private sphere.<sup>157</sup> As with the right to difference debate, opposition also came from (some) feminists who feared legitimization of patriarchal and sexist practices.<sup>158</sup> Second, the anti-*foulard* grouping included the nationalist extreme right, which denounced any form of cultural

<sup>155</sup> Wieviorka, 'La Crise du modèle français d'intégration' (The Crisis of the French model of integration), *Regards sur l'actualité*, no. 161, May 1990, pp.3-15.

<sup>156</sup> Symbolic of this position is the open letter published in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, November 2-8 1989, from five leading secular Republicans, Elisabeth Badinter, Régis Debray, Alain Finkelkraut, Elisabeth de Fontenay and Catherine Kintzler. The main function of the public educational system, they argue, is to develop good Republican citizens. The Islamic headscarf should not be tolerated within this system. All symbols marking religious belonging should be prohibited, otherwise the very foundations of the Republican school system are under threat.

<sup>157</sup> See for example the analysis of Kacét, *Le Droit à la France*. Migrating to France from Algeria in 1959, he is a strong proponent of Republican position. France must welcome and integrate its new citizens, he argues, and the secular school system is the crucial ingredient: 'I believe with all my force that the unity of the nation, its cement, its common values, the conviction of its destiny, are the unique fruits of the secular and obligatory educational system', p.82. He questions the response of the 'regressive' pragmatic camp: namely, those that argued it was imperative to oppose the far right and therefore felt constrained to approve the wearing of the scarves. Further, how could they approve such an oppressive symbol for women? On Danielle Mitterrand (expressing tolerance) 'Mme. Mitterrand did not specify whether, in the name of this tolerance, she would agree to close her eyes to the genital mutilation (*l'excision*) of little African girls', p.87.

<sup>158</sup> See B. Winter, 'Women and Human Rights in Europe: Views from France' in Hancock and O'Brien (eds), *Rewriting Rights*, pp.25-51.

difference as threatening to French cultural identity. The latter was defending an ethnic concept of the nation; the former defending a nationalist, secular Jacobin reading: both, however, converged on the same policy position.

In the other camp, the pragmatists called for more tolerance of diversity.<sup>159</sup> The (then) Education Minister, Lionel Jospin, argued that the negative response would merely result in the exclusion of the students.<sup>160</sup> Acknowledging the reality of the multiethnic nature of French society, and the possibility for discrimination, they advocate a considerate—and pragmatic—approach to integration, but one that is nonetheless, over the long term, is aimed at the non-recognition of difference in the public sphere. A brief summary of the positions taken is shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3 Positions in the headscarves affair**

<i>Anti headscarf</i>	<i>Central argument</i>
'Jacobin' Republican:	Maintenance of the secular school system, of Republican values, national identity and national unity
Extreme Right (nationalist):	Unacceptability of alien cultures; inability to integrate
Feminist:	Headscarf as a symbol of oppression
<i>Pro headscarf</i>	
Mainstream Pragmatists:	Tolerate difference; educate for integration; scarves unthreatening

The controversy relates to the French notion of the public-private division and usefully serves to underline the theoretical nature of the split. If group cultural identity, and symbols of that identity, are relegated to the private sphere, it follows that these have no place in the public school system. This divide is crucial to the concept of *laïcité*; however this may not be as black-and-white as it appears. Many examples of flexible and pragmatic approaches by various schools emerged during

<sup>159</sup> James Hollifield divides the response along three lines: liberal-pluralist (which I have termed mainstream pragmatist), Jacobin, and nationalist. See his 'Immigration and Modernization', in particular p.140. However while the motivations and the rationale of the Jacobins/nationalists were separate, their proposed solutions—that no religious symbols (and in this case, no *foulards*) were permissible in the state education system—were quasi-identical.

<sup>160</sup> Such defenders also viewed it as allowing for the coexistence of cultural groups, leading to integration in the long-term, rather than threat to secularism in education.

the debate, which gave lie to the extreme scenarios of those who prophesied the end of the Republican educational system.<sup>161</sup>

At the time, the *Conseil d'Etat* ruled that while secularism requires the neutrality of teachers and curricula, the students did have rights to freedom of belief. As long as the wearing of the *foulard* was not ostentatious, or an act of aggressive religious proselytism, then it was permissible.<sup>162</sup> The ambiguous nature of the ruling—what might be aggressive or ostentatious was left unspecified—meant that different schools interpreted and implemented the ruling in different ways.<sup>163</sup>

However, this was not just a debate that symbolised French problems with difference and cultural identification, but about the place of Islam in French society.<sup>164</sup> The negative impression of Islam in France has been highlighted by numerous polls where the religion is correlated with fanaticism, violence and intolerance.<sup>165</sup>

It has been noted that contemporary Islam in France is facing similar problems as did Catholicism in the past, when it had 'fundamentally problematical relations with the state' both in the post-revolutionary era, and in the process of secularisation resulting in the 1905 legislation separating Church and State.<sup>166</sup> The question of cultural compatibility has also been raised in the past—for example in the 1880s and 1930s when the new migrants of the day, Italians and Poles, were described as 'unassimilable', and were the targets of discrimination and violence.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>161</sup> See open letter cited in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, November 2-8 1989. The downfall of the Republican school system, moreover, would herald the demise of the Republic itself: the authors assert that the Republic is 'not a mosaic of ghettos', that it is founded on the educational system—and 'that is why the destruction of the [secular] schooling system would lead to that of the Republic'.

<sup>162</sup> Ruling passed down on 27 November 1989.

<sup>163</sup> For further developments on the ruling, see G.Salemohamed, 'The State and Religion: Rethinking Laïcité' in G.Raymond (ed.), *Structures of Power in Modern France*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000, pp.129-45, especially pp.137-41.

<sup>164</sup> At the beginning of the 1990s, it was estimated that there were some three million Muslims in France, over one thousand mosques and prayer rooms, and some six hundred Muslim associations. See G.Kepel, *Les banlieues de l'Islam*, Paris, Seuil, 1992. 1999 government statistics put the figure at four million French Muslims, under the heading of 'main religions' with the introductory phrase: 'The French Republic is a secular state where all religious confessions are represented': Catholics: 47 million (81.4 per cent); Muslims: 4 million (6.9 per cent); Protestants: 950 000 (1.6 per cent); Jews: 750 000 (1.3 per cent); Buddhists: 400 000 (0.7 per cent); Orthodox: 200 000 (0.3 per cent); Others: 4.7 million. (8.1 per cent). See French government web site at <<http://www.france.diplomatie.gouv.fr/france/>>.

<sup>165</sup> See for example the polls cited in Beriss, 'Scarves, Schools and Segregation', published in *Le Monde*, 24 October 1989: 60 per cent associated Islam with violence; 71 per cent with fanaticism; 66 per cent view it as anti-progressive. The same issue also quotes the former Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy: 'there is no reason at all why the French should passively accept forms of fundamentalism, forms of intolerance'.

<sup>166</sup> See for example Salemohamed, 'The State and Religion', pp.129-45.

<sup>167</sup> Noiriel, *Le Creuset français*, pp.247-94.

While such considerations might give lie to the simplistic pronouncements of the FN, or at least suggest a different perspective of the problem, the idea of Muslim incompatibility with French norms has found great resonance. The ensuing debate has encompassed not only the problematic question of Islam's relationship with the state, and the supposedly 'value-free' secular Republic, but also specific 'cultural' issues which are widely seen as tied to certain Muslim traditions.<sup>168</sup> The fact that the neo-racist far right found itself in league with respected politicians and scholars on some of these issues, albeit with a different rationale underpinning its arguments, has given the FN and its policies added legitimacy and credence.

### **'Difference' as a threat to nationhood: the politics of the FN**

The immigration debate poses a threat to the dominant idea of the nation as a voluntaristic and political community. The debate is also manipulated by the extreme right, which holds that nationhood is culturally-determined. The brief analysis of FN policies as they relate to the integration and difference debate, coupled with the overview in Chapter 2, show that the party seeks to reify an essential 'French' identity. Its politics are based around the three related themes of identity, insecurity and immigration, and hold that the French nation may only be protected as a culturally unified, exclusive unit. This is aggravated through the use of such arguments by members of the mainstream parties, particularly on the Right.

Identity has become the 'code-word' at the core of FN discourse: protection of national identity its mission. Mégret's program of the 'National Alternative'—since the split of the FN setting out the core of the MNR program, but formerly used within the FN—devotes Chapter 4 to the 'Identity Imperative' (*l'impératif d'identité*), beginning with the assertion that 'French identity is an immeasurable treasure'.<sup>169</sup> He sets out French identity thus: 'a mixture of ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural identities, it has taken shape over the centuries in the melting pot of history and of blood, to become the spirit of a destiny embedded in a territory and sublimated in a

<sup>168</sup> Notably, the practices of female circumcision / genital mutilation and polygamy have attracted much attention. On the arguments surrounding women's rights and 'cultural' practices, see Winter, 'Women and Human Rights', pp.39-45.

<sup>169</sup> Mégret, *L'Alternative nationale*. The creation of the MNR, resulting from the split of the FN in 1999, has undoubtedly weakened the electoral successes of the far right in the short-term. In terms of policy and program, there is very little that differentiates the two parties. Mégret describes the FN as part of the 'national' camp of ideas, but disagrees with Le Pen's stance of 'provocation' and the FN's choice to be the party of 'eternal opposition'. See the conclusion to his *L'Alternative nationale*: 'In the camp of national ideas, if one excepts the National Front which sets itself up as the eternal opposition party with the easy pleasure of provocation, there is only one political formation which is coherent, organised and deeply-rooted (*enracinée*): the National Republican Movement'.

nation'.<sup>170</sup> References to '*enracinement*', the existence of 'natural' and organic communities and the transmission of national traditional values via inheritance occur throughout the speeches and programs of the far right. An exclusive, essentialised notion of identity is then used in the politicisation of immigration, difference, and the various 'evils' that threaten the existence of the French nation. Exclusion of the 'other', whether veiled or explicit, is a natural consequence. The campaign material is certainly explicit: extra-European population is described as being 'reverse colonisation', and the cohabitation of different cultures is likely to result in major future conflict as well as creating unemployment and poverty.<sup>171</sup>

Looking to Le Pen's speeches and writings, it is clear how his idea of 'Frenchness'—French national identity—is defined. In a 1999 address, for example, he stresses cultural difference and in particular, the incompatibility of Islam with French culture:

France is a country which is geographically, historically and sociologically Christian ... The National Front is the natural and, alas, exclusive defender of French identity, its history, its language, its Christian and humanist civilisation and its future.<sup>172</sup>

He goes on to describe the threat posed by Muslim African and Asian immigrants to French national identity and advocates 'each people in their nation, each religion in its geographic sphere'. Likewise, Mégret states that integration has been a total failure: the country, he claims, is on the verge of 'an explosion'. The solution is a '*France française et chrétienne*'; the reason for past failure is 'Islam', which is 'incompatible with France and with Europe'.<sup>173</sup>

As noted in Chapter 2, immigration appears throughout the chapters of the FN's 1993 *300 Measures* program, portrayed as central to contemporary problems (as defined by the FN)—security, law and order, unemployment. The immigration-insecurity couplet heightens the sense of immigration as a threat across a variety of inter-related themes. *300 Measures* prioritises themes of cultural identity and unity: immigration is exploited as a weapon in the politics of national identity.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Mégret, *L'Alternative nationale*. The MNR web site also provides a listing of the 'founding texts' of the movement, which includes these headings under Immigration: 'Immigration=Insecurity; Immigration=Unemployment; Immigration=Islamisation; Immigration=Taxes'.

<sup>171</sup> MNR campaign brochure, '*Des immigrés au secours de l'Europe?*' (Immigrants to the Aid of Europe?). The response: '*il faut des enfants*' (from the 'native' French, naturally). Reproduced on the MNR web site, 2000.

<sup>172</sup> FN web site, 'Discours de Jean-Marie Le Pen'; closing speech, BBR Festival, 26 September 1999.

<sup>173</sup> Reported in *Le Monde*, 17 November 1999: 'Bruno Mégret launches a virulent campaign against immigration'.

<sup>174</sup> Using a similar rationale, *300 Measures* also attacks the EU: a Europe which 'denies the reality of nations'. It calls for 'a French France in a European Europe'. There is a two-level identity model being

The 1997 program for the parliamentary elections—*Le Grand Changement*—presents a sixteen-point plan to achieve '*la grande alternance*'—a phrase highlighting the idea that both left and right mainstream parties present essentially the same policies: only the FN provides a real alternative. It alone will ensure the survival of the nation. National preference and protectionism are presented as the antidote to the evils of globalisation. The sixteen points are presented under the headings of liberty, family, health, immigration, education, ecology, security, defence, Europe, social, justice, housing, institutions, unemployment, economy, agriculture.

A closer inspection of the program itself shows that of the sixteen summary points, two are squarely aimed at immigrant difference: 'Defend our roots'<sup>175</sup> and—yet more explicit—'Organise the return of immigrants'. The sections on work and health also contain immigrant references, as does the section on security—a 'priority area for the FN'. Notably a major cause of the problem is alleged immigrant delinquency; the solution? 'The expulsion of the immigrant delinquents'.<sup>176</sup> However it is the cultural difference of immigrants that is clearly targetted in the idea of 'roots'. As explained earlier, such policies are aimed at foreigners in general, irrespective of whether they are migrants—or citizens.

The FN also claims that some members of the establishment and political class have finally caught on to its message: that immigration is threatening the French nation. Thus the *National Hebdo* claims that the *lepénisation* of minds has been achieved, and that 'everyone is now repeating what the FN has been saying'. Examples cited include: 'Immigration-invasion' (Giscard d'Estaing); 'France can't accept all the misery of the world' (Rocard); 'Fight against insecurity in the suburbs' (Jospin); 'End of ghettos' (Fodé Sylla); 'Attack areas of "*non-droit*" where the State is powerless' (Chirac).<sup>177</sup>

This listing highlights three problematic preoccupations of the mainstream: first (among the parties of the Right in particular), the desire to 'win back' voters lost to the FN through a more

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perceived as 'French' and 'European', both cultural constructs set up to exclude those from 'foreign' backgrounds.

<sup>175</sup> The section 'Defend our roots' states that 'While the budget of the Culture Ministry has never been as high, French culture has developed into the opposite of what it should be: an intellectualist and uprooted culture (*une culture déracinée*) in which French people no longer recognise themselves' (my emphasis). It calls for an end to the self-proclaimed, 'cosmopolitan' caste of intellectuals and for a 'popular and deeply rooted culture'.

<sup>176</sup> See *200 Measures*. The foreigner-crime link is explicit: 'As the odious assassination of the young Nicolas in Marseille reminded us, immigration is the basis of a particularly significant level of delinquency ... While they only constitute 7 per cent of the total population, foreigners represent 31 per cent of the prison population ... The expulsion of foreign delinquents would alone lead to a considerable decrease in the level of criminality'.

forceful line on immigration;<sup>178</sup> second, the problems of the disadvantaged suburbs where the immigrant population is concentrated; and third, in a more nuanced manner, the way in which the anti-difference/equality line put forward by anti-racist groups such as SOS-Racisme and 'Republicans' can be manipulated to support Le Pen's line.

As the FN met with electoral success, the mainstream parties of the Right, fearful of losing voters to the extreme right, moved to take up a more 'hard-line' position on immigration and integration: the rejection, and in some cases, denigration of immigrant cultures featured increasingly in their rhetoric. The mainstream right, in particular elements of the Gaullist RPR, admit sympathy for the ideas of the FN, particularly on immigration. Negative stereotyping is not the preserve of the extreme right. Chirac's derogatory comments on large immigrant families soaking up welfare payments,<sup>179</sup> followed by proposed measures to counter the immigrant problem,<sup>180</sup> were almost identical to those of the FN; former president Giscard d'Estaing referred to an immigrant 'invasion' and advocated citizenship by descent only.<sup>181</sup> Le Pen, according to the mainstream parties, was asking the 'right questions'. The Left too has used the language of a 'threshold' of tolerance—a phrase used by Mitterrand—that seeks to minimise the number of immigrants in certain areas and implicitly labels ethnic minorities as a problem.<sup>182</sup>

The anti-immigration message of the far right in general, and the FN in particular, is well documented. Notwithstanding debate as to whether such parties are 'single-issue' parties, that is, built totally around an anti-immigration/anti-'foreigner' line, or whether they are more multifaceted, their xenophobic discourse and policies are not in dispute. The success of their anti-immigration line is based on its presentation as a double-threat: in the socio-economic field, migrants take jobs and scarce resources (housing, welfare, education); culturally, they threaten

<sup>177</sup> Speech by FN official Martin Peltier at a dinner for the 'Friends of the *National Hebdo*' on 7 February 1998, *National Hebdo*, 12-18 February 1998, special lift-out.

<sup>178</sup> The mainstream right has had a mixed experience here: on the one hand, the talk of 'shared values' with the FN and alliances with the FN at local and regional levels suggest that they have some common causes. On the other, the formation of 'Republican Fronts' to fight elections against the FN are indicative of attempts to marginalise the far right, and, arguably, indicate a more recent consensus on Republican values and integration. On mainstream Left and Right working together to exclude the possibility of an FN victory, see e.g. Vitrolles, 1997—reports and editorial in *Le Monde*, 4 February 1997.

<sup>179</sup> As quoted in the *Guardian Weekly*, 30 June 1991, from *Le Monde*, 21 June 1991: 'When a Frenchman living in the Goutte-d'or and working with his wife to earn 15,000 francs a month sees a family of immigrants crowded into the apartment across the landing consisting of a father, three or four wives and a score of kids drawing 50 000 francs in social welfare payments, and add to that the racket and the smells, it just burns him up'. Chirac at this time was Prime Minister.

<sup>180</sup> *Le Monde*, 22 June 1991.

<sup>181</sup> *Le Figaro*, September 1991, in an article entitled 'Immigration or Invasion?'.

<sup>182</sup> See N. MacMaster 'The "seuil de tolérance": the uses of a "scientific" racist concept' in Silverman (ed.), *Race, discourse, and power*, pp.14-28. Mitterrand's comments were reported in *Le Monde*, 12 December 1989.



'national identity'. While racist attitudes underpin both viewpoints, it is the language of cultural difference rather than racial superiority that is used, thus enabling the FN leadership to deny that it is, in fact, racist. The FN has used the language of difference to support policies for a culturally-determined national identity and Republican imagery to reject any (non-French) culture in the public sphere. The centrality of the immigration debate enhanced its prospects for success.

### Conclusion

In summary, the early 1980s saw a promotion of the 'right to be different' by the Left—a major shift from the homogeneous Jacobin vision of old. Initially supported by anti-racist groups, a vision of a culturally plural (if not multicultural) France was promoted. However by the end of the decade the Socialist Party had retreated from this position. The current mainstream position refers to neither assimilation nor difference, but *intégration*, recognising the right of immigrants to their own cultural identity, but very much relegated to the private sphere. Prime Minister Juppé's new cabinet in May 1995 included a minister responsible for 'integration and the fight against exclusion'. Even anti-racist groups moved from the overt promotion of a pluralist society, from the position that 'multicultural youth are the France of tomorrow' to 'integration works when you do something about it'.<sup>183</sup> Society would be open to difference, on the condition that it be kept in the private sphere and not form the basis of any political identity. The Republican model of integration is the order of the day; the public and private spheres are separate; the political and the cultural distinct. A 'well-tempered universalism' is the current, widely-held orthodoxy amongst academics and politicians, and in the media.<sup>184</sup>

Why was there a shift from the right to difference to a 'Republican model of integration'? One reading relates this development to the emergence of the politics of the far right; however it is also associated with the peculiarly and specifically French imagining of the nation—and the problematic quasi-blindness of the Republican attitude towards minority rights. Wieviorka calls this the 'republican withdrawal'—the French version of being politically correct—prompted by immigration, Islam and the perceived threat to national identity.<sup>185</sup>

Meanwhile, the multicultural approach of the Left—the right to be different—has been appropriated by the extreme right, as was, largely, the issue of national identity itself. In his study of the 1989 commemoration of the French Revolution, Steven Kaplan notes that 'neither

<sup>183</sup> SOS-Racisme, quoted in *Le Monde*, 9 January 1990.

<sup>184</sup> See McKesson, 'Concepts and Realities'.

<sup>185</sup> Wieviorka, 'Last words on "politically correct" French style'.



mainstream right nor mainstream left made a concerted bicentennial bid to reclaim the theme that the far right had monopolised in recent years'.<sup>186</sup> In the arena of national identity the far right has set the terms of the debate. Cultural difference, in particular Islam, they argue—making use of Republican language to justify an exclusivist stance—is not compatible with the values of the unitary lay Republic.

Increasingly, a picture has been drawn of irreconcilable cultures, of a necessary conflict between 'traditional' French values and others—particularly those of Muslim North African immigrants. Islam has been portrayed as an alien tradition/religion which could not be integrated into French society. This was fuelled by sections of the media, including the much quoted 1985 feature article in *Figaro Magazine* on the threat to French national identity, which predicted that by 2015 France would be overrun by Muslim culture/religion.<sup>187</sup>

At issue, then, in the so-called 'immigration debate' is not the level of immigration into France *per se*, but the level of integration into the national community. A common theme taken up when examining the current levels of hostility towards migrants in contemporary France is the extent to which the new migrants are culturally 'different': non-European, non-Christian (read 'Muslim'), and, by extension, non-assimilable. This attitude is seen most directly in the policies and writing of the FN: Le Pen explicitly excludes those who come from 'our common European civilisation' when referring to immigration in general. FN immigration policies do not target European migrants.<sup>188</sup> This theme, however, is also taken up in more mainstream analyses—both political and scholarly—and forms a part of the legitimate debate surrounding, and explanation for, the recent 'problems' of immigration.<sup>189</sup>

The immigration debate of the 1980s and '90s exemplifies the use of the 'dominant cultural idiom' of nationhood—the political nation—to justify the actions and policies of the government in citizenship and immigrant integration policies. The consensus on integration implies a rejection of cultural difference, and although it is argued that this may be manifested in the private sphere, the practical problems of socio-economic disadvantage combined with racist attitudes mean that 'full' national belonging and identification with the nation-state is difficult to achieve for immigrants and

<sup>186</sup> Kaplan, *Farewell, Revolution*, p.47. See in particular his examples of the treatment of national identity, pp.47-53.

<sup>187</sup> 'Serons-nous encore Français en trente ans?'.

<sup>188</sup> The FN's line of thinking is explained by Le Gallou in *La Préférence nationale: other European countries have undergone the same indelible marks of history—Antiquity, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment—that is why traditional immigration from the European countries has not threatened French identity*, p.55.

their offspring from different cultures. The cultural assumptions implicit in the political and civic sphere—and in the political understanding of nationhood—render this doubly difficult.

Also, there is a secondary understanding of nationhood which is ethno-cultural, and by no means totally dominated by the 'political'. As Silverman notes, the terminology of the FN emerged from the 1970s debate on immigration control, where both a nationalisation and racialisation of the immigration debate took place as control and protection of national interests became paramount.<sup>189</sup> Certainly, both the content and tenor of the immigration debate has contributed to the successes of the FN. This suggests that there is a strong cultural underpinning to national identity in France.

The rhetoric and success of the FN and the anti-immigrant discourse in general are based on a cultural understanding of French national identity that draws on particular readings of national history and creates its own myths of belonging. The facile response of '*nous sommes tous républicains*' when confronted with the question of ethnicity fails to acknowledge the problems encountered by 'Republican' *beurs* and conceals a culturally-determined understanding of French national identity.<sup>191</sup> Immigration and the place of cultural difference in society have become central themes in this debate, in the course of which immigration moved from the sphere of economics to that of culture. The emergence of a strongly anti-immigrant far right movement is both symptom and cause of this shift.

One of the major concerns of the FN electorate is 'insecurity'. If, as Anthony Smith suggests, it is national identity which has been the strongest form of collective identity, then it is perhaps not surprising that debates centred on supposed challenges to national identity translated into a vote for a party which promised defence of this identity—even at the price of simplistic solutions and misleading rhetoric. However the fact that integration could also be argued as a progressive, inclusive option allowed the FN to portray itself as a Republican defender of the nation. It may be that the Republican consensus has attempted to marginalise both the exclusivist nationalistic claims of the far right, and the multicultural claims of the Left, which are seen as antithetical to the French tradition. However it has done so at a cost: the appropriation of national identity by the far right,

<sup>189</sup> Hence the idea that it is the 'foreignness' of the immigrants themselves that is the problem: cultural homogeneity is a central value threatened by cultural difference.

<sup>190</sup> Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation*, pp.95-106. He argues that to hold the FN responsible (for racist attitudes) is misleading and underplays racism in France.

<sup>191</sup> This response is reported by Hollifield when interviewing a high-level French government official in the field of immigration policy in 1986. See 'Immigration and Modernization'.

and an uncompromising official stance on difference that does not serve to mitigate the real socio-economic disadvantage of the so-called *immigrés*.<sup>192</sup>

The 1990s confirmed the rejection of a politics of difference and the school of communitarian thought. The rhetoric and politics of the FN, the *Nouvelle Droite* think-tanks and the harsher anti-immigrant line taken by mainstream parties influenced both the terms of the debate and the perception of immigration, whereby the foreigner is viewed a threat to national unity and identity. As examined in Chapter 3, the French understanding of nationhood does not allow for the existence of separate communities, but privileges an unmediated link between individual citizens and the nation-state. The Anglo-American model of separate ethnic communities is regarded as anathema, going against France's unique genius or universalising values. The recognition of ethnic minorities results in segregation and at worst, such statements suggest, in genocidal practices. It was perhaps a necessary corollary to this development that citizenship, symbolising the political unity of the nation, should also be subject to change during the 1980s and '90s.<sup>193</sup> The debates on the incorporation of minorities into public life led on to the more formal question of citizenship: national belonging at the legal level. Once again, this advantaged the FN, playing to its central themes and enabling the dissemination of its policies. The following chapter will examine how the FN was able to benefit from the debates surrounding French citizenship in the 1980s and '90s.

<sup>192</sup> The consensus can also be overstated: Ireland refers to a mainstream consensus on the values of a unitary and lay Republic, ('Vive le jacobinisme', p.43), but as the headscarves affair showed, the understanding of these values can take markedly different forms.

<sup>193</sup> As noted by Favell, 'The starting point of all public reflection in France about immigration and integration is always the connection between the idea of citizenship and the formal status of membership in the nation, spelt out in nationality law', *Philosophies of Integration*, p.62.

## Chapter 5

### *De L'Immigré au Citoyen: Reforming French Citizenship*

A French man is a French citizen, nothing more, nothing less. The nation of citizens is quite the opposite of the ethnic nation. It defines itself as a shared project, not by reference to some 'mythical' stock. The Left must defend this republican conception of the nation

Jean-Pierre Chevènement, Interior Minister, 1997<sup>1</sup>

Without the political and electoral pressure exerted by the National Front, the citizenship code (*code de la nationalité*) would never have been reformed

Jean-Yves Le Gallou, FN Political Bureau member, 1986<sup>2</sup>

While the previous chapter analysed how the FN both benefited from and exploited the immigration and integration debate in the 1980s and '90s, with the ultimate victory of 'integration' and an ambiguous rejection of the politics of difference, this chapter examines the FN's relationship to the politics of citizenship change which arose during this time. The widely accepted tenet that French citizenship is based, primarily, on *jus soli*—denoting membership in a political-territorial community and acceptance of Republican values—was challenged. The received version of citizenship—indicative of a political understanding of nationhood that does not relate to deterministic factors of race, creed or colour—was contested by the FN and ultimately modified by the mainstream right in the 1990s. The subsequent shift back to an automatic granting of citizenship to second-generation migrants in 1998 was also couched in the language of nation and identity.

In the mid-1980s, the interior minister in the new right-wing government, Charles Pasqua, attempted to introduce a reform of the *Code de la nationalité française* (the French Nationality Code, CNF).<sup>3</sup> The proposal aimed to abolish the automatic granting of French citizenship, upon the age of majority, to children born in France of foreign parents, and was withdrawn in the face of public protest. Brubaker, in his detailed study of French and German citizenship, wrote in 1992 that future reform was unlikely due to the widespread nature of the opposition.<sup>4</sup> However, what was politically impossible in the 1980s proved to be acceptable in the 1990s. After the contentious—

<sup>1</sup> Quote from an interview in *Le Monde*, 26 June 1997, reproduced in the *Guardian Weekly*, June 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Following the presentation of the citizenship reform bill in October 1986. See *Le Monde*, 5 December 1986.

<sup>3</sup> Note here that *nationalité* refers in fact to **citizenship** entitlements—hence the nationality code defines who may and may not be legal citizens of France. The association between nationality and citizenship is however contested: the term 'nationality' often implying both cultural community and citizenship—as in Derek Heater's analysis, it can contain a 'cluster of meanings'. See his *Citizenship. The civic ideal in world history, politics and education*, London, Longman, 1990, p.163. Here, however, citizenship is analysed from a legal-political perspective: that is, being able to gain formal citizenship rights including franchise and the right to political participation.

<sup>4</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, p.164.

and ultimately unsuccessful—earlier attempt, the government succeeded in changing the nationality code in 1993 to prevent the automatic acquisition of French citizenship by the French-born children of foreigners.<sup>5</sup> The law thus differentiated on the basis of descent, shifting to a more deterministic model of who may—and may not—belong.

The citizenship debates—in particular, regarding who should have access to French citizenship—were indicative of the wider national identity debates of the 1980s and '90s and for many, the first point of reference for those asking: 'who is French?'.<sup>6</sup> As Patrick Weil describes the nexus, there is no dissociation, in the French imagination, between 'identity, vote, citizenship and nationality'.<sup>7</sup> It is within this context, and alongside the successes of the FN, that the temporarily successful campaign to downgrade *jus soli* citizenship in the 1990s was undertaken.

However, as the examination of French understandings of nationhood in Chapter 3 has shown, there are two significant caveats to this point. First, there is an underlying secondary reading of nationhood that is based on cultural belonging. A neo-racist approach to citizenship and identity would disqualify the 'Other' from participation on the basis of cultural difference. Second, and more nuanced, 'culture' is by no means absent from the so-called political-civic model. Although formally denoting a legal-political status, i.e. membership of the nation-state together with the rights and duties that inhere in this membership, the meaning and content of citizenship also encompasses aspects of 'cultural' belonging, at least a minimum of accepted 'civic' Republican values: universalism, secularism and unitarism. As Chapter 4 noted, the content and extent of this set of values has been contested as part of the 'national identity' debate, as has the extent to which certain forms of cultural belonging (e.g. the Islamic faith) preclude full acceptance of national values (e.g. *laïcité* and the division between private-public). Can one be, the question was raised, both Muslim and French? To what extent is assimilation a prior condition for citizenship?

This chapter examines how the understanding of citizenship developed over the past twenty years, with particular reference to the debates surrounding Nationality Code reform, and how these debates have been both shaped and exploited by the FN. In calling for 'France for the French', Jean-Marie Le Pen is referring to *Français de souche*, native French, a culturally homogeneous community: this extends to citizenship criteria. The demand for citizenship by filiation (*jus*

<sup>5</sup> For details of the CNF reform law of 22 July 1993, see SOPEMI, *Trends in International Migration*, Paris, OECD, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Favell notes 'the exclusive framing of questions of immigration and integration in terms of an idiom of republican citizenship': see *Philosophies of Integration*, p.41.

*sanguinis*) reflects the continuing 'ethnic' strand of nationhood, understood as a genealogical and organic community as examined in Chapter 2. The idea of the nation as an ethnic community is at the core of such demands. As this chapter will illustrate, this call was not restricted to the far right but emerged in the discourse and proposals of the mainstream right (both UDF and RPR). This also points up the spread and legitimation of the ideas of the extreme right through the identity and citizenship debates. Further, justification for the legislative changes of the early 1990s were also couched in the traditional language of Republican citizenship through the use of terms such as 'voluntarism', the 'conscious will' to be French. The changes brought in by the left-wing government in 1998 again stressed the significance of a certain reading of nationhood: in this case, abstract political, and 'colour-blind'. The dominance of the national idea, whether 'cultural' or 'political', or a blend of the two, contributed to the effectiveness of the FN message.

It has been argued that citizenship policies had little salience before 1983.<sup>8</sup> I would add that before then citizenship was implicitly 'imagined' in the same way as French nationhood, as a blend of the political (dominant) and the cultural. By the early 1990s, when 'Republican integration' was affirmed as the order of the day and the multicultural model rejected, cultural difference was repeatedly held up as a threat to French national identity and to the universal values it embodies. Thus the assertion of Republican values can, paradoxically, lead to the national unit in France being increasingly imagined as an exclusive body. As Safran has remarked, it was 'logical that the debate about ethnic pluralism should touch upon the question of naturalization and the meaning of citizenship'.<sup>9</sup> Citizenship reform gave legislative form to these ideas.

The challenge to *jus soli* (*droit du sol*) emanated from a series of factors and was not limited to one side of the political arena. However the call for *jus sanguinis* (*droit du sang*) to be made the dominant element in citizenship policy came essentially from the right of the political spectrum, and was a core policy of the FN. Like aspects of the other immigration debates, this provided the far right with 'respectable bedfellows' and enabled it to participate in—and at times, even lead—the debate. The attempted reforms illustrated that the idea of the nation in France was shifting to accommodate a more deterministic paradigm. This shift was closely associated with the debate surrounding the 'crisis' of national identity and cannot be divorced from its influence. It can also be linked to the Left's 'retreat' from a multicultural politics of difference; to the problematic of a

<sup>7</sup> Weil, *La France et ses étrangers*, p.473.

<sup>8</sup> See M.Feldblum, *Reconstructing Citizenship: The Politics of Nationality Reform and Immigration in Contemporary France*, New York, SUNY Press, 1999, p.31.

<sup>9</sup> Safran, 'Minorities, ethnics, and aliens', p.186.

Republican discourse which incorporates an assimilationist view of French history and society; and to the success of the anti-immigrant rhetoric and differentialist-racism of the FN.

Following some introductory remarks on French citizenship, this chapter examines the two attempts to change the criteria for citizenship: the first, unsuccessful attempt in the mid-1980s, and the (temporarily) successful campaign of the early 1990s. The arguments of those in favour of change will be examined with particular reference to the politics of nationhood, and the manipulation of national identity, history and memory by the FN. One central problem faced by the 'mainstream' French political parties is that the concept of national identity was taken over—almost appropriated—by the far right over this period. Hence the prominence of FN language and argument in the much-discussed crisis of identity, which defines 'Frenchness' in exclusive terms.

### Nation and citizenship

This thesis has argued that the political-territorial understanding of nationhood in France has been dominant. Drawing on Anthony Smith's dual conception of the nation, one that 'has come to blend two sets of dimensions, the one civic and territorial and the other ethnic and genealogical', it is this former, civic-territorial, aspect which has been predominant.<sup>10</sup> In a similar fashion, belonging to the French nation-state, being a French citizen, is essentially considered to be an inclusive, political concept—unlike, say, in Germany, where a more exclusive cultural understanding of citizenship has predominated.<sup>11</sup> The *Petit Larousse* defines citizenship on political lines: a citizen is a member of the state with rights and duties—political and civic engagement, then, with no 'ethnic' strains.

Citizenship as a political category, like the nation, is imagined primarily in inclusive terms. Like Renan's articles of faith concerning nationhood, the accepted version of French citizenship is that of an open, non-deterministic and generous model, based on *jus soli*. Second-generation immigrants in France have been defined as citizens for a century—and third-generation immigrants since 1851.<sup>12</sup> The dominant idiom is that of Republican citizenship: a distinctive French model

<sup>10</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, p.15.

<sup>11</sup> Despite the May 1999 reforms of German citizenship legislation to include elements of *jus soli*, the ethno-cultural understanding of citizenship persists. The opposition of the right wing parties to the reform, plus the substantial support gleaned for the rejection of dual citizenship, indicates that this is a contested move. For further details, see J.Halfmann, 'Immigration and Citizenship in Germany: Contemporary Dilemmas', *Political Studies*, Vol. 45, 1997, pp.260-74; on 1999 reforms and opposition, see *Der Spiegel*, 8 March 1999, 'Leviathans Ende' (The End of Leviathan), and *Der Spiegel*, 2 April 1999, 'Doppel Pass: Unsinn abräumen' (Dual Citizenship: clearing up the nonsense).

<sup>12</sup> Costa-Lascoux places this 'generosity' in comparative—and positive—perspective. See her

without ascriptive characteristics.

But just as the cultural aspect is important in the constitution of the nation, so the idea of national citizenship is dependent on the acceptance of a minimum of 'Republican' values. As has been discussed, these values—despite their political inflection—are not culture-free. French citizenship is not solely a neutral, 'rational' and progressive political-legal concept: it does not, in practice, exclude all ethno-cultural elements. As explained by Silverman, 'citizenship was merged with cultural conformity, the second seen as a condition of, and means to attain the first'.<sup>13</sup> Edgar Morin, writing of the process and problems of *francisation* ('becoming French') also refers to citizenship in a similar vein: talking of education, he states that in the *francisation* process, children are given 'good ancestors who speak to them of freedom and integration, that is to say of their duty in becoming French' (my emphasis).<sup>14</sup>

It has also been argued that a deterministic, ethnic model of nationhood has co-existed with this civic model—one that has been more significant than has been generally allowed.<sup>15</sup> Considering the Dreyfus Affair, the *Action française*, Vichy, it is arguable that Republican integration, even if seen as problematic in its homogenising discourse, was totally antithetical to (and unrepresentative of) a strong current of deterministic thought which was far more exclusive in its concept of national belonging. The 'blood and soil' concept of the nation also has a basis in French understandings of citizenship. Nonetheless, the voluntaristic concept of the nation, based upon the values of a unitary lay republic, has dominated and this has been apparent in the legal bases for citizenship. The salient difference between the 'cultural' aspects in the two discourses is that the first (political) may be willed: a matter of choice; the latter is determined at birth: a quasi-inherited set of values.

The debate on citizenship reform in the 1980s and '90s centred on the question of access to citizenship: that which formally confers rights and duties on a legally-recognised member of the nation-state. In a legal sense, citizenship necessarily operates as an instrument of inclusion and

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'L'acquisition de la nationalité française, une condition d'intégration?' (The acquisition of French citizenship, a condition of integration?) in S. Laacher (ed.), *Questions de nationalité. Histoire et Enjeux d'un Code* (Questions of Citizenship: the History and Stakes of a Law), Paris, L'Harmattan, 1987, pp.80-126. French citizenship legislation, she argues, is one of the most 'open' in Europe: a fact illustrated both by the figures and via a European comparison, p.121.

<sup>13</sup> Silverman, 'The Revenge of Civil Society', pp.153-4.

<sup>14</sup> Morin, arguing that the concept of a republican and universalist France must be retained in order for processes of integration to flourish. *Le Monde*, 5 July 1991.

<sup>15</sup> Jenkins argues that this has been dominant in the right-wing conception of the nation: see his *Nationalism in France*, as discussed in Chapter 3. This has been reinforced by colonialism and the concept of French cultural superiority.



exclusion, a marker of 'insiders' and 'outsiders'.<sup>16</sup> It has come to incorporate far greater dimensions than merely the legal. A Marshallian three-fold model of citizenship—incorporating civic, political and socio-economic strands—provides a more complete picture of contemporary (western European) citizenship.<sup>17</sup> However it is the question of access to citizenship—which confers the rights and duties inherent in the political aspect—which is at the forefront in French discussions: it is, after all, a debate on the citizenship law.

Yet there is a valid distinction to be drawn between what can be viewed as 'formal' as opposed to 'substantial' citizenship. Formal citizenship—which ostensibly provided the content for the nationality debates of the 1980s and '90s—comprises those legal rights and duties which inhere in national citizenship, including the legal issue of who is entitled to citizenship. Substantial citizenship refers to the practical rights and opportunities offered to those who are seen to belong to the national community.<sup>18</sup> In practice, it has been far more difficult for non-European migrants to attain the benefits of substantial citizenship in France, and changes to the nationality code are unlikely to alter this state of affairs.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, in accordance with the French emphasis on political rights, and the tendency to view citizenship as a political concept above all, it has been the formal aspects of citizenship which have been the subject of the most intense debate. The issue of formal citizenship has taken precedence in both the public debate and in government action.

The following section will sketch the development of the Republican idea of citizenship—a long-established and supposedly dominant model based on a *jus soli* approach. The historical view shows that there has been a 'choice' between competing versions. The contemporary 'collective memory' of citizenship emphasises openness and generosity, calling on French universalistic and Enlightenment values, and serves to underpin a particular contemporary approach which is

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<sup>16</sup> Further on this aspect, see Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, Chapter 1: 'Citizenship as Social Closure', pp.21-34.

<sup>17</sup> Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class*. See also Silverman, 'The Revenge of Civil Society': he outlines a 'cluster of different discourses' within the term 'citizen', and the conflation of citizenship with nationality and culture in the modern era. This, he argues, is now in the process of fragmenting.

<sup>18</sup> On this useful distinction, see S.Castles, 'Democracy and Multiculturalism in Western Europe' in Holmes and Murray (eds), *Citizenship and Identity in Europe*, pp.55-72. As he states, p.57, 'granting immigrants formal access to citizenship is an important first step, but it does not ensure that they actually obtain the rights regarded as part of modern citizenship'.

<sup>19</sup> In theory, the civic and socio-economic rights of both citizens and (legally-resident) non-citizens are similar: both are entitled to the civic-type rights of freedom of association, right to property, freedom of expression; both are entitled to social welfare, education, etc. This of course overlooks the reality of 'everyday racism' but nonetheless, as argued by Soysal, has altered the institution of citizenship in western Europe as the identity-rights couplet becomes disjointed—see her *Limits of Citizenship*.

voluntaristic and idealised, even romantic.<sup>20</sup> However this 'tradition' is far less clear-cut than is often portrayed.

### French 'traditions' of citizenship: the consensus

According to Brubaker, 'The expansive, assimilationist citizenship law of France, which automatically transforms second-generation immigrants into citizens, reflects the state-centered, assimilationist self-understanding of the French'.<sup>21</sup> This quote encapsulates a specific understanding of a French model of citizenship, grounded in history and tradition. This understanding tends to overlook competing versions *per se*—although these are acknowledged as counter to the French tradition. At the same time, it represents an idealised interpretation of the historical processes at work, one which underplays the instrumental and 'national-interest' components involved in the granting of citizenship.

Moreover, while citizenship law in France has traditionally been open and relatively generous (for whatever reasons), it is not culture-free. Traditionally, it has been closely linked to the notion of socialisation into French culture (acculturation), and ultimately assimilation, or becoming 'French'. Thus the values of 'classic citizenship', defined by Wihtol de Wenden as 'universalism, individualism, egalitarianism, assimilationism, *laïcité* and link to the nation-state'<sup>22</sup> reflect a both an idealised notion, and, largely, the contemporary consensus on the values associated with citizenship.

Despite the grounding of citizenship in Revolutionary values and events—the Revolution being widely accepted as having 'invented' the modern institution and ideology of national citizenship<sup>23</sup>—the assimilationist aspects were not inherent at the outset. Just as the new sovereign nation was a political entity above all—one which, moreover, was seen as a positive

<sup>20</sup> This approach has been challenged by scholars in the 1990s: in particular, Miriam Feldblum, Adrian Favell and Virginie Guiraudon. Favell, for example, criticises both the Anglo-Saxon 'Francophile' view of immigration and citizenship policies (citing e.g. Safran and Brubaker); and also notes the domination of the Parisian intellectual elite in setting the terms of the debate, shaping it in their own interests. See his *Philosophies of Integration*, p.44. See also V. Guiraudon, 'Citizenship Rights for Non-Citizens' in C. Joppke (ed.), *Challenge to the Nation-State: Immigration in Western Europe and the United States*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp.272-318.

<sup>21</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, p.14.

<sup>22</sup> Wihtol de Wenden, 'Le Cas Français' in Falga et al., *Au miroir de l'autre*, p.47. She contrasts these values to the revival of opposing tendencies, namely: communitarianism, collective identity, ethnicity, local networks, and the idea of citizenship based on residence and proximity.

<sup>23</sup> Brubaker notes that with the 1791 Constitution, France was the first western state to formalise and codify

force for change, symbolising the move from a hereditary monarchy to a limited form of democracy—so the move from subject to citizen.<sup>24</sup> This was embodied in the idea that citizenship was open to all, and not dependent on 'national' (cultural) belonging. There was little focus on assimilation initially. The key descriptors associated with citizenship were equality; political-activism; national fraternity; and connection to the state. An important aspect of the current debate are the central references to the founding ideals of citizenship as providing the basis for a political community based on the nation-state.

France already possessed an 'inclusive' tradition of sorts which predated the 'creation' of national citizenship, and, indeed, the modern nation-state. *Jus soli*, under the *ancien régime*, was the criterion by which French nationality was attributed, and took preference over *jus sanguinis*.<sup>25</sup> But the revolutionary ideals of a citizenship open to all, based on will, did not continue unchallenged. There have been breaks in the *jus soli* tradition, notably in the Napoleonic era, and more recently, in the denial of basic citizenship rights to Jews and other 'outsiders' during the Vichy regime.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, there are multi-faceted views on the legacy of revolutionary citizenship. According to Brubaker, the Revolution may be seen from differing viewpoints, each of which has moulded and influenced the modern understanding of national citizenship. First, as a bourgeois revolution, it created (in theory) the ideal of equality of all citizens before the law. Second, as a democratic revolution, it incorporated the idea of politically-active citizenship; as a national revolution, it stressed the importance of territorial boundaries and difference between members of different nation-states. Finally, as a state-strengthening / bureaucratic revolution, it introduced an unmediated, direct link between the state and the citizen.<sup>27</sup> While most of these points fit well into the 'classic' set of values enumerated above, the 'national' aspect already introduces an element of differentiation.

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the citizenry.

<sup>24</sup> See Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, p.191.

<sup>25</sup> Although this was neither uniform nor national, but attributed by region—see Weil, 'Nationalities and Citizenships. The lessons of the French experience for Germany and Europe' in Cesarani and Fulbrook (eds), *Citizenship, nationality and migration*, p.76. Further, it did not carry any notion of political equality: the concept of the citizen as a member of a national state with equal rights and standing before the law was a revolutionary 'invention'. On this theme, see M.Fitzsimmons, 'The National Assembly and the Invention of Citizenship' in R.Waldinger et al. (eds), *The French Revolution and the Meaning of Citizenship*, Westport, Conn., Greenwood, 1993, pp.29-42.

<sup>26</sup> The Vichy government withdrew citizenship rights retrospectively from sections of the population.

<sup>27</sup> See Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, pp.35-49. As noted, however, women did not gain access to full citizenship rights—the right to vote—until after World War II.

In the Napoleonic era, the Civil Code (1804) rejected automatic *jus soli* and accorded primacy to citizenship based on blood lines (via the father). While it did allow children born in France of foreign parents to claim citizenship on reaching the age of majority, if they so chose, this was a conditional form of *jus soli*, which stressed the importance of a conscious will to become a French citizen. According to some, this was a 'confident assimilationist' position.<sup>28</sup> To others, it suggested that birth in the country alone did not suffice to engender loyalty and that granting citizenship against the will of the individual could be a danger.<sup>29</sup> Weil notes that this was the only period in French history when blood lines overruled birthplace.<sup>30</sup>

However, as noted by Brubaker, there was no great move on the part of the resident foreigners to claim their right to French citizenship on reaching majority.<sup>31</sup> After the failed 1831 attempt to counteract this perceived injustice, the legislative assembly passed a law (7 February 1851) which set out that all third-generation foreigners would be considered French at birth. This attribution of French citizenship to third-generation immigrants was uncontroversial, unlike the more contested proposals in the 1880s.

The 1870s and '80s saw an increased emphasis on the cultural aspects of national belonging and hence citizenship.<sup>32</sup> The particularist strand of '*nationalité*', which was strengthened with the emergence of 'racial' explanations in nineteenth-century France (and indeed throughout Europe)—Taine, Gobineau, Renan—and following the French experience of defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, encouraged contrasts and comparisons between 'nations' on the basis of

<sup>28</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, p.91. He also argues against the claim that demographic, military or economic interests were the decisive influence on French citizenship policies. The fact that few foreigners claimed the right to become citizens on reaching the age of majority—so escaping the duty of military service—led to a proposal to amend the legislation in 1831 so that all born in France would be French citizens. The amendment, however, did not succeed—see pp.91-2.

<sup>29</sup> Weil, 'Nationalities and Citizenships', p.77.

<sup>30</sup> Weil, 'The Transformation of Immigration Policies, Immigration Control and Nationality Laws in Europe: A Comparative Approach', *EUI Working Paper*, no. 98/5, Badia Fiesolana, EUI, 1998.

<sup>31</sup> See also Weil's comments in 'Nationalities and Citizenships', p.77. Quoting from E.Rouard de Card: 'A few years after the Code had been instituted, it was observed that numerous individuals who had been born on French territory, even though they belonged to families who had lived on French territory for an extended period, were in no hurry to formally request their French citizenship ... They would take advantage of the benefits of our social state by passing themselves off as French citizens while avoiding any public responsibilities by claiming to be foreigners'. From *La nationalité française*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Paris, Pedone et Gamber, 1922, pp.37-8.

<sup>32</sup> As may be seen in the controversy over the 1889 legislation, the ethno-cultural understanding of nationhood and citizenship was on the rise. Mazzini's 'principle of nationality' in Italy, and other nineteenth-century national movements—Greek, German, Polish—were based on a community of descent and lent themselves to membership being based on *jus sanguinis*.

race. A 'limited ethnicization' of French citizenship and self-understanding was the result.<sup>33</sup> 'Nationalité' as a term, it should be noted, only emerged after 1830, and its routine use to describe members of the French state ('nationaux') and state-membership (*nationalité*) only developed in the mid-nineteenth century, Brubaker argues that its prior ethnic-cultural inflection did affect its supposedly legal-political meaning during this time.<sup>34</sup> Weil notes that the 1889 legislation was the first to include the term '*nationalité*'—and that calling state membership and ethno-cultural community by the same term (*nationalité*), suggests 'an awareness of, and a desire to emphasise, the affinity between the two': that is, accepting a degree of socialisation.<sup>35</sup> In contemporary usage, the two are virtually indistinguishable, as exemplified by French citizenship legislation, or the '*Code de la nationalité*'.

Hence the more controversial debate surrounding the 1880s citizenship reform proposals, which were designed to ensure that all children born in France of foreign parents would become French citizens. Despite the intent of the 1851 legislation, there was opportunity for individuals to renounce their right to French citizenship on the age of majority, by opting for the right to be considered a foreigner. This reform was designed to counter this possibility. The proponents of *jus sanguinis* maintained the inherited nature of national characteristics, and pointed to the undesirability of 'foreign' acquisition of French citizenship via *jus soli*. But it was the latter principle that was to prevail in 1889: children of foreigners henceforth would be French 'from the point of view of spirit, inclination, habits and morals'.<sup>36</sup> It was no longer possible for children of foreigners, born on French soil, to renounce French citizenship. Industrial and military interests too, at this stage, supported the introduction of a system based on the principle of citizen incorporation of second-generation foreigners.<sup>37</sup>

The 1889 reforms which theoretically 'sealed in' these values, via the (re)-institution of the primacy of *jus soli*—i.e. that birth on French territory gives (conditional) rights to French citizenship; and the continuation of the (more usual) *jus sanguinis*—i.e. the right to French citizenship by virtue of being born to one or more French citizens—form the basis for the current legislation.<sup>38</sup> Although

<sup>33</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, pp.100-1.

<sup>34</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, p.99.

<sup>35</sup> Weil, *La France et ses étrangers*, p.475.

<sup>36</sup> From the Judiciary Committee of the *Chambre des Députés*, 1889, quoted in Weil, 'Nationalities and Citizenships', p.78.

<sup>37</sup> Noiriel, *La Tyrannie du national*, p.88.

<sup>38</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, p.138.

modified in 1927, 1945 and again in 1973,<sup>39</sup> the *jus soli* principle was not touched: it is continually cited, uncritically, as the touchstone of French citizenship. As William Safran notes, the emphasis was on 'birth in France and adherence to republican principles rather than descent from French ancestors, in the granting of French nationality'.<sup>40</sup> *Jus sanguinis*—citizenship by descent—also applies under the current law, but without calling into question the principle of *jus soli*. Thus continuities—the rhetoric of inclusion and the weakness of ethnicity—are invoked and praised as strengths, and as means of ensuring integration and national unity. While the organic conception of nationality, more prevalent on the Right, persisted, it is notable that the Vichy regime which revoked citizenship by birth is generally seen as a total aberration which ran contrary to the principles of the Republic.

The idea that French citizenship embodies an open, liberal approach based on universal values and Republican integration, then, needs qualification. Ambiguities prevail: the demarcation of citizenship has elicited both assimilationist and exclusionary responses.

First, there is a shift from the original revolutionary political idea of citizenship to one which, although reasserting the primacy of *jus soli*, includes assimilationist elements.<sup>41</sup> While the *droit du sol* remains dominant in the legislation, the condition of assimilation has meant that membership in the political and national community was made dependent on cultural conformity. This highlights a central contradiction of the Republican understanding of the national community as a non-ethnic, political nation with open citizenship laws. In fact, the nation-state via its citizenship laws 'created a national racism at the same time as a "liberal" republicanism'.<sup>42</sup> Citizenship, then, was influenced by the 'national myth' of cultural homogeneity that was encouraged by the secular public schooling system of the Third Republic, as well as by Church and Army.

Second, there were instrumental aspects to the citizenship legislation. While the 1889 reforms recognised the processes of integration / assimilation, they were also motivated by a fear of collective separatism, with the growth of large new immigrant communities in the border regions in

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<sup>39</sup> The modifications related to attribution of citizenship via *jus sanguinis*, naturalisation, and marriage. They updated the legislation to allow equal treatment of men and women; and extended Article 23 to (former) colonial territories. See Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, pp.110-14.

<sup>40</sup> W.Safran, 'State, Nation, National Identity, and Citizenship', *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 12 (3), 1991, p.221.

<sup>41</sup> Citizenship (naturalisation) may be refused if there is a '*défaut d'assimilation*'—a lack of assimilation.

<sup>42</sup> Silverman, *Deconstructing the nation*, p.33 (emphasis in the original).

the south east between 1851 and 1889.<sup>43</sup> Reforms were also driven in part by demographic concerns and more explicitly by industrialisation and the needs of the economy.<sup>44</sup> Hence while the resulting legislation fed the 'myth' of a liberal and generous approach to nationality, the instrumental nature of its introduction and continuation tended to be obscured.<sup>45</sup>

The work of Robert Gildea in identifying 'parallel and competing' collective memories, and the ways in which these memories have been utilised to serve the interests and legitimise the objectives of particular groups, is useful here.<sup>46</sup> While the dominant interpretation is that French citizenship legislation is 'open and generous', this 'collective memory' is a contested one. Those promoting a rival interpretation of the 1889 legislation, for example, as being based on French interests—be they demographic, economic or military—can justify contemporary exclusive legislation using the same set of principles.

The final point concerning the development of French citizenship is that it has been exclusively the domain of, and tied to, the nation-state. Citizenship has been, by definition, 'national'. It has formed a core element of national sovereignty: the state has been able to decide who may or may not be a (national) citizen. This was challenged by the creation of EU citizenship in the Maastricht Treaty.<sup>47</sup> Although the Treaty states that citizenship is derived from member state citizenship—whereby the state is still, in effect, in control over who may or may not be French (and by extension, a 'European' / 'EU-ist')—EU citizens nonetheless are accorded (limited) rights in all member states of the Union. This includes the right to vote in local and European elections in all EU member states, as well as the right to stand in these elections.<sup>48</sup>

This challenges the traditional understanding of citizenship in the French context—as a political self-governing community—and indeed an amendment to the French constitution (1992) was required in order for EU citizenship (specifically the voting / standing rights) to be accepted and

<sup>43</sup> Weil, 'Nationalities and Citizenships', p.78.

<sup>44</sup> See Silverman, *Deconstructing the nation*, pp.146-7. However the industry position was nuanced. From the 'immigrant as worker' perspective, immigrants could provide a short-term solution to a temporary labour shortage: and as contract labourers there was no need to grant citizenship status, and little need to assimilate.

<sup>45</sup> Costa-Lascoux makes this point in 'L'acquisition de la nationalité française', p.112: 'the "French tradition" is invoked without a great concern for historical accuracy and without distinguishing the different strands which have influenced it'.

<sup>46</sup> Gildea, *The Past in French History*.

<sup>47</sup> See MTEU, Article 8.1: 'Citizenship of the Union is hereby established. Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union'.

<sup>48</sup> The limited set of rights introduced in Article 8 of the Maastricht Treaty were extended (and renumbered, Articles 17-22), in the Amsterdam Treaty. See S.Hall, 'Fundamental Rights, National



applied. Opposition to this reform provided additional opportunity for the extreme right to gain respectability, rejecting such developments by calling on their so-called 'Republican' credentials.<sup>49</sup>

To summarise the legal situation in the mid-1980s, there are three main avenues to French citizenship. The unquestioned—often unmentioned— and most frequent way is by filiation: to be born of French parents, whether on French territory or not.<sup>50</sup> Here the principle of *jus sanguinis* is in effect—and of course, does not involve any voluntaristic or conscious choice on the part of the individual! The second is via the naturalisation process: either following five years' residency in France<sup>51</sup> or via marriage to a French citizen, with a waiting period of six months. The third is via *jus soli*, either by attribution at birth, according to Article 23, if one of the parents was also born in France (also known as 'double *jus soli*'); or by acquisition, according to Article 44, if born in France of non-French parents, when citizenship is 'acquired' with no formalities at the age of eighteen.<sup>52</sup> An important point to note is that dual citizenship is allowed. This means that children claiming French citizenship by virtue of *jus soli* may still retain the nationality of their parents; likewise those claiming French citizenship by marriage may also retain their original nationality—providing, of course, that the original country permits dual citizenship.

### 1980s: controversial attempts at reform

In the mid-1980s, the newly-elected right-wing government proposed a reform of citizenship law. The idea was to modify the principle of *jus soli* so that second-generation immigrants would not be

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Sovereignty and Europe's New Citizens' in Hancock and O'Brien (eds), *Rewriting Rights*, pp.204-5.

<sup>49</sup> The Maastricht Treaty, and nationalist reactions to its provisions, will be examined in detail in Chapter 8.

<sup>50</sup> Weil notes that 95 per cent of French citizens have never needed explicitly to request French nationality—see 'Nationalities and Citizenships', p.75. While this fact suggests that the concepts of voluntarism/consent/will are mythical, it can nonetheless be argued, as Brubaker does, that citizenship is still primarily understood or imagined in these terms, and that this in turn shapes practice and action.

<sup>51</sup> If no criminal offence has been committed (Art. 79) and the applicant can prove their 'morality' (Art. 68).

<sup>52</sup> Automatic acquisition on age of majority applies to those who have been resident in France for at least five years. Before the age of 16, the parents can apply on behalf of the child. In certain cases the State may reject the application e.g. in cases of crimes against state security or other criminal offences (Art. 79). The children of foreigners who were born on French territory (e.g. Algeria before 1962) automatically have citizenship rights according to the principle of double *jus soli*. See principal measures of the 1973 *Code de la nationalité* in Wihtol de Wenden, 'Le Cas Français', p.55. The CNF also had a provision that second-generation foreigners could be refused citizenship on the grounds of insufficient assimilation (Art. 106): in practice, this was invoked less than once a year on average. See Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*, p.163. Another categorisation of citizenship access is given by Costa-Lascoux, 'L'acquisition de la nationalité française'. She divides the modes of acquisition into 'automatic' (by birth in France, by filiation); and 'voluntary': a right (by declaration) or a privilege (naturalisation).



automatically granted citizenship. Seemingly, the government wished to accord primacy to *jus sanguinis*. The controversy surrounding the proposal was accompanied by the emerging debates on the nature of French national identity; the impact of immigration and of a *de facto* multicultural society; and the successes of the anti-immigrant FN.

Criticism of the workings of the CNF had arisen in the early 1980s; it was not, however, from the mainstream right that these first critical voices arose, but rather from second-generation Algerians.<sup>53</sup> France's colonial history in Algeria, with pre-1962 Algerians being classed as French citizens (in contemporary legislation: they were not 'full' citizens during the colonial era), coupled with the timing of Algerian immigration and the complexities of citizenship and nationality legislation, had led to the unconditional attribution of citizenship at birth to second-generation Algerians born in France, often without their knowledge or consent.<sup>54</sup> In the post-colonial context, this was seen by many Algerians resident in France as a continuation of colonialism by other means.<sup>55</sup> In particular, it hit home when they—or their sons—were called up for military service in France. The Algerian government also protested at this 'unilateral imposition' of French citizenship on what it regarded as Algerian emigrants.<sup>56</sup>

However, although the citizenship legislation was first criticised by the Algerian government and immigrants themselves, and by some on the Left,<sup>57</sup> (facts which tended to be lost in the subsequent debate),<sup>58</sup> it was taken up by the right-wing government in the mid-1980s with a number of different aims in mind and influenced by a variety of factors: intellectual-ideological; political; and

<sup>53</sup> This should be qualified by noting that the extreme right had always insisted on the primacy, or even exclusive use, of *jus sanguinis*.

<sup>54</sup> See Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, pp.139-42. Article 44 of the (old) Nationality Code entitled second-generation immigrants to French citizenship at the age of majority. Article 23 applied French citizenship at birth to third generation, but also unconditionally granted citizenship at birth those born in France to (at least) one French parent. Hence—due to Algeria's status as a French colony until 1962—pre-independence Algerians (i.e. those born before 3 July 1962 and thus French citizens) with children born in France post-independence found they had given birth to 'French citizens'.

<sup>55</sup> Feldblum, *Reconstructing Citizenship*, pp.26-7. She notes the reactions of the parents, many of whom had been involved in the independence struggle: 'How, as an Algerian, could I produce French children?'.

<sup>56</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, pp.141-2.

<sup>57</sup> In a similar vein, one of the first overtly anti-immigrant actions in the 1980s came not from the Right but from the Communist Party: during the 1981 presidential campaign, the party supported the PCF mayor of Vitry (a south-eastern suburb of Paris) when an immigrant hostel was destroyed on his orders. Hargreaves makes the point that migrants are often concentrated in poorer areas where the PCF is traditionally strong; and the party has allocated resources based on ethnicity—i.e. to the white (voting) working class—thus further disadvantaging migrants. See *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*, pp.181-2. The size of the working-class vote for the FN in the 1990s can also be better understood in this context.

<sup>58</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, p.139, observes that Costa-Lascoux was one of the very few to note this 'reversal'.

social.

These factors included first, the emergence of the FN with its racist ideology and hard-line policies on immigration, which impinged on the electorate of the Right;<sup>59</sup> second (and related), the influence of the ideology of the *Nouvelle Droite* and the increasing emphasis on a deterministic cultural view of belonging;<sup>60</sup> third, the popularisation of a debate surrounding a 'crisis of national identity' alongside a racist discourse incorporating the supposed threat of immigrant non-integration;<sup>61</sup> and fourth, the desire to promote integration in opposition to 'right to difference' rhetoric (and limited policies) of the Left.

The first three factors were to increase in saliency through the 1980s and into the 1990s. Meanwhile, 'integration', the fourth factor, came to be accepted largely on both Left and Right, as seen in the previous chapter. The ideas of a right to difference emanating from the Left in response to ethnic pluralism were dealt a blow by the 1986 citizenship reform proposal, the publication of subsequent findings, and the creation of the High Council on Integration. The Left subsequently moved towards the centrist consensus embodied in the *EFAD* and HCI reports and, finally, was unable to mobilise substantial protest against the 1993 citizenship reforms.

As noted in the previous chapter, the 1981 PS election agenda included 'New Rights for Immigrants' and proposed a number of policy changes.<sup>62</sup> The most contentious of these were the amnesty for illegal immigrants and the issue of voting rights for foreigners. The amnesty went ahead: in a *régularisation exceptionnelle*, 130 000 out of an estimated 300 000 illegal immigrants came forward.<sup>63</sup> But the government was forced to drop the proposal for local voting rights for (non-citizen) immigrants—a proposal closely linked to the ideal of a 'new citizenship' based on residence rather than nationality.<sup>64</sup> This may have suggested the troubles that lay ahead. While the Right argued that voting rights were clearly linked to nationality (that is, to holding French

<sup>59</sup> The Right's reaction may certainly be seen as a means to 'win back' the voters lost to Le Pen through a more explicitly nationalistic stance—without a formal alliance—at least at a national level. At the regional and local level alliances were tolerated. Silverman describes the 1986 bill as 'the clearest sign that the right-wing coalition government was intent on stealing the clothes of the FN'; see *Deconstructing the Nation*, p.65.

<sup>60</sup> As noted in Chapter 4, the memberships of both major groups of the ND—Club de l'Horloge and GRECE—overlapped with mainstream right and the FN, and their ideas on cultural difference have been utilised by the far right to promote a deterministic and exclusive version of French identity.

<sup>61</sup> On the visibility of racist discourse and practice by the mid-1980s, see Wiewiorka, 'Tendencies to Racism'.

<sup>62</sup> Nos. 79-81 of the PS' 110 *propositions pour la France*.

<sup>63</sup> Shields, 'Immigration Politics in Mitterrand's France', pp.228-9.

citizenship), it is notable that the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty concerning voting rights for EU nationals has since been approved. The constitution was amended to grant voting rights to EU citizens, and the largest immigrant group in France, the Portuguese, may now vote (and stand) in local and European elections. But the proposal to allow other non-nationals, in particular long-standing residents of North African origin, local voting rights was dropped. The cultural implications of this line of argument are all too clear.

Some scholars have suggested that the Right's proposals were influenced more by a desire to win back disaffected voters from the FN than by a belief in citizenship reform as an integrative tool. At the same time, public opinion polls suggest that insofar as the Right was pandering to the more exclusivist FN line *vis-à-vis* immigrants by changing the citizenship laws, this was not necessarily supported by a majority. The result of polls such as that published in *Le Figaro* appear at first sight surprising. In response to the question: 'do you consider it normal that the following rights are granted to immigrants?', the percentage to find it 'normal' were as follows: unemployment benefits: 90 per cent; family allowances: 90 per cent; free access to public education system: 89 per cent; automatic naturalisation for children of immigrants born in France: 62 per cent.<sup>65</sup> The socio-economic aspects of citizenship were essentially uncontested; moreover, a sizeable (although smaller) majority supported automatic naturalisation, i.e. easy access to 'formal' citizenship. Likewise, Hargreaves quotes poll results which indicate 2-1 in favour of retaining automatic acquisition of French nationality—albeit accompanied by a (more general) rejection of multiculturalism.<sup>66</sup> However the majority did agree with the more general question on 'the need to change the code in some way': this, perhaps, is more indicative of the generalised picture of immigration as a 'problem' and justification of changes as mere 'common sense'. This points to the growing influence of the national identity debate, and the influence, again, of the FN in setting the terms of the debate.

*'Being French today and tomorrow': reactions to the proposals*

In 1986, then, the right-wing government under Jacques Chirac (co-habiting with Socialist President Mitterrand, 1986-88) proposed new changes to the legislation. In particular, it sought to suppress the primacy of the *jus soli* principle, long established in French law, and viewed as an important tool of integration since the end of the nineteenth century. The reform bill was presented

<sup>64</sup> Weil, *La France et ses étrangers*, pp.157-62.

<sup>65</sup> SOFRES poll, 'Immigrant Rights', published in *Le Figaro*, 22-28 November 1985.

<sup>66</sup> Hargreaves, *Immigration 'race' and ethnicity*, pp.175-6.

in October 1986. The principles of the bill accorded with the ideal of voluntarism but clashed with that of 'expansiveness' or 'generosity'—and certainly with the idea that ethnicity was of no account in the public sphere.

As already mentioned, the most recent change to the Nationality Code in France had been in 1973. The 1973 legislation was widely supported and seen as uncontroversial. Despite the three million immigrant guest workers in France by that time, many of whom were in no way integrated into French society, assimilation of new citizens was seen as inevitable and consistent with French history and tradition.<sup>67</sup> Such assumptions were challenged by the debate emerging in the 1980s—a debate which questioned the assimilative capacity of both French society and the 'new' migrants themselves.

Faced with, first, the rejection of the draft bill by the *Conseil d'Etat* on 30 October, and second, with vocal and widespread public opposition from immigrant and student groups, the opposition parties, Churches, and unions, the government stalled and referred the question to a specially constituted expert commission, to be known as the Commission of Nationality, in June 1987.<sup>68</sup> In considering both the CNF and the proposed reforms, the Commission decided to conduct a series of hearings which were televised nationally, thus ensuring a huge audience and contributing to the ampleur of the national debate. Revealingly, the Commission had neglected to invite Portuguese representatives—as the largest foreign community in France—and had to 'tack on' an additional (non-televised) session.<sup>69</sup> This small example highlights the fact that the 'citizenship' debates, like the 'immigration' debates, were concerned with (non-European) cultural difference and, in particular, communities of North African origin in France.<sup>70</sup>

The Commission's report, *Being French Today and Tomorrow* was submitted in 1988.<sup>71</sup> Its two volumes included transcripts of all the hearings, plus a substantial set of recommendations. In particular, the report recommended that the second generation should express the will to become

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<sup>67</sup> See report in *Le Monde*, 26 November 1997, entitled 'The 1973 law had been voted through in a climate of unanimity'. It quotes a Gaullist deputy referring to a 'spirit of generosity', of 'complete assimilation'.

<sup>68</sup> For a listing of the 20 Commission members, see *EFAD*, I, pp. 7-8.

<sup>69</sup> A fact noted by Feldblum, *Reconstructing Citizenship*, p. 20.

<sup>70</sup> They had also neglected to invite representatives of the Asian community in France, so the crux of the 'problem' was seen to be even more clearly focused on, not merely non-European, but Maghrebi and 'Black African' migration. Members of the Commission later acknowledged that their main concern was with the North African community. See D. Schnapper, 'La Commission de la Nationalité, une instance singulière', *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, Vol. 4 (1-2), 1988, p. 15.

<sup>71</sup> See Chapter 4, note 103, for details.

French citizens through a simple process of affirmation.<sup>72</sup> Thus it strongly upheld a voluntaristic notion of citizenship; indeed its 'New Charter for a Nationality Code' was prefixed by Renan's '*l'existence d'une nation est un plébiscite de tous les jours*'.<sup>73</sup> However the point was made forcefully during the hearings that the removal of the automatic granting of citizenship was building on the policies of the FN. The president of LDH, Yves Jouffa, argued that the extreme right had broken the consensus on citizenship and charted the lineage of the proposals: the reform had been proposed by the PFN, followed by the FN and the Club de l'Horloge—and then in 1985, had become part of the common platform of the RPR-UDF.<sup>74</sup>

The Commission was opposed to the imposition of any conditional aspects, notably proof of assimilation (such as mastery of the French language) and proof of law-abiding behaviour. It also acknowledged that 'formal' citizenship was no guarantee of integration: socio-economic disadvantage also needed to be addressed.<sup>75</sup> This final consideration, however, was widely overlooked in the public debate. In the public arena the debate centred on the concepts of integration and national identity, and fell into the ambit of the FN.

It is telling that the section outlining the Commission's 'three fundamental orientations' was headed: 'The Foundations: integration, national identity and nation'.<sup>76</sup> The Commission explicitly separated the concepts of 'nation' and 'nationality code'—the former being a political idea, the latter a legal category—yet the very wording of the section heading suggests that the citizenship code is bound up in concepts of national identity and integration. Thus while the political-legal concepts of the code are supposedly *what* define the definition of the 'problem' as one relating to identity centres the debate on cultural difference. In this situation, it is unsurprising that the socio-economic factors impacting integration, spoken of in many of the hearings, were swamped by questions of identity.

Ultimately, however, the Commission's recommendations were not acted upon at this stage. By the

<sup>72</sup> EFAD, II, p.214. Propositions 4-17 cover the proposals for second-generation acquisition of citizenship. According to the Commission, reform should allow both a respect for their rights and a means of conscious expression of the right to become citizens.

<sup>73</sup> EFAD, II, p.81.

<sup>74</sup> EFAD, I, pp.439-45. Asking why the issue had suddenly become so urgent, he suggested it resulted from a racist reflex which had accompanied Maghrebi immigration, and from the constant pressure from the far right which had succeeded in linking the question of a threatened national identity to an 'influx' of foreigners.

<sup>75</sup> See in particular EFAD, II, pp.83-4, section headed 'Nationality [citizenship] is not sufficient to ensure integration'.

<sup>76</sup> EFAD, II, p.82.

time the Commission had published its findings and recommendations (7 January 1988) the government had already decided to withdraw the proposal, not wishing to deal with such a sensitive and controversial issue with forthcoming presidential elections that year.<sup>77</sup> Wihtol de Wenden notes that the public debate surrounding the Commission hearings ensured that the debate on immigration was transformed into a legal debate on citizenship: 'Consequently the debate on immigration had come to focus on complex legal texts that were of little interest to the public, not least because they were difficult to understand'.<sup>78</sup>

However, not only did the debate focus on legal requirements, but it also raised questions concerning the linkage between nationality and citizenship. Both the traditional Gaullist and Jacobin lines oppose the de-coupling of the two: the political unity of the nation-state assumes a degree of cultural (in particular linguistic) assimilation; moreover, no division can be tolerated in the public sphere along *communautaire* lines as this would endanger both the unity of the Republic and social cohesion. The debate also raised the thorny question of cultural difference, traditionally assumed to be relegated to the private sphere, and its relationship with national identity.

As noted, both these relationships were being called into question in the 1980s and both were preferred domains for the extreme right. Previous assumptions of assimilation and the belief that immigrants and their descendants would be socialised and integrated into French society were publicly challenged. The concerns voiced ran as follows: first, they do not wish to assimilate; second, they are more culturally distant than previous migrants (i.e. those from European countries); and finally, the institutional underpinnings of assimilation are weakening. Such concerns were reflected and reinforced via the policies of the FN and the influence of the *Nouvelle Droite*. Only the last point—on the weakening of integrative mechanisms—was squarely accepted by the Left; however it too was using arguments based on, and using the language of, cultural difference (albeit with a different rationale). As will be briefly examined, the Left's argument held that cultural difference could transform French society, and was grounded in the concepts of *droit à la différence* and *nouvelle citoyenneté*.

**New Citizenship** As analysed in the previous chapter, this was the period of engagement by the Left with pluralist ideas based on *droit à la différence*. The need for foreigners to integrate within a pre-existing national culture was being questioned and forms of pluralism, it was argued, might be

<sup>77</sup> See Silverman, *Deconstructing the nation*, p.65.

<sup>78</sup> Wihtol de Wenden, 'Immigrants as Political Actors in France', *WEP*, Vol. 17 (2), April 1994, p.103.

accommodated both within the public and the private spheres. Cultural diversity, then, was not viewed necessarily as undesirable. While the issue of cultural 'distance', or unassimability, had no validity in this framework—if a plural society is accepted, then cultural difference and its 'extent' are no longer relevant factors—the Left was nonetheless identifying the same core issues as the Right: cultural difference and, possibly, distance. However the solutions proposed by Left and Right were diametrically opposed. For this strand of the Left there was no inherent contradiction between the ideas of cultural pluralism and national citizenship, so the curtailing of access to citizenship based on cultural difference was attacked as repressive, undermining the right to citizenship based on birth—the *droit du sol*. Mitterrand, the Socialists, and SOS-Racisme all strongly criticised the EFAD proposals. Second-generation *beurs* argued that citizenship should be based on participation and residence rather than nationality and descent. This *citoyenneté communale* was part of a move to rethink concepts of citizenship and nationality.<sup>79</sup>

This new concept of citizenship—literally a '*nouvelle citoyenneté*'—was linked to the pluralist ideas in circulation at the time,<sup>80</sup> and reflected in the work of sociologists Cordeiro and Bouamama, among others.<sup>81</sup> Proponents argued that France had become a multiethnic society; that old concepts of citizenship no longer apply; and that to talk in terms of insertion-integration-assimilation was redundant. According to this model, citizenship should be based on local participation in political, cultural, economic and social life—in short, participation across the spectrum. Citizenship should be de-linked from nationality, and linked rather to residence, thus allowing for political equality and cultural difference.<sup>82</sup> At its most basic, then, it was a citizenship based on 'being there': '*j'y suis, j'y vote*'.<sup>83</sup> But, as Silverman has pointed out, 'integration' as a tool of both the anti-racists and the

<sup>79</sup> See Richer, *Le Droit de l'Immigration*, pp.112-15.

<sup>80</sup> See Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, pp.152-3. Cathie Lloyd links the new citizenship to an older idea of 'active citizenship' that came to the fore in 1848, 1870 and during the Resistance, one that is not concerned with legal requirements, but with 'natural' rights and participation. Grounded in French Republican history, this connection might have provided it with increased legitimacy and justification, but it failed to find widespread support. See her *Discourses of Anti-racism in France*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1998, pp.26-9.

<sup>81</sup> See S.Bouamama, 'Au-delà du droit de vote. La nouvelle citoyenneté' (Beyond the right to vote. New citizenship), *Hommes et Migrations*, no. 1118, January 1989, pp.13-16; S.Bouamama, A.Cordeiro and M.Roux, *La Citoyenneté dans tous ses états. De L'immigration à la nouvelle citoyenneté* (Citizenship in all its states. From immigration to the new citizenship), Paris, L'Harmattan, 1992; A.Cordeiro, *Pourquoi l'immigration en France?*, Créteil, Office municipal des migrants de Créteil, 1981.

<sup>82</sup> See Feldblum, *Reconstructing Citizenship*, pp.46-52. These ideas find an echo in Soysal's thesis in the 1990s: namely, that citizenship and rights are being de-coupled: rights are becoming inherent in 'personhood' and do not necessarily need the defence of a national citizenship status. Hence her vision of a post-national membership. However this is problematic in France where the 'national' remains the central point of reference, even for anti-racist groups.

<sup>83</sup> Silverman, *Deconstructing the nation*, p.139



government (of both persuasions) is not suited to achieve the aims of this new citizenship—i.e. a disassociation of citizenship and nationality. The problem, he states, is how to 'move beyond the confines and contradictions of the national model'<sup>84</sup>—to somehow remove citizenship from the confines of the nation-state.

This was not a uniquely French response: the proposal had with similarities to ideas put forward by Habermas in Germany, searching for a way to move beyond traditional German concepts of citizenship towards rights based on residence. It also relates to the rethinking of citizenship from nationhood to 'personhood', and suggests the potential for a move away from citizenship rights being accorded in relation to the nation-state in favour of a concept of individual, universal human rights which each individual enjoys. As a result, the distinction between citizen and non-citizen becomes increasingly blurred. The state, then, should accord these universal rights to all those resident in its territory, regardless of whether they are part of the national community.<sup>85</sup> To some extent, that has already taken place in western Europe, with few arguing against socio-economic and civil rights for legally-resident non-citizens (denizens, in the words of Tomas Hammar).<sup>86</sup> The problem with this line of thinking, in the French context, relates to the idea of the citizen as a politically active member of the democratic nation-state. This is not to deny that French citizenship has carried with it notions of incorporation into French culture and society, with the concept of socialisation at the fore; it is not purely political. However, while a post-national citizenship might address some of the coercive elements tied up in the notion of integration and provide options for real cultural choice,<sup>87</sup> it underplays the ideal of the citizenry as a democratic body. Moreover with the pragmatic shelving of Mitterrand's plans to accord local voting rights to immigrants, it was hard to imagine how the 'new citizenship' model, where rights were uncoupled from the nation-state,

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<sup>84</sup> This follows the logic of political rights following on from civic and socio-economic rights. Taguieff and Weil, "Immigration", fait national et "citoyenneté", critically observe that this concept is in many ways a reaction to Le Pen's policies: if Le Pen criticises the access of 'foreigners' to French citizenship, then in order to be a 'good anti-racist' one must argue that access should be easier! The citizenship-nationality nexus is thereby broken, a breaking from Republican tradition and the French model.

<sup>85</sup> On the case for a new 'post-national' citizenship based on a universal system of rights, regardless of historical and cultural ties, see Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship*.

<sup>86</sup> See T. Hammar, *Democracy and the Nation State: Aliens, Denizens, and Citizens in a World of International Migration*, Aldershot, Gower, 1990. He uses the term 'denizen' to categorise long-established, legally resident foreigners.

<sup>87</sup> I argue 'might' as there are aspects of cultural difference which might lead to disadvantage and dissent. At the extreme, the argument surrounding female genital mutilation in France is a prime example; the wearing of the Muslim headscarf also. The maintenance of cultural tradition—seen as positive by some—may well be seen as repressive, or worse, by others.



would gain acceptance.<sup>88</sup>

While 'new citizenship' took into account that citizenship rights do not, necessarily, equate to equality, this was the exception rather than the rule. Notably, the mainstream debate did not turn upon the notions of socio-economic integration and immigrant participation and opportunity at these levels. The debate was stuck in the politics of identity (and inclusion/exclusion) and its relation to 'formal' citizenship, rather than addressing the issues of 'substantive' citizenship. Although it has been cogently argued that the debate surrounding CNF reform was a 'red herring', and that legal reforms did nothing to counter socio-economic disadvantage and racism,<sup>89</sup> the climate was such that issues of 'rights' were subsumed under the 'nationality' label.

While there was general agreement that the institutions of integration were no longer functioning effectively, this had led, initially, to three quite different conclusions and solutions concerning the future of the citizenship model—the political prerequisite. Certainly, the agreement did not translate into overall support for the bill in the 1980s. Crucially, however, the debate, which ostensibly turned on the acquisition of citizenship and amendments to the CNF, had been transformed into a debate on the nature of French identity.<sup>90</sup> The extreme right was able to capitalise on this as well as influence the terms of the debate.

It has been argued that both the internationalist / pluralist ideas from the Left, as well as the exclusivist ideas from the extreme right, were marginalised in the citizenship debates as a consensus for the 'integration' scenario developed. Favell notes the development of a widespread and mainstream consensus—'interdisciplinary, cross-party and cross-institutional'. He judges that this new 'Republican synthesis' acted to deflect both the multicultural and internationalist ideas of the (radical) left as well as culturally exclusive models of the (far) right.<sup>91</sup>

Despite the strength of this argument, I would argue that the content of the debate also played into the hands of those on the Right who believed, first, that citizenship should be accorded by filiation: the *droit du sol* might be acceptable for countries of settlement (e.g. the USA), but not for '*une nation constituée comme la France*'. From here, the argument could be set up as a choice: do we

<sup>88</sup> McKesson, 'Concepts and Realities', rather acidly remarks that this concept 'is totally out of touch with today's realities in France', p.35.

<sup>89</sup> See Silverman, *Deconstructing the nation*, p.140; Costa-Lascoux, 'L'acquisition de la nationalité française', pp.112-13.

<sup>90</sup> A major argument within Wiktór de Wenden's analysis, 'Immigrants as Political Actors', pp.91-109.

<sup>91</sup> Favell, *Philosophies of Integration*, p.41.

want a multiethnic society or do we wish to retain French national identity?<sup>92</sup> Coupled with a changing climate to favour integration over a multicultural model, this made possible the successful introduction of new citizenship laws by the right-wing government in the early 1990s, and also allowed the extreme right to influence the agenda and participate in the debates.

### 1990s: the environment enabling a change in legislation

Following the sweeping victory of the Right in the March 1993 legislative elections, the new government—and particularly the ‘hard-line’ RPR Minister of the Interior, Charles Pasqua<sup>93</sup>—selected immigration as one of the first themes to be addressed in the new legislative period.<sup>94</sup> The Long Commission report (*EFAD*) was resurrected and used as the basis for a new set of proposals, although not in its entirety—some proposals were ignored, others were subsequently added. The abolition or amendment of Article 23 of the Nationality Code was judged too complex and difficult.<sup>95</sup> Eventually, it was proposed to abolish the **automatic** granting of French citizenship on the age of majority by altering Article 44, so that second-generation immigrants would need to make a specific—voluntary—declaration in order to be granted citizenship. Automatic acquisition of citizenship would be limited to filiation (*jus sanguinis*) or second-generation *jus soli*.

On 20 June 1993, Pasqua resubmitted a proposal for the change in citizenship law to the Senate.<sup>96</sup> The subsequent *loi Méhaignerie*<sup>97</sup>-Pasqua, introduced 22 July 1993, included the following major changes:

- No automatic right to French citizenship at age of majority for those born in France of foreign parents (Art. 44);

<sup>92</sup> See testimony of Club de l'Horloge president, Henry de Lesquen, in *EFAD*, I, pp.424-39. Painting nightmarish scenarios of conflict in, and possible break-up of, multiethnic countries—citing Sri Lanka, Yugoslavia, USSR—he argued that *jus sanguinis* would ensure the survival of the nation. He remarked approvingly of both the RPR and FN citizenship proposals, and referred to the Club de l'Horloge literature on this subject, notably *La Préférence nationale* and *L'Identité de la France*, both published in 1985.

<sup>93</sup> Gildea describes Pasqua as ‘a Corsican with all the finesse of a New York cop’!, *France since 1945*, p.144.

<sup>94</sup> This in itself is not unusual. Christian Bruschi notes that most changes of government (*‘alternance’*) have resulted in immigration reform within the first months of parliament. See his ‘Moins de Droits pour les Étrangers en France’ (Fewer Rights for Foreigners in France), *Migration-Sociétés*, no. 31, January-February 1994, p.8.

<sup>95</sup> Article 23 covers the attribution of citizenship at birth, if one of the parents was also born in France.

<sup>96</sup> *Le Nouvel Observateur* notes his methods: ‘a knock-out operation ... voted on in the small hours before dawn, without having been discussed ... and in the absence of the Socialist members who left the room in order to protest against this forceful blow’, 6-12 May 1993, p.43.

- Abolition of the provision that children born in France of foreigners who were born on French territory (e.g. Algerians pre-1962) acquire French citizenship via double *jus soli* (not foreseen by Long Commission);
- Foreign parents no longer able to claim French citizenship for their French-born children during minority (under 16) (Arts. 52, 54);
- Acquisition by marriage: a period of two years, rather than six months, required before citizenship may be requested (the Long Commission had proposed one year) (Art. 37).<sup>98</sup>

The reforms added elements of conditionality: the granting of citizenship would be conditional on assimilation, and could be refused if the requestor had a criminal record.<sup>99</sup>

Moreover, the new nationality law was accompanied by a tightening of immigration controls, both internal and external. Legal provisions on identity checks (10 August) and immigration controls (24 August) were all passed in parliament in 1993, with little parliamentary or public protest.<sup>100</sup> Never before, notes an European Commission report on immigration, 'had legislation on immigration been so radically changed in such a short space of time and with such wide public support'.<sup>101</sup> Later in the same year, restrictions to the asylum law were passed. These legislative developments indicate a substantial shift in public opinion and policy-making choices, and raise the question: why were such laws—the subject of huge protest in the mid-1980s—passed so uncontroversially in 1993? *Le Point* made the comparison: while some 100 000 had protested against changes to the CNF some six years previous, in 1993 a mere 1500 turned out to protest.<sup>102</sup> The influence of the extreme right—its anti-immigrant politics portraying migrants as a threat to French nationhood and rejecting cultural difference—had increased, as had the obsession with national identity.

Identity checks and immigration / asylum legislation related to personal freedom, while citizenship reform touched on the relationship between the individual and the State. Both, however, were squarely grounded in the issue of cultural difference and the so-called 'crisis' of national identity: who could become 'nationals'? Who would remain (perceived as) 'foreigners'? While immigration

<sup>97</sup> The UDF Justice Minister.

<sup>98</sup> See summary in SOPEMI, *Trends in International Migration*, 1995; Wihtol de Wenden, 'Le Cas Français', p.55.

<sup>99</sup> Conditions set out in the amendment to Article 44, whereby French nationality would have to be requested.

<sup>100</sup> For an outline of these laws, see Bruschi, 'Moins de Droits', pp.8-22.

<sup>101</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *The EC Member States and Immigration in 1993*, Luxembourg, OOEPC, 1995, p.9.

<sup>102</sup> *Le Point*, 15 May 1993, p.20.

control is generally associated with the Right, it should be noted that this was not a simple equation. The new 1993 Nationality Law, when read as instituting a conscious decision to take on French nationality—all French-born children of foreigners were required to formally request citizenship on reaching the age of majority—was also supported by elements on the Left. In particular, the ‘voluntaristic’ aspect of the bill was read in positive terms, as fitting the French historical mould.<sup>103</sup> The far right arguments and their resultant support for the content (if not the logic) of the new citizenship legislation allowed the FN to present itself as part of the ‘respectable’ political scene. Certainly the climate had changed markedly since the position on citizenship reform worked through by Long’s 1988 Commission.

The four factors noted earlier, which played major roles in the drafting of the initial 1986 proposals, had strengthened in effect by the early 1990s. First, the implantation of the FN with its hard-line policies on immigration and a certain ‘*lepénisation des esprits*’; second, the influence of the *Nouvelle Droite* and its differentialist neo-racism; and third, the ‘national identity’ debate, which had increased in volume and intensity—particularly around the bicentenary of the French Revolution—accompanied by the perception of a ‘threat’ to this identity posed by the non-integration of migrants.

The fourth factor—that of opposing any moves towards public recognition of cultural pluralism—had become not so much a question of government and opposition, but of a mainstream political consensus. By the early 1990s, as discussed in Chapter 4, support for *droit à la différence*—the acceptance and accommodation of cultural pluralism within both the public and private spheres—had dwindled. The concept of a ‘new citizenship’ had also largely disappeared from view: mainstream support was focused on immigrant integration *à la française*.<sup>104</sup>

Support for the changes to citizenship law was predicated on two separate arguments—the first voluntarist, the second national-assimilationist. Although a number of issues were subsumed under both the voluntarist and the nationalist arguments—the devaluation of citizenship; the breakdown of integrative institutions and processes; and the ‘unassimilable’ nature of the post-war migrants—they were based on quite separate premises. While the Left broadly accepted the first (voluntaristic)

<sup>103</sup> According to one poll, 76 per cent believed that the reform of the nationality code was ‘a good thing’: see *Le Point*, 15 May 1993, p.20. Feldblum also argues that the 1993 amendments did not emanate solely from the Right, but developed out of a ‘new nationalist politics of citizenship’ in which not only far right (which she terms ‘nativist’) but also voluntarist and communitarian (in terms of collective identity) arguments were influential. See her *Reconstructing Citizenship*, pp.4-6, 60-71.

<sup>104</sup> See Chapter 4, ‘The shift to integration’, pp.146-8.

set, the second set was more contested and especially marked by the politics of the extreme right. The influence of the FN—its subversive language and neo-racist cultural differentialism—is apparent in the increase in support for the reforms over this time. They cannot be dissociated from the racist and exclusionary politics of the FN. I will first set out the voluntaristic and national-assimilationist arguments for the changes—the latter covering the perception of an increased threat to national identity through non-integration, particularly in relation to Islam. I will then consider the exceptions to the so-called 'Republican consensus' and the impact of the extreme right.

### *Citizenship and voluntarism*

First, the argument ran that children born in France to immigrant parents should no longer automatically gain French citizenship at eighteen, because these foreigners were becoming '*Français malgré eux*'.<sup>105</sup> From a voluntarist point of view, the French-born children of foreign parents were 'becoming' French—that is, automatically acquiring French citizenship—without their knowledge, or consent (hence '*malgré eux*'), and not consciously or voluntarily, as Renan would have stressed.

This 'voluntarist' argument was thus based squarely in the traditional French understanding of citizenship and, as noted, was supported by the Long Commission.<sup>106</sup> In this light, the reforms were viewed by the majority as an improvement—a free and conscious decision to become French. A willed allegiance to the country, and a genuine desire to become French, were widely judged as positive. As *The European's* French correspondent argued, there is nothing racist about having to 'ask for French nationality' (nationality and citizenship being used as synonyms): 'Nobody says you can't be French, but you have to care enough to ask'.<sup>107</sup>

Moreover, this view was shared by both the Right and many on the Left. The debate on voluntarist lines was generally couched in Republican and statist terms, grounded in a specific French tradition. The focus of approval was on the active, voluntary acquisition of citizenship. This appealed to many on the Left (although not all: Mitterrand, for example, opposed the law), and was widely supported by the public. The consensus was that French citizenship should be an act of will, based on consent: the act of requesting citizenship would underline both its open character and its worth. So the reform could be seen not as an exclusionary measure, but as a new instrument of

<sup>105</sup> 'French in spite of themselves'. See Wihtol de Wenden, 'Immigrants as Political Actors', p.102.

<sup>106</sup> The conclusions of the report explicitly situated its work within the framework of the elective and contractual concept of the nation—see *EFAD*, II, p.90.

<sup>107</sup> Anne-Elisabeth Moutet, 'One clause too far', *The European*, 21-27 June 1993.

integration; not as an attack on French traditions, but a defence of the Republican spirit. Hence voices of (conditional) agreement from the Left, and from some immigrant groups.<sup>108</sup>

Jean Daniel, while vehemently opposed to some effects of the reform, could state in the same editorial that access to the French community should not be 'a passively-received material benefit, an arrangement without cultural meaning' and that 'Republican citizenship should be desired, not imposed'. He was all in favour of foreigners born in France being required to express their desire to become French and to avoid the temptation of reconstituting 'communities' alien to the Republican tradition.<sup>109</sup> This approval was mirrored in other left-leaning organisations—although sometimes tempered with criticism of the practical workings. For example, Brice Lalonde, president of *Génération Ecologie*, came out in favour overall, but suggested instituting an induction ceremony for all young people, in which they would be formally instructed on the Constitution and the 'rights of man'.<sup>110</sup> Salem Kacet, the Algerian-born member of the Nationality Commission, also agreed with the change in principle, arguing that although he would have preferred an informal, discreet method, automatic acquisition needed to be changed. One is French, he avers, because one wants to belong to the French nation.<sup>111</sup>

### *Citizenship and national assimilation*

The second pro-reform argument held that these children of immigrant origin were becoming French without having properly 'integrated' into French society and were hence French '*de papier*' and not French '*de coeur*'.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, their view of citizenship was marked by a purely instrumental approach which commodified citizenship.<sup>113</sup> The full import of national citizenship, as a fusion of the political and cultural, was being de-valued; national identity was being threatened by the process of automatic acquisition. Many accepted the premise that the 'instruments of

<sup>108</sup> See for example the contribution from the President of LICRA, Jean-Pierre Bloch, *EFAD*, I, pp.392-400. Stating that LICRA 'gives priority to the question of integrating immigrants who wish to become French ... I consider it an honour to be French and that it is not a dishonour to have to ask', pp.393-4. In a similar vein, see also Dahmani's contribution (President of France-Plus), *EFAD*, I, pp.467-79.

<sup>109</sup> J. Daniel, Editorial, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 20-26 May 1993.

<sup>110</sup> *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 20-26 May 1993, p.23. However he criticised what he termed the 'idiotic amendment' concerning parents born in Algeria when it was French.

<sup>111</sup> See Kacet's account in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6-12 May 1993, p.44.

<sup>112</sup> Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation*, p.32, notes that the term '*de papier*' was used by the *Action française* to describe both naturalised citizens and Jews: it illustrates well their 'ethnic' view of the nation and, consequently, citizenship. It also echoes the distinction made between the *pays légal* and *réel* by the nationalist right during the Third Republic—see Chapter 3, p.112—and used today by the FN.

<sup>113</sup> Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, pp.145-7. He notes that this is particularly pronounced among the second-generation Algerians, partly attributable to colonialism and decolonisation.

Republican integration' were no longer effective and that traditional processes of integration were breaking down. However unlike voluntarist responses to this phenomenon, the national-assimilationist response was not so firmly situated in French Republican traditions. The national-assimilationist rationale underpinning the proposed solution was symptomatic of a more hostile and exclusionary approach, as it did not propose to facilitate the integration process, for example via socio-economic measures, or via a legally-bound process of consent (however problematic these might be), but rather placed the focus on cultural integration and the onus on the immigrants themselves to integrate successfully. As such, this drew on the current debates on (a threatened) national identity and a selective memory of past assimilatory processes. It was in the reaction to this issue that a palpable change in climate may be observed.

While the voluntarist argument can be traced more clearly to traditions in Republican thought, the national-assimilationist rationale had a fuzzier heritage. As with nationhood, the seeming contradictions between 'open' citizenship and assimilationist policies (both legal and actual) are, at closer inspection, two sides of the same coin. But the Republican 'myth' was on the side of individual choice and an open tradition. The fact that national-assimilationist cultural arguments increasingly came to the fore in the 1990s not only undercut the traditional understanding of French citizenship, but challenged the 'myth' of assimilation. The debate was clearly marked by the politics of the Right, and of the extreme right, as the self-defined 'defender' of an essentialised national identity. The individual needed to be attached to the French community via mores, customs, and values. Again drawing on favourite Republican texts, Renan's plebiscite-nation was transformed into a nation based on spiritual principles, a soul, a rich inheritance of memories, a valorisation of French history. Selected aspects of his writings were made to serve a specific cultural understanding of nation and citizenship.

### *Integration and Islam*

When viewed more closely, the discourse of assimilation honed in on one particular category. Little mention was made of the primary 'marker' of integration into a national community—language. Rather, the factor raised in this argument was invariably 'Islam'. In this context, the 1989 headscarves affair and the ensuing public debate played an enormous role—one which identified 'Islam' as contrary to French tradition and values, and, to some extent, encouraged the more sceptical Left to move towards the ideology of 'integration'. Overall, it served to bolster a

substantial consensus on the French nationality law as the core symbol of national membership.<sup>114</sup>

The debate on the role of Islam in French society, placed within a problematic of immigration-integration, had a number of facets.<sup>115</sup> First, Islam was set up in opposition to—and in historical competition with—Christianity. Catholicism is still a central marker of French identity, and the idea of France as the 'eldest daughter of the Church'—and the professed need to integrate migrants into a system based on Judeo-Christian values—is one promoted explicitly by the FN. It also remains an influential factor in more indirect ways.<sup>116</sup> This is made particularly apparent in the debate over Turkish membership of the EU, and the accompanying debate on the constituents of a possible 'European identity'.

Second, the debate raised the question of whether the Islamic faith is compatible with French norms and values. On the one hand, freedom of religion is (legally) guaranteed in the French Constitution, as well as in a number of European and international conventions. On the other hand, Islam is widely seen as qualitatively different from other religions.<sup>117</sup> Within the national framework, it is suggested that Catholic, Protestant or Jewish immigrants integrate within existing structures, while a particular problem is posed by Islam. First, Islam has no 'tradition' in France, and second, its relationship with the principles of *laïcité* is problematic. The latter argument holds that while Islam may be treated like other religions, that is, by recognising the separation between Church and State and allowing for the creation of Islamic associations to manage their interests, Islam is, in fact, impossible to enclose within the private sphere. It does not merely incorporate spiritual aspects, but has political dimensions—and these can come into conflict with French national law.<sup>118</sup> These

<sup>114</sup> This is the argument put forward by Favell, *Philosophies of Integration*. See Chapter 5: 'France: Following the Integration Line *jusqu'au bout*', pp.150-99. While I agree this holds insofar as the Left did abandon *droit à la différence* and, on the whole, was favourable towards the principle of voluntarism enshrined in the new legislation, this did not act to marginalise the extreme right model based on *jus sanguinis* and overlooks the links between the value-embedded civic model and ethnic model of the nation.

<sup>115</sup> Muslims form the second largest, and fastest growing, religious group in France. French government statistics indicate that Muslims form 6.9 per cent of the total population. See French government web site at <<http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/>> and Chapter 4, note 164, for further statistics.

<sup>116</sup> See Wieviorka, *La France raciste*, pp.298-300.

<sup>117</sup> See M.Oriol, 'Islam and Catholicism in French Immigration' in Horowitz and Noiriel (eds), *Immigrants in Two Democracies*, pp.188-204. Looking to research on immigrant groups—in a chapter drafted before the headscarves affair—he notes that religion was not taken into account till 'remarkably late'; moreover, that the immigration debate focuses on Islam, despite the fact that post-war immigrant flows were predominantly Catholic. He argues, p.200, that the headscarves affair—an 'extraordinary dramatization of a minor event'—confirms his analysis.

<sup>118</sup> This point is put in the *Que sais-je?* series, Richer, *Le Droit de l'Immigration*, pp.107-8: 'The Koran does not only have a spiritual dimension, it forms the foundation of all social life and notably it is the



political dimensions may threaten, then, Republican values. This debate was fed by the headscarves affair and by media reports which portrayed Islam as a threat to the core values of the Republic. A typical example is 1991 dossier in *L'Express* entitled 'Immigration: the Five Taboos', in which the Republic is portrayed as imperilled by Islamic practices.<sup>119</sup> Finally, the debate was also fuelled by—and exploited by—the FN.

While the areas where Islamic practices could conflict with the existing legal and political system might appear to be limited and manageable, they were discussed in an environment dominated by negative imagery and violence. This leads to the third major element: the public image of Islam in relation to political activism, both international and domestic. In the French imaginary, Islam was linked to religious fundamentalism and political extremism. Fears were raised of a fundamentalist Islam taking root in France, destabilising the political system and possibly threatening law and order in terrorist attacks. In turn, these anxieties were fed by two developments in the 1990s: the Gulf War, and the increasing levels of violence both in Algeria and on French territory by the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS). The FIS, an Islamic group opposed to (and banned by) the Algerian regime, had been involved in a violent struggle to overthrow the regime since 1992. The strength of these two images—Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic terrorism—exacerbated tendencies to view Muslims as potentially dangerous and threatening.<sup>120</sup> Hargreaves refers to a 'blanket equation'

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basis for ... certain rules and legislation'.

<sup>119</sup> *L'Express*, 8 November 1991: the five taboos are listed as: special language / culture classes; female genital mutilation; polygamy; national service being performed in other countries; and the toleration of fundamentalism.

<sup>120</sup> The possibility of official French-Islamic representation that might counter such misleading impressions is a two-sided problem. First, the Muslim community is far from monolithic, and has long disagreed on an appropriate interlocutor. On its fragmentation, see *EFAD*, II, p.49. Ireland suggests that this absence has contributed to the image of a 'threatening, inscrutable force', see *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity*, pp.90-1. Second, while various official bodies and governments have encouraged the community to appoint a representative spokesperson, the same institutions in the past have explicitly rejected the '*communautaire*' route, arguing that ethnic community representation is a dangerous development alien to the Republican tradition. Such representation however does exist for France's Protestant and Jewish communities—the subtle distinction is made that this is not 'ethnic' representation, but religious: it can therefore be deemed acceptable because there is an element of choice and free association. Thus this argument allows such developments to fall within an overarching Republican framework. In 1990 the PS Interior Minister Joxe instituted a Council for Reflection on Islam in France (CORIF)—the first of its kind. Ten Islamic representatives were appointed. At the time this served more to highlight Muslim divisions in France than foster a non-threatening Gallic strain of Islam. On the further development of a representative body, and the problems associated with it, see Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*, pp.206-9. Some progress has been made since that time. For the Republican stance, and the wish of the current French government to foster a 'modern Islam on French soil', see Chevènement, 'L'Islam en France', pp.46-54. In January 2000, President Chirac, for the first time, received a Delegation representing Islam in France: see report in *Le Monde*, 15 February, 2000, entitled '"Historic" meeting between four Muslim 'personnalités' and M.Chirac'. According to the grand mufti of

between Muslims and fundamentalists.<sup>121</sup>

However, as the attention paid to the FIS suggests, the colonial legacy and the struggle for Algerian independence also played a crucial role alongside—and within—the ‘Islamic factor’: otherwise, presumably, the Moroccans and Tunisians would be equally ‘suspect’ national citizens on cultural grounds. This, however, was not the case. A 1984 opinion poll on French perceptions of integration across various ethnic groups illustrated a ‘hierarchy’ of ethnicity, from ‘well integrated’ west Europeans, through Central Europeans and Asians, and falling to Turks, Gypsies and Africans, with Algerians at the bottom. 70 per cent of respondents deemed Algerians ‘badly integrated into French society’, compared with Tunisians (37 per cent) and Moroccans (48 per cent).<sup>122</sup>

The use of ‘cultural’ arguments alone (e.g. the Islamic faith of certain groups) to justify perceptions of integration—or otherwise—provides only an incomplete picture: the attitude towards immigrants of Algerian origin in particular, suggests that both the French colonial experience in Algeria, and the bitter decolonisation process still have a profound effect.<sup>123</sup> This is supported by the fact that second-generation immigrants see themselves as far better integrated than do the French. The level of distrust or hostility towards France—felt by both first- and second-generation Algerians—would also be a plausible contributing factor.

While colonised Algeria was considered an integral part of France, rather than a ‘colony’ or ‘settlement’, the Algerians—‘*indigènes*’—were mostly classed not as ‘full’ French citizens but as subjects.<sup>124</sup> Thus they were never considered equal to—or worthy of the same entitlements as—the (‘real’) French. Thus the normative logic of French colonialism—the spreading of universal values, France’s civilising mission—is misleading and muddled, and causes problems in the post-colonial environment at two, seemingly contradictory, levels. First, it renders the settlement and ‘integration’ of Algerian-origin immigrants crucial if the French Algerian colonial experience and

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Marseille, Soheib Bencheikh, the meeting marked the ‘definitive *enracinement* of Islam in the Republican landscape’: highlighting the Republican vocabulary and philosophy which underpins the ‘integration’ of Islam into French society: a religion like any other.

<sup>121</sup> Hargreaves, *Immigration, ‘race’ and ethnicity*, p.124. This is despite the fact that studies have indicated that less than 1 per cent of Muslims in France may be classed as ‘fundamentalist’. In a 1994 poll, 70 per cent of Muslims were hostile to the FIS, with 10 per cent in favour—see *Le Monde*, 13 October 1994, cited in Hargreaves, p.125.

<sup>122</sup> French perceptions of minority ethnic groups, SOFRES opinion poll reproduced in Hargreaves, *Immigration, ‘race’ and ethnicity*, p.155. The question was: ‘Here is a list of communities living in France. For each of them, can you tell me whether they are on the whole well or badly integrated into French society?’.

<sup>123</sup> See Hargreaves, *Immigration, ‘race’ and ethnicity*, pp.163-4.

rationale is to be accepted. Second, insofar as the colonised Algerians were never truly recognised as 'full' citizens, the acceptance of former inferiors as equals is problematic. Not only does it shape post-colonial attitudes, but it reveals the idea of French 'universal' values which underpinned French colonialism as imbued with—if not racism—then ethno-centrism. It also points to a further undermining of the dominant principles of associated with nationhood and citizenship.<sup>125</sup>

### Citizenship reform: exceptions to the 'Republican consensus'

There were still, in 1993, harsh critics of the citizenship reforms: the idea of a total 'Republican consensus' needs qualification.<sup>126</sup> Unsurprisingly, these critics came mostly from the Left and concentrated on two areas: legislative and contextual. First, a number of specific additional amendments (not included in the Long Commission recommendations) were rejected; second, the overall tenor and context of the debate, in particular its association with restrictive immigration and identity control legislation, was criticised. Both these areas, moreover, were seen as especially problematic in a climate where far right anti-immigrant and racist policies were finding resonance and electoral support.

Criticism of the legislative amendments was focussed on the introduction of 'conditionality'—the 'national-assimilationist' aspect of the legislation—and the abolition of double *jus soli* for children of pre-1962-born Algerians. Dissenters noted that the Right's stress on *volonté* and the importance of a 'conscious will to be French' also incorporated elements of assimilation. Such amendments to the bill went beyond the recommendations of the Long Commission and came under fire from Commission members. Schnapper, for example, argued that she had wished—via the Commission proposals—to improve prospects for integration of foreign residents and their children in France, and deplored the fact that government was pressured by a hard right faction to amend the proposals.

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<sup>124</sup> EFAD, II, p.51.

<sup>125</sup> Further on this, see Silverman, *Deconstructing the nation*, pp.144-7. The specific Algerian experience of colonialism was different to the Afro-Caribbean experience: both Guadeloupe and Martinique were 'overseas departments' after World War II, and their populations were granted the statute of French citizenship. They have right of entry into metropolitan France and are not counted as part of the foreign population. They have even been cited by the FN, with approval, as instances of 'foreigners' who assimilate. See P.Ogden, 'The Legacy of migration: some evidence from France' in King (ed.), *Mass Migration in Europe*, pp.101-17.

<sup>126</sup> According to Favell, *Philosophies of Citizenship*, p.58, a 'Republican consensus' on citizenship was promoted by 'media-wise, self-promoting public intellectuals' in the intellectual press and adopted by the 'court'. This reading overlooks the extent of criticism and overt dissent, but Favell is right to link this to the arguments surrounding the advent of a new, consensual 'Republic of the Centre' (as described by Furet) and the possible end of French exceptionalism.

She strongly opposed the inclusion of conditions on citizenship (for example, reserving the right of refusal if an applicant had committed certain crimes or served a jail term for certain offences).<sup>127</sup>

Also strongly criticised was the introduction of an amendment that meant that children born of pre-independence-born Algerian (and thus French) parents would be denied citizenship via Article 23. This was seen as a denial of France's colonial past; Jean Daniel's editorial, for example, labelled it a 'colonial lie'.<sup>128</sup> Symbolic and cynical, the amendment implies that those born in French Algeria before its independence in 1962 are no longer considered French; it belies the fact that Algeria was once part of 'territorial' France.

Some stronger dissenting voices—criticising the very heart of the bill—were also heard from the Left, particularly from within the PS and anti-racist organisations, on the basis of non-Republican discrimination.<sup>129</sup> Again, the values of the Republic were invoked to support the counter-argument. Socialist Jack Lang argued forcefully against the change, judging it as a sop to the far right, discriminatory, and a fundamental attack on French identity. The reforms, he argued, were anti-integrationist, discriminated between young people born in France, and established a hierarchy of *droit du sang* over *droit du sol*.<sup>130</sup> This discrimination between those with French and those with foreign parents was a central point of criticism: Henri LeClerc, LDH Vice-President, argued that to ask children who had always lived in France to make a specific request to become French would only serve to reinforce a strong feeling of exclusion.<sup>131</sup> On the relation with national identity, Lang

<sup>127</sup> See her comments in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6-12 May 1993 and 20-26 May 1993.

<sup>128</sup> See his editorials in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6-12 May 1993 and 20-26 May 1993. The intent of this amendment was, in part, to halt cases of fraud whereby Algerian women travelled to France to give birth. The extent of this 'fraud' is undocumented and assumed to be small—Wihl de Wenden estimates a few hundred at most. It falls into the same category as the amendment to put a stop to marriages of convenience (estimated at 2-3 per cent) by increasing the eligibility period required by the foreign partner for citizenship. See her 'Le Cas Français', p.51.

<sup>129</sup> Favell refers to 'very pious left-wing dissent'—that now out of power, the Left could criticise a policy for which it was largely responsible via their espousal of a 'new Republican consensus'. See his *Philosophies of Integration*, pp.152-9. However the fact that one of the first actions of the new socialist government was to amend the legislation—automatic acquisition was reintroduced in 1998—suggests left-wing dissent had both substance and intent. The new Nationality Act adopted in March 1998 reaffirms the primacy of *droit du sol*—without the need for a declaration. At 18, children born in France of foreign parents will be automatically entitled to French citizenship; they may also request nationality between the ages of 13 and 18. It also addresses the much-criticised amendment of Article 23 which removed citizenship acquisition at birth to those born (in France) of parents from in Algeria prior to 1962. For details of the changes, see SOPEMI, *Trends in International Migration*, Paris, OECD, 1998, pp.106-7. For details of renewed automatic acquisition, and minors' acquisition by request, see F.Johannes, *Libération*, 13 January 2000. Over 25 000 young people requested citizenship in the first half of 1999, a pointer to their 'will to integrate'.

<sup>130</sup> *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6-12 May 1993, p.45.

<sup>131</sup> Quoted in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6-12 May 1993, p.43.

judged the law as 'anti-national': against the history and the future of France. For him, the *droit du sol* was constitutive of French identity. Quoting Renan (selectively) on the existence of a nation as '*un plébiscite de tous les jours*', he argued for the continuation of the precedence of *droit du sol* as one of the fundamental laws corresponding to a strong, generous and confident conception of nationality: '*Droit du sol* is constitutive of the identity of our country. To call it into question is to reject the soul of France'.<sup>132</sup> At issue in the critique of the reforms, then, was the whole question of French identity—in this case, calling on an interpretation of revolutionary and Republican values which stresses not only voluntarism and unitarism, but a strict 'culture-blind' approach.

Criticism was also voiced at the context and tenor of the parliamentary debate. Despite claims that the reforms would act to improve integration, stressing the consensual nature of French citizenship and a welcoming approach to new citizens, the changes were debated alongside measures to stem the immigrant 'influx' and prevent illegal immigration. The drafter of the bill, Pierre Mazeaud (RPR), fed such views on the overall context. While prefacing his remarks on the importance of 'commitment', he added the following on who should be entitled to French citizenship: 'The role of Islam stands out more and more—Islam, and particularly the fundamentalist threat, which refuses all adherence to our society'.<sup>133</sup> This belies the professed voluntaristic approach. Moreover, the fact that the measures were passed along with those limiting the rights of immigrants betrayed the supposed intent of stressing the integrative aspect of the legislation. Alain Touraine, also a member of the Commission, while favouring the idea of voluntary rather than automatic acquisition of citizenship, stated that he felt 'betrayed' by the parliamentary amendments, the vehemence of parliamentary debate, and the violence of the extreme right: this represented '*une intention trahie*' (betrayed), he declared.<sup>134</sup>

The cultural import of the 'voluntarist' set of arguments—and the insistence on a value-free public sphere in which such ethnic communities have no place—exemplifies the Republican-Left stance on the question of integration and citizenship.<sup>135</sup> It also fits with the view from the Right by putting the onus on 'other' cultures to request French nationality explicitly. While not as overtly as the

<sup>132</sup> *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6-12 May 1993, p.45.

<sup>133</sup> *Le Monde*, 13 May 1993, quoted in Hargreaves, *Immigration, 'race' and ethnicity*, p.147.

<sup>134</sup> Touraine in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 6-12 May 1993. For him, the Commission's proposals were based on two ideas: voluntary citizenship and an open society. The intention of these proposals had been undermined by 'a context and a climate charged through with discrimination' and the reforms would not act to further integration.

<sup>135</sup> See also editorial in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 13-19 May 1993: 'I choose the French Republic', arguing that if France is no longer capable of turning immigrants into 'little Republicans' then the foreigners themselves must do so based on their free will.

national-assimilationist argument, it nonetheless indicates the extent to which the crux of the citizenship reforms turned on concepts of integration into the national community and the rejection of difference in the public sphere. Added to the (failing) mechanisms of integration, an active citizenship policy, it was argued, should bolster France's integrative capacity.<sup>136</sup>

Moreover, the fact that the reforms concerned only the political aspects of citizenship (in particular the right to vote) and not 'substantial citizenship' tended to be overlooked. It can be argued that what is required, in practice, for the successful integration of immigrant minorities in France—and, possibly, to address the problems of violence and delinquency in the disadvantaged suburbs where many migrants are concentrated—is social and economic reform aimed at improving opportunities and services offered in these areas. That is, it is necessary to concentrate on 'substantial' rather than 'formal' aspects of citizenship. The fact that it might go 'against the grain' of French Republican thinking to offer enhanced services to groups based on ethnicity does not have to be a problem: it can be offered on territorial grounds, to disadvantaged areas without reference to ethnicity.

As Castles has argued, socio-economic marginalisation and racial discrimination (both institutionalised and 'everyday') continue to affect the ability of immigrants to integrate. Their continuing disadvantage not only illustrates the flaws in the 'Republican model' but also points to the fact that mere access to citizenship is not the answer.<sup>137</sup>

There have been some moves along these lines: a '*politique de la ville*' to address areas of urban decline; and a ministry to promote urban renewal. The hearings with immigrant representatives, as published in *EFAD*, suggest that many are concerned with material inequality, and see this as a central issue to be addressed in order for 'integration' to be successful.<sup>138</sup> However, both the dominant and the cultural idiom of nationhood militate against any form of affirmative action. In

<sup>136</sup> As noted, the abolition of conscription in 1996 has arguably served to further weaken the effectiveness of these institutions.

<sup>137</sup> He notes two factors which undermine the French Republican model of citizenship: socio-economic marginalisation ('*exclusion*')—often related to ethnicity—and racism. 'Thus the idea of citizenship as conferring equality applies only in a formal political sense, not in social reality'. See 'Democracy and Multiculturalism in Western Europe', p.64. On these issues in comparative context (Germany, US and UK) see C.Joppke, 'How immigration is changing citizenship: a comparative view', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 22 (4), July 1999, pp.629-52.

<sup>138</sup> See for example testimony of Dahmani (President of France-Plus), and Désir (President of SOS-Racisme), *EFAD*, I, pp.465-79 and 543-67. Dahmani describes France-Plus as 'effectively a civil rights movement', p.466. The 'right to difference' is all but ignored: abstract Republican integration is linked with issues of socio-economic disadvantage. Dahmani asserts that what is needed is not a new nationality code but a new integration code, p.467; Désir talks of the immigrants' 'huge desire to integrate', p.545. Both call on French Republican traditions to ground their opposition to the changes.

May 2000 a delegation of black French citizens proposed a reform of public regulations to ensure better ethnic representation—a project that attempted to introduce quotas and a policy of affirmative action (*discrimination positive*) akin to the US model. This was dismissed by *Le Figaro* as '*loin, très loin de la citoyenneté "à la française"*'.<sup>139</sup> Patrick Weil, recalling the French tradition of equality, of individual integration regardless of skin colour, is quoted as stating that such proposals are not the way forward: 'That means making skin colour and religion the principal elements of identity ... They should be treated according to merit, not according to racial identity'.<sup>140</sup> The idiom of the voluntarist, culturally-blind model of the nation allows no theoretical room for affirmative action. There is, however, room for the identity politics of the FN.

The fact that government reform and public debate have turned on the politics of citizenship access, largely conducted in abstract terms and with more symbolic than practical significance, has played into the hands of the FN. Lang talks of French revolutionary and Republican values: at issue, he asserts, is French identity. Such rhetoric has successfully steered the debate towards one of national identity and culture, rather than economic and social disadvantage. Similarly, Favell argues that a close reading of *EFAD* and the HCI texts shows how the Republican philosophy of citizenship goes well beyond 'boundaries and membership'; it has transformed the debate from insertion / socio-economic / welfare entitlements to one including 'a whole set of moral and cultural preconditions about turning culture-bound individuals with divergent interests into a unified citizenry'.<sup>141</sup> Thus the argument that integration could be best fostered through social and economic reforms, in particular, addressing the problems of 'exclusion' and racism, was muffled in favour of a clamour concerning formal citizenship rights.

It might be argued that the state–citizen relationship needs to be fostered by all possible means, and that the public–private division is a valuable means of ensuring equality and fairness in society. Citizenship reform, then, may be part of this overall effort. Silverman has argued persuasively that the increasing role of the nation-state in the nineteenth century, positing action based on the ideals of universality and neutrality, was dependent on a division of spheres into public and the private, between civil society and the state.<sup>142</sup> Now that the links between nation, state and citizen are unravelling, the danger may be that increasing atomisation of society, with individuals at the mercy of the market, will result in breakdown of social cohesion, fragmentation of society, and market-led

<sup>139</sup> 'Far, very far, from French-style citizenship'. *Le Figaro*, 22 May 2000.

<sup>140</sup> Quoted in *Le Figaro*, 22 May 2000.

<sup>141</sup> Favell, *Philosophies of Integration*, p.62.

<sup>142</sup> See Silverman, 'The Revenge of Civil Society'.



definitions, whereby citizens are viewed primarily as consumers.

On the other hand, this might empower individuals through the breakdown of the overbearing state; new voices might be heard, more diversity allowed. In the French context, the fear of the first scenario far outweighs the possibilities of the second. But oppositional sets of concepts (public-private; integration-difference; ethnicity-politics) are clearly being challenged: the undoubted 'ethnic' nature of the citizenship reforms gives the lie to the philosophical construct of citizenship as a neutral space.

Just as a preoccupation with the politics of nationality and citizenship tends to occlude economic considerations, it may also be argued that it undermines ethnic politics *per se*. Interest groups—whether established by French citizens or immigrants—tend to organise around a political theme and do not mention specific ethnic categories.<sup>143</sup> Moreover, they stress the very 'French' themes of Republican values and secular ideals.<sup>144</sup> The question of an Islamic identity is put in political rather than religious terms: as noted by Michel Oriol, 'the political dimension of religious life is given priority'.<sup>145</sup> This was made most apparent in the headscarves affair, when the debate was largely conducted in terms of a challenge to secularism, and a danger to the 'French model' of integration. The national identity aspect of the debate again served the interests of the far right, and the evolution of the citizenship debate must also be understood in relation to its domestic political influence.

### *The influence of the FN*

The centering of the citizenship debates around the thorny issue of 'national identity' and a virtually uncontested picture of a philosophical, Republican tradition, played into the hands of the far right. Indeed, whilst the retreat of the Left from a politics of difference may be in part attributed to the influence of ideas, norms and institutions, the role of the FN in precipitating this retreat is also significant. Identity was its *cause célèbre*: defence of French nationhood and identity was at the core of their policies and programs. This allowed the extreme right to participate in the

<sup>143</sup> See Lloyd's extensive analysis of anti-racism in France, *Discourses of Antiracism in France*, in particular Chapter 7. She states that the protest movements concerning immigrants' rights and position in French society 'largely avoided a racialised communitarian approach, appealing instead to universal principles of human rights', p.230. This is also illustrated by the representatives on anti-racist / pro-immigrant groupings at the Long Commission hearings. See in particular, those by Dahmani, Désir and Bloch in *EFAD*, I.

<sup>144</sup> M.Feldblum, 'Paradoxes of Ethnic Politics', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 16, 1993, pp.52-74.

<sup>145</sup> See example Oriol, 'Islam and Catholicism', p.189.



immigration and citizenship debate on its own terms: not only popularising its ideas and language, but according it increased respectability and legitimacy. Its emphasis on cultural difference provided added leverage for the 'Republican retreat' of the Left from multiculturalism, and allowed the FN virtually to monopolise the 'national identity' space.

As noted, the mid-1980s had already seen the mounting success and increasing acceptance of the FN and its anti-immigrant, racist policies. From not being able to garner enough signatures to stand for president in 1981, Jean-Marie Le Pen gained over 14 per cent of the votes in 1988 and over 15 per cent in 1995.<sup>146</sup> Polls showed increasing numbers admitting to racist feelings agreeing with Le Pen's ideas. A 1991 report by the National Consultative Committee on Human Rights quoted polls where 71 per cent of respondents agreed that there were 'too many' Arabs in France.<sup>147</sup> Such findings find resonance in the anti-immigrant target of the FN: the non-European Muslim, culturally distant and, according to the FN, unassimilable. The racist discourse has to a large extent been normalised. The lack of media reporting of Le Pen's 1995 presidential campaign by comparison with 1988, although in some ways beneficial, nonetheless points to an increased acceptance of the party which is seen as an unremarkable actor in political life. The much-debated identity crisis was used by Le Pen to foster a vision of irreconcilable conflict between so-called traditional French values and those of the *immigrés*, primarily those of North African descent. Skilfully using Republican language—and here the Republican myths, and the unproblematic acceptance of a history of assimilation, homogeneity and universalism served him well—he claimed a Republican heritage for the FN and called on a particular historical version of events—a collective memory—to serve his purposes and to bolster his message. The contradictions at the heart of this discourse—skilfully deconstructed by Silverman—went largely unchallenged.

For the far right, the legislative changes complemented their understanding of nationality and citizenship—that is, nationality as a given, a determined, bio-cultural characteristic. For all the rhetoric of cultural difference (rather than affirmations of racial superiority/inferiority), the racist import of their ideology is clear.<sup>148</sup> The FN has stated that to be a French citizen is a matter of

<sup>146</sup> For the electoral results of the FN see Chapter 2, Table 2.1, p.69.

<sup>147</sup> CNCDDH, *La Lutte contre le racisme et la xénophobie*, 1991. Despite the fall in support for the FN at the polls following the party split in 1999, opinion polls in 2000 still show high levels of anti-immigrant sentiment with 59 per cent agreeing that 'there are too many immigrants in France'. See 'Les Français décomplexés par rapport aux idées de l'extrême droite', *Le Monde*, 20 May 2000. Journalist Gérard Courtois notes that the ideas upon which Le Pen had built his success over fifteen years, notably immigration and insecurity, are now shared by a majority of people, and refers to a 'banalisation' of racism.

<sup>148</sup> This is not to argue that the 'neo-racist' analysis by Taguieff is redundant; in particular, in order to counter the rhetoric of the FN, it is a useful insight and distinction. At heart, however, FN policies are

inheritance (mostly) and merit (on rare occasion): '*Etre Français, cela s'hérite ou se mérite*'.<sup>149</sup> On closer inspection of its policies, one sees that citizenship will be based on bloodlines, and naturalisation allowed ('earned'), on request by the foreigner, on four conditions: that s/he has no criminal offences; shows the capacity and the willingness to assimilate; that previous nationality is renounced; and, finally, that the 'national community' accepts the immigrant as citizen.<sup>150</sup> French citizens, then, must be 'culturally French'—whether through biology or socialisation/acculturation. The fact that the FN could support changes to the Nationality Code using the 'Republican' language of voluntarism and a positive affirmation of French heritage does not conceal their goal of a closed, exclusive and particularistic citizenship policy that dovetails with their policies of 'national preference'.

The success of the FN was fed—and provided with at least a façade of intellectual respectability—by the ideas of the *Nouvelle Droite*, as noted in the previous chapter.<sup>151</sup> If political power is grafted onto cultural power, an intellectual space on the far right is needed for the success of the FN in the political arena.<sup>152</sup> The French New Right, which promotes ideas of cultural difference and the importance of keeping cultures separate, served precisely this function.<sup>153</sup>

The influence of the FN, then, extends via the movement of its ideas and policies into 'normal' political debate. It also extends via the actions of the mainstream parties—particularly the mainstream right—in taking on board the 'problems' identified by the FN in an attempt to win back voters. Increasingly, as the FN came to appeal to both Left and Right (gaining the largest working class vote in the 1995 presidential elections), the Left too was tempted to follow a similar strategy.

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based on a racist rejection of cultural difference, and a distorted static idealisation of French national identity. The idea of an inherited superiority is (at least) implicit.

<sup>149</sup> See also Gallou and Jalkh, *Etre Français cela se mérite*. Despite the title of the book, the authors proposed that *droit du sang* be the major determinant of nationality; those who 'merit' and request citizenship may also be considered, but no dual citizenship is allowed.

<sup>150</sup> See FN 1997 electoral program, *Le Grand Changement*. Citizenship and naturalisation policies are set out under the heading of 'Organising the return of immigrants'.

<sup>151</sup> Not to be confused with the neo-liberal New Right—free-market, Thatcherite thinkers—prevalent in the UK and USA at this time.

<sup>152</sup> The concept of 'cultural hegemony' as based on the work of Antonio Gramsci, is influential here. As Gill Seidel notes, the New Right in France explicitly refer to a '*gramscisme de droite*'. See her 'Culture, Nation and "Race"'; also Minkenberg, 'The New Right in France and Germany'.

<sup>153</sup> The basis for the 'Appeal to Vigilance' by '40 Intellectuals' in an open letter to *Le Monde*, July 13 1993, in which they refuse 'all collaboration' with the networks of the far right and condemn the 'involuntary complicity' of writers and publishers, especially those from the Left, for giving their work and ideas an outlet. *Krisis*, a journal edited by de Benoist, has published articles by prominent intellectuals such as Olivier Mongin, Bruno Etienne, Max Gallo, and Jacques Julliard—none of whom could be regarded as having any connections to the far—or the 'new'—right. The intellectuals' appeal,

The forging of a Republican consensus around citizenship reform may suggest a the formation of a 'Front' against the extreme right. The particulars of the citizenship legislation, however, suggest that the ideas of the FN had filtered into the policy-making arena. In the general 'immigration' debate, as noted in the previous chapter, leadership on the Left has used the language of a 'threshold of tolerance'.<sup>154</sup> Socialist PM Cresson chartered planes to expel illegal migrants. Relating specifically to citizenship, the Right has also shown some partiality towards an ethnically informed model: Giscard d'Estaing (UDF) has openly called for citizenship based on *jus sanguinis*. In an article entitled 'Immigration or Invasion', he called for France to return to the 'traditional conception' of the acquisition of French nationality—that of *droit du sang*—indicating that his understanding of French traditions called on a vastly different collective memory than that set out in the major 'Republican' texts.<sup>155</sup> More recently, former PM Balladur (RPR) has called for the setting up of a Commission to discuss 'national preference'—the central policy platform of the FN.<sup>156</sup> The alliances between the UDF and the FN in the 1998 regional elections—in five of the regions—to maintain / gain power, also points to a willingness to work with FN representatives, to provide them with seats of power and, at the very least, to tolerate the airing of FN ideology.<sup>157</sup>

### Conclusion

The new citizenship legislation qualifying *droit du sol* came into force on 1 January 1994. Many have commented that it appears paradoxical that the change should have occurred after thirteen years of a Socialist presidency and a government which came to office on a promise of a 'new citizenship', a new deal for France's immigrant community.<sup>158</sup> Yet national identity was at the heart

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plus responses, are published in *Telos*, nos. 98-99, Winter 1993-Fall 1994.

<sup>154</sup> For examples of political leaders 'borrowing' from the language and themes of the far right, see Wieviorka, *La France raciste*, pp.342-3.

<sup>155</sup> Article entitled 'Immigration ou invasion' in *Figaro-Magazine*, 21 September 1991; see also critical comment in *Le Monde*, 21 September 1991.

<sup>156</sup> In response, and linking such proposals to the influence of the extreme right, see an open letter to Balladur published in *Libération*, 22 June 1998, calling on citizens to disavow the ex-PM. It begins: 'We ... viscerally attached to the founding principles of the French Republic, in particular equality, refuse all political and semantic drifts which banalise the National Front, its theses, its leaders'.

<sup>157</sup> For a detailed breakdown of the regional results see *Le Monde*, 17 March 1998. The FN formed the largest single party in Alsace, Franche Comté, PACA, and Rhône Alpes, winning 275 seats with over 15 per cent of the overall vote. Both RPR and UDF national leaderships banned alliances with the FN; the five UDF regional presidents who did so were expelled from the party. This stance contributed to a split within the parties of the mainstream right. For an overview of the affair and subsequent split, see *Libération*, 17 March and 26 March 1998. On the role of the FN, see Downs, 'The Front National as kingmaker'.

<sup>158</sup> See for example Shields, 'Immigration Politics in Mitterrand's France'.

of the debates over citizenship reform: at issue was the maintenance of a particular concept—a 'French model'—of nationhood. Furthermore, for all the emphasis on political-voluntarism, the reforms incorporated national-assimilationist aspects and arguments. This fits with the discourse of integration discussed in the previous chapter and also provides a fertile milieu for the politics of the FN.

The ideal of French Republican citizenship calls on a selective historical interpretative framework: most clearly, as a continuation of the processes of the Third Republic—however flawed—with reference to both the Revolutionary and Napoleonic inheritances. It continually invokes specific events: the 'Alsace-Lorraine' situation (stressing voluntary adhesion rather than ethno-cultural understanding); the separation of Church and State following the Dreyfus Affair; and the linear development of citizenship laws. In short, the tradition of citizenship is inclusive, integrative, and particularly French, and the narrative follows an intrinsic teleological logic. Such a reading forgets other aspects of French history and underplays the assimilative aspects of citizenship.

The attempts to change citizenship laws in the 1980s and early '90s illustrate first, a renewed focus on 'ethnic' criteria for nationality and citizenship in France, driven by the extreme right and influential within the mainstream right. As noted, the strengthening of FN influence and the development of the national identity debates in the years between the two attempts enabled an environment favourable to citizenship reform. Moreover, rising support for the FN made the mainstream right anxious to win back voters lost to the extreme right. The reforms demonstrated that culture matters in the public sphere: the question of cultural integration of immigrants and the rejection of cultural pluralism was at the heart of the process driving the change from the Right, albeit swathed in Republican rhetoric. The idea that a dominant political understanding of nationhood and citizenship would hold sway proved to be mistaken, at least in the short term. The culturally-determined logic of the FN's policies on immigration and citizenship was tacitly taken on board in the process of citizenship reform.

Second, and paradoxically, the reforms also illustrate the continuing hold of Republican ideals (even 'myths') of the consciously chosen, voluntaristic form of national belonging, in the stress on the need for new citizens to claim their right to citizenship. 'Republican values' were used by both Left and Right to justify the changes. The fact that the laws were repealed when Socialists returned to power indicates that the Left holds to a 'political' reading of the nation, reasserting the link between place of birth and national belonging, and 'colour-blind' policies. It does not,

however, indicate an acceptance of pluralism. This fits with the return to integration '*à la française*' seen in the politics of immigrant integration.

There are further issues which played into the hands of the extreme right. The reaffirmation of 'Republican citizenship', accompanied by the universalist ideal of integration—with a total rejection of ethnic differentiation as basis for policy-making—is problematic. It conceals two facts at odds with the rapidly changing situation. First, it is totally embedded in the framework of the nation-state: nation-building is the vital ingredient, despite the complex and contradictory movements involved in globalisation / interdependence / regionalism. In a period of increasing European integration, and voting rights for EU citizens in France, it is unclear how the model will adapt. Second, its rhetoric of integration does not contribute towards the 'inclusion' of second- and third-generation immigrants, and does not deal with the issues raised by cultural difference, particularly within the so-called neutral public sphere and secular state apparatus. The extreme right can draw on such challenges to bolster its messages of threatening change that is not being successfully managed by the mainstream parties. EU citizenship in particular may be manipulated as culturally-based category: a common European 'civilisation' along Huntington lines.

Exclusion from the one and indivisible Republic, from the national community on the basis of descent was granted a temporary basis in legislation in 1994. While integrative mechanisms no longer function as they did in the past, for a variety of reasons, forcing young French people of immigrant origin to request citizenship does not appear an effective response to the problems of exclusion, or a caricatured multiculturalism, or the successes of the FN. Moreover, it is certainly devalued, emptied of its more idealistic content, when pushed through parliament alongside limitations on immigrant rights. The reversion to automatic granting of citizenship according to the principle of *droit du sol* sets the historical narrative of French citizenship 'back on track'. Republican integration—equal individual citizens—continues to be promoted, while the multicultural model—understood as leading to segregation based on ethnicity—is rejected.

At the same time, the simple binary oppositions of universalism—specificity, assimilation—segregation, are no longer applicable.<sup>159</sup> Promoting the former in a society which is clearly no longer uniform and is undergoing a crisis of national identity leaves the ground open to the populist and racist policies of the FN. Hugh Seton-Watson once wrote that a nation exists

<sup>159</sup> See Silverman's criticism of the binary oppositions at the heart of French 'national identity' discourse in *Deconstructing the nation*, pp.1-9; also, his critique of universalism and assimilation, concepts which he argues are dependant on 'ethno-centric ideas of inferior-superior cultures', p.25.

'when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation or behave as if they formed one'.<sup>160</sup> Support for the ideas and politics of Jean-Marie Le Pen's party in the 1980s and '90s suggests that there is a sizeable minority who do not believe that immigrants and their children form part of the French nation. Changes to the nationality code only reinforce this perception.

The role of the FN in fostering a more exclusive model of nationhood and citizenship is significant: both the 1994 reforms, and the move away from a new citizenship—and more broadly, a politics of difference—must be interpreted in light of its political successes. The approaches of the mainstream parties may have been conditioned by an underlying set of ideas and practices with a long and dominant tradition in French thought; however they were also reactions to the relative success of the FN and its ideology: one which called on a quite different set of ideas. Thus the dangerous compromises on the Right, accompanied by a tougher line on immigration and the questioning of citizenship acquisition for (culturally-different) migrants; and on the Left, a retreat to 'Republican values' and the acceptance of a certain logic of citizenship reform.

These changes are in part a reaction to the weakening of the nation-state nexus, to the tendency to 'unbind' the political-cultural. They also reflect a desire to hold onto the ideal of a unitary nation represented by the state. Nationality and citizenship have been bound tightly together within the French nation-state: the synthesis of these constitutive elements is now being reaffirmed in France despite the seemingly contradictory arguments which were used to underpin changes to the nationality code in the early 1990s. At the same time, not only were the internal facets of nationhood being questioned, but also the external: in particular, the impact of European integration as institutionalised within the EU. The debate surrounding integration and sovereignty, which reached a peak with the MTEU referendum in 1992, illustrate a further set of challenges to the traditional 'political' nation, a democratic polity of equal and sovereign citizens. In this arena, again, the FN's 'defence of the nation' could take centre stage. The following chapters will examine the politics of European integration in France with particular reference to the politics of national sovereignty and the role of the FN.

<sup>160</sup> Seton-Watson, *Nations and States*, p.5.

## Chapter 6 National Sovereignty, European Integration and Globalisation: the Challenge of Supranational Integration

The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the Nation. No body, no individual may exercise authority which does not proceed expressly from it  
Article 3 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen

Title I of the French Constitution is entitled 'Of sovereignty' (*De la Souveraineté*). It asserts that national sovereignty belongs to the people and that political parties must respect the principles of national sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> This position, dating back to 1789, remains a strongly held principle that underpins the understanding of the French nation as a primarily political community. However this understanding of the sovereign nation, in control of internal affairs and external policy, has been eroded by forces of globalisation and regionalism. It is the process of post-war European integration and the development of the European Union, above all, that have called into question the principle of national sovereignty.<sup>2</sup>

The development of a European level of governance with overriding powers, with the recognition of the primacy of European law over national law, is at odds with the French understanding of the nation as a sovereign entity: indeed, 'Nothing is more contrary to the French tradition of the sovereign nation-state'.<sup>3</sup> If the political nation is the major foundation for belonging, as is commonly asserted—Mongin claims, for example, that it is difficult for a (French) Republican spirit to conceive that identity be based on any other community of belonging other than a political nation<sup>4</sup>—then this too is on shaky foundations.

This chapter examines the challenge posed by the EU to the political understanding of French nationhood, which has contributed to the appeal of the FN's 'defence of the nation' mantra. It analyses the transformation of the nation-state in relation to the process of European integration, in particular the 'pooling' or 'surrender' of sovereignty to the Union, and the ways in which this process may be contested by '*souverainiste*' groups on both sides of the political spectrum. For the far right, the EU has become a central issue. The FN's call for a '*Europe des patries*' echoes

<sup>1</sup> Article 2 sets out the following attributes of nationhood: 'The language of the Republic is French. The national emblem is the tricolour flag, blue, white, red. The national anthem is the *Marseillaise*. The slogan of the Republic is Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Its principle is: government of the people, by the people and for the people'.

<sup>2</sup> When the Maastricht Treaty on European Union came into force (1 November 1993), the European Community (EC) was incorporated within a new overarching entity, the EU. In general, the term EU will be used in the post-MTEU context and EC before that time. It should be noted that there is still a legal distinction between the EC and EU, especially in relation to the policies of the first 'Community' pillar of the MTEU, and the second and third 'Union' pillars. For further details of the structure and content of the Treaty, see Chapter 8, pp.277-82.

<sup>3</sup> D.Chagnollaud (ed.), *La Vie politique en France* (Political Life in France), Paris, Seuil, 1993, p.199.

<sup>4</sup> Mongin, 'Retour sur une controverse'. See Introduction, note 12.



the Gaullist stance and its attack on the EU as presaging 'the death of the Republic' echoes some left-wing critiques. Overall the FN's rhetoric of 'French survival' in response to the increasing powers and reach of the EU has found considerable support.

The question of integration has split the mainstream parties. Long-established cleavage lines along the Left-Right axis have been overridden as significant strands within the major political parties have taken up the sovereignty theme. As with the issue of immigrant integration, divisions have not necessarily fallen along traditional cleavage lines, as given form in the political party system. The 1999 European Parliament (EP) elections were notable in France for the fact that the main battles took place *within* the main established groupings, not between Left and Right.<sup>5</sup> The emergent new cleavage line—that of the nation (and in this case, the response to the erosion of nation-state power)—has split both Left and Right and strengthened the message of the staunchly anti-EU extreme right. Further, as opposition to the EU has not been confined to the extremes, once again a dominant FN theme has found resonance within the mainstream political class, and support amongst the electorate. This suggests that the concept of the sovereign nation retains a hold on the popular imaginary, and it has also allowed the FN some respectability in its anti-EU campaigns and via EP representation.

Despite France being a leading member of the Union, declining levels of support for the EU in France are discernible from the end of the 1980s. This phenomenon could be observed across most of the EU member states, but was particularly acute in France.<sup>6</sup> By the mid-1990s, French support for the EU was amongst the lowest of all EU member states. This shift relates in part to major changes in the international and European scene, most notably the end of the Cold War, the unification of Germany and the extension of EU powers. However it also is a consequence of the renewed focus on nationhood and national identity.

The inclusion of asylum and immigration policy in the EU's 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam highlights the extent to which core features of nation-state sovereignty are challenged by the EU. The right to determine who may (legally) enter and remain in the country is being shifted to the European level.<sup>7</sup> As with the perceived challenges to nation and identity arising from immigration and the settlement of ethnic minorities in France, the EU forms a strong challenge to the nation politically understood—i.e. the sovereign nation-state as the basis for a democratic

<sup>5</sup> For example, the breakaway *souverainiste* grouping on the Right, led by Pasqua and de Villiers, won thirteen seats—more than either of the other, pro-European, mainstream right parties. For electoral statistics, see EP web site at <<http://www.europarl.eu.int>>. See also analyses of the 1999 elections in *WEP*, Vol. 23 (1), January 2000. The elections and anti-EU parties will be examined in detail in Chapter 8.

<sup>6</sup> The fall in support is documented by D.Cameron, 'National Interest, the Dilemmas of European Integration, and Malaise' in Keeler and Schain (eds), *Chirac's Challenge*, pp.325-82. For detailed breakdown of the figures, see the European Commission's *Eurobarometer*.

<sup>7</sup> Moreover, an EU-level visa policy may be decided by qualified majority voting from 2004.



polity. The FN contributes to the nationalist camp that opposes further 'pooling' or (in their terms) 'abandonment' of sovereignty. The central point of reference in this debate is, again, that of the nation: in this case, French nationhood as embodied in the political ideal of a community of self-governing citizens.

Guyomarch identifies a 'polarisation' of public attitudes in France in relation to the EU. He posits that this is due, first, to the increase in the volume and range of EU policies; second, to the increase in EU powers via the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty; and third, to the fact that public and party opposition were given voice in the MTEU referendum.<sup>8</sup>

The force of these explanatory factors hinges on the perceived relocation of sovereignty from the nation-state to the EU, in terms of both the transfer of an increasing range of policies and the accumulation of decision-making powers at the EU level. The fact that the main decision-making body, the Council of Ministers,<sup>9</sup> remains a largely intergovernmental body does not affect the perception (or reality) of the overall movement of powers from the national to the European arena. As Guyomarch suggests, the role of the MTEU referendum in France was crucial in transmitting such issues to the broader public, contributing to a shift away from the 'passive consensus' which had largely characterised the public attitude towards European integration up till this time.

Although the major parties and the political elite have largely agreed to the integration process, this message has not been clearly passed on to the electorate. References to the nation-state remain central to national rhetoric: just two weeks after the birth of the euro in January 1999, Prime Minister Jospin strongly supported the continuing centrality of nationhood in a televised address to the country and in a longer article in *Le Monde*. He mounted a defence of the nation-state 'as guarantor of equality and solidarity between citizens ... a nation proud of its history that refuses to be dissolved'.<sup>10</sup> What to make of such a pronouncement at this time? It is fair to argue that such an assertion underplays the importance of the EU and, arguably, attributes capabilities and powers to the nation-state for which is it only now partly accountable. The changed circumstances—articulated by the euro-sceptic *souverainistes* and traditional Gaullist defenders of the nation-state—are not effectively transmitted by those politicians and parties favourable to integration, who continue to use the language of the primacy of the nation-state. Medium-term, the traditional conception of the sovereign nation-state will have to be modified. Territorial integrity is already compromised; major political decisions are no longer taken independently by the national government; and national citizenship has also been affected. No

<sup>8</sup> See Guyomarch et al., *France in the European Union*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998, pp.94-102.

<sup>9</sup> Since the Treaty of Amsterdam, now formally renamed the Council of the European Union.

<sup>10</sup> See 'Lionel Jospin: 'Le tournant "national"', *Le Monde*, 14 January 1999, p.1. Jospin describes the nation as 'an unshakeable reality, the beating heart of democracy'.

amount of Republican language can disguise the fundamental challenges posed by the EU to the concept of France as a political nation. Linked to such challenges are the debates surrounding the nature and effect of globalisation, both in relation to the region and the nation-state.

These debates are couched in terms of sovereignty and nation, and this plays into the hands of the FN, whose call for the protection of nation is amplified. Part of the success of the FN is based upon the fact that it has been able not only to appeal to a culturally-determined view of the nation, but also to defend the nation as a politically sovereign unit. This has been particularly advantageous as levels of scepticism towards globalisation and European integration increased in France in the 1990s.

### **The EU in context: nation, region, and globalisation**

Classically the French nation has been viewed as a territorial-political community, as discussed in Chapter 3. France has been depicted as the 'model political nation'. The political and the national have been closely linked since 1789, and the concept of the nation as a sovereign, political community is rooted in the legacy of the Enlightenment and the Revolution. Article 3 of The Rights of Man and Citizen asserted that 'sovereignty resides in the nation'; the current constitution states that 'national sovereignty belongs to the people, who shall exercise this sovereignty through their representatives and by means of referendums. No section of the people, nor any individual, may arrogate to themselves or himself the exercise thereof'.<sup>11</sup> The French Revolution gave birth to the idea of the political nation as a source of sovereignty, legitimacy and democracy. The preamble to the current constitution restates the attachment of the French people to the 'principles of national sovereignty'.

The idea of the nation as a self-governing body of citizens also highlights the close tie between nation and state: in France, the two are densely intertwined, if not indissoluble. The nation-state is the inevitable corollary of the understanding of the nation as a sovereign political body. The French state has developed as a strongly centralised and hierarchical unit, accorded sovereign status, and acts as a locus of identification. The role of the state as an 'instrument of national unity' is a core element in French political culture.<sup>12</sup>

The EU, on the other hand, seeks (variously) to 'transcend' the nation-state; to 'pool' sovereignty; and to achieve an 'ever closer union of the peoples of Europe'.<sup>13</sup> How may this be reconciled with the 'classic' French understanding of nationhood, incorporating both the sovereign will of the people as well as the strong, centralised state? The fact that the EU has

<sup>11</sup> Article 3 of the French constitution, translated and reproduced in Safran, *The French Polity*, p.332.

<sup>12</sup> A.Cole, *French Politics and Society*, London, Prentice Hall, 1998, p.45.

developed a strong liberal 'free-market' orientation, embracing competition, deregulation and privatisation, also directly challenges the strong tradition of state involvement in the economy: those of *étatisme* and *dirigisme*,<sup>14</sup> as well as the ability of the state to continue its role of 'provider'.<sup>15</sup> The antipathy towards the development of 'liberal Europe' is not confined to the Left but is criticised across the spectrum as antithetical to the French model. The massive strike action in the Autumn of 1995, attracting much support amongst the general public, was described as a French revolt against liberal Europe,<sup>16</sup> and set within a more general critique of deregulatory global liberalism and of the *pensée unique*.<sup>17</sup>

This critique is accompanied by the acknowledgment that traditional forms of state involvement need to be rethought. However neither Right nor Left has provided an explanatory framework or set of policies which admit liberal economic and social policies and explain how France should respond effectively to meet the new challenges.<sup>18</sup> Hence, in part, the danger of the populist messages from the far right—and the attraction of the 'sovereignty' strand of the Gaullist Right and the Jacobin Left.

Before looking in more detail at the participation of France in the post-war European integration project, some examination of the concept of sovereignty is in order. While often used to describe a 'given' state of affairs, there is no one accepted definition of the term; moreover, it is being both reshaped and reconceptualised in the modern globalised, arguably post-national, world. This analysis will restrict itself to the reconsideration of state sovereignty—in France, conceptualised as the embodiment of the sovereign will of the people or nation—and proceed to examine the effects of European integration on nation-state sovereignty.

### *Sovereignty: the global challenge*

William Wallace states squarely that 'no government in Europe remains sovereign in the sense understood by diplomats or constitutional lawyers half a century ago'.<sup>19</sup> Certainly, it is uncontroversial to assert that the sovereignty of the nation-state has been challenged and

<sup>13</sup> The founding Treaty of the European Economic Community, signed in Rome in 1957, refers to 'an ever closer union of the peoples of Europe' in the preamble: this formula is retained in the later treaties.

<sup>14</sup> Central traditions in French economic development—see Safran, *The French Polity*, pp.25-31. See also Rosanvallon's history of the state in France, *L'État en France*, in particular part IV, as a regulator.

<sup>15</sup> Rosanvallon, *L'État en France*, part III, 'La Providence' (Welfare).

<sup>16</sup> See 'La grande révolte française contre l'Europe libéral' (The great French revolt against liberal Europe), *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 1996.

<sup>17</sup> See the analysis by R.Mouriaux and F.Sublieu, 'Les grèves françaises de l'automne 1995' (The French strikes of Autumn 1995), *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 4 (3), 1996, pp.299-306. They describe the protestors as 'rejecting the economic jungle' and claiming decent public services and social security for all.

<sup>18</sup> V.Schmidt, 'Economic Policy, Political Discourse and Democracy in France', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 15 (2), Spring 1997, pp.37-48.

<sup>19</sup> W.Wallace, 'The Sharing of Sovereignty: The European Paradox', *Political Studies*, Vol. 47, 1999, pp.503-21.

reconceptualised.<sup>20</sup> French political scientist Blandine Kriegel sets up a threefold conception of sovereignty: external independence; internal coherence; and the supremacy of law.<sup>21</sup> This is echoed in conventional theories of sovereignty that distinguish between internal and external sovereignty (meaning internal supremacy and external equality). Both cases refer to a supreme national political and legal authority.<sup>22</sup> In each of Kriegel's three areas, the EU has had far-reaching effects on the substance of member state sovereignty.<sup>23</sup> However, it is not new to assert that sovereignty has been eroded, and that critical processes are at work that render the sovereign nation-state unviable. Before examining the ways in which the EU has eroded these areas of external, internal and legal national supremacy, I will briefly overview existing critiques of sovereignty that influence the French debate.

Critiques of sovereignty have been argued on moral, analytical and empirical grounds.<sup>24</sup> It is within the final set of critiques—the practical/empirical—that the most far-reaching changes have occurred over the past decades, and that the strongest voices of opposition have been voiced in France. The empirical argument holds that state sovereignty has become increasingly irrelevant in a world in which, first, power is increasingly fragmented,<sup>25</sup> and second, the divide between formal (*de jure*) sovereignty and effective (*de facto*) sovereignty is widening.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> On the rethinking of sovereignty from a variety of perspectives, see for example J. Camilleri and J. Falk, *The End of Sovereignty? The Politics of a Shrinking and Fragmenting World*, Aldershot, E. Elgar, 1992; D. Held, *Political Theory and the Modern State*, Cambridge, Polity, 1989; R.B.J. Walker, 'State sovereignty and the Articulation of Political Space/Time', *Millennium*, Vol. 20 (3), 1991, pp.445-62. On the historical development of the concept of sovereignty—as a concept which accompanied the rise of the national European state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Camilleri and Falk, *The End of Sovereignty?*, pp.15-31.

<sup>21</sup> See B. Kriegel, *The State and the Rule of Law*, trans. M. Le Pain and J. Cohen, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1995, pp.29-32.

<sup>22</sup> See F. Hinsley, *Sovereignty*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986; M. Williams, 'Rethinking Sovereignty' in E. Kofman and G. Youngs (eds), *Globalization in Theory and Practice*, London, Pinter, 1996, pp.109-22. Internal supremacy is increasingly being challenged, e.g. in 1999 Kosovo, where human rights were invoked as overriding traditional notions of territorial sovereignty. While such action remains *ad hoc*, qualified, and contested—and from a French point of view, seen as applicable only to 'others'—it may alter concepts of sovereignty in the future.

<sup>23</sup> In his May 2000 speech in Berlin the German foreign minister Joschka Fischer names the three essential sovereign rights of the modern nation-state—currency, internal security and external security—and notes that the EU (to a greater or lesser extent) has impacted upon all three. See his speech 'Vom Staatenbund zur Föderation—Gedanken über die Finalität der europäischen Integration' (From Confederation to Federation—Thoughts on the Finality of European integration), speech delivered at the Humboldt University, Berlin, 12 May 2000, published at German foreign affairs web site at <[http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/4\\_europa/index.htm](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/4_europa/index.htm)>.

<sup>24</sup> For an overview of these critiques, see Williams, 'Rethinking Sovereignty', pp.112-15.

<sup>25</sup> This relates to a central question posed by theorists of sovereignty: where is the locus of power? See Camilleri and Falk, *The End of Sovereignty?*, p.18. Two other crucial questions concern the relationship between the state and civil society, and the practical or normative limits to 'sovereignty'.

<sup>26</sup> Williams, 'Rethinking Sovereignty'; see also D. Archibugi et al. (eds), *Re-imagining Political Community*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1998, introduction.

The thrust of this argument is that the sovereign power of states has been limited and qualified by an interconnected set of increasingly salient (if not totally new) phenomena.<sup>27</sup> This view implies sovereignty cannot be an 'absolute': rather, it must consist of bundles of rights, which can be limited, qualified—or lost. The wide-ranging and interconnected set of factors at work include international law and treaty obligations;<sup>28</sup> the increasing number of transnational regional bodies; increasing economic and financial interdependence and interconnectedness (in particular the internationalisation of capital); technological advances (particularly in communications and information technology); and the rise of powerful, non-government, transnational actors, in particular large transnational corporations (TNCs).

According to this argument, individual states no longer have the power to act without reference to the outside world in either internal or external affairs. The locus of power and authority is fragmented, and practical constraints on independent action are formidable. The term 'globalisation' has come to cover much of this set of developments.<sup>29</sup> A favoured target of the FN, globalisation has blurred the distinction between internal and external, and undermined territoriality in a process of interconnectedness. A process rather than a phenomenon, globalisation is more than the internationalisation of economic activity and increased interdependence. It involves disembedded economic (and to some extent social / political) activity, which exists above, or beyond, the state. Unhindered by territorial or jurisdictional barriers, it largely escapes governance.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> As Wallace points out, the post-war reconstruction of Europe via the Marshall Plan compromised the notion of sovereignty by attaching conditions to its receipt and allocation. See 'The Sharing of Sovereignty', p.507.

<sup>28</sup> This may however be seen as an aspect of sovereignty in itself, in that the state has freely entered into such international commitments.

<sup>29</sup> Particularly in the fields of production, finance and commerce but also in the movement of people and ideas. See M.Horsman and A.Marshall, *After the nation-state: citizens, tribalism and the new world disorder*, London, Harper Collins, 1994, introduction. Camilleri and Falk refer to technological change as 'probably the most conspicuous symptom and agent of globalization', p.243.

<sup>30</sup> K.Ohmae, *The end of the nation-state: the rise of regional economies*, New York, The Free Press, 1995, lists the four global 'I's which are no longer geographically constrained: investment, industry, IT and individual orientation. The nature and extent of globalisation and its effects on the autonomy of the nation-state are however contested; 'globaloney' coined to express the opposing viewpoint! Those arguing the continued significance of the state include e.g. L.Weiss, *The myth of the powerless state: governing the economy in a global era*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1998; P.Hirst and G.Thompson, *Globalization in Question*, London, Polity, 1996. In a more recent publication Hirst and Thompson foresee the domination of the world economy by a 'triad': US, EU and Japan. See 'The Tyranny of Globalisation: Myth or Reality?' in F.Buelens (ed.), *Globalisation and the Nation-State*, Cheltenham, E.Elgar, 1999, pp.139-78. They conclude that there is no fully integrating 'globalised world economy' but rather an internationalised system 'conditioned by a regional Triadic bloc structure' (p.176). The anti-globalisation argument denies that globalisation is a 'natural' or inevitable phenomenon, and holds that it results in inequality and threatens democracy. A prevalent view in continental Europe—that globalisation should and can be resisted by the state—has led to the term 'globophobia', see e.g. H-P.Martin and H.Schumann, *The Global Trap: the assault on democracy and prosperity*, London, Pluto, 1997. *Le Monde Diplomatique* regularly runs articles critical of and hostile to globalisation and was instrumental in setting up the anti-globalisation network 'attac'. On recent international public manifestations of concern, including the large demonstrations at the 1999 Seattle WTO meeting and the largely French-led

Boundaries, as Camilleri and Falk argue, are central to the traditional model of the nation-state. These include physical boundaries between states, conceptual boundaries that distinguish between the internal and external, and cultural boundaries which distinguish between the 'same' and the 'Other'. Boundaries, or borders, are favoured themes of the extreme right: the maintenance of physical and conceptual boundaries is a crucial element in the FN's protection of a static and essentialised national identity. Globalisation, however, clearly undermines boundaries, and challenges traditional concepts of state sovereignty and nationhood. Although the nation-state remains the central organising concept of international relations, it can no longer effectively lay claim to independent action.<sup>31</sup> The actions of the French state in pursuing regional solutions may be seen as both a reaction and a contribution to the processes of globalisation: an attempt to preserve the optimum national control over economic and political developments while utilising a European arena to play an effective part both in international and domestic policy- and decision-making.

### *Sovereignty: the regional challenge*

The constraints arising from globalisation identified above (fragmentation and the *de jure-de facto* split) concern all three of Kriegel's sovereign features—external independence, internal coherence and supremacy of the law. However it is the process of European integration which has more directly and effectively challenged state sovereignty. Wallace's evaluation ('no government in Europe remains sovereign in the sense understood by diplomats or constitutional lawyers half a century ago') is based on more than the limitations on state sovereignty imposed by globalisation: he is focussing on European countries and assessing the consequences of European regionalism as embodied by the EU.<sup>32</sup> He refers to a 'post-sovereign European order', and depicts the EU as a system where

constitutional independence has been ceded, sovereign equality modified, economic autonomy long since deeply compromised, security managed through an integrated alliance, internal borders opened and external borders managed through a common regime, monetary sovereignty ... [is] shortly to yield to a single currency.<sup>33</sup>

On the one hand, the EU may be seen as a response to globalisation—states acting in concert to assert their common interests. This has been an increasing trend and is especially apparent in

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transnational lobbying to halt negotiations on the MAI, see S.Meunier, 'The French Exception', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79 (4), July-August 2000, pp.104-16.

<sup>31</sup> Susan Strange, who sees a 'retreat' of the state and the rise of transnational actors, argues that International Relations scholars are particularly prone to the 'globaloney' misconception as they are dealing in obsolete or incomplete categories. See her *The Retreat of the State*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

<sup>32</sup> Wallace, 'The Sharing of Sovereignty'.

<sup>33</sup> Wallace, 'The Sharing of Sovereignty', p.518. Nonetheless, he recognises that the nation-state is still the framework for public allegiance despite constraints in meeting the expectations of its citizens.

France. Yet on the other hand, the processes of European integration are propelling the member states of the EU towards a 'post-sovereign' form. In tension with globalisation, regionalism in the EU sharpens and intensifies the constraints on national sovereignty—and, some would argue, democratic control and accountability.

In terms of external independence, the foreign and security policies of France are constrained by a variety of international treaties, and membership of such bodies as NATO and the UN. However the embryonic Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) introduced in the Maastricht Treaty goes further than these international obligations, indicating that a future 'pooling' of sovereignty in this area may be envisaged. The European Commission already acts as the major international trade policy actor, representing the member states of the EU in such fora as the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The EU has also challenged the notion of (theoretical) external sovereign equality through differential representation.<sup>34</sup>

In terms of domestic policy-making and institutions (internal coherence), fragmentation of authority may be identified at a number of levels. In the area of finance and investment, as well as employment, the role of multinationals and the effects of free capital movements (sometimes referred to as 'Anglo-Saxon' capitalism) are relevant internationally. Again, however, the EU member states have agreed to far greater constraints on their domestic policy-making than that implied by globalisation. Policies concerning agriculture and fisheries, and competition and merger control, have been transferred to the European level. Further, with the creation of Economic and Monetary Union in 1999, and the establishment of a European Central Bank (ECB), the EU has taken a major area of decision-making away from the nation-state. A core element of national sovereignty—monetary policy and the issue of coin/notes—has been shifted from a national to a supranational level.

The counter argument—that this shift will allow France a greater say in monetary policy as a result of being part of a powerful monetary bloc—certainly has validity. The 'overarching objective', it has been argued, for French political and monetary authorities on both the mainstream Right and Left, has been 'to end the German monopoly on monetary decision-making in Europe, by achieving equality and sharing monetary leadership'.<sup>35</sup> Associated with this motivation is the desire to establish the euro as an alternative global currency, challenging

<sup>34</sup> Wallace notes the example of the European Commission: the smaller states nominate one Commissioner while the four larger states nominate two. See 'The Sharing of Sovereignty', pp.504-5.

<sup>35</sup> W.Sandholtz, 'Europe's monetary malaise: international institutions and domestic policy commitments', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 22 (3), July 1996, pp.257-73; quote on p.268. He also notes that the French government used the constraints imposed by the exchange rate mechanism in the 1980s and early 1990s as a means to justify anti-inflationary and rigorous domestic economic policies. Later it also justified the policies to meet EMU criteria as being essential, if painful, in order for France to maintain its leading position in Europe, as it needed to participate in EMU from the outset.



the might of the US Dollar.<sup>36</sup> However these arguments in favour of EMU lessen neither the significance nor symbolism of the state giving up this core function. Moreover, the increasing use of qualified majority voting in the Council of Ministers, the EU major decision-making body, further qualifies claims of national sovereignty in a growing number of areas.<sup>37</sup>

In terms of the *de jure* - *de facto* split, however, the EU can counter the effects of globalisation on state sovereignty. The oft-cited example of the *de facto* constraints on state sovereignty (both by those who approve of the declining role of the state, and those who deplore the development) was the failed attempt by the new left-wing government under Mitterrand in 1981-1983 to introduce reflationary policies, including state investment in public works and state companies. Leading to massive capital flight and a drastic weakening of the French economy and currency, the government's chosen economic policies were challenged by forces beyond its control. Such 'socialist' policy programs, it appeared, could no longer be achieved at a national level, and the practical limitations on formal (*de jure*) sovereignty were clearly illustrated.<sup>38</sup> The response of the French government—to pursue a European agenda and join the European Monetary System—is indicative of how the EU is used as a counterweight to globalisation. A second example of the practical constraints on sovereignty is that of Chirac's inability to put his 1995 presidency campaign promises of relaunching the economy, reducing taxes and unemployment, and mending the 'social fracture', into practice. Once elected and in office, Chirac opted for spending cuts and reducing the budget deficit in order to meet the EMU criteria.<sup>39</sup> Here both fragmentation of authority—the EMU criteria set at a European level, albeit with French involvement—and the *de facto* constraints on national policy-making were at play. Again, Chirac turned to 'Europe' as the palliative.

<sup>36</sup> EMU was also seen as a means for France to 'tie Germany in' to a European framework and limit its policy-making choices.

<sup>37</sup> QMV is used in Council voting in a number of areas in the Community or 'first' pillar, as set out in the MTEU. This will be modified as a result of the Treaty of Nice (not yet ratified). At present, 62 of a total 87 votes are required. Member states have a weighted number of votes: France, along with Germany, Italy and the UK, has ten votes. Two developments point to further erosion of national sovereignty within the Council: first, the increase in the number of areas which are subject to QMV (as opposed to consensus); and second, the re-weighting of votes to prepare the institutions for enlargement—a highly controversial element in the 2000 IGC and ensuing Nice Summit negotiations. For further details on EU institutional balance and voting rights, see EU web site; D. Dinan, *Even Closer Union. An Introduction to European Integration*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Boulder, Co., Lynne Rienner, 1999, pp.261-5.

<sup>38</sup> Using the French U-turn to illustrate this point, see for example Horsman and Marshall, *After the nation-state*, xiii, p.97; Strange, *The Retreat of the State*, p.76: she notes in particular the role of finance and technology in the declining role of the state.

<sup>39</sup> Schmidt, 'Economic Policy, Political Discourse and Democracy'. See also G. Ross, 'Europe and the Misfortunes of Mr Chirac', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 15 (2), Spring 1997, pp.3-8. His comment—that the French people 'were entitled to wonder what had happened since the spring of 1995, when they had elected a President pledged to completely different policies'—highlights the fact that although there may be recognition among the mainstream parties of Left and Right that there is no great scope for a distinctively 'national' policy, this is not articulated or effectively explained to the electorate. An editorial in the *Guardian Weekly*, 27 April 1997, following Chirac's calling the early 1997 election, stated that he 'has performed a comprehensive U-turn since he fought and won his last election on pledges to fight



It is apparent that there is a distinct gap between the campaign promises and rhetoric of the political parties on the one hand, and their ability to make domestic 'national' policy on the other. The state as a 'sovereign actor' has been constrained and the traditional interventionist state has been curtailed. France is referred to as 'post-dirigiste'.<sup>40</sup> Other studies interrogate '*la fin du dirigisme*?'—and conclude that major constraints on the state's ability to act have compromised its *dirigiste* capacity.<sup>41</sup> As the title of Levy's article suggests, such developments not only challenge national sovereignty but also contest central features of French national identity.

Finally, Kriegel's third sovereign feature, the supremacy of national law, has long been overridden by the EU. There are three key elements of the EU legal system that corrode the principle of a sovereign national legal order: these are direct applicability, direct effect and primacy.<sup>42</sup> All EU regulations passed are directly applicable: that is, they do not have to be translated into national law to take effect.<sup>43</sup> The direct effect and supremacy of EU law came about due to landmark rulings by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in 1963 and 1964 respectively. They remain the 'two essential rules on which the new legal order rests'.<sup>44</sup> In the *Van Gend v. Loos* case (1963), the ECJ ruled that 'self-sufficient and legally complete' treaty provisions could apply directly to individuals. Hence the principle of the 'direct effect' of primary legislation was established.<sup>45</sup> National courts are obliged to recognise and enforce such provisions.<sup>46</sup> Further ECJ decisions have extended the scope of direct effect so that it now applies to most secondary legislation.

The original treaties made no reference as to the primacy of European or national law, should the two conflict. However in the *Costa v. ENEL* ruling (1964), the ECJ ruled that EC law had supremacy over national law and it has continued to uphold this principle since that time.<sup>47</sup> In

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unemployment and heal France's "social fracture". In this case, one could be justified in arguing that the would-be President had campaigned on deliberately misleading policies.

<sup>40</sup> See for example J. Levy, 'The Crisis of Identity in post-dirigiste France', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 14 (1), Winter 1996, pp.36-44.

<sup>41</sup> See issue of *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 5 (2), 1997; also Schmidt, *From State to Market?*, which examines the deregulation and restructuring of the French economy in the 1990s.

<sup>42</sup> N. Nugent, 'European Union Law and the Courts' in *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1999, pp.245-57.

<sup>43</sup> There are different types of legislation set out in the treaties: regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations and opinions. Regulations are usually adopted by the Commission and are specific and technical in nature, relating to existing EU law. See Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, pp.260-1. In July 2000 the European Court of Justice for the first time imposed a daily fine of EUR 20 000 on a member state (Greece) for failing to implement two directives on waste disposal. See Commission of the European Communities, *Frontier-Free Europe*, July 2000, p.3.

<sup>44</sup> Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, p.303.

<sup>45</sup> Primary legislation comprises the treaties, including the treaties of accessions and treaty amendments. Secondary legislation is passed by the institutions in accordance with the treaties.

<sup>46</sup> Case 26/62, *Van Gend v. Loos*.

<sup>47</sup> Case 6/64, *Costa v. ENEL*. On EC legislation and the role and rulings of the ECJ, see also K. Bradley and A. Sutton, 'European Union and the Rule of Law' in A. Duff et al. (eds), *Maastricht and Beyond*:

the ruling, the Court stated unequivocally that EC law is autonomous, and that 'the Member States have limited their sovereign rights, albeit within limited fields, and have thus created a body of law which binds both their individuals and themselves'.<sup>48</sup> Unlike some international commitments, EC law is both binding and enforceable, and may not be overridden by the national courts or by national legislation.

The supremacy of national law as a sovereign feature, then, is at odds with the EU legal order. While enforcement remains a problem in practice, the principles of both direct effect and supremacy are clearly established and accepted by both the EU member states and the institutions.<sup>49</sup>

### French reactions: globalisation and region

Both globalisation and the European integration process challenge state sovereignty. At the same time, 'Europe' is invoked both as a partial remedy to the effects of globalisation and blamed for eroding the capacities of the nation-state in both internal and external affairs. This tension has enabled supporters of further integration to invoke the 'national interest' at the same time as shifting decision-making to the European level: the EU is a necessary response to the forces and effects of globalisation. However the FN has been able to draw on anti-globalisation sentiment to bolster its message of protecting national identity. It has benefited from the increasing saliency and questioning of globalisation in the 1990s.<sup>50</sup> A contributor to the 1996 issue of *Esprit* devoted to globalisation noted that 'for more than a year, the theme of globalisation has been at the centre of the majority of political debates... but the notion remains confused and rigorous approaches rare'.<sup>51</sup>

Despite some attempts to describe globalisation as benefitting the French economy,<sup>52</sup> it is fair to claim that globalisation is generally not portrayed or viewed in a positive manner in France. If

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*Building the European Union*, London, Routledge, 1994, pp.229-66. Stephen Hall comments that it is now 'an unremarkable and long-established Community law principle that national law, even national constitutional law protecting fundamental rights, must give way to an inconsistent Community law'. See 'Fundamental Rights, National Sovereignty and Europe's New Citizens', p.200.

<sup>48</sup> Case 6/64, *Costa v. ENEL*.

<sup>49</sup> This is despite the fact that the ECJ has been accused by critics of judicial activism and going beyond its original charter 'to ensure that in the interpretation and application of [the treaties] the law is observed', Article 164, EEC Treaty (Treaty of Rome).

<sup>50</sup> This has parallels with the way in which the FN exploited the immigration-identity debates of the 1980s and '90s.

<sup>51</sup> See *Esprit*, no. 226, November 1996: 'Politics and Economy facing the challenge of globalisation'; article by O.Mongin, 'Les tournants de la mondialisation. La bataille des interprétations' (The turning points of globalisation. The battle of interpretations), pp.155-71; quote on p.155

<sup>52</sup> A frequent argument put forward by those more favourable to globalisation—notably in the US media and journals—is that France, as the world's fourth leading exporter, with significant comparative advantages in areas such as telecommunications, transport and aerospace, should welcome the trade and investment opportunities ordered by globalisation. This argument is also seen some official French

not rejected outright, then some qualification of the term is usually seen.<sup>53</sup> In particular, it is associated with economic globalisation—the 'Anglo-Saxon' neo-liberal model of capitalism, and with cultural globalisation—a tool of US cultural hegemony.<sup>54</sup> It tends to be cast as a matter of identity and values—as Sophie Meunier notes, 'the trade debate has been recast as "Anglo-Saxon globalisation" versus the preservation of France's national and cultural values'.<sup>55</sup> Again identity, the catch-cry of the extreme right, is central to a major public debate.

One of the clearest symbols of the critical public attitude were the massive sales of a 1996 publication denouncing neo-liberalism by *Le Monde* literary critic, Viviane Forrester. Entitled *L'Horreur Economique*, it is a frontal attack on economic rationalism, decrying the evils of neo-liberal globalisation and the 'dictatorship of the market'. Its very success indicates the widespread dissatisfaction with the current processes confronting and eroding the powers of the nation-state.<sup>56</sup> Anti-globalisation sentiment is usually voiced alongside a critique of neo-liberalism and the ideology of the 'free market'—accompanying terms include 'ravages', 'unbridled', 'unfettered' and 'savage'. It is perceived as a threat to social cohesion, a contributor to unemployment, an instrument of Anglo-Saxon (or US) domination,<sup>57</sup> and a threat to democracy.

The desire to protect a national cultural identity is part of the generalised rejection of globalisation. The cultural aspect is not new, with long-standing measures in place to protect the French language and cultural output such as film. The obligation to defend national cultural output and identity informed French efforts at the GATT and WTO negotiations to include special dispensations for cultural products. French opposition to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) was also driven by concerns over cultural homogenisation and the

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economic promotional material—see for example *Label-France*, September 1998, on 'Investing in France'. The opening article, 'France, a welcoming land for foreign investments', is indicative of its stance.

<sup>53</sup> For a forceful expression of French aversion to globalisation—the 'new French Resistance'—see Meunier, 'The French Exception'. For examples of qualification, see President Chirac's call for 'controlled globalisation' at the 1996 G7 summit in Lyons, and Prime Minister Jospin's 1998 call for the regulation of globalisation ('*la mondialisation appelle la régulation*') in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 10 September. Jospin asserts the important role of nation-states: 'representatives of the peoples, frameworks for democracy, they must remain the subjects of global reality'.

<sup>54</sup> For a breakdown of globalisation into various categories, see R. Keohane and J. Nye, 'Globalization: What's New? What's Not? (And So What?)', *Foreign Policy*, no. 118, Spring 2000, pp. 104–19. They differentiate between economic, military, environmental, and social-cultural globalism, using globalism to describe the condition ('networks of interdependence at multicontinental distances') and globalisation to denote the processes.

<sup>55</sup> Meunier, 'The French Exception', p. 105.

<sup>56</sup> V. Forrester, *L'Horreur Economique*, Paris, Fayard, 1996. On the effect of Forrester's book, see also review by D. Sassoon, 'Big Fears and Some Ideas', *Political Quarterly*, Vol. 71 (2), April 2000, pp. 246–8. The tendency to stress non-economic and non-technical aspects of change also emerged in the debate on EMU—see the special set of articles in consecutive issues of *Revue du Marché commun et de l'Union européenne*, entitled 'Integrating the Human Factor' (*Intégrer le facteur humain*), nos. 421–424, September, October, November–December 1998 and January 1999.

protection of French culture in the face of the English-speaking, US-led culture and entertainment industries. The French government made a point of sending two (junior) ministers to the anti-globalisation 'social' summit in Porto Allegre as well as two (senior) ministers to the concurrent 2000 Davos summit.<sup>58</sup>

The multi-faceted critique of globalisation rests on a continuing allegiance to the state as the appropriate locus of authority and sovereignty, accompanied by a defence of national identity. It contests the inevitability of globalisation and the retreat of the state, and derides '*la pensée unique*' as misleading and blinkered paradigm.<sup>59</sup> Further, it builds upon the expectation that the state will provide—and that it will continue to play a central role in public life.<sup>60</sup> As Tony Judt points out, with high levels of *exclusion* in France, the state needs to play an important role for reasons of culture, pragmatism and democracy. The strength of the French statist tradition is reaffirmed in this context.<sup>61</sup> The Left needs to 'reconstruct a case for the activist state'; meanwhile the far right—'less timid about invoking the nation-state as the forum for redemptive action'—attracts disaffected voters and remains a danger.<sup>62</sup>

A 1998 initiative to promote the so-called 'Tobin tax'—a tax on international financial dealings—followed the publication of a strongly-worded editorial critique of neo-liberal markets and unregulated financial trading in *Le Monde Diplomatique*.<sup>63</sup> Launched in France as

<sup>57</sup> This is not new: Servan-Schreiber's *Le Défi américain*, Paris, Denoël, 1967, is the forerunner of such concerns.

<sup>58</sup> Noted by Judt, 'The French Difference', *New York Review of Books*, April 12 2001, pp.18-23.

<sup>59</sup> The label '*pensée unique*' ('official doctrine') is directed (critically) at globalisation—see Judt, 'The Social Question'. It has also been picked up by the FN—see for example the 1996 publication of Samuel Maréchal's *Ni droite, ni gauche, ... Français! Contre la pensée unique*, Paris, Alizés, 1996. The FN uses the label to deride all mainstream parties as part of its positioning as the only party offering an alternative politics.

<sup>60</sup> See Judt, 'The Social Question'. Judt argues that the 'regulatory providential state' is all that stands between citizens and unpredictable economic change, p.110. He claims that the main issue facing Europe today is not unemployment but social crisis, or exclusion, which he sets at 30 per cent of the active population. Many are partial members, at best, of the national community. This is a political (not economic) problem for the Left, which needs to focus on new policies to address the issue.

<sup>61</sup> On the statist tradition as a continuing theme in French history and politics, see Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*, in particular Chapter 6, 'The Strengths and Limits of the *Étatiste* Tradition', pp.151-77. See also the influential work of Raymond Aron: he argued that the nation-state—as a political and a cultural community—was the most appropriate forum for the exercise of political and economic power. *Peace and war: a theory of international relations*, trans. R.Howard and A.Baker Fox, Garden City, N.Y., Anchor Press, 1973. The division of the world into sovereign states he saw as long-lasting—outliving capitalism. Judt refers to his 'cool realism'; although not in a theoretical *realpolitik* sense, see *The Burden of Responsibility*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998, pp.156-64.

<sup>62</sup> Judt, 'The Social Question', p.117.

<sup>63</sup> Ignacio Ramonet's editorial—'Disarming the Markets'—was published in the December 1997 issue of *Le Monde Diplomatique*. It targets the globalisation of investment capital as destroying the power of nation-states to uphold democracy and guarantee the welfare of their citizens; criticises the WTO as an undemocratic organisation; and suggests the introduction of the Tobin tax to offset the negative effects of unregulated capital movements.

'Attac' (Association for the taxation of financial transactions for the aid of citizens) it bases its policies on an anti-globalisation and anti-free market agenda.<sup>64</sup>

The lead article of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, July 1999, is representative of the globalisation critique from the Left. Under the headline 'State sovereignty under threat', the 'globalising designs of the WTO' are rejected as being 'founded on the primacy of the markets' and guarded by 'irresponsible and complicit' international organisations, led by the WTO.<sup>65</sup> The MAI is described as a 'scandalous treaty', and Leon Brittan, the former EU Commissioner in charge of trade negotiations, as aiming for a world governed by free trade. The December 1999 lead article labels globalisation as an intrinsically destructive phenomenon, one which results in 'mass unemployment, underemployment, precarious employment and exclusion', 'fundamentally an American phenomenon'.<sup>66</sup> In a parliamentary debate on the (then) forthcoming Seattle WTO conference, only one voice was raised in unqualified support for open markets: that of *Démocratie libérale* deputy, Laurent Dominati—who was also the only deputy not to criticise the US.<sup>67</sup>

A more measured, but still pointed critique is contained in Jospin's 1998 article in *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Here unregulated processes of globalisation are critically dismissed, and capitalism described as 'instable'. Jospin affirms that the state has an important role in regulating the economic sphere: 'The market cannot exist without the state ... [there can be] no healthy economy without a solid state'.<sup>68</sup> National polities are imperative, he argues, not to deny globalisation and competition, but to regulate them. Moreover, as the peoples' representatives and the framework for democracy, nation-states must remain actors in the international arena.

An open letter to the (social-democratic) leaders of Europe from a PS MEP, published in *Libération*, follows a similar line. Asking for a more 'social' Europe, the letter denounces globalisation, claiming that Europeans have had enough of paying a high price for this 'mondialisation sans règle' of deregulation and social dumping.<sup>69</sup> Globalisation is linked, then, with unemployment. For example, Hoover's decision to relocate from Burgundy to Scotland—

<sup>64</sup> Details of Attac are available on its web site at <<http://www.attac.org/france/indexen.htm>>. The Tobin tax proposes that international financial transactions be taxed at 0.1 per cent. Cassen is hopeful that the French government will promote such measures in the near future. See 'France wants a global tax', *France Soir*, 28 June 2000. Attac's leadership includes Ramonet and Cassen (President) (from *Le Monde Diplomatique*), Susan George and Viviane Forrester.

<sup>65</sup> Article by S. George, President of the Paris-based 'Globalisation Observatory'.

<sup>66</sup> Ramonet, 'The Year 2000', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 1999.

<sup>67</sup> See report in *Le Monde*, 27 October 1999. There were thirty deputies present.

<sup>68</sup> Jospin, 'La crise mondiale et nous', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 10 September 1998.

<sup>69</sup> M-N. Lienemann, 'Lettre ouverte à Tony, Lionel, Gerhard et les autres ...', *Libération*, 26 October 1998.

hundreds of 'French' jobs being lost in the process—was derided as the result of 'savage liberalism' by (then) Prime Minister Bérégovoy.<sup>70</sup>

In the same way that the French model of immigrant integration is set up in opposition to, and superior to, the Anglo-Saxon multicultural model, so the French *dirigiste*-statist tradition is defended against the inferior Anglo-Saxon neo-liberal model. While this process involves stereotyping and caricaturing a complex and diverse set of policies and attitudes, it draws on a particular understanding of nationhood that remains potent. This partly accounts for the reason why the proposed 'Third Way', which attempts to respond to the pressures of global capitalism on social democratic polities, has found little support in France.

French socialist leadership has reacted coolly to the proposed 'Third Way' of other socialist / social-democratic parties that have accepted the politics of a market economy, if not a market society. Jospin has held—at least in theory—to the 'French model' that stresses the role of the state. At the 1997 European socialist congress, he reiterated the view that the nation-state remain the central point of reference, that it is the basis for democracy and the framework for solidarity—rejecting a market-led rationale for Europe.<sup>71</sup>

Paradoxically, one of the results of this rejection of neo-liberalism and affirmation of the national in France has been to strengthen the support for a united Europe as an economic competitor to Japan and the US: the third pillar of the economic 'triad' dominating the world economy. The rationale for increased integration, then, is partly based on the fear of globalisation. The EU is also invoked as a protective shield for national cultural differences: Jacques Attali expresses this clearly: in the face of globalisation, 'small nations must unite with their neighbours to achieve a critical mass ... the EU is an excellent example of such a construction, one that protects some specific societal differences, such as the rural way of life, the health system, the urban heritage, the diversity of languages'.<sup>72</sup> At the same time, the EU itself is a target of criticism when it is perceived to be following a neo-liberal agenda implicit in

<sup>70</sup> See Horsman and Marshall, *After the nation-state*, p.210.

<sup>71</sup> See 'Les socialismes entre l'Europe et l'Etat-nation' (Socialisms between Europe and the nation-state), *Le Monde*, 14 June 1997. The article refers to Tony Blair as being 'imprisoned' in a typically British vision of an EU structured around the single market and free trade. Notably, Jospin did not contribute to the joint Schröder-Blair 'Third Way / Neue Mitte' (New Centre) document, his attitude described as 'cool in public, mocking in private', *Guardian Weekly*, 9 May 1999. Ignacio Ramonet in *Le Monde Diplomatique* refers scathingly to German and British writings on the Third Way (Hombach and Giddens respectively) as 'catalogues of renunciation and renegeing'—see his 'Social Democracy betrayed', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 1999. The Blair-Schröder document is published on the UK Labour party web site at <www.labour.org.uk/>.

<sup>72</sup> J. Attali, 'The Crash of Western Civilisation: The Limits of the Market and Democracy', *Foreign Policy*, no. 107, Summer 1997, pp.54-64. Attali, an economist, was special advisor to Mitterrand for ten years; and from 1990-1993 President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. This is a mainstream realist perspective widespread amongst French foreign policy practitioners and many analysts, as seen in Védérine's *Les Cartes de la France*. Védérine was also close to Mitterrand as his foreign policy advisor over fourteen years, and draws on the work of Kissinger.

the French understanding of globalisation—for example opening markets, promoting competition, deregulation and the privatisation of state-owned companies, and in particular, assessing the 'legality' of state subsidies to business.

Popular attitudes and political approaches towards European integration, then, reflect both an anxiety over the surrender of sovereignty (voluntary or otherwise) and a desire for the nation-state to retain powers not only in the areas of defence and foreign policy (formerly referred to as 'high politics'), but also at a domestic economic level ('low politics'), including the desire for state protection of the welfare of its citizens. Opposition to 'Europe' has also emanated from a perhaps nostalgic vision of the strong and independent nation-state—France as a powerful world actor, harking back to Gaullist visions of *grandeur* and *rayonnement*. But it has also, and more powerfully, been voiced against the loss of state powers in domestic affairs, particularly when economic decisions have not been shifted to another level of governance but left to the dynamics of the free market and competition.<sup>73</sup> As Bourdieu argued, the nationalist extreme right can profit from the disintegrative effects of neo-liberal policy.<sup>74</sup> It can exploit the critiques of neo-liberalism, using its nationalist rhetoric to criticise the EU and the 'free-market' and drawing on powerful understandings of nationhood to bolster its message.

Opposition to European integration coexists with a justification for Europe as a 'bulwark' against globalising trends which threaten national interests and identity. This complicates the debate on political nationhood, sovereignty and the EU. Overall, however, it has the effect of both 'nation' and 'identity' being central themes in the debate. Further, it permits the FN to present itself as a legitimate defender of national sovereignty and identity as it prosecutes its anti-EU politics.

### *The challenge of the EU: four national concerns*

European integration poses two major sets of challenges to the French understanding of nationhood as set out in Chapter 3. The first set incorporates a dual challenge to the political-territorial idea of the nation, with the development of a supranational level of governance impinging on French sovereignty and the decreasing significance of intra-EU borders, including the abolition of national border controls. The second set concerns the construction and

<sup>73</sup> For a democratic and social critique, see for example the work of Pierre Bourdieu, *Contre-feux*, Paris, Liber-Raisons d'Agir, 1998; translated as *Acts of Resistance*. He argued against the 'inevitability' of globalisation and neo-liberalism, and called for the building of a different, 'social', Europe where human rights and workers' rights are protected, noting the enabling role of the nation-state in this context. See also 'A Reasoned Utopia and Economic Fatalism', *New Left Review*, no. 227, January-February 1998, pp.125-30. Here he argued against 'radical capitalism' and the rule of the markets—against, then, the economic fatalism of the title.

<sup>74</sup> The emergence of neo-fascism is due in part to neo-liberalism's effects: from the concentration of wealth and power in hands of small minority to the destruction of the environment, he argued in 'A Reasoned Utopia'. Further, Europe should not be rejected from an extreme nationalist position, but from a democratic rejection of a neo-liberal 'Europe of the bankers'.



promotion of a European identity alongside a political Europe, including the introduction of a European citizenship. This raises a double problematic: it may be seen as a challenge to, rather than complementary to, French national identity; as well as possibly drawing on aspects of a 'culturally distinctive' European community at odds with the French concept of a non-ethnic political community. Further, the introduction of European citizenship implies a decoupling of nationality and citizenship, a nexus fiercely defended in France as a crucial element of its democratic system. The erosion of the relationship between national identity and rights fundamentally challenges the concept of a cohesive national community as the basis for democracy. Also embedded in the debates on a possible European identity are culturally-determined assumptions about the nature and content of this identity, which fall into the realm of the FN's identity rhetoric. The FN has been able to promote its 'survival of the nation' policies in the EU debate both in relation to cultural aspects of national / European identity and in relation to political aspects of national belonging, as detailed below.

**Supranationalism** The fact that the EU has transformed its member states is uncontroversial: the surrender / transfer / pooling of sovereignty is common language in EU-member state analyses.<sup>75</sup> The European regime itself, however, is neither a state, nor a federation; it is a political system with some state attributes, and some federal attributes—a new multi-level polity.<sup>76</sup> It constitutes a new framework for governance. Wallace argues that most European scholars (unlike international relations scholars) start from the perspective of the EU as a collective political system, not an intergovernmental regime.<sup>77</sup> At issue in the sovereignty debate, then, is the extent and content of the EU's supranational powers. If it is no longer appropriate to conceptualise 'sovereignty' as an absolute, but rather as a 'bundle' of rights and attributes, then it is clear that the concept of the nation-state as sovereign is no longer applicable

<sup>75</sup> See for example A.Sbragia, 'From "Nation-State" to "Member State": The Evolution of the European Community' in P.Lützeler (ed.), *Europe after Maastricht. American and European Perspectives*, Providence, Berghahn, 1994, pp.69-87.

<sup>76</sup> On the question of definition, see J.Caporaso, 'The European Union and forms of state: Westphalian, regulatory or post-modern?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 34 (1), 1996, pp.29-52. For overviews of analyses of the EU, see for example S.Hix, 'The Study of the European Union: the "new governance" agenda and its rival', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 5, 1998, pp.39-65; W.Wallace, 'The Collective Governance' in H.Wallace and W.Wallace (eds), *Policy-making in the European Union*, 4th ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp.523-42.

<sup>77</sup> Wallace, 'The Collective Governance', p.530. He argues that international relations scholars can be trapped in a supranational vs. intergovernmental dichotomy, whereas in fact the EU is a 'partial polity', a not yet fully developed democratic system. The EU is far more than an intergovernmental bargaining arena controlled by the interests of its most powerful states. Nonetheless, the choices by national governments to deal with foreign and security policy in a decidedly intergovernmental format suggests that the category remains relevant: moreover, it is used effectively by those wishing to retain a national hold on such policy areas. As will be examined in the following chapter, approaches from comparative politics are arguably more appropriate for analyses of the EU as a polity, while international relations approaches suit analyses of EU 'integration'.



in a number of areas.<sup>78</sup> This is especially relevant in the 'Community' supranational pillar of European legislative competence and executive powers, including EMU. Where consensus is no longer required, national ministers may be overruled.<sup>79</sup> Further, with the French emphasis on the nation as a political body that represents the will of the people, the question of democracy (accountability and representation) is a central problematic.

**Open borders** The 'territorial' aspect of nationhood is also at issue. The free movement of people, enshrined as one of the 'four freedoms' of the Single Market, and the abolition of internal border controls as agreed to in the Schengen Agreement, and subsequently incorporated into the Treaty of Amsterdam, point to the increasing permeability and insignificance of national borders within the EU. France's 'natural borders' have lost their former importance, and as the external EU borders are strengthened, so internal borders have less practical and symbolic significance.<sup>80</sup> Further, the move towards a European immigration and visa policy, as well as a common policy on asylum-seekers, impinge on the territorial aspect of nationhood.

**National - European identity** Both the evolution of the EU as a political power, as well as the conscious attempt to foster a sentiment of 'Europeanness' by the member states and the EU institutions, may be seen as a challenge to existing forms of national identity. Efforts have been made to portray 'European identity' as complementary to existing national identities, as a new 'layer' of identity in a world of multiple identities.<sup>81</sup> However it may still be perceived as a homogenising force unmindful of national traditions, histories and forms of belonging. Moreover, the increasing political powers of the EU institutions challenge the particularly French conception of the nation as a sovereign entity. The reference points of a potential 'European identity' are also highly problematic. Attempts to define it in cultural / historical terms run into problems of exclusivity and competing, if not incompatible histories and memories.<sup>82</sup> It is unclear whether the liberal-democratic bases for a future inclusive identity will prove sufficient; and, significantly in this context, whether they will undermine inclusive national modes of belonging that are paramount in the French imaginary.

<sup>78</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 8, the proponents and opponents of the MTEU base their stances on differing conceptions of national sovereignty—either as an absolute, or, more pragmatically, a bundle of competences. The 'unbundling' of sovereignty challenges Rousseau's idea of the indivisible general will.

<sup>79</sup> Consensus is generally sought, however, even when not formally required by the treaties.

<sup>80</sup> Again, a more nuanced view might see that borders in general are increasingly permeable in the post-Cold War world. Others argue that 'European' borders are now a more appropriate place for control. However this does not diminish the logic of the 'national' argument; nor the continuing attachment to the notion of a territorially sovereign state.

<sup>81</sup> Notably, this was spelt out in the Amsterdam Treaty, which added a proviso to the original citizenship provisions stating explicitly that European citizenship was not a replacement for national citizenship.

<sup>82</sup> See for example Anthony Smith's analysis: 'National Identity and the Idea of European Unity'. He describes the European dilemma as 'a choice between unacceptable, historical myths and memories on the one hand, on the other a patchwork, memoryless scientific 'culture' held together solely by the political will and economic interest that are so often subject to change'. He does afford some hope for a 'family of cultures' approach which might over the long-term contribute to an 'overarching political identity and community'.

**Citizenship of the Union** Closely associated with the question of European identity is the issue of EU citizenship. EU citizenship was introduced in the Maastricht Treaty, which established a limited set of rights for EU citizens.<sup>83</sup> This posed particular difficulties for France, necessitating constitutional amendments.<sup>84</sup> The creation of this supranational citizenship pinpoints the challenge posed by a decoupling of nationality and citizenship in the French context where the two are enmeshed in a single conceptual understanding of the democratic order. At the same time, it is recognised that the legitimacy of a central European authority or government does rely on a connection between this authority and the people. Thus a European citizenship, however embryonic, may be seen as contributing towards a more democratic EU—a notable deficit, by most analyses.<sup>85</sup> Yet it may also be viewed as 'anti-national' in a democratic sense: that is, it challenges the political legitimacy of the nation-state without replacing it with democratic structures or institutions at a European level. From the Republican position, moreover, an element of consent or voluntarism would be welcome.

Finally, the challenge to political sovereignty comes in the break between the identity and rights: the nation as the legitimation for power. This relates to a deeper, denser sense of identity than the seemingly encompassed in a thin reading of the 'political'. The title of the widely-read 1993 essay by French diplomat Jean-Marie Guéhenno *La fin de la démocratie* (translated into English as *The End of the Nation-State*<sup>86</sup>—which tends to stress the political-institutional aspect) is intended to reveal that democracy is not merely a legal-political arrangement, but requires a sense of community. Thus it is not a question of rewriting large the institutions and constitutions of the French—or European—democratic nation-state in the context of an increasing globalised environment. If geographical boundaries are no longer relevant, then community bonds and relationships need rethinking in order to preserve humane and democratic societies.<sup>87</sup> The lack of a widely-held, unifying European identity—a European 'narrative'—suggests that attachment to the nation-state as the legitimate source of authority prevails, and that the shift of powers to a European level requires sensitive handling and a recognition of the necessity for democratic and accountable structures at this level.<sup>88</sup> Going beyond the legal-political aspects of democracy, the

<sup>83</sup> Along with other provisions of the MTEU, the introduction of EU citizenship will be analysed in more detail in Chapter 8. All member state citizens were automatically accorded EU citizenship status.

<sup>84</sup> One of the most controversial issues in France was the granting of local voting rights to citizens of other EU member states.

<sup>85</sup> It has been argued that the EU does not meet its own membership criteria—and would be rejected if it had to apply! On the democratic deficit, see for example T.Banchoff and M.Smith, *Legitimacy and the European Union: the contested polity*, London, Routledge, 1999; B.Laffan, 'Democracy and the European Union' in C.Cram et al. (eds), *Developments in the European Union*, London, Macmillan, 1999, pp.330-49.

<sup>86</sup> *La fin de la démocratie*, Paris, Flammarion, 1993; *The End of the Nation-State*, trans. V.Elliot, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

<sup>87</sup> For Guéhenno's elaboration of this argument, see his epilogue to the English translation, pp.131-41.

<sup>88</sup> Pointing to problems with EU legitimacy, Commission polls published in 2000 found that 44 per cent of French respondents tended 'not to trust' the EU; 39 per cent 'tended to trust'. See *Eurostat Yearbook*, OOEPC, Luxembourg, 2000, p.436.

European identity / democratic deficit debate also illustrates the overlap between the political and cultural. Deterministic factors may be rejected as criteria for belonging to the French national community, but broader cultural imaginings of community and a sense of attachment to principles and values of that community are inevitably embedded in national imaginary.

Bearing these issues in mind, it is little surprise that of the major post-war developments in European integration, the most controversial proposals have been the proposed European Defence Community (EDC) and the Maastricht Treaty, while the Treaty of Rome and Single European Act (with an economic focus) have been the least controversial.<sup>89</sup> The former overtly 'political' proposals dealt with issues at heart of national sovereignty: national borders, money, army, foreign policy, defence, and citizenship. In both cases, the power of nationalist euro-sceptic ideas—invoking the defence of the nation-state and Republican values—created a formidable challenge to the integration process, and in the case of the EDC, ultimately sank the proposal. The following chapters will highlight the problems associated with these factors and their relationship to concepts of nation and identity.

The legacy of de Gaulle's brand of nationalism, stressing national independence, *grandeur* and 'great power' politics, has influenced the foreign policy positions of his successors. Of all French parties, only *Force démocrate* (successor to the pro-European MRP), part of the UDF alliance, is in favour of a federal approach. The nation-state is still invoked as a crucial ingredient in the EU policies of the major parties. However this is tempered by a commitment to continuing the integration process. On the domestic front, both sides of politics have turned their back on election promises and turned to 'Europe' for solutions to domestic economic problems, as well as using it as a justification for the implementation of unpopular economic policies. Outside of the mainstream framework, meanwhile, the national-populist FN has been able to draw successfully upon Gaullist rhetoric and symbols to underpin its opposition to integration.

Viewed through the lens of political nationhood, the debates on European integration privilege the concept of nation-state sovereignty. French attitudes to the EU are shaped by the understanding of nationhood as a political community. Utilising this understanding, the EU can be portrayed as a threat to the continued survival of the nation-state, involving the surrender of French sovereignty in both domestic and international arenas, and a threat to French national identity. This 'fits' well with the anti-EU rhetoric of the FN.

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<sup>89</sup> See Guyomarch et al., *France in the European Union*, p.244.

### Defending the nation: the FN

The aspect of the FN's program that receives most attention is its anti-migrant and indeed racist stance, and its message that migrants dilute the 'purity' of the (ethno-cultural) nation. This stance feeds into its proposals for policies of 'national preference' and citizenship by descent. However another—increasingly stressed—aspect is the FN's anti-EU stance, as noted in Chapter 2. In this arena, the FN appeals for the 'survival' of the sovereign nation-state, exploiting the democratic-political understanding of nationhood. At the same time, the party uses a 'certain idea of Europe' to promote its anti-migrant message. Thus while insisting on the maintenance of **national** identity and the importance of reinstating **national** border checks, the FN also grounds its opposition to migration on the existence of a European civilisation of accepted cultures and values. This only appears paradoxical if one overlooks the actual target of its programs—not the migrant, as such, but 'non-assimilable' Other.

The FN, then, presents itself as a defender of the French nation, opposed to all forms of supranationalism and especially as incarnated in the EU. The party's defence of the political 'sovereign' nation has multiple aspects which can be related back to Kriegel's threefold conception of sovereignty. Internally, it asserts the right of the state to determine its own domestic policies; externally, it calls for an independent foreign and security policy; and in terms of legal supremacy, it demands the reinstatement of the primacy of national over European law. The FN's 1997 legislative program *Le Grand Changement* called for 'a different Europe' ('une autre europe').<sup>90</sup> It castigated the centralised Brussels bureaucracy;<sup>91</sup> demanded the protection of national frontiers;<sup>92</sup> rejected the single currency;<sup>93</sup> and called for the reestablishment of the supremacy of French law<sup>94</sup> and the construction of a Europe of nations.<sup>95</sup>

Le Pen's 1998 May 1 speech called for the defence of the unity, independence and 'inalienable sovereignty' of France—comparing this struggle to that of Joan of Arc some six hundred years earlier. This is indicative of the way that powerful and positive national symbols are appropriated by the FN to buttress a message of national independence and strength—and,

<sup>90</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the following FN policy on the EU is taken from *Le Grand Changement*.

<sup>91</sup> The '*Europe de Bruxelles et de Maastricht*' is a machine which 'pulverises' nations and peoples. Power is held by a handful of elite civil servants—anonymous and unaccountable—resulting in a lowering of social services to the lowest common denominator and an influx of cheap overseas goods.

<sup>92</sup> The abolition of frontier controls by the 'Brussels Commission' benefits 'international crime, immigration and terrorism'—therefore strict border controls must be reintroduced and the Schengen Accords denounced.

<sup>93</sup> The French people were lied to during the Maastricht referendum. EMU will lead not only to the disappearance of monetary sovereignty but an unprecedented social disaster, and a referendum on the single currency is required.

<sup>94</sup> European laws are imposed on the French without even being examined by the national parliament: 'The supremacy of French law over European law must be re-established'.

<sup>95</sup> 'France and the other nations of Europe must escape from the globalising and technocratic logic of Maastricht'. This should be done via a renegotiation of European treaties to establish national sovereignty in political, monetary, economic and social spheres, and the creation of a 'Europe of nations'.

conversely, the FN also uses images of past French mistakes or weakness to decry current developments.<sup>96</sup> The FN media during the 1997 election campaigns were full of references to the 'betrayal' of Maastricht and the dissolution of France into 'euro-mondialisme'. See for example the front page headline of *Présent*: 'Chirac hides the real question. Silence on the euro and on the abdication of France'.<sup>97</sup> The article attacks the establishment elite and their so-called consensus on national 'abdication': 'Only Jean-Marie Le Pen affirms and repeats it [the abdication of France] amongst the denationalised media and a hostile political class concerned only with retaining its privileges'.<sup>98</sup>

Polls indicate that some 70 per cent of FN voters are hostile to 'Europe'.<sup>99</sup> Part of FN's resonance with the electorate is linked to the strong French attachment to the nation-state as the primary political unit: the location of allegiance and legitimacy. This relates to the concept of the state as the embodiment of the 'political' nation: the French model. Once again, the FN finds 'respectable' bed-fellows who also resist the encroachments of a regional authority on national sovereignty. 'Nationalist' political economists such as Alain Minc and Michel Albert have defended the French political-economic model against both the 'liberal' EU model and the 'Anglo-Saxon' free market model.<sup>100</sup> Politicians from the Jacobin wing of the Socialist party (Chevènement) and Gaullist party (Pasqua) have opposed the transfer of national sovereignty to a supranational body, also with explicit reference to Republican ideals and traditions.

The FN's loudly proclaimed opposition to the rights of EU citizens to vote in local (French) elections is also echoed by those grounding their opposition squarely in French Republican traditions—and in the constitution. The restriction of voting rights to nationals lies at the heart of the concept of national sovereignty. As with the increasing range of EU policy areas that are negotiated and agreed within a supranational framework, voting rights for EU citizens poses a direct challenge to the understanding of the 'political nation'.

<sup>96</sup> See Hainsworth, 'From Joan of Arc to Bardot', especially pp.60-2.

<sup>97</sup> *Présent*, 8 May 1997. The headline read 'Chirac cache la vraie question. Silence sur l'euro et l'abdication de la France'.

<sup>98</sup> *Présent* does concede that anti-EMU sentiment is not limited to the FN. The Communists, Chevènement and de Villiers are also anti-euro, but their motives are different: Communists are acting in the name of the international proletariat and de Villiers so that the Right will not lose anti-MTEU voters to the 'national opposition'—that is, the FN.

<sup>99</sup> See J.-Y. Camus, 'Extrêmes droites européennes entre radicalité et respectabilité' (European extreme rights between radicalism and respectability), *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 2000, pp.4-5.

<sup>100</sup> A. Minc, *La Grande Illusion*, Paris, Grasset, 1989, M. Albert, *Capitalisme contre capitalisme*, Paris, Seuil, 1993. This has been described as the mainstream French position—as 'centrist social democracy' which sought to reconcile, once the Left came back into power (particularly under Prime Minister Rocard), both French particularism / collective spirit and liberal capitalism. See Favell, *Philosophies of Integration*, p.153. The FN's *Le Grand Changement* also incorporates anti-US and anti-neo-liberal sentiment, denouncing the insertion of France in a new world economic and political order dominated by the US.

The issues of European identity and citizenship are multi-faceted and do not form a simple case of an 'either-or' zero-sum scenario in relation to the national. Both can be used to exclude—as the extreme right would argue, France is part of a European civilisation which must protect its identity and frontiers. The concept of a European identity to bolster extremist ideas of a Christian European civilisation and set up new boundaries of exclusion is used by the far right across Europe. The argument runs that 'foreigners'—those who do not come from a common 'European civilisation'—are inherently different, and they neither have the will nor the ability to integrate. Le Pen has noted that his proposed anti-immigrant measures 'obviously do not apply to citizens of the EC and beyond, those of our European culture, religion and civilisation'.<sup>101</sup>

The FN's position on European integration, then, is double-sided, underlining the racist nature of FN policy. The EU is dangerous because it threatens national identity and sovereignty; but the EU is also useful as a bulwark against 'alien', non-European, cultures. The party argues for identity to be protected at the EU level, via imposition of stronger external border controls and European visa and asylum policies.<sup>102</sup> Although a great defender of national identity, the 'European' / civilisational dimension is often used as a rationale to underpin FN policies.

## Conclusion

Both globalisation and European integration pose significant challenges to the dominant French understanding of the 'political nation'. Growing concerns in France about the impact of globalisation and European integration in the 1990s have led to a reaffirmation of the significance of the politically understood model of nationhood. This is seen as possessing democratic legitimacy as well as being situated within the French Republican tradition. The FN has been able to feed off this disquiet, presenting both globalisation and European integration as a 'threat' to national identity and national sovereignty, and presenting itself as the 'national protector'. It has also been able to position itself alongside a social-democratic critique of supranational integration and the neo-liberal economic policies adopted by the EU.

The FN has been able to exploit the problematic nature of supranational integration for French self-understandings of nationhood. It was able to enter the debate on European integration alongside those favouring the nation-state as the legitimate source of authority, and has drawn on the political understanding of the French nation to underpin its opposition to the EU. The party has contributed to the growth of an influential *souverainiste* opposition in France, grounded in concepts of national sovereignty and identity. The influence of ideas in the

<sup>101</sup> Quoted in *Le Monde*, 19 November 1991.

<sup>102</sup> Indeed, while the EU strongly rejects the 'Fortress Europe' label, the commitments in both the Schengen and Maastricht agreements have resulted in a tightening of national immigration policies and external border controls to restrict migration from non-European countries.

integration debate is increasingly being recognised as important—a cognitive dimension which places limits on or shapes the ideologies and actions of governments and their electorates.<sup>103</sup> The concept of the nation in France continues both to influence and direct its European policy, just as it strengthens nationalist opposition to supranational integration.

This is not an attempt to 'justify' the nationalist positions invoked by the FN.<sup>104</sup> However this approach does help to explain the relative success of the FN's program, especially in a climate where the 'crisis of national identity' was commonly invoked. Further, it helps explain the creation of, and support for, new parties on both the Left and Right specifically to contest the surrender of sovereignty to a supranational body and the possible development of a federally-structured EU.<sup>105</sup> The pooling or surrender of sovereignty to another (non-national) body—or, indeed the 'market'—is a practical manifestation of the constraints on traditional notions of sovereignty and challenges to the political understanding of the French nation. Through the forging of closer economic and political ties in the EU, and the development of supranational policies, France has voluntarily signed up to a substantial limitation on its freedom of action. It may be argued that such limitations are inherent in the overall globalisation process, and further, that France has gained, not lost, control over monetary policy, for example, as a result of such steps. In short, it may be argued that increasing regional integration has increased, rather than decreased, France's influence.

Nonetheless, whether the actions were designed to mitigate the loss of autonomy or not, the EU remains a challenge to the idea of the nation-state as the source of democratic legitimacy and the most important arena for democratic decision-making. This scenario suggests that the anti-EU policies of the FN can be situated alongside a traditional statist Republican critique of the EU. Both reject the 'Europeanisation' of policy-making and supranational forms of decision-making.

The following two chapters will examine in some detail the most significant events whereby the process of European integration has challenged French conceptions of the unitary, sovereign nation-state and demonstrate how these have bolstered the appeal of the FN's nationalist line. This will highlight the four sets of developments identified above (supranationalism, open borders, identity and citizenship) which pose challenges to French concepts of nationhood, and the use of these concepts in the integration debates. Chapter 7 will analyse France's role in the

<sup>103</sup> For example, this is acknowledged in the fourth edition of Wallace and Wallace (eds), *Policy-Making in the European Union*, in the concluding chapter which includes, for the first time, a section headed 'Ideas and Identities'.

<sup>104</sup> Nor an attempt to argue that the 'nationalist *repli*' is a sufficient response to the challenges posed by globalisation and the fragmentation of power.

<sup>105</sup> For example, Chevènement's *Mouvement des Citoyens* on the Left, and Pasqua-de Villiers' *Rassemblement pour la France et l'Indépendance de l'Europe* on the Right. Both Pasqua and de Villiers achieved success with earlier, separate anti-EU parties before combining in the 1999 EP elections. These *souverainiste* parties will be examined in more depth in Chapter 8.

post-war process of European integration, initially as a founding member of the European Communities in 1951 and 1957, and a leader in the further evolution of the integration process. Chapter 8 will then examine in detail the French involvement in, and reaction to, the Maastricht Treaty which established the EU.



## Chapter 7 France and the Integration Process: the Preservation of the Nation

The Schuman proposals are revolutionary or they are nothing. The indispensable first principle of these proposals is the abnegation of sovereignty in a limited but decisive field. A plan which is not based on this principle can make no useful contribution to the solution of the major problems which undermine our existence  
Jean Monnet, 1950<sup>1</sup>

This chapter examines crucial stages of French involvement in the European integration process and seeks to identify the importance of the idea of the 'political' nation, closely linked to French statehood, sovereignty and democracy. The primacy of the political concept of the nation, and the significance of this in debates over supranationalism, has led to a resistance to supranational structures and an emphasis on national sovereignty. At its most extreme, French opposition to the EU has centred on the survival of the 'political' nation. The chapter illustrates how current FN policy fits well with *souverainiste* positions supported by elements on both Left and Right which promote intergovernmental structures and are reluctant to relinquish sovereignty. The invocation of the nation—here in opposition to supranationalism—is used to bolster FN support and forms an integral part of its identity thematic.

Under the Fifth Republic there has been a generalised resistance to the idea of a federal Europe, with specific reference to importance of 'nation' or 'patrie' amongst both supporters and opponents of the integration process. Particularly evident in the earlier Gaullist stress on the independent nation-state as the basis for international cooperation, it also characterises the position of many left-wing Republicans as well as the extreme right. This chapter identifies a number of events which illustrate the difficult negotiation of national sovereignty / national interest in the context of European integration, and the attachment to political concept of the nation, also enshrined in the constitution. The FN has been able to draw on these traditions in mounting an effective opposition to further integration. Further, as the introduction to an issue of *Esprit* devoted to European integration notes, questions relating to the concepts of nation, identity and legitimacy are at the core of the European debate.<sup>2</sup> This has privileged favoured themes of the FN: nation and identity.

This chapter analyses the major characteristics of the French approach to the 'building of Europe' during the Cold War period. Following a brief overview of EU policies and institutions to set the debate in context, it outlines major theoretical approaches to the EU with particular reference to the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in P. Fontaine, *A new idea for Europe. The Schuman declaration—1950-2000*, Luxembourg, OOEPEC, 2000, p.17.

<sup>2</sup> *Esprit*, no. 176, November 1991, in the lead-up to the December 1991 Maastricht Summit.

French position. It then traces the leading French role in the founding of the Communities; the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) and Fouchet Plan; and the 'empty chair' crisis under de Gaulle. It illustrates how French involvement and initiatives were driven by particular conceptions of the national interest in the Cold War environment.

### **The EU: policies and institutions**

The process of European integration has constituted a major challenge to the traditional model of the nation-state. In particular, it has impinged upon core elements of the sovereign nation-state: the primacy of national law; territorial integrity; and the production of money. Membership of the EU has involved a diminution or pooling of national sovereignty in an increasing number of policy areas, including agricultural policy, monetary policy, and trade policy. In the future this may extend to foreign and defence policy. The process has been one of gradual, although uneven, evolution. The founding Treaties of Paris (1951) and Rome (1957) set out the aim of 'an ever closer union' to be achieved via economic means, including the supranational control of coal and steel production and the implementation of a customs union. Alongside a set of unique EU institutions, a complex mix of supranational and intergovernmental policy- and decision-making processes has evolved to realise the aims of integration. As a whole, the system is marked by a complex interdependency, and indeed the complexity of the policy-making processes has increased as the EU has both enlarged and deepened.

The forms of power-sharing within the Union vary according to policy area and decision-making procedures. Two major distinctions should be noted: first, between those institutions which are supranational and those which are intergovernmental; and second, between those policies which are classed as 'Community' policies, and those which are classed as 'Union' policies. Union policies are not subject to the so-called 'Community method' of decision-making.<sup>3</sup>

It can be confusing to compare EU institutions to those operating at a national level.<sup>4</sup> The EU is not a state and does not constitute a political system in the national sense. There is no single European government and the EU does not have a constitution. Rather, the powers of the institutions are set out in the various treaties, evolving over time. The major EU institutions are the European Commission; the European Council; the Council of the EU (formerly, and still more usually,

<sup>3</sup> This may also be described, at an overview level, as a distinction between supranational and intergovernmental processes. The Community process only applies to the policies expressly covered in the first pillar of the MTEU. However policy-making within this pillar also incorporates intergovernmental processes.

<sup>4</sup> J. McCormick, *Understanding the European Union*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1999, p. 87.

referred to as the Council of Ministers and often just as 'the Council'); the European Parliament; and the European Court of Justice.<sup>5</sup> Of these, the Commission, Parliament and Court are the major supranational actors, while the Council of Ministers and European Council are intergovernmental. The Council, made up of national ministers of the fifteen member states, is the major decision-making body, while the Parliament has developed from a purely advisory body to gain powers of co-decision in an increasing number of areas. The Commission is the executive arm of the Community, with powers to initiate and implement policy. The Court of Justice ensures the correct interpretation and application of EC law in the member states. Its rulings have been judged as integrative, in particular on the direct application of EC law (1963), and the supremacy of EC law (1964). Since the advent of the single currency, the European Central Bank controls monetary policy, including interest rates and money supply.<sup>6</sup>

'European' policies fall into a number of different groupings that follow different decision-making processes with varying degrees of institutional involvement. Following Maastricht, policies fall into one of three major 'pillars'. The first, Community, pillar is based on the original Paris and Rome Treaties, with common policies including the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), trade, competition, and matters relating to the single market. Here the European Commission is the initiator of policy, and legislation is adopted by the Council of Ministers in conjunction with the EP.<sup>7</sup> Some supranational 'Community' policies are subject to qualified majority voting (QMV) within the Council;<sup>8</sup> some require consensus. The second and third pillars are intergovernmental in nature, and comprise a foreign and security policy (CFSP) and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)—now the area of 'Freedom Security and Justice'—respectively. In these pillars the role of the supranational Community institutions is limited; national government representatives initiate and decide policy; and consensus is the norm.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed description of the development and competencies of the EC/EU institutions, see for example Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, part II; Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, part II; H.Wallace, 'The Institutional Setting' in Wallace and Wallace (eds), *Policy-Making in the European Union*, pp.3-38. Secondary institutions include the Court of First Instance, Court of Auditors, Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions. The latter two are advisory bodies. See also brief self-descriptions at the EU web site: <<http://europa.eu.int/inst-en.htm>>.

<sup>6</sup> For details of the ECB composition and powers, see Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, pp.453-82.

<sup>7</sup> Wallace sets out five variants of the policy-making process. See 'The Institutional Setting', pp.28-35.

<sup>8</sup> A weighted voting system in the Council applies: with fifteen member-states, 62 out of 87 votes are required for a decision by QMV. For break-down of the voting weights, see the EU web site, <<http://europa.eu.int/inst-en.htm>>. France (along with the other three major countries, Germany, Italy and the UK) has ten votes; Spain eight; Belgium, Greece, Netherlands and Portugal five; Austria and Sweden four; Ireland, Denmark and Finland three, and Luxembourg two. These will change if and when the Treaty of Nice and enlargement come into effect. France, despite the population difference, insisted on maintaining Council voting parity with Germany, although additional measures relating to population mitigate this effect. For analysis of the Nice Treaty outcomes, see D.Dinan and S.Vanhoonacker, 'Long Live the IGC', *ECSA Review*, Vol. 14 (1), Winter 2001, pp.1, 20-1.

Overall, there has been a trend towards increasing EU powers across a number of domains, accompanied by the increasing use of QMV (in the Community pillar). While the ultimate decision-making body remains the Council of Ministers, an intergovernmental institution, the EP's powers to amend and, in some cases, reject legislation, have been reinforced. At the same time, the role of intergovernmental institutions was also been reinforced in the 1990s, when the EU was characterised by nation-state, rather than Commission, leadership.<sup>9</sup>

### *Theoretical approaches to integration*

There is no single generally accepted, encompassing theoretical explanation for the processes leading to the EU.<sup>10</sup> Earlier readings were idealistic and even teleological,<sup>11</sup> focussing on the desire for peace between West European countries, reconciliation between France and (West) Germany, and a stable and economically prosperous European bloc, while acknowledging the importance of the Cold War environment and the (positive) US influence.<sup>12</sup> Federalism and functionalism/neo-functionalism were the widely-held early theoretical approaches to the processes of European integration.<sup>13</sup> The dominant neo-functional paradigms, largely emanating from American scholarship in the 1950s and 1960s, foretold an inevitable process of increasing integration due to 'spillover', placing emphasis on the role of supranational institutions and the decline of the nation-state.<sup>14</sup> As with federalist theory, neo-functionalism lost ground as its predictive powers ran into major problems in the 1960s, notably with the actions of de Gaulle.<sup>15</sup> Although still supplying

<sup>9</sup> Wallace, 'The Collective Governance', p.523.

<sup>10</sup> For a selection of the most significant theoretical texts on European integration, see B.Nelsen and A.Stubb (eds), *The European Union: Readings on the Theory and Practice of European Integration*, Boulder, Co., L.Rienner, 1994.

<sup>11</sup> Examples of this idealised reading remain today: the introduction to a Commission publication describes the Community's early momentum as deriving from 'the far-sighted and ambitious project of the founding fathers who emerged from the second world war driven by the resolve to establish between the peoples of Europe the conditions for a lasting peace'. Fontaine, *A new idea for Europe*, p.1.

<sup>12</sup> Wallace argues that both the idealistic 'apologists' for Europe as well as the revisionists do not pay sufficient attention to the influence and actions of the US. See W.Wallace, 'Rescue or Retreat? The Nation-State in Western Europe, 1945-93', *Political Studies*, Vol. 42, 1994, pp.52-76.

<sup>13</sup> There is a vast body of literature on these supranational approaches. For an overview of supranational approaches, see L.Cram, 'International theory and the study of the European policy process' in J.Richardson (ed.), *European Union. Power and policy-making*, London, Routledge, 1996, pp.40-4. For more detail see M.O'Neill, *The Politics of European Integration. A Reader*, London, Routledge, 1996, in particular Chapter 2 on federalism (pp.21-30) and Chapter 3 on functionalist models (pp.31-53).

<sup>14</sup> See for example E.Haas, *Beyond the Nation State*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1964; L.Lindberg, *The Political Dynamics of European Economic Integration*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1963.

<sup>15</sup> Supranational approaches were criticised as being ideologies of integration, rather than theories. See for example C.Church, 'Conflicting Conventional Wisdoms on European Integration', *Global Society*, Vol. 11 (3), 1997, pp.391-7. He concludes that neo-functionalism and federalism were 'more politically motivated advocacy coalitions than explanations of what was happening' (p.397). For an early challenge to the idealistic

insights into the development of the EU,<sup>16</sup> these theories lost support with the emergence of revisionist intergovernmental approaches that focussed on the role, and continuing influence of, the nation-state and national concerns.

The intergovernmentalist school of scholarship on the EU stresses the decisive role of the state, with national preferences and national interest(s) at the forefront in the development of both European policy and institutions. British historian Alan Milward argues that the nation-states of Europe voluntarily pooled their sovereignty in order ensure economic prosperity, fund the welfare state, and so to maintain their position: European integration, then, as 'the rescue of the nation state'.<sup>17</sup> His state-centric theory—specifically, that the nation-states of Europe consciously used the EU as a means of ensuring their survival—challenges the idealism of the earlier theorists of integration.<sup>18</sup>

Leading US theorist Andrew Moravcsik also looks to economic interests and inter-state bargaining to explain the processes of integration, but stresses the role of economic interest groups. He sets out his liberal intergovernmentalist framework in *The choice for Europe*, where he argues that the main integration processes run through three stages: national interest formation as shaped by domestic interest groups, inter-state bargaining, and finally, where appropriate, the delegation or 'pooling' of sovereignty to international institutions.<sup>19</sup> The outcomes reflect the relative power of the states and

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views of the supranationalists, see S. Hoffmann, 'Obstinate or Obsolete? The fate of the nation state and the case of western Europe', *Daedalus*, no. 95, Summer 1966, pp.865-921.

<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of the continued relevance of the old paradigms, see O'Neill, *The Politics of European Integration*, Chapter 6, 'Theoretical déjà vu?', pp.122-44.

<sup>17</sup> A. Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State*, London, Routledge, 1992.

<sup>18</sup> While Milward's research challenged some of the highly idealised and normative approaches to European integration, and the idea of an 'inevitable' process, it tends to underplay non-economic concerns, including those related to the political and security environment of post-war Europe.

<sup>19</sup> A. Moravcsik, *The choice for Europe: social purpose and state power from Messina to Maastricht*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1998. This followed seminal articles which adopted, first, an intergovernmental institutionalist reading of European integration, 'Negotiating the Single European Act: National Interests and Conventional Statecraft in the European Community', *International Organisation*, Vol. 45, Winter 1991, pp.19-56, refined to an liberal intergovernmentalist approach in 'Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 31, December 1993, pp.473-524. Both accounts reject neo-functional approaches, in particular a significant role for supranational institutions. In *The choice for Europe* he elaborates on these articles, taking a pluralist approach to the European integration process where economic (and particularly commercial) interests are the determining factors. The core argument runs that 'European integration resulted from a series of rational choices made by national leaders who consistently pursued economic interests—primarily the commercial interests of powerful economic producers and secondarily the macro-economic preferences of ruling government coalitions—that evolved slowly in response to structural incentives in the global economy', p.3. Notably, Moravcsik does not agree with Milward's central argument concerning the 'rescue' of the nation-state and his emphasis on the welfare state, although he does agree with Milward's critique of neo-functionalism as an explanatory and a normative theory, and his emphasis on the controlling role of the nation-state. On these issues, see also Milward and Sørensen, 'Interdependence or Integration?' in Milward et al. (eds), *The Frontier of National Sovereignty*, London, Routledge, 1993.

the process represents a form of 'asymmetrical interdependence'. Further, France is seen as conforming most closely to his rationalist intergovernmentalist reading.

Certainly, the role of national interest in the decisions over the pooling of sovereignty has tended to be underplayed in the earlier literature. Detailed historical research, such as that noted above, points to the importance of national concerns in decisions on policy integration and institutional reform. However there are a number of counterpoints to the intergovernmental reading. The role and influence of supranational institutions is contested, and the hybrid nature of IGC negotiations noted. Ideological and geo-political considerations are also significant, in particular the influence of the Cold War environment and the positive attitude of the US to (west) European integration as a bulwark against communism.<sup>20</sup> Further critiques focus on the role of sub-national governments (e.g. the German *Länder*), civil servants, and elites; the ability of 'the state' to act in a rational and unitary manner; the privileging of economic factors at the expense of identity and cultural issues; the implications for domestic electoral results (after the Treaty of Rome and the SEA, the ruling party was voted out of power in France); and finally, the translation of economic policy demands into institutional reform. It is certainly not clear why business support for deregulation in the 1980s (culminating in the SEA) resulted in moves to majority voting, nor why the noncommittal approach of French business to EMU should have resulted in its adoption.<sup>21</sup> However Moravcsik's approach does suit this 'highest level' of bargaining, where member states are the predominant actors and the future shape of the EU, if not precise policy content, is determined.<sup>22</sup>

For many years, integration theory was dominated by the supranationalist–intergovernmental divide. However both the two supranationalist paradigms, federalist and neo-functionalism, and the intergovernmental reading, are now viewed as inadequate.<sup>23</sup> Neunreither points to the difficulty of characterising the EU as a political system:

<sup>20</sup> See for example the analysis of W. Wallace, *The Transformation of Western Europe*, London, Pinter, 1990.

<sup>21</sup> See C. Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht*, New York, Garland, 1997, pp.8-12, T. Diez, 'Riding the AM-track through Europe', *Millennium*, Vol. 28 (2), 1999, pp.355-69. For further critique of Moravcsik's approach, see Wallace, 'The Collective Governance', where he opposes the view of the EU as an intergovernmental bargaining forum, arguing that IR scholars are trapped in a 'redundant supranational-intergovernmental dichotomy'. He refers to the EU in 2000 as a 'post-sovereign' order, pp.530-1.

<sup>22</sup> On a multi-level framework for analysis, see J. Peterson and E. Bomberg, *Decision-Making in the European Union*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1999, 9-24. They argue that different theories are best applied to different aspects of the integration process. It is probably no coincidence that intergovernmentalist scholars tend to focus on historical moments of integration—e.g. the signature of Treaties—where interstate bargaining is certainly at the fore. But such analysis cannot be applied to the lower systemic / sub-systemic policy levels.

<sup>23</sup> See P. Schmitter, 'Examining the Present Euro-Polity with the Help of Past Theories' in G. Marks et al. (eds), *Governance in the European Union*, London, Sage, 1996, pp.1-14. He overviews the three 'pre-ground' lenses for examining the integration process—neo-realism, neo-functionalism, neo-rationalism—and finds that none of them adequately explains the process. Cram argues, however, that 'the central division remains that

The main comprehensive approaches have at least partly failed, and we have to admit that the EU is neither completely neo-functional, nor intergovernmental, nor pre-federal. We may call it *sui generis*, but this does not carry is very far.<sup>24</sup>

No longer an inexorable move towards unity, then, European integration is characterised as a multi-dimensional process with fluid boundaries, where the state is a composite of interests—and certainly not obsolete. By no means a pure intergovernmental exercise either, the EU is a hybrid. The use of mid-range theories to encapsulate different aspects of the EU,<sup>25</sup> as well as comparative political approaches,<sup>26</sup> have also challenged the search for an all-encompassing 'grand theoretical' explanation for integration.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, both the intergovernmental and supranational approaches—seemingly in competition with one another—proceed from the same underlying premise. Both argue that European integration has been driven by demands of various institutions, elites, or interest groups, be they national or supranational, to achieve a particular set of objectives (economic, geo-political, security)—even if the actual results have sometimes been unexpected or unintended. Thus a 'soft' rational choice argument underpins these analyses.

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between state-centric and non state-centric approaches'. See her 'International theory and the study of the European policy process', p.51.

<sup>24</sup> K.-H. Neunreither, 'Governance without Opposition', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 33 (4), August 1998, pp.419-41; quote on p.419. On the theoretical problems with the *sui generis* approach—i.e. that the EU is a unique phenomenon, a specific, historically-conditioned entity—see B. Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration*, London, Macmillan, 2000, pp.15-16.

<sup>25</sup> Wayne Sandholtz has described this as 'different kinds of theories for different parts of the puzzle'. See his 'Membership Matters: Limits of the Functional Approach to European Institutions', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 34 (3), Autumn 1996, pp.403-29.

<sup>26</sup> See for example S. Hix, 'The Study of the European Community: the Challenge to Comparative Politics', *WEP*, Vol. 17 (1), January 1994, pp.1-30. He makes the useful point that approaches from international relations—which had traditionally dominated the study of European Community development—were more suitable for 'integration' studies, while comparative politics could provide more useful insights into—and theoretical models for—studies of the EU as a polity. On the more recent use of comparative politics in this field, see also J. Caporaso, 'Regional Integration theory: understanding our past and anticipating our future', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 5 (1), 1998, pp.1-16; Cram, 'International theory and the study of the European policy process'; Hix, 'The Study of the European Union'.

<sup>27</sup> There is a growing body of literature on the EU as a polity, focussing particularly on policy-making processes. This is generally grounded in comparative politics, as suggested by Hix. See for example the policy network approach (Peterson), and multi-level governance approach (Marks, Hooghe). A further set of approaches are grounded in the 'new institutionalism', from differing perspectives—historical, rational choice, and sociological. On the three institutionalisms, see P. Hall and R. Taylor, 'Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms', *Political Studies*, Vol. 44, 1996, pp.936-57. This chapter does not examine the structure of the emerging EU polity, but rather the motives underpinning, and the processes governing, the gradual pooling of sovereignty in the French context. Hence approaches from international relations are more pertinent. They also highlight the centrality of the concept of sovereignty, significant in understanding the appeal of the anti-EU nationalists in France. Institutional perspectives also provide useful insights, with historical and sociological approaches incorporating the role of norms and conventions as well as formal / informal procedures.



A further approach is based on the power of ideas and norms, where actions are not the exclusive result of actors' particular interests or resources. A growing body of literature points to the significance of political culture and tradition, and the 'subjective filter' that colours action.<sup>28</sup> This focus on national ideational structures looks to the causal power of ideas. Material interests and/or resources are not necessarily decisive, and although French literature on the EU tends to proceed from a realist perspective, the power of the national idea in France needs consideration.<sup>29</sup> This is useful in explaining the French approach to European integration and the success of the anti-EU policies of the FN and *souverainiste* groups. In the same way that French Republican traditions are explicitly invoked to justify policies concerning immigrant incorporation and citizenship, as well as forming unstated assumptions underpinning attitudes and actions, so in the case of European integration, the understanding of the political nation as a sovereign and democratic body guides both integration policy and contributes to EU opposition.

### *Theoretical approaches: the French context*

French analysis tends to be influenced by a realist perspective that interprets policy through the lens of the 'national interest'. Studies have noted the relative scarcity of work by French political scientists and international relations scholars dealing specifically with France and the EU prior to the 1980s.<sup>30</sup> Since that time, scholars such as Grosser and Laïdi have examined the Union in the context of French foreign policy and Franco-German relations respectively. Analysis tends to be bound to the conceptual notion of a state-centric world, with realist paradigms largely accepted. There is little of an explicitly

<sup>28</sup> See for example, J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996; J. Ruggie and R. Keohane (eds), *Ideas and Foreign Policy*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1991; J. Ruggie, 'Ideas do not float freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures and the End of the Cold War', *International Organisation*, Vol. 48 (2), 1994, pp.185-214; A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

<sup>29</sup> The role of culture and identity is clearly at play in the development of the EU, and theories based on rational choice alone can be misleading. On the recent arrival of the constructivist debate in EU studies, see the special issue of the *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 6 (4), 1999, edited by Thomas Christiansen, Knud Erik Jørgensen and Antje Wiener; and M. Pollack, 'International Relations Theory and European Integration', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 39 (2), 2001, pp.221-44.

<sup>30</sup> See M.-C. Smouts, 'The Study of International Relations in France' in H. Dyer and L. Mangasarian (eds), *The Study of International Relations*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1989, pp.221-8. She notes the 'paucity of research on the EEC' (p.225)—and that the chapter on European integration in Grawitz and Leca's 1985 *Traité de science politique* was written by Hoffmann, not a French political scientist. Moreover, as noted by Nick Hewlett, French political science tends to concentrate on specifics, in particular constitutional law, and the detailed examination of election results and polls, rather than taking an overall perspective. See his *Modern French Politics. Analysing Conflict and Consensus since 1945*, Cambridge, Polity, 1998, conclusion. Even J.-F. Sirinelli's edited *Dictionnaire Historique de la Vie Politique Française au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Historical Dictionary of French Political Life in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century), Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1995, devotes only four-five pages to the 'European Construction' (pp.223-7)—of which only one page deals with post-Cold War affairs and the Maastricht Treaty, compared to four pages dedicated solely to the EDC debate (pp.137-41). Both sections were, however, written by French scholars, Raymond Poidevin and Eric Duhamel respectively.



theoretical nature, and geo-political interests are accorded priority with the state acknowledged as the primary actor.<sup>31</sup> This 'French variant of political realism' underpins French analysis of international relations, with Aron's influence still widespread. This tradition prioritises military and economic strength, but also places them in a historical continuum where culture and ideas have a role to play.<sup>32</sup> However while cultural differences between various regions of the world—even 'civilisations'—may be taken into account, there is little analysis of the role of norms and values in the French approach to European integration. Moreover, much of the work in the 1990s tends to the polemical or clearly proselytising, giving voice to a party approach or personal conviction.

Arguably the most influential writer in English on France within the EU is Stanley Hoffmann—himself a student of Aron. His analysis reflects a development from a predominantly realist approach, moving from his famous 1966 defence of the nation-state which foreshadowed a re-evaluation of its projected demise,<sup>33</sup> to analyses which incorporate the impact of supranational institutions and influences.<sup>34</sup> His approach is characteristic of the terms of the debate within France, set essentially in terms of the national interest, while not overlooking the importance of transnational institutions which may be used as instruments to protect or project national interests both regionally and internationally.<sup>35</sup>

Hoffmann is unusual in that he attempts to understand European integration and French approaches to immigration and racism as parallel processes with overlapping influences.<sup>36</sup> Apart from Silverman, who explicitly links immigration with the question of European integration,<sup>37</sup> France's role in the EU is generally the subject of separate set of literature, although passing reference may be made to it within chapters dealing with questions of immigration and citizenship. Much analysis is in the form of chapters within edited volumes, with few full-length studies written by single authors. *France and EC Membership Evaluated* is a good example of such an edited collection, with twenty chapters covering the economic, foreign policy, legal and cultural implications of France's membership of the EC.<sup>38</sup> The

<sup>31</sup> P. Hopmann, 'French Perspectives on International Relations After the Cold War', *Mershon International Studies Review*, Vol. 38 (1), April 1994, pp.69-83. He notes lack of an explicitly theoretical perspective, although classical realism, with its focus on the structural relationship between nation-states, influenced by historical and cultural readings, is important.

<sup>32</sup> Hopmann, 'French Perspectives on International Relations' notes explicitly that this has nothing in common with the 'billiard ball' neo-realism of Kenneth Waltz.

<sup>33</sup> Hoffmann, 'Obstinate or Obsolete'.

<sup>34</sup> See his collected essays in *The European Sisyphus: Essays on Europe, 1964-1994*, Boulder, Co., Westview, 1995.

<sup>35</sup> See Hoffmann, 'French Dilemmas and Strategies in the New Europe' in R. Keohane et al., (eds), *After the Cold War. International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989-91*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1993, pp.127-47.

<sup>36</sup> See his 'France and Europe: the dichotomy of autonomy and cooperation' in Howorth and Ross (eds), *Contemporary France*, Vol. 1, pp.46-54, and 'Thoughts on the French nation today'.

<sup>37</sup> Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation*.

<sup>38</sup> F-G Dreyfus et al. (eds), *France and EC Membership Evaluated*, London, Pinter, 1993.

second treatment is in specific chapters within the literature on the various presidencies and their European policy vocation—be they interpreted as pro-integrationist (Giscard, Mitterrand), or defending national independence (de Gaulle).<sup>39</sup> A third type of analysis is devoted to France and the EU at the end of the Cold War, prompted in particular by the unification of Germany and the concern that Germany would take over the political and economic leadership of the EU. The EU had up to this time been portrayed very much as an organisation advancing France's national interests and preserving its important regional and global position. A change in the *status quo* led to much debate about France's future role within the Union and this received additional attention—and more critical analysis—with the 1992 referendum on the Maastricht Treaty.<sup>40</sup>

During the Cold War France sought to overcome the bipolar world system and fashion an independent path. As the 'Yalta order' disappeared the country has experienced difficulties in coming to grips with the new order and in fashioning foreign policy. As Jean-Pierre Chagnollaud notes, the shock of the collapse of the Cold War has resulted in the need to discover a new system of international relations.<sup>41</sup> This might signal a move away from a French-realist interpretation but it is not clear that a new theoretical framework has emerged to guide the study of France within the EU. Both sides of the MTEU debate essentially defined the issue in realist terms situated within the traditions of French political culture. The 'no' faction argued that France's interests would be subordinated to Germany's, and opposed EMU and the introduction of further supranational elements. The 'yes' faction was dominated by the idea of 'containing' Germany and viewed EMU as the best available means to economic and political control in the national interest. While ideational structures were in play, these were rarely referred to during the debate and are only more recently being used by scholars to unpick the French approach to the EU.<sup>42</sup>

### Integration: the influence of the nation

As acknowledged in the literature, both an idealistic and instrumental rationale influenced the French position on integration. The aim was to ensure a 'peaceful, prosperous, liberal and

<sup>39</sup> See J-C de Swaan, 'Mitterrand and the Gaullist Dilemma over European Integration', *International Relations*, Vol. XII (2), 1994, pp.11-24; A.Cole, 'François Mitterrand and the new Europe' in his *François Mitterrand. A Study in Political Leadership*, Routledge, London, 1994.

<sup>40</sup> See for example H.Kassim, 'French Autonomy and the European Union', *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 5 (2), 1997, pp.167-80.

<sup>41</sup> J-P.Chagnollaud, *Relations internationales contemporaines: un monde en perte de repères* (Contemporary International Relations: a world without references), Paris, L'Harmattan, 1997.

<sup>42</sup> See for example C.Parsons, 'Domestic Interests, Ideas and Integration: Lessons from the French Case', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 38 (1), March 2000, pp.45-70; T.Risse et al., 'To Euro or Not to Euro? The EMU and Identity Politics in the European Union', *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 5 (2), 1999, pp.147-87.

democratic Europe', coupled with the goals of containing Germany within a European framework, advancing France's economic interests and enhancing its regional and global status.<sup>43</sup> The desire to achieve a lasting reconciliation with Germany paralleled an instrumental desire to maintain French leadership in Europe, and European influence in the world. This duality is echoed in official French material on the EU that refers to peace, reconciliation with Germany, France's leading role, extending the EU's global influence, and competing with the US and Japan.<sup>44</sup>

The immediate post-war pro-integration movement, then, was driven by parallel—if not competing—strands: integration as an 'ideal' and as an 'instrument'.<sup>45</sup> The idealistic set included a desire to transcend the nation-state and overcome the evils of nationalism; and to ensure a lasting peace in western Europe and reconciliation with Germany.<sup>46</sup> Many were opposed to any renewal of nationalism, discredited by the war and its association with Nazism, and were predisposed at this time towards the idea of a federal Europe. Further, with the French nation-state having proved too weak to confront and resist fascism effectively, the national ideal had suffered. Hence many were responsive to the idea of supranational institutions in which the traditional nation-state no longer had the leading role, and Resistance- and Catholic-led initiatives towards moving beyond the national paradigm appeared an attractive option.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> See Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, pp.17-35; F.Duchêne, 'French motives for European integration' in P.Bideleux and R.Taylor (eds), *European Integration and Disintegration*, London, Routledge, 1996, pp.22-35.

<sup>44</sup> See for example the official positions set out French Foreign Ministry web site at <<http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/>> and echoed in the EU web pages at <<http://europa.eu.int>>.

<sup>45</sup> Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, p.19.

<sup>46</sup> This view is still in currency today and was underlined in the French reactions to the (Haider-led) FPÖ coalition government in Austria in February 2000. See for example *Le Monde* editorial, reproduced in the *Guardian Weekly*, 10-16 February 2000, where the EU reaction is judged as absolutely necessary 'if the notion of European democratic values was to continue to mean anything'; P.Lellouche (RPR deputy) in *Libération*, 10 February 2000: 'the founding fathers were convinced that Franco-German reconciliation, the step-by-step construction of a Union of democracies, integrated in their economies, their currencies, their actual politics, would definitively eradicate the threat of any return to the European demons of the past'; also Pierre Moscovici, the French European Affairs Minister, quoted in *Libération*, 14 February 2000, who describes the EU as a 'community of values'. All the French political parties, with the exception of the FN and Pasqua's RPF, agreed with the EU's stance in attempting to isolate the new Austrian administration.

<sup>47</sup> During the war, resistance movements in the countries of occupied Europe expounded the idea of a new political order, based on a vision of a unified Europe. The representatives of the various resistance movements met in 1944 to draft a document outlining the principles of a post-war order based on a 'Federal Union of European Peoples'. See 'Draft Declaration II on European Federation', dated 20 May 1944, in W.Lipgens (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration*, Vol. 1, trans. P.Falla, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1985, pp.678-82. For an elaboration of the influence of the French resistance on the future of Europe, see 'Ideas of the French Resistance on Future Foreign Policy' in the same volume, pp.264-361. The supranational visions of the Resistance, however, were not necessarily shared by French in exile. Pierre Guillen notes that some French organisations abroad tended to stress national values and 'considered it their duty to reawaken French national energies and persuade allied and neutral countries that France was still a great nation'; this was at odds with plans to pool national sovereignty. See his 'Plans by Exiles from France' in Lipgens, Vol. II, pp.279-352; quote on p.280. On Catholic support for a federal Europe, see A.Zurcher, *The Struggle to Unite Europe, 1940-1958*, Westport, Conn., Greenwood, 1975. Catholic parties and politicians—such as Schuman and Bidault from the Catholic MRP, formed in 1944—were

The second, more diverse, set of pro-integration arguments covered the need for territorial security; the desire to contain Germany; to extend France's political and economic influence in a French-led Europe, independent from the US; and to develop its economy.<sup>48</sup> French literature tends to stress this second 'instrumental' set. A 1998 study unequivocally states the 'reasons' for France's European choice as security, power, and modernisation.<sup>49</sup> Both power and modernisation are described with reference to American alternatives or American competition. Since the 1980s 'Europe' has been increasingly invoked as a response to the challenges of Japanese and US economic power.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, the external dimension should not be overlooked. Wallace argues that European integration 'has been shaped as much by the international environment in which it grew as by its own internal dynamic'.<sup>51</sup> The containment of Germany was a paramount consideration, and France has continued to privilege the construction of Europe since the 1950s 'to control Germany'.<sup>52</sup> Overall, during the Cold War period, French interests came to be seen as synonymous with European integration, particularly as the French assumed leadership of the European bloc.<sup>53</sup>

Thus two sets of motives—'contradictory yet complementary'<sup>54</sup>—have marked French approaches to the processes of integration. 'Contradiction', 'tension', and 'ambiguity', are terms that dominate

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committed and influential supporters of European integration in the early post-war period, along with their Christian Democratic counterparts in West Germany (Adenauer) and Italy (de Gasperi). Zurcher comments that the clerical parties' 'leaders and rank and file in all of the Six provide the European movement with its most solid, most persistent and most loyal support' (p.193).

<sup>48</sup> See in particular Chapters 1 and 4, 'The French Contribution to Building the EU' and 'Common Foreign and Security Policy' in Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*. This latter grouping also incorporates some anti-US sentiment. In support of this instrumentalist reading, Milward notes that European integration 'buttressed the nation-state in pursuit of income, welfare, family security and employment' in the 1950s and 1960s, hence the acceptance of successive surrenders of sovereignty. See 'Approaching Reality: Euro-Money and the Left', *New Left Review*, no. 216, March-April 1996, pp.55-65; quote on p.58. EMU, on the other hand, strengthens unpopular policies and outcomes, notably higher unemployment—and thus is contested in France, with Europe losing its allegiance among the electorate. See also A.Grjebine, 'Après Maastricht: des écus et des chômeurs?' (After Maastricht: ecus and unemployed?), *Le Débat*, no. 71, September-October 1992, pp.16-42.

<sup>49</sup> G.le Quintrec, *La France dans le monde depuis 1945* (France in the world since 1945), Paris, Seuil, 1998, pp.58-63. Europe is 'une contrainte nécessaire' (a necessary constraint) with 'L'Europe sécurité' based on reconciliation with Germany, peace and security; 'L'Europe puissance', a powerful body in relation to the US, able to arrest French decline; and 'L'Europe modernité' as a means of modernising the economy, and later to resist US and Japanese competition and adapt to globalisation.

<sup>50</sup> See Cole, *François Mitterrand*, p.126.

<sup>51</sup> Wallace, *The Transformation of Western Europe*, p.7.

<sup>52</sup> R.Schwok, 'La France et l'intégration européenne: une évaluation du "paradigme identitariste"' (France and European Integration: an evaluation of the identity politics paradigm), *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 17 (1), Winter 1999, pp.56-69. He notes that the 'identitarian paradigm' can be mixed with a realist or neo-realist approach, linking geo-political theory and identity politics approaches.

<sup>53</sup> See for example F.de La Serre, 'France. The Impact of François Mitterrand' in C.Hill (ed.), *The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy*, London, Routledge, 1996, on the 'tacit recognition of French superiority' (p.31); Cole, *François Mitterrand*, p.123.

<sup>54</sup> In the words of P.Defarges, 'France and Europe' in Godt (ed.), *Policy-Making in France*, pp.226-34; quote on p.227.

the literature on France and the EU. One of the major reasons for this is the attempt to reconcile the ongoing attachment to the nation-state while pursuing French interests in a changing regional and global environment. EU policy can be ambiguous and at times contradictory—in part due to changing external and domestic factors, in part due to competing interests in French policy-making. This position becomes yet more problematic with the end of the Cold War, as will be explored in the following chapter. Before 1989, however, there was already an apparent tension between two clear aims of French European policy—on the one hand, containment of, or reconciliation with, Germany, and on the other, the desire to preserve national sovereignty.<sup>55</sup> However there are other contributing factors: the ambiguity of French leaders *vis à vis* Europe,<sup>56</sup> compounded by some startling divergences between stated aims/rhetoric and actual negotiating positions.<sup>57</sup> Further, the divergence between the establishment elite and the electorate, with a flaky elite-driven consensus not actively supported by the electorate, contributes to an uncertain picture. Finally, divergences within the elite—the so-called consensus on Europe was not as unitary as presented—also contribute to the ambiguous relationship.

National motivations notwithstanding, the overall integration project has been an uneven process of a pooling of sovereignty, and has resulted in an increase in 'European' policy-making areas. This has been challenged as an attack on the democratic nation-state, endangering national sovereignty, and as a threat to national identity. In particular, voices of opposition emerged in the early 1990s, following on from the debates surrounding the 'crisis' of national identity. They coalesced around the MTEU referendum and ratification debates. Up until that time, there had been little public discussion of European policies that dealt, essentially, with economic issues, led by, and in the interests of, France. However earlier resistance, as well as the central lines of government action, suggested that concern centred on the dual themes of nation and identity.

Both readings of European integration—idealistic and instrumental—proceed from an understanding of the state as a unitary actor, where interests are defined in terms of the national interest. However an ideational approach affords a more complete explanation of both government strategy and action, and elite and public opposition to pro-integrationist moves. It provides a

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<sup>55</sup> As noted by Hoffmann, 'French Dilemmas and Strategies', p.138.

<sup>56</sup> Notably Mitterrand: Cole notes that while Mitterrand was certainly at the forefront in promoting economic and political integration, he also contributed to the ambiguity surrounding the relationship between national sovereignty and European integration. Mitterrand would evoke European integration and national independence 'as imperatives in the same breath' See 'The European statesman' in *François Mitterrand*, pp.116-32; quote on p.132. Mitterrand's formulation that 'France is our Motherland (*patrie*); Europe is our future', while having a 'Europeanist' flavour, is also vague and ambiguous. See his *Lettre à tous les Français*, reproduced in *Le Monde*, 8 April 1988.

guiding image about how to work through related problems, as well as a normative basis for legitimate solutions.<sup>58</sup> The powerful understanding of the nation as a democratic sovereign body has directed the positions of both pro- and anti-Europeanists. Reference to cognitive matrices also helps explain the intra-party rifts, where members with otherwise similar 'objective' interests and views differ fundamentally on the same questions—in this case, European integration.<sup>59</sup> It may also explain the emergence of cross-party cooperation or agreement, where members of different parties might be expected to have diverging interests but agree on a particular approach. So material interests and electoral demands have to be balanced out against the influence of underlying ideas and norms.<sup>60</sup> Such norms are incorporated into collective national identities, into the political culture and political institutions. One such decisive norm, I argue, is based around the concept of the nation. This influence may be variable. Certainly, opposition to the EU based on democratic principles and the concept of the nation as the optimum framework for civic and social solidarity has been evident in France alongside more strident calls for national independence based on Jacobin readings of national sovereignty. Paradoxically, in its most exclusive reading, a nationalist stance may serve to underpin a European identity based on shared culture and traditions.

At certain times the French government has sought to maintain, or develop, an intergovernmental model that retains ultimate national control within EU decision-making—particularly in areas which cut to the heart of national sovereignty.<sup>61</sup> De Gaulle's proposals and actions in the 1960s

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<sup>57</sup> See for example on CFSP, de La Serre, 'France', who refers to a 'discrepancy between the discourse on the objectives', p.33.

<sup>58</sup> This parallels the arguments put forward on immigration, integration and citizenship in that it uses cognitive matrices / structures to help explain the differences and developments in European integration policy.

<sup>59</sup> The Left-Right cleavage remains central to French national electoral politics, despite the blurring of the two, and the emergence of other cleavages, such as post-materialist. In European elections, however, the emergence of alternative parties indicates that the Left-Right division is not the central dividing line, and that a 'national' cleavage, based on differing readings of nationhood, is significant.

<sup>60</sup> The importance of ideational foundations in the French approach to European integration is noted by Parsons, 'Domestic Interests'. He concludes '...French strategies in European integration are neither predicted nor adequately explained by an interest-group model', p.65. As well as the power of ideas, he stresses the role of the French elite (rather than economic interest groups). On the role of French elites, see also Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*.

<sup>61</sup> Under the Fifth Republic, foreign affairs were the 'reserved domain' of the presidency. This in the past has included 'Europe'. However this has become contested, with both president and prime minister at various times in the 1980s asserting their primary responsibility for European matters, particularly during periods of *cohabitation*. See Cole, *François Mitterrand*, pp.128-9. During periods of *cohabitation* the power of the president is certainly circumscribed. Moreover, the increasing scope of EU policy, impinging on domestic policies, has resulted in increasing blurring of the boundaries between the European and the national, and the question of jurisdiction remains contested.

epitomise this. Such decisions have privileged the intergovernmental institutions in the EU—for example, the Council of Ministers and European Council.<sup>62</sup>

However this is not to suggest that countries are prisoners of their 'dominant cultural idiom', in the words of Brubaker.<sup>63</sup> The policy-making and decision-making processes of the EU—covering an ever-increasing range, economic, political and social—have resulted in a significant diminution of national sovereignty. A redistribution of power has taken place at a number of levels: from the national arena to the 'European' level, and from the traditional, centralised state to the 'market'. The 'sharing' of power at the EU level may be part of an intergovernmental or a supranational process. It may involve retention of the national veto but, increasingly, is subject to qualified majority voting. Overall, the combined effect of the EU integration process challenges the heart of the idea of the nation as a community of self-governing citizens.

Such challenges are not unique in that all states are subject to the constraints of globalisation and increasing interdependence. However, as explored in Chapter 6, the EU is more than an international organisation. Unlike other regional or global bodies, it is developing an increasing body of laws and regulations in an area where national governments no longer have the final say. Moreover, Community law takes precedence over national law.

The intergovernmental examples noted above (and in more detail below) are qualified by examples where the French government has supported moves towards supranational decision-making—most notably, EMU. This is widely judged as a pragmatic bargain struck by the French to maintain their influence, both in a European and international context.<sup>64</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, EMU is a means of retaining national and European influence in the context of a dominant Deutschmark and a globalising economy. In this instance, a traditional understanding of national sovereignty has been adapted to come to terms with changing economic and political circumstances. The government has also agreed to decisions being taken by majority vote, and to the strengthening of the EU's supranational institutions such as the EP.

<sup>62</sup> The French also promoted the three-pillar structure of the MTEU, in part to ensure that CFSP was maintained within an intergovernmental structure. This indicated that in such a sensitive area, national sovereignty remained a central concern. See de La Serre, 'France', p.33.

<sup>63</sup> Brubaker uses this phrase to denote prevailing self-understandings of nationhood in France and Germany (assimilationist and ethno-cultural differentialist). As in his account, this is not to suggest that these exclusively determine outcomes, but rather how they 'framed and shaped judgements of what was politically imperative, of what was in the interest of the state', *Citizenship and Nationhood*, p.16.

<sup>64</sup> See for example K.Dyson and K.Featherstone, 'EMU and Presidential Leadership under François Mitterrand' in M.Maclean (ed.), *The Mitterrand Years*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998, pp.89-111. In the context of US global power and German regional hegemony, French decisions on EMU were driven by a desire 'to protect and promote French interests and power in a context of dependency and retrieve a leadership role for France', p.92.



It has been argued that the dominant cleavage on Europe, at the outset, was that between the federalists and the confederalists (nationalists).<sup>65</sup> There is consensus in the literature that both these groupings were driven by particular conceptions of the national interest, rooted in particular understandings of French national traditions. However the differing 'camps' can no longer be subsumed within this somewhat simplistic model, and a more accurate contemporary description splits the groups between the *souverainistes* (nationalists), national-Europeans (pragmatic Europeanists), and the far smaller federalist grouping.<sup>66</sup> The parties' positions are summarised in Table 7.1.<sup>67</sup>

The nationalists, or confederalists, frame their opposition in terms of national sovereignty, with reference to the political nation as the source of legitimacy and democracy, and in terms of national identity.<sup>68</sup> This grouping is probably the most diverse in terms of membership. On the extreme right it includes the 'exclusivist nationalists' who develop the national identity theme, defending the 'survival of the French nation' and protecting a culturally-determined vision of the French nation while exploiting political understandings.<sup>69</sup> The Jacobin *souverainistes* on the Left also defend the sovereign French nation but stress the threat to the Republic and accompanying problems of legitimacy and democracy. Their national defence incorporates a socialist critique of the EU that calls for the democratic nation-state to protect economic and social rights. According to Chevènement's judgment on supporters of the Maastricht Treaty, 'they are destroying the Republican state on the pretext of constructing Europe and, in fact, they are leaving the working

<sup>65</sup> See for example J.Howorth, 'France and the Defence of Europe: Redefining Continental Security' in M.Maclean and J.Howorth (eds), *Europeans on Europe: Transnational Visions of a New Continent*, London, Macmillan, 1992, pp.77-97. Rainer Riemenschneider, in the same volume, identifies the same two positions, and stresses the extent to which European integration was seen as instrumental in advancing French interests (in particular, containing Germany). See 'The Two Souls of Marianne: National Sovereignty versus Supranationality in Europe', pp.141-59.

<sup>66</sup> This categorisation is set out by M.Zolner, 'National Images in French Discourses on Europe', paper presented at ECSA Sixth Biennial International Conference, Pittsburgh, 2-5 June 1999. The paper argues that national myths shape political discourses on Europe, and that differing conceptions of nation and Republic cross-cut an 'apparently consensual pro-European discourse'. The Right-Left cleavage is cross-cut by three differing discourses on Europe: *souverainiste*, national-European, and federalist, and each relates in a different way to France's 'national mythology'. Another categorisation, based on similar premises, comes from Parsons. He identifies traditionalist (*souverainiste*), confederalist, and pro-Community views of French interests as articulated by national leaders. His use of 'pro-Community' refers to those leaders who have moved beyond that required by domestic demands and actively promoted integration, e.g. Mitterrand and Giscard d'Estaing. While both accounts are based on the power of ideas in politics, Zolner explicitly uses political myths to help explain the stance of political parties; Parsons refers to national leaders' ideas as conditioning EU progress.

<sup>67</sup> For an overview of party fragmentation on the question of Europe, see The Economist, 'France, divided by Europe', *The Economist*, 13 February 1999, pp.29-31.

<sup>68</sup> For the 'European' programs of French political parties, refer to their web sites; for analysis of party positions see J.Gaffney (ed.), *Political Parties and the European Union*, London, Routledge, 1996; Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, pp.73-103.

<sup>69</sup> At a party level, this position is represented by the FN and the MNR.



man, and the country with him, defenceless in the face of international capital markets'.<sup>70</sup> The program of the MDC sets this out in more detail.<sup>71</sup> The PCF are also situated within this overall group and share many of the MDC concerns.<sup>72</sup> On the Right, the neo-Gaullist *souverainistes* hold fast to the concepts of national independence, French grandeur and France's universal mission, and also introduce a cultural strand via references to the need to protect national identity. The program of the anti-EU RPF, created in 1998 by Pasqua and de Villiers, and now led by Pasqua alone, attacks a supranational Europe and calls for the protection of national sovereignty and identity.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in *Le Monde*, 30 August 2000. Chevènement founded the *Mouvement des Citoyens* (Citizens Movement) in opposition to French involvement in the Gulf War and the MTEU. A staunch Jacobin, Chevènement resigned his position in the Jospin government in August 2000 as he could not accept the (limited) autonomy being granted to Corsica in an attempt to overcome decades of violent nationalist conflict on the island. This was reported as a question of national self-understanding, related to the 'political' concept of the one and indivisible nation. See for example *Libération*, 22 September 2000: 'in quitting the government, Jean-Pierre Chevènement has posed, via the Corsican question, the question of France. It is the conception of the French nation as a community of free and equal citizens, overcoming particularisms and refusing to define themselves by origin, ethnicity or religion, which is at issue here'. See also G. Marcou, *Le Monde*, 8 August 2000, 'The threat to the Republican state'.

<sup>71</sup> For the MDC positions on Europe, see under the heading 'International' at their web site at <<http://www.mdc-france.org/accueil.html>>. Following are excerpts which indicate the party's stress on national sovereignty, bound up in a left-wing critique of globalisation and neo-liberal economics ('blind liberalism'), rejecting federalism and calling for '*une autre Europe*' based on social solidarity. 'The MDC is founded on a double refusal of France to imperialism (Gulf War) and the capitulation of Europe to the logic of financial markets (Maastricht referendum) ... and strongly favours the construction of a Europe of nations, of peoples, that is to say citizens, from the Atlantic to the Urals ... This will permit nations to live, to exercise their rights in the framework of the historical, geographic and cultural space that belongs to them at the heart of European civilisation'. The document also contains, somewhat surprisingly, a cultural rationale of a European civilisation which deserves protection—although this is aimed at the US rather than the developing world. Finally, the MDC's proposed European model is couched firmly in the Republican tradition: 'it is the very heart (*l'essence même*) of the universal message of the Republic'.

<sup>72</sup> On the evolution of the Communist position on Europe, see E. Callot, 'The French Communist Party and Europe: the idea and its implementation', *EJPR*, Vol. 16, 1988, pp. 301-16. From a sympathetic position in the immediate post war era, the party took an uncompromisingly hostile stance from 1947, modified from 1962 to a qualified opposition based on hostility towards the construction of a 'Capitalist Europe'. As with aspects of the MDC critique, the PCF argues that the EU represents a 'Europe of the capitalists', benefitting large multinationals rather than benefitting workers or encouraging higher levels of social protection. The party's attachment to national sovereignty—given the internationalist flavour of Communism—may seem contradictory, but it has tended to view the nation-state as a more legitimate and effective defender of its interests than the EU. It has consistently voted against all EC/EU Treaties debated in parliament. See Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, p. 94. Zolner places the party in the 'pragmatic' national-European grouping despite its anti-MTEU and anti-Amsterdam stance, as its position is somewhat ambiguous with calls for a '*Europe des nations solidaires*' and a stronger EU social charter.

<sup>73</sup> Formed to contest the 1999 EP elections (in 1994 both Pasqua and de Villiers headed their own anti-EU parties). Its full name '*Rassemblement pour la France et l'Indépendance de l'Europe*' summarises its stance. The first of the 'ambitions for France' set out in the program is '*La République renouée et retrouvée dans une France indépendante et souveraine*'. The program fiercely rejects globalisation and situates European integration within that process, which, it argues, serves to promote US domination. See RPF web site at <<http://www.rpfie.org>>. Pasqua argues for democracy to be safeguarded at the national level, seeing 'Europe' as transferring sovereignty from the people to the 'aristocracy' in Brussels. See also his passionately argued article 'Give the Europeans their sovereignty!' in *Le Monde*, 6 August 2001.

Table 7.1 Party positions on the EU

<i>Anti-EU; pro national sovereignty</i>	<i>Pragmatic integrationist</i> <sup>74</sup>	<i>Federalist</i>
PCF, Hue	PS	Greens
LCR, Laguiller	RPR	UDF
MDC, Chevènement		PRG
<i>Demain la France</i> , Pasqua <sup>75</sup>		
<i>Majorité pour une autre Europe</i> , de Villiers <sup>76</sup>		
RPF, Pasqua, de Villiers		
FN / MNR, Le Pen / Mégret		

Source: adapted from Zolner, 'National Images', p.14.

The (predominant) 'national-Europeanists' base their program on a more pragmatic mixed approach which looks to 'Europe' to defend French interests while opting for intergovernmental structures in sensitive areas of foreign policy and defence.<sup>77</sup> This approach acknowledges that the nation-state is no longer necessarily the best level at which to achieve desired policy outcomes, while still calling on French Republican traditions to support their actions. It perhaps best illustrates the paradox of wanting a powerful Europe with weak institutions.<sup>78</sup> It attempts to minimise opposition between national and European interests, and argues that European integration is compatible with the continued existence of the nation.

The smaller body of federalists look to a politically united Europe with various 'layers' of government—regional, national and European—and a supranational European-level executive and

<sup>74</sup> There are substantial splits within these parties; however their overall 'official' line is pro-EU. The RPR contested the 1999 EP elections with a joint list with *Démocratie libérale*; the UDF, led by François Bayrou, declined to join forces and presented their own candidates.

<sup>75</sup> Co-founded with Séguin in 1992; fought the 1994 EP elections.

<sup>76</sup> De Villiers' party for the 1994 EP elections.

<sup>77</sup> This has generally been the mainstream position of the Socialists and the liberal-Gaullists in the RPR. See the European policy of the PS at their web site: <<http://www.parti-socialiste.fr/>>. For analysis, see A.Cole, 'The French Socialists' in Gaffney (ed.), *Political Parties*, pp.71-85; G.Ross, 'French Social Democracy and the EMU', *Arena Working Paper*, no. 98/19. For the official Gaullist-RPR position, see RPR web site at <<http://www.rpr.org>>; for analysis, see J.Shields, 'The French Gaullists' in Gaffney (ed.), *Political Parties*, pp.86-109. He concludes that the RPR position on Europe is now only Gaullist 'in the most tenuous sense', p.105.

<sup>78</sup> This is increasingly becoming a problem—an untenable contradiction, in the words of pro-Europeanist Cohen-Tanugi. See his analysis in 'Europe: la vacance française' (Europe: the French holiday), *Le Débat*, no. 83, January-February 1995, pp.35-41. He argues that France's traditional ambivalence concerning political integration—on the one hand desiring a powerful European entity ('*Europe-puissance*') while on the other hand not providing it with the institutional means or political legitimacy to achieve this—must be overcome.

legislative body. Yet many French federalists too argue that this is the best way to ensure cultural diversity (read national identity) and French influence.<sup>79</sup>

The various groups correspond to, and can draw upon, French myths and images of the nationhood, as discussed in Chapter 3.<sup>80</sup> They call on differing models of the nation, political and/or cultural, and ground their positions in differing models of nationalism, Republican or counter-revolutionary. The former stresses the universal values of French identity; the latter the particularistic. The sovereignty camp comprises aspects of both: a counter-Revolutionary nationalism from an extreme right stance (FN, MNR, de Villiers), the Gaullism of Pasqua from the Right, and Jacobin Republicanism of Chevènement from the Left. All promote a strong state to uphold national values and interests, while disagreeing on the nature of these values and interests.

The pragmatists reflect a type of Republican nationalism that holds to France's universal values but have transferred the desire for independence and power from the national to the European level. France can fulfil its missionary (*rayonnement*) functions, then, via Europe.<sup>81</sup> They are prepared to countenance decentralisation, using subsidiarity, as a means of maintaining some powers at national level, but also to transfer some powers to Europe. In the words of Lionel Jospin, 'Europe must be a supplementary space for democracy ... which will not substitute for the nation'.<sup>82</sup>

Finally, the federalists, according to Zolner, reflect an anti-Jacobin nationalism, promoting a federal structure to counter the dangers of over-centralisation, or Jacobinism. Drawing on liberal '*girondisme*' it calls on this particular Republican tradition both to allow for French internal reform and to inspire the future shape of the EU.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>79</sup> This strand is represented mainly by the UDF, as well as the Greens and the PRG. The UDF is made up of a number of right and centre-right parties. Not all may be classed as federalist, but overall it has been the most consistent supporter of a federal Europe. The main parties in the UDF confederation are the Republican Party (PR) and the Christian Democratic Party. See its European program at <<http://europe99.udf.org/>>, entitled '*Franchement Européen*': the EU 'is the result of the founding Fathers, the most eminent of which have belonged to our political family. This same year, the euro has become a success with no historical precedent, the success of the century. But the euro will not "complete" Europe ... The decisive step towards a real European Union has not yet been taken ... We must now construct a political Europe. We desire a political Europe ... if we do not realise this project, then we will be condemned to remain at the mercy of global giants, the US in particular'.

<sup>80</sup> This argument is also taken up, in a modified form, by Zolner.

<sup>81</sup> See Zolner, 'National Images', pp.21-2.

<sup>82</sup> Jospin, quoted in *Le Monde*, 30 August 2000.

<sup>83</sup> J-P Colombe, in a long editorial in *Le Monde*, 25 August 2000, also invokes *girondisme*. Entitled 'Our Republic', the editorial asserts that the Jacobins have constructed an ideological and partisan Republican history, but do not have a monopoly on the Republic. One can be '*girondin*', supporting some decentralisation, and still be 'perfectly Republican', pp.1, 7.

It is difficult, however, decisively to pin these types of nationalism / national myths onto the differing groupings in practice, although they explicitly claim such a heritage. The sovereignty camp, as noted, has significant divergences. The anti-EU policy of the 'Jacobin' Republicans and the FN may make use of the same national myths but are poles apart in intention. Republican *souverainistes* do not exploit a counter-Revolutionary tradition. The 'national-Europeans' and the federalists can both, at times, claim aspects of the '*girondin*' heritage. Finally, analyses of declarations and party programs does not necessarily translate into corresponding action, a fact noted by most analysts of the France-EU relationship. Whatever the stance, French Republican traditions and national interests are invoked as the bases for positions on European integration—and all draw on an anti-US sentiment. As in the immigration and citizenship debates, the FN has been able to align itself with various 'nationalist' opposition voices, identifying with Republican traditions and a political reading of nationhood that stresses national sovereignty.<sup>84</sup>

At heart, the European debate concerns the future of the nation. In particular, European integration concerns the exercise of political sovereignty and its relation to democracy; it also affects France's role as a leading power with universal values, and a mission to transmit these to the world. The EU debate, then, is closely linked with elements of the national identity debates of the 1980s and 1990s. The language of nationhood has come to the fore in the most controversial debates on European integration and this has again proven advantageous for the *Front national*.

### *Early initiatives*

The section examines the evolution of positions on European integration at crucial points in the development of the Union and highlights the extent to which the ideas of nationhood—in this case the political nation as a basis for democracy—have come to the fore in debates concerning European integration. The concept of the political nation constituting the ideal democratic body and expressing the will of the people has been a powerful model—and at times instrument (in the case of the FN)—which has upheld an intergovernmental approach to integration, privileging the nation-state as the central actor and distrusting supranational approaches and institutions. In the same way as immigration, integration and citizenship policies have drawn on particular imaginings of the nation, both political (dominant) and ethnic, so the debates on European integration are rooted in French understandings of nationhood. National self-understanding has not only conditioned the

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<sup>84</sup> Other European extreme right parties are also opposed to the EU, but are unable to ground their criticism in such a favourable context. On such other parties, see C. Fieschi et al., 'Extreme right-wing parties and the European Union: France, Germany and Italy' in Gaffney (ed.), *Political Parties*, pp. 235-53.

outlines of the national interest but also provides a cognitive matrix which influences the choices and actions of the major parties.

Analysis of France's role in European integration illustrates how the issue of 'Europe' cross-cuts the traditional Left-Right cleavage: opposition and support are found within both camps. This also lends support to the thesis that ideational structures shape the behaviour and positions of the parties on the European question. Europe, it would appear, forms its own cleavage, based squarely on concepts of nationhood, particularly those relating to national sovereignty. These no longer correspond to traditional Left-Right divides and so weaken the position of the established mainstream parties that reflect this division. They do, however, correspond to particular French imaginings of nation and Republic: the voluntarist, democratic, statist concepts are at the fore, while the theme of a 'defence of national identity' (as in the citizenship debates) underpins the policies and rhetoric of the extreme right. Paradoxically, proponents of an exclusivist ethnic concept of the nation have also been able to use the idea of 'Europe' in order to protect a racialised national identity and 'European civilisation'.

### *The Treaty of Paris*

Throughout its development, European integration has been seen not only as serving the French interest, but also very much as an elite-led 'French idea'.<sup>85</sup> The ECSC resulted from a French proposal to pool coal and steel production in France and Germany. On May 9 1950 (now 'Europe Day'<sup>86</sup>), Foreign Minister Robert Schuman proposed that 'Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole be placed under a common High Authority, within the framework of an organization open to the participation of the other countries of Europe'.<sup>87</sup> The proposal, moreover, would lead to 'the first concrete realisation of a European federation indispensable to the

<sup>85</sup> See for example A. Duhamel, *La Politique Imaginaire* (Imagined Politics), Paris, Flammarion, 1995. He refers to Europe as part of the national legacy (*patrimoine national*): France alone had been capable of inspiring the integration process, p.277. In his *Une ambition française* (A French Ambition), Paris, Plon, 1999, he refers to 'Europe' as an '*idée française*' from Briand to Delors, p.16—and strongly criticises the nationalist actions of de Gaulle. On the role of the elites, see Parsons, 'Domestic Interests'. He quotes from Védrine's *Les mondes du François Mitterrand*, Paris, Seuil, 1996: '...since its origins ... European integration has been a voluntarist and elitist movement *par excellence* ... the pure product of a modern form of enlightened despotism', p.26.

<sup>86</sup> Despite the fact that only six western European countries participated in this initial project, the EU has largely appropriated the terms 'Europe' and 'European'; the desire of CEECs in the 1990s to 'rejoin Europe', particularly via membership of the EU, suggests that it has largely succeeded.

<sup>87</sup> The Schuman declaration is reproduced in Fontaine, *A new idea for Europe*, pp.36-7. Schuman's proposal was inspired by French high-level civil servant, Jean Monnet, a 'founding father' in the EU pantheon. At that time he was head of the French Planning Commission. See F. Duchêne, *Jean Monnet, The First Statesman of Interdependence*, New York, Norton, 1996; also Monnet's own account in his *Mémoires*, Paris, Fayard, 1976, in particular pp.341-72.

preservation of peace'.<sup>88</sup> The resultant Treaty of Paris setting up the ECSC contained explicit supranational provisions that suggest a federalist vision, albeit with pragmatic undertones.<sup>89</sup>

**Table 7.2 Key dates in European integration**

1950	9 May	Schuman Declaration
1951	18 April	Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community signed by the Six: Benelux, France, Germany & Italy
1952	27 May	Treaty establishing the European Defence Community is signed
1954	30 August	French parliament rejects the EDC Treaty
1955	1-2 June	Messina Conference
1957	25 March	Treaties of Rome create the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community
1962	30 July	CAP begins operation
1963	14 January	De Gaulle veto on UK accession
1965	8 April	Treaty merging the three Communities signed
1965	Autumn	Empty chair crisis
1966	29 January	Luxembourg Compromise
1973	1 January	Denmark, Ireland and UK join the Community
1979	13 March	European Monetary System is established
1981	1 January	Greece joins the Community
1986	1 January	Portugal and Spain join the Community
1986	17/28 February <sup>90</sup>	Single European Act is signed
1990	19 June	Schengen agreement on elimination of border checks signed
1990	3 October	Unification of Germany
1992	7 February	Maastricht Treaty of European Union is signed
1992	20 September	French referendum approves MTEU
1995	1 January	Austria, Finland and Sweden join the EU
1997	16 July	Agenda 2000 presented to European Parliament
1997	2 October	Amsterdam Treaty is signed
1998	20 March	Beginning of membership negotiations with the CEECs
1999	1 January	Introduction of the euro in 11 member states
2001	26 February	Signing of the Treaty of Nice

Source: adapted from the European Commission's 'History of the EU' at  
<[http://europa.eu.int/abc/history/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/abc/history/index_en.html)>

<sup>88</sup> The Schuman Declaration.

<sup>89</sup> See *Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community*, London, HMSO, 1972. For a detailed examination of the proposal, and French reactions, see F. Willis, *France, Germany and the New Europe*, Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1968, pp.80-103. Sonia Mazey refers to Schuman and Monnet as 'pragmatic federalists'—see 'European integration: Unfinished journey or journey without end?' in J. Richardson (ed.), *European Union: Power and Policy-Making*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London, Routledge, 2001, pp.27-51.

<sup>90</sup> Nine member states signed in Luxembourg on 17 February; Denmark, Italy and Greece signed in The Hague on 28 February. See Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, p.119. The Act did not come into effect until 1 July 1987.

Portrayed as a means to prevent war in Europe—in particular by establishing control over the traditional tools of war-making and through reconciliation with Germany—and to promote economic recovery, its proponents had economic, political and security arguments on their side. Its architect, Jean Monnet, argued that effective economic action was moving beyond the capacity of the nation-state, and that such joint actions were vital to secure national prosperity. The pooling of sovereignty was an indispensable aspect of the plan.<sup>91</sup> The underlying motives are contested: despite the avowed federal aspirations of the Schuman Plan, it may still be seen as a means of pursuing French national interests, not only by containing Germany but also by providing protection to inefficient French steel producers.<sup>92</sup>

While general public opinion was not mobilised—Willis notes a 'vague, uninformed benevolence'<sup>93</sup>—other parties, including industry, unions and federalists, lobbied the politicians. Even in the post-war environment where nationalism was totally discredited, and where the idea of transcending the nation-state was seen as an attractive means to ensure peace in Europe, the proposal was highly contested. Opponents argued that it undermined French democratic institutions, attacked national sovereignty, was incompatible with national identity, and threatened the peaceful coexistence of states in Europe. The Gaullists and Communists argued fiercely against its provisions.<sup>94</sup> As with the debates on immigrant incorporation, both sides sought to place their position within a particular narrative of French identity and tradition. The final vote, 377 to 233, indicates that the political elite was far from the consensus found in the parliamentary MTEU ratification debates in the 1990s. The Treaty of Paris establishing the Community was signed on 18 April 1951, less than one year after the Schuman declaration, by six West European countries: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Monnet looked to the building of 'Europe' by a concrete, step-by-step approach, and argued that the loss of national sovereignty was justified by the achievement of peace and prosperity in western Europe. On the crucial supranational component required—relinquishing national sovereignty—according to Monnet, see his *Mémoires*, where he refers to 'this battle to create a new sovereignty made up of the fusion of existing sovereignties', p.520. He criticised the intergovernmental nature of the Council of Europe, arguing that the requirement for consensus would render it ineffective—see his comments, pp.324, 510. Monnet was appointed the first president of the ECSC's High Authority, the supranational executive that administered the ECSC. On the structure and operation of the ECSC, see D.Urwin, *The Community of Europe*, London, Longman, 1991, pp.47-57.

<sup>92</sup> See Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51*, London, Methuen, 1984. He notes that the Plan was a means of ensuring French competitiveness in steel and manufacturing. However he argues that the role of domestic interest groups was not significant: this was primarily an elite-driven, political decision for the French.

<sup>93</sup> Willis, *France, Germany and the New Europe*, p.98.

<sup>94</sup> On French arguments for and against the Treaty, see T.Banchoff, 'National identity and EU legitimacy in France and Germany' in Banchoff and Smith (eds), *Legitimacy and the European Union*, pp.180-98. See also Willis, *France, Germany and the New Europe*, pp.81-103.

<sup>95</sup> The UK and the Scandinavian countries cited issues of national sovereignty as central to their non-involvement.



The next major move towards further integration that involved a loss of sovereignty moved from the economic to the military-security arena. Proposed by the French, however, the European Defence Community was also scuppered by the French in 1954. The rejection of the EDC by the Chamber of Deputies was driven largely by fears of ceding national sovereignty in the sensitive and vital arena of national defence.

*The EDC and the defence of the political nation*

In October 1950 French Prime Minister René Pleven proposed a European Defence Community (sometimes referred to as the 'Pleven Plan') that would incorporate a common European army. Again, external circumstances were influential, and the proposal may certainly be viewed as a French reaction to the promotion of German rearmament by the US, following the outbreak of the Korean War and intensification of the Cold War.<sup>96</sup> According to the proposal, all German military units would fall under the EDC umbrella, hence allowing German rearmament without German control. Thus the 'traditional' fear of German military domination was incorporated within a pro-Europeanist response, adjudged as 'trying to hitch the unwelcome rearmament of Germany to the new hope of a united Europe'.<sup>97</sup>

A federalist influence was still observable in the proposal, with a common European army, controlled by a European Defence Minister and responsible to a European Assembly. However the level of French opposition to the treaty finally resulted in its rejection by the Chamber of Deputies in August 1954 by 319 to 264 votes, with 43 abstentions<sup>98</sup>—its late submission to the legislature a mark of the difficulties that had been anticipated by the government of the day.<sup>99</sup>

The issue of sovereignty was a decisive factor in both France and Germany.<sup>100</sup> Although the 'no' vote in France was also driven by anti-German sentiment and apprehension over German

<sup>96</sup> See Urwin, *The Community of Europe*, p.48.

<sup>97</sup> Duchêne, 'French motives for European integration', pp.22-35.

<sup>98</sup> See Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, p.43. Communists and Gaullists voted against, accompanied by 50 per cent of the radicals and socialists and a minority of independents.

<sup>99</sup> As noted by Urwin, *The Community of Europe*, pp.65-6, Schuman had delayed introducing the EDC Treaty to parliament for ratification as he feared its rejection. Pro-European parties had declined in strength since 1950; moreover, the government was weak and divided, with little consensus amongst its constituent parties. For details of French reactions, see Willis, *France, Germany and the New Europe*, pp.138-45. He quotes Raymond Aron on the significance of the plan, who likened the split in opinion to the Dreyfus affair, p.138. Aron noted that while the quarrel apparently related to German rearmament, at heart its 'deepest significance affected the very principle of French existence, the national state'. The reference to the Dreyfus case is in R.Aron and D.Lerner (eds), *La Querelle de la CED* (The Quarrel over the EDC), Paris, Colin, 1956, p.9.

<sup>100</sup> The EDC Treaty was approved in West Germany in February 1952. Despite some opposition there, Chancellor Adenauer argued for the Treaty on the grounds of national sovereignty, namely, that West German rearmament within this framework would be a step towards the restoration of sovereignty in that country. See K.Adenauer, *Mémoires*, trans. B.von Oppen, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1966, pp.270-1.



rearmament, it was also a vote for retaining national independence in an area as sensitive and vital as national security. While the French parliament rejected EDC and German rearmament, the subsequent decision to rearm Germany in the framework of an intergovernmental organisation suggests that the crucial factor was not rearmament as such.<sup>101</sup> Rather, it was the supranational character of the EDC proposal and its implications for the creation of a federal, political Europe. De Gaulle summed up the opposition of the Gaullists: he called it a 'crafty scheme for a so-called European army which threatens to put an end to France's sovereignty'.<sup>102</sup>

### *The EEC and Euratom*

Following the demise of the EDC, there was little expectation of the creation of new integrative Communities the short term. From a French perspective, there was no overwhelming economic case, nor, seemingly political desire, for the negotiation of an economic community based on free trade.<sup>103</sup> The initiative, however, did not emanate from France but from the Benelux countries. A meeting of the foreign ministers of the Six at Messina discussed two sectors for future integration: a customs union to lead to a common market, and a nuclear energy community.<sup>104</sup> The committee set up by the Messina conference to examine further sectors for future integration was chaired by the Belgian Foreign Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak, a committed Europeanist.

The French were well disposed to the idea of a pooling of nuclear energy information and research, but the reaction to the idea of a common market was 'almost uniformly hostile'<sup>105</sup>—a reflection of the anxiety felt concerning the removal of industry protection.<sup>106</sup> It was French politicians, and in particular a small number of Community-minded men, rather than domestic interest groups, that promoted a Community strategy.<sup>107</sup> The French decision to take part in the EEC at a time of economic, political and military weakness, then, marked a break in policy and a surrender of sovereignty that was surprising to many.<sup>108</sup> It was largely driven by the debate on how best to serve

<sup>101</sup> The organisation in question was the Western European Union (WEU), formed in October 1954.

<sup>102</sup> Cited in Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, p.83. On the visceral nature of the debate, see also E. Duhamel's contribution on the EDC in Sirinelli (ed.), *Dictionnaire Historique*, pp.137-41.

<sup>103</sup> Duchêne, 'French motives'.

<sup>104</sup> At the Messina conference, the French supported Euratom but had bought no new proposals to the conference. Pinay (the French Foreign Minister) was instructed to consider Euratom, but not discuss the EEC proposal. However Pinay 'stepped beyond his instructions' and approved a study of the EEC proposal. See Parsons, 'Domestic Interests', p.55; Duchêne 'French motives', pp.29-30.

<sup>105</sup> Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, p.32.

<sup>106</sup> For French preferences and outcomes at the negotiations (1955-1958) stressing the economic imperatives, see Moravcsik, *The choice for Europe*, pp.92-3.

<sup>107</sup> Parsons, 'Domestic Interests', pp.52-8.

<sup>108</sup> F. Lynch, 'Restoring France: the road to integration' in Milward et al., *The Frontier of National Sovereignty*, pp.59-87, notes that France's decision to join the EEC marked a 'sharp break' with previous

French national interest, conditioned by France's experience of war, its relationship with Germany and its economic weaknesses.

Preliminary approval for the continued negotiation of the two treaties had to be gained in the French parliament in 1956. This proceeded fairly smoothly and quickly for Euratom, with approval granted in July 1956. However as predicted the common market proposal was more controversial. The parliament insisted on concessions to ensure that France would 'guarantee [its] essential ... economic interests'.<sup>109</sup> The enthusiasm of the five other countries involved allowed France to negotiate major concessions, first, in relation to its overseas possessions, and second, with the inclusion of a common agricultural policy in the EEC Treaty. Even with these major concessions there was still Poujadiste, (some) Gaullist and Communist dissent.<sup>110</sup> Concessions did not solve the basic problem of a surrender of sovereignty, whether or not the overall package might be judged as in France's national interest. Elsewhere, the package was interpreted as a compromise: namely, France gaining major concessions in return for opening up its industry to competition.<sup>111</sup>

The Treaties of Rome which set up the EEC and a European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) were signed by the six ECSC member states in Rome, 25 March 1957.<sup>112</sup> In the French parliament, the decision to ratify was driven by a fear of the consequences of non-acceptance, in both economic and foreign policy, with economic arguments predominant. This was understandable given the economic nature of the EEC Treaty: it would introduce a common market with free movement of goods, a common external tariff, and a common agricultural policy.<sup>113</sup> The Poujadists, Communists

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protectionist policies—and that, based on the assumption of continued protectionism, the UK was confident that France would not sign up.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in Urwin, *The Community of Europe*, p.78. As noted, Moravcsik argues that the driving force behind French agreement on the EEC was economic rather than geo-political. See *The choice for Europe*, pp.103-22. Nonetheless the geo-political and ideological impetus cannot be overlooked—most notably, the decision to bind (West) Germany into a European organisation, to bolster West European security in the Cold War, and to achieve Franco-German reconciliation. The role of elite politicians is also crucial.

<sup>110</sup> The only representative of the federalist movement in the French parliament was the small MRP (Monnet's party) that had declined in influence and numbers since 1950. The Socialists also supported the Rome Treaties, but were not federalist.

<sup>111</sup> On the Treaty of Rome as a Franco-German trade-off, see R.Tiersky, 'Mitterrand, France and Europe', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 9 (1), Winter 1991, pp.9-25.

<sup>112</sup> In theory both the Euratom and EEC Treaties are the Treaties of Rome; in practice the label 'Treaty of Rome' tends to refer to the EEC Treaty. See Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, p.33.

<sup>113</sup> For details of the Treaty contents, see Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, pp.45-8. The broad objectives are set out in Article 2: 'The Community shall have as its task, by establishing a common market and progressively approximating the economic policies of Member States, to promote throughout the Community a harmonious development of economic activities, a continuous and balanced expansion, an increase in stability, an accelerated raising of the standard of living and closer relations between the states belonging to it'. See *Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (Treaty of Rome)*. Although references to peace remain, overall, as Nelsen notes in *The European Union*, there is a 'subtle shift of emphasis away from peace to economic prosperity as the driving motive for unity', p.13.

and some Gaullists again voted against, but the treaties were passed by a relatively comfortable majority (342 to 239), with little heated debate.<sup>114</sup> The argument that both treaties were in France's national interest, ensuring Franco-German reconciliation, also carried weight.<sup>115</sup>

The lack of opposition may also be accounted for by the content of the EEC Treaty: economic and trade issues were not as central to concepts of national independence as foreign and security policy. There was little here in the sensitive areas of common foreign or defence policy; moreover, the institutional design of the new Communities had shifted away from supranationalism. The new treaties did not contain the more explicitly federal elements of the Paris Treaty.<sup>116</sup> The aim remained 'an ever closer union of the peoples of Europe', but ultimate decision-making power resided in the intergovernmental Council of Ministers, with a strengthened role, while the power of the (supranational) Commission was curtailed.<sup>117</sup> Parsons also notes that the diversionary effects of the looming Algerian and economic crises: 'many thought the treaty would never be implemented'!<sup>118</sup>

The treaties did, however, come into operation at the beginning of 1958, a year that also saw the fall of the weakened Fourth Republic, precipitated by the Algerian war and accompanied by a severe financial crisis. This led to the return of de Gaulle and the birth of the Fifth Republic, with a new constitution ratified by referendum in October of that year. Partly in reaction to the perceived instability of the Fourth Republic<sup>119</sup>—and also reflecting de Gaulle's preferences—the new constitution strengthened the role of the executive at the expense of the legislative body,<sup>120</sup> and

<sup>114</sup> See Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, pp.44-5. On the lack of debate at this stage, Moravcsik points out in *The choice for Europe*, pp.150-2, that the parliament had approved the negotiating position just some six months earlier.

<sup>115</sup> See for example Lynch, 'Restoring France'. He argues that French signing of the Treaties was the 'outcome of a prolonged debate about how best to secure the French national interest—a debate which was driven by the shock of defeat in 1940', p.60.

<sup>116</sup> Pinder refers to a 'weakening of the federalist impulse', *The Building of the European Union*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, p.10.

<sup>117</sup> The Commission had the unique right of initiating legislation: the pattern was encapsulated in the phrase 'The Commission proposes: the Council disposes'. The role of the European Assembly—the forerunner to the European Parliament—at this stage was purely advisory.

<sup>118</sup> Only thirty deputies cast their notes in person. See Parsons, 'Domestic Interests', p.57. He also notes that the Socialists were unwilling to vote against a proposal closely identified with PS chief, Mollet. Public acceptance was then driven by an elite pro-European group of politicians: Socialist Mollet, centrist Fauré, conservative Pinay. The two most popular politicians, Mendès France (before the EEC negotiations) and de Gaulle (following), supported a confederal, not a supranational, approach.

<sup>119</sup> The instability of the executive led to twenty-five governments and fifteen different prime ministers in the Fourth Republic's short existence. Only two of these prime ministers lasted for more than a year. It has been calculated that the governments of the Fourth Republic spent about 10 per cent of their time trying to resolve ministerial crises. See Bernstein, *Fragile Glory*, p.235.

<sup>120</sup> On the institutions and distribution of power in the Fifth Republic, see M.Hancock et al., *Politics in Western Europe*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998, pp.130-53; 188-200; on position and powers of the executive, see Safran, *The French Polity*, pp.161-200.

granted extensive powers to the President.<sup>121</sup> As noted earlier, foreign and defence policy became the exclusive domain (*le domaine réservé*) of the President—in this case, de Gaulle—and this primacy remained unchallenged until the 1980s.<sup>122</sup> De Gaulle also brought a specifically confederal vision of the integration project, based on the belief that the nation-states of Europe were the indispensable and central building blocks of a European and global order. Further, his vision held that French independence was not to be compromised, and that France was destined to lead this confederal organisation.

### *Gaullism: championing the nation-state*

The nationalist approach to integration was strengthened with the arrival of de Gaulle. At the core of the Gaullist philosophy was a more intransigent nationalism with a stress on national independence, grandeur and unity.<sup>123</sup> An anti-‘Anglo-Saxon’ stance was also central: de Gaulle blocked UK applications to join the Community throughout his presidency and was frequently hostile to US involvement in Europe.<sup>124</sup> This tendency is continued in contemporary anti-US sentiment—which paradoxically provides validation for the construction of a strong international European entity. The leitmotif of national sovereignty and its preservation within a European system appears throughout de Gaulle’s speeches and writings.<sup>125</sup> Thus de Gaulle promoted a

<sup>121</sup> The President was appointed—and from 1962, directly elected—for a seven-year term. In 2000 a referendum was held to change this to a five-year term to correspond to the legislative period. In theory, this should limit, if not abolish, the possibility of *cohabitation* where president and prime minister are from opposing sides of politics (e.g. Chirac, RPR; Jospin, PS).

<sup>122</sup> By the 1990s it became clear that EU relations were not just a matter of foreign policy, reserved for the president, but also a domestic policy issue. The mid-1980s saw a clear divergence of views over this between Mitterrand and Chirac—during a period of cohabitation, notably—with Mitterrand declaring that European affairs were primarily the concern of the president and Chirac that they were a prime ministerial concern. At this time the EC was still widely considered—and perceived by the public—as being in the presidential domain, and Mitterrand campaigned on this in the 1988 presidential elections.

<sup>123</sup> There are numerous studies of de Gaulle and ‘Gaullism’. For analysis of the central ideas underpinning Gaullism, see J.-C. Petitfils, *Le Gaullisme*, Paris, Seuil, 1977. He sets out two fundamental principles: national grandeur, accompanied by independence (including economic and military strength); and national unity, as guaranteed by a strong state. France’s special role in the Cold War world set it apart from other countries as it strove to move beyond an ideologically divided (and two bloc dominated) world. For analysis of de Gaulle’s foreign policy approach, see A. Hartley, *Gaullism. The Rise and Fall of a Political Movement*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972, pp. 195–243; Le Quintrec, *La France dans le monde depuis 1945*, pp. 16–27. De Gaulle’s ‘other vision’ of Europe incorporated anti-federalist and anti-Atlanticist positions, along with a leadership role for France in a more powerful Europe. The much quoted ‘*Toute ma vie, je me suis fait une certaine idée de la France*’—inspired by sentiment as much as reason—comes from the opening to his *Mémoires de Guerre: L’Appel*. For studies on the evolution of Gaullism, see Chapter 8, note 59.

<sup>124</sup> De Gaulle withdrew France from NATO’s integrated military structure in 1966, although it remained within NATO’s political structure.

<sup>125</sup> See for example the chapter on ‘Europe’ in his *Mémoires d’espoir: Le renouveau*, pp. 173–210. He referred to integration as a ‘process of evolution that might lead to ... confederation’, p. 182.

distinctly confederal vision of Europe—a confederal ‘Europe of States’.<sup>126</sup> Accordingly, his favoured *modus operandi* for closer European cooperation was determinedly intergovernmental. This may be seen in two separate developments: first, in his proposal for a common foreign and defence policy outside of the Community framework—the Fouchet Plan—followed by a choice to deepen the bilateral Franco-German relationship; and second, in the so-called ‘Empty Chair’ crisis of 1965-66.

### *The Fouchet Plan*

In September 1960 de Gaulle put forward a plan for a European ‘Union of States’ based on a confederal model.<sup>127</sup> Clearly opposed to—and incompatible with—the type of integration embodied in the Paris and Rome Treaties, the ensuing Fouchet Plan<sup>128</sup> called for a common foreign and defence policy for ‘Europe’ within a confederal framework. It proposed four major institutions: a Council composed of heads of government or foreign ministers, where decisions would be taken by consensus; a secretariat (based in Paris) made up of national officials; intergovernmental committees; and a nationally-appointed assembly. This structure did not foresee any diminution of national sovereignty and allowed no supranational elements.<sup>129</sup> Resisted by the smaller member states, the drafting committee, and the plan, collapsed.<sup>130</sup> It was, however, indicative of de Gaulle’s approach to European integration. There was to be no loss of national sovereignty, and French leadership would be assured within an intergovernmental framework.<sup>131</sup>

Germany had supported the French proposal, however, and following the breakdown of the Fouchet negotiations, de Gaulle sought to strengthen the bilateral relationship. He and German Chancellor Adenauer signed a Treaty of Friendship and Reconciliation in January 1963. This treaty provided an institutional basis for bilateral cooperation and embedded the Franco-German partnership at the

<sup>126</sup> The term ‘*Europe des patries*’ is often attributed to de Gaulle. While accurately identifying his approach, the phrase was coined by his Prime Minister, Michel Debré. De Gaulle more commonly referred to a Europe of States. See de Gaulle, *Discours et Messages*, Vol. III, Paris, Plon, 1970, pp.406-7. The phrase ‘*Europe des patries*’ is now used commonly by the FN, which has largely appropriated Gaullist rhetoric on the question of European integration.

<sup>127</sup> See Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, pp.48-54.

<sup>128</sup> Named after the chair of the committee drafting the proposal, the French ambassador to Denmark.

<sup>129</sup> The French ‘three pillar’ design for the Maastricht Treaty some thirty years later, placing foreign and security policy and interior affairs in an intergovernmental framework removed from the Community structure, has been compared to the Fouchet proposals. See Moravcsik, *The choice for Europe*, pp.450-1.

<sup>130</sup> For details of the negotiations and collapse, see Urwin, *The Community of Europe*, pp.104-7; Willis, *France, Germany and the New Europe*, pp.292-9.

<sup>131</sup> In his *Mémoires d’espoir*, de Gaulle wrote at length on the proposals in his chapter on Europe. Hartley considers this a sign of the importance he attached to them—see his *Gaullism*, p.218.

heart of the European integration process.<sup>132</sup> In so doing, it also privileged the role of the nation-state (here France and Germany) in setting the European agenda and directing negotiations. The regular meetings between the leaders and their involvement in producing joint statements or proposals on the future direction of European integration have served to lessen the influence of supranational actors (notably the Commission) and promote the influence of the two national governments.<sup>133</sup>

### 'Empty chair' crisis

Most well-known of de Gaulle's actions relating to Europe is the 'empty chair' (*chaise vide*) crisis of 1965-66, centred on his refusal to give up the right of national veto and accept majority voting within the Council of Ministers. He noted in his memoirs that the Treaty of Rome specified that all decisions had to be unanimous for an initial period. This ruling ensured, for the initial period, that there was no infringement of French sovereignty.<sup>134</sup> By 1966, however, the major Council decisions were to be taken by majority vote. The attempt by the Commission in 1965 to introduce three new measures (relating to the CAP and the budget) afforded de Gaulle an opportunity to challenge not only the supranational aspects of the Commission proposals but also the introduction of majority voting in Council. His refusal to agree to the package of measures proposed by the Commission resulted in a French boycott of Community institutions—hence the 'empty chair' label—from June 1965 to January 1966.<sup>135</sup> After protracted negotiations, the six countries came to a compromise, if not an agreement: named the Luxembourg Compromise, it included the right (*de facto* but not *de jure*—there was no treaty amendment) of national veto if vital national interests were at stake.<sup>136</sup> The intergovernmentalist view of de Gaulle prevailed; the supranational aspirations of 'Europeanists' were thwarted.<sup>137</sup> The crisis played a major role in increasing the influence of the

<sup>132</sup> Dinan comments that it would have enraged de Gaulle to know how this treaty worked to promote European integration in the future—see *Ever Closer Union*, p.51.

<sup>133</sup> On the Franco-German relationship within the EU, see H.Simonian, *The Privileged Partnership: Franco-German Relations in the European Community*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1984; J.Friend, *The Lynchpin: Franco-German relations 1950-1990*, New York, Praeger, 1991; and D.Webber, *The Franco-German Relationship in the European Union*, London, Routledge, 1999.

<sup>134</sup> De Gaulle, *Mémoires d'espoir*, p.196: 'I looked after it [French sovereignty] with care', he noted.

<sup>135</sup> For detailed description of the crisis, and the resulting Luxembourg Compromise, see W.Kulski, *De Gaulle and The World*, New York, Syracuse University Press, 1966, pp.207-27.

<sup>136</sup> Unanimity would be required '*lorsqu'il s'agit des intérêts très importants*'. See A.Pratt, 'La V<sup>e</sup> République et l'Europe' (The Fifth Republic and Europe) in Chagnollaud (ed.), *La Vie politique en France*, pp.199-219; quote on p.209. He goes on to note a 1992 parliamentary address by the prime minister asserting that France had never renounced the right to defend important national interests. Notably, the Luxembourg compromise in this French text is examined under the heading of 'democratic deficit', pointing to the view that majority voting in Council is antithetical to a democratic order—and so to a political reading of nationhood.

<sup>137</sup> On the crisis as a victory for intergovernmentalism, see D.Wood and B.Yesilada, *The Emerging European Union*, New York, Longman, 1996, pp.38-42.

Council in relation to the Commission and the EP, as well as continuing the norm of consensual decision-making.<sup>138</sup>

This compromise was still being invoked in France in 1996 in internal government guidelines for negotiating at the 1996 IGC:

...concerning the first (Community) pillar and decision-making in Council ... France takes the view that any Member State should still be able to invoke, where necessary, the existence of a significant national interest, thus justifying postponement of the vote and the continuation of negotiations along the lines of the 'Luxembourg compromise'.<sup>139</sup>

Alistair Cole notes that the use of national veto has only been threatened once since 1986, namely by the French in order to veto an unacceptable compromise between the EC and US in the Uruguay Round of the GATT.<sup>140</sup> Yet its very existence encourages decision-making by consensus and compromise.

#### *France as the leading power in the Cold War European Community*

Under de Gaulle, the nation-state increased its influence within the Community institutions with the insistence of the right of national veto and the decreasing influence of the supranational Commission. The language of supranationalism and federalism faded. New integrative proposals tended to be less bold and the EC concentrated on finalising the customs union and administering existing policies.<sup>141</sup> Following de Gaulle's departure and the installation of his Gaullist successor Georges Pompidou in 1969, there were signs that new initiatives might lead to a deepening of European integration, potentially involving the ceding of national sovereignty. At the 1969 Hague Summit, the slogan 'completion, integration and enlargement' indicated new directions for the Community, with UK accession no longer blocked by de Gaulle. The 1970s were, however, to develop into a period of 'euro-sclerosis' or stagnation.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, pp.142-6, 431.

<sup>139</sup> Published in *Le Figaro*, 22 February 1996. The document guided the work of the committee chaired by two Ministers, de Charette and Barnier, to make detailed preparations for the Amsterdam IGC.

<sup>140</sup> Cole, *François Mitterrand*, p.127.

<sup>141</sup> The customs union was completed by July 1968, well before the 1970 deadline set out in the Treaty of Rome.

<sup>142</sup> Two developments are however worth noting. First, led by Giscard and Schmidt, the French and Germans put forward a new plan to coordinate exchange rates between the member states. In 1979 the European Monetary System (EMS) was born, with an exchange rate mechanism (ERM) permitting 2.25 per cent band of fluctuation against the other participating currencies. This closely tied the French franc to the DM. The EMS helped create a zone of monetary stability in Europe until pressures in September 1992 forced bands to widen—largely as a result of high interest rates in Germany due to the cost of unification. See L.Tsoukalis, 'Economic and Monetary Union: Political Conviction and Economic Uncertainty' in Wallace and Wallace



A number of developments are worth noting in the context of the French involvement in the evolution of the Community during this time: first, the continued 'Gaullist' adherence to the principle of intergovernmentalism; second, an increase in influence of intergovernmental institutions (notably with the creation of the European Council); and third, retention of French political leadership within the Community. European integration continued to be perceived as serving the national interest and implying a minimal loss of sovereignty alongside an increase in overall influence.

**Intergovernmentalism** Despite a more positive attitude to the EC than de Gaulle, Pompidou remained Gaullist in his rejection of supranationalism. Like de Gaulle, he supported a confederal, rather than a federal, Europe.<sup>143</sup> So although de Gaulle's departure permitted the 1973 enlargement to include the UK, along with Denmark and Ireland, Pompidou's presidency did not alter the Gaullist confederal vision for Europe.<sup>144</sup>

The completion and deepening invoked in the Hague Summit slogan did not include any ceding of sovereignty. Completion referred to the financing reform of the CAP, which entailed the funding of the Community by its own resources. Deepening entailed an expansion of policy scope—into the foreign policy arena—but the French specifically proposed an intergovernmental system of foreign policy cooperation (EPC) via foreign ministers and their (national) staffs rather than via existing EC institutions and processes. Such developments seemed to confirm that the nation-state was guarding its sovereignty and would not allow an extension of supranational Community processes into sensitive areas of national policy. Although the October 1972 Paris Summit saw a commitment to 'transform the whole complex of their relations into a European Union', this was vague and indeterminate. Overall, the development of new policies in the 1970s did little to challenge the dominance of the nation-state in the Community, or to suggest that the Community would successfully implement an increasing range of policies.<sup>145</sup>

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(eds), *Policy-Making in the European Union*, pp.150-4. Second, the Hague Summit led to the introduction of a limited form of foreign policy cooperation, European Political Cooperation (EPC), strictly within an intergovernmental framework and outside the remit of Community institutions. On EPC see M.Holland, *The Future of European Political Cooperation*, London, Macmillan, 1991; on EPC within the overall development towards a European foreign policy, see Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, pp.508-26.

<sup>143</sup> Simonian, *The Privileged Partnership*, p.35.

<sup>144</sup> French economic difficulties at this time, coupled with a more assertive Germany, limited French ability to maintain a veto on UK membership.

<sup>145</sup> Initial attempts to coordinate monetary policy—the first 'snake', established in February 1971 which set a limited band of fluctuation for the various currencies both in relation to each other and to the dollar—met with failure; as did the second snake set up in April 1972. With the oil crisis and intense speculative pressures, the French government withdrew the franc in February 1974, joining and leaving again in July 1975 and 1976 respectively. Tsoukalis refers to EMU as 'the biggest non-event of the decade', 'Economic and Monetary Union', p.152. However there was agreement on a European regional policy and the direct election of the EP.

**Creation of the European Council** Second, the French initiated a new Community forum, the European Council. Special summit meetings had taken place since 1969 but these were *ad hoc* and not part of the treaty structure. At the Paris summit in December 1974, French President Giscard d'Estaing announced the formal establishment of the European Council.<sup>146</sup> This comprises a (now) six-monthly summit of the heads of state and government of the member states, where the overall direction of EU policy is set and controversial, high-level decisions taken by consensus. Clearly intergovernmental in nature, and operating at the highest political level, the European Council has increased the influence of the nation-states at the expense, in particular, of the Commission.<sup>147</sup> The summits themselves have come to mark political landmarks in the development of the EU: 'Fontainebleau', 'Maastricht', 'Copenhagen' and 'Amsterdam' all symbolise significant decisions that have shaped the integration process.<sup>148</sup>

The Franco-German alliance, symbolised earlier in the close personal relationship between de Gaulle and Adenauer, and through the second half of the 1970s between Giscard and Schmidt, also served to underline the relative weakness of the Commission. This was exacerbated by the practice of avoiding the Commission and holding Franco-German meetings and negotiations in either Paris or Bonn.<sup>149</sup>

**Political leadership** Third, there was no challenge throughout this period to the French political leadership of the EC. Moreover, the EC was perceived as an entity which clearly served the French national interest. This was to remain the case throughout the Cold War period. The Franco-German alliance, as the 'motor' of integration, may have been at the heart of new initiatives, and the support of both parties vital for the EC's development. However it was clearly understood, in the Cold War environment, that France was the dominant 'political' partner, even as (West) German economic strength and its powerful currency dominated the western European bloc—and largely financed the

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As noted, in 1979 the EMS was established, which gave the EC some financial powers, including a common reserve fund (for intervention), and an exchange rate mechanism to limit fluctuation between the participating currencies.

<sup>146</sup> This was recognised formally in the SEA, and its composition and number of meetings set out in the Maastricht Treaty, which specified that the European Council 'shall provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development and shall define the general guidelines thereof'.

<sup>147</sup> On the impact of the European Council and its relations with other institutions, see S. Bulmer and W. Wessels, *The European Council: Decision-making in European Politics*, London, Macmillan, 1987; Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, pp. 248-54. For analysis of the changed institutional balance post-1974, see Urwin, *The Community of Europe*, pp. 164-79.

<sup>148</sup> Each country assumes the presidency of the EC/EU for six months, concluding with the European Council meeting in a national city of their choice. The presidency also entails chairing the various meetings of the Council of Ministers, at all levels, setting the agenda and leading negotiations.

<sup>149</sup> See Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, p. 93.

EC.<sup>150</sup> 'Europe' served French interests and the integration process could be seen as a means rather than an end. Thus the period from 1950 to 1986 has been described as the 'golden age' as France 'pursued its national interests with great effectiveness at the European level'.<sup>151</sup>

*Mitterrand and the 'European turn'*

In 1981, the first president from the Left was voted into power in the Fifth Republic. President Mitterrand is now portrayed as an ardent Europeanist—the 'European Statesman'<sup>152</sup>—whose 'greatest legacy must be the building of Europe'.<sup>153</sup> Cohen-Tanugi expresses it thus: 'the deepening of European integration will probably remain the major contribution of François Mitterrand's presidency'.<sup>154</sup>

However on coming to power in 1981 Mitterrand had totally different priorities.<sup>155</sup> He and his government briefly followed a socialist agenda of nationalisation and increased state spending, promising a society—and a Europe—for workers, not for capital. But his program collapsed in 1983: confronted with a monetary crisis and rising unemployment, he moved away from socialist policies, accepted the existence of the market economy, agreed to cut government spending and decided to keep the franc in the ERM of the EMS.<sup>156</sup> Mitterrand's turn to Europe, his 'conversion' to the '*franc fort*' (literally, strong franc, but also a pun on the seat of the Bundesbank), and his reconciliation with the market and with capital, were to mark the rest of this term in office, and from 1983 he was to make Europe his cause. His much-quoted 'France is our Motherland, Europe is our future' was commonly used to describe his pro-European stance.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>150</sup> The FRG is generally described as the 'paymaster' of the EC/EU and continues to be the largest net contributor.

<sup>151</sup> Kassim, 'French autonomy and the EU', p.168. He identifies the principal interests as economic modernisation and containment of Germany. West Germany during the Cold War was widely described as an economic 'giant' and political 'dwarf'.

<sup>152</sup> The title of Cole's chapter dealing with Mitterrand's 'evolving attitude' towards Europe, in his *François Mitterrand*. Mitterrand moved from an early stance that 'Europe will be socialist or not at all' to the promotion of closer political and economic integration.

<sup>153</sup> Tiersky, 'Mitterrand, France and Europe', p.15.

<sup>154</sup> Cohen-Tanugi, 'L'Europe: la vacance française', p.35.

<sup>155</sup> Cole notes that only three of the PS' '110 Propositions' were directly concerned with Europe: increased state intervention, a coordinated economic relaunch, and move away from free-market liberalism. See Cole, *François Mitterrand*, p.119.

<sup>156</sup> For details of his economic and social policies, see H.Uterwedde, 'Mitterrand's Economic and Social Policy in Perspective' in MacLean (ed.), *The Mitterrand Years*, pp.133-50.

<sup>157</sup> Despite its somewhat vague formulation, used both domestically and abroad. See for example his 1987 address to the RIIA at Chatham House, London, 15 January. Quoted in E.Haywood, 'The European Policy of François Mitterrand', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 31 (2), Summer 1993, pp.269-82.

This was no idealistic vision, however. Like previous presidents, Mitterrand also saw that the EC served France's national interests well.<sup>158</sup> So national interests were portrayed as synonymous with European integration, and up until 1989 Mitterrand could be assured of a leading role in the EC's overall direction, policy-formation and decision-making processes. Pro-integration moves included support for the accession of Spain and Portugal in 1986; support for the SEA and the single market; active promotion of institutional reform—a surprise to some who recalled the French stance on the national veto question;<sup>159</sup> the appointment of Jacques Delors as Commission president in 1985, underlining the French leadership role as well as a commitment to the EC by sending a person of Delors' calibre; and the revival of plans for economic and monetary union. France was a prime mover behind the renewed EMU initiative, with a proposal for an IGC to discuss and plan for further integration in this area.<sup>160</sup>

How does this integrationist agenda fit with the French concept of national sovereignty? Unlike his Gaullist predecessors, Mitterrand was prepared to compromise, and the national veto was no longer sacrosanct.<sup>161</sup> The agreement to QMV for matters pertaining to the single market was significant.<sup>162</sup> However other main lines of EC policy continued. These included the continuation of France's leading political role in Europe; its preference for intergovernmental institutions and procedures (decision-making to remain the preserve of the nation-state in the Council);<sup>163</sup> its distrust of supranational institutions (Mitterrand was opposed to granting further powers to the EP);<sup>164</sup> the

<sup>158</sup> See for example de Swaan, 'Mitterrand and the Gaullist Dilemma'. He notes that 'Like de Gaulle, Mitterrand has attempted to shape the European Community (now European Union) to serve as a vehicle to assert France's position in the world', p.11. He judges Mitterrand's European engagement as being pragmatic, based on compromise rather than idealism. He does not agree with Hoffmann's earlier analysis that Mitterrand's policy is totally Gaullist: it has since broken with some of the tenets. However, at a macro level, it does attempt to use Europe to achieve national goals. For Hoffmann's analysis, see 'Gaullism by any other Name', *Foreign Policy*, no. 57, Winter 1984-85, pp.38-57.

<sup>159</sup> As noted by Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, p.116, the agreement on majority voting in Council on matters pertaining to the single market represented a marked change in policy.

<sup>160</sup> In his 1988 *Lettre à tous les Français*, Mitterrand declared that a European currency unit would constitute a new pillar in the global monetary order, alongside the US\$ and the Japanese Yen.

<sup>161</sup> In his *Réflexions sur la politique étrangère de la France* (Reflections on French foreign policy), Paris, Fayard, 1997, he states that 'national independence' is a key concept in foreign affairs, but this is complemented by 'the construction of Europe', amongst other things, p.7.

<sup>162</sup> Kassim, 'French Autonomy and the EU', also notes some unwelcome consequences of the SEA and implementation of the single market for France: competition policy did not allow the promotion of European (or national!) 'champions'; and the focus on liberalisation and deregulation (particularly in opening up state-protected industries to competition) was antithetical to French traditions. Given France's *dirigiste* tendencies, these were problematic developments for the country, and Kassim is right to point out that the SEA substantially changed the nature of France's relationship with the EC. In 2001, the French government continued to resist EU pressure both to open up major sectors of its energy and transport market to international competition as well as to relinquish state control in major finance and energy companies.

<sup>163</sup> See Cole, *François Mitterrand*; Dyson and Featherstone, 'EMU and Presidential Leadership'.

<sup>164</sup> In an article otherwise lauding a deep-rooted and constant commitment towards Europe, Elizabeth Haywood does acknowledge Mitterrand's 'ambivalence' towards the EP and notes that this is 'one area where

continued insistence that Europe was a 'vehicle' to serve French interests;<sup>165</sup> a continued and intensified bilateral partnership with Germany; and, finally, the (essentially Gaullist) stress on greatness and global influence shifting from the national to the European level as conditions dictated. Dyson and Featherstone conclude that for Mitterrand the lesson of 1982-3 was that 'the unity of the Franco-German relationship was the essential precondition for French influence in the EC and beyond'.<sup>166</sup> The strong personal and political bond forged between Mitterrand and German Chancellor Kohl facilitated the power of bilateral, inter-state, bargaining and agreement. The major proposals for further integration were accompanied, if not initiated, by joint Franco-German (government) proposals, such as the 1985 drafting of a Franco-German Treaty on European Union. Further, Europe was increasingly painted as a means of countering US and Japanese economic domination.

Finally, a notable divergence could be observed between the rhetoric and the reality concerning European integration.<sup>167</sup> While the language used by Mitterrand and other political figures could be described as federal—whether discussing the future of the institutions, or future policies, or the future 'shape' of a united Europe—this was often at odds with actual policy proposals and action. Hoffmann notes the extent to which Mitterrand's language was federalist, but the IGC proposals were not, pointing to seeming contradictions in European policy.<sup>168</sup> Guyomarch also stresses this discrepancy—he labels it as 'misleading'—and this uncovers underlying continuities in policy even though rhetoric might indicate a shift.<sup>169</sup> Overall, then, Mitterrand remained a champion of intergovernmental institutions, not federal. The EC's main decision-making body remained the Council, where France was well placed to exert authority. Supranational decisions were confined to the economic sphere.

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there are limits to Mitterrand's European commitment'—see 'The European Policy of François Mitterrand', p.277. However her conclusion that Mitterrand had to disguise his proposals 'behind a smokescreen of Gaullist rhetoric', and keep them largely secret from the wider French electorate for as long as possible, in order to make them more acceptable, while revealing sophisticated political skills, suggests that opposition to European integration along national (Gaullist) lines was foreseen.

<sup>165</sup> See de Swaan, 'Mitterrand and the Gaullist Dilemma'.

<sup>166</sup> In 'EMU and Presidential Leadership', p.90.

<sup>167</sup> A point also made by M. Wise, 'France and European Unity' in R. Aldrich and J. Connell (eds), *France in World Politics*, London, Routledge, 1989, pp.35-69. Examining France's leading role in the European integration process, he highlights the difference between rhetoric and action and analyses some of France's narrower defences of the national interest.

<sup>168</sup> Hoffmann, 'French Dilemmas and Strategies', pp.127-47, especially p.131.

<sup>169</sup> Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, p.17. In particular, he notes that while Mitterrand's discourse was 'federal', his strategies were often intergovernmental, see p.28.

## Conclusion

In summary, France's involvement in the integration process during the Cold War was an elitist project driven by particular conceptions of the national interest and overlain by a realist perspective. The elite-driven nature of the integration process has two aspects which highlight the potential for opposition. First, there was little public debate about the merits of integration. Any assumption that an elite political consensus on the merits of further integration would be mirrored in the electorate was misplaced. Second, approaches to integration were ambiguous, at the elite level, where action did not match rhetoric.

The potential for opposition to European integration on the basis of national sovereignty was partly concealed during the Cold War era, while the perception of the EC remained that of an economic entity and an instrument of French foreign policy. The rationale for joining the EC and promoting integration had been driven by particular conceptions of the national interest. A realist perspective remained dominant, characterised by a continuing attachment to the nation-state, driven by Republican and nationalist sentiment. Popular support for the EC, as based on opinion polls, remained high—if passive—with majorities supporting continued membership and agreeing that membership had served French interests well.<sup>170</sup> As Hoffmann describes, 'it was expected that French influence would be, if not hegemonic, at least superior to anyone else's in that entity' and successive French presidents 'saw no necessary contradiction between a European entity that fell well short of federalism and the will to national independence'.<sup>171</sup> Of course, this was predicated on the division of Germany, and of Europe—the continuing Cold War *status quo*.

There were some indications, however, of the potential for opposition to further integration. The break through of the FN at the 1984 EP elections, providing it with a platform to voice opposition to further integration, the concerns voiced by more traditional Gaullists on the preservation of national sovereignty, and the long-standing intergovernmental approach to the EC indicated that supranational integration did not sit easily alongside French conceptions of the nation-state. The majority of French did not identify with Europe: the idea of a supranational identity remained foreign and the nation-state remained the overwhelming primary point of reference. Moreover,

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<sup>170</sup> Eurobarometer figures show French support for the EU at above average levels throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Those deeming French membership to be a 'good thing' rose to a peak in 1987 and dropped below average in mid-1989. Those believing that France benefited from EU membership was also above average until 1989. Support decreased in the 1990s and by 1995 opinion was divided. See *Eurobarometer*, twice yearly report since 1973, and *Eurobarometer Trends* showing shifts over time. The Commission also publishes Eurobarometer results on the web at <<http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/epo/>>.

<sup>171</sup> Hoffmann, 'French Dilemmas and Strategies', p.129.

opponents of the integration process were able to utilise particular readings of French nationhood to justify their stance.

There are parallels here between the way the concept of 'the nation' has been used and extended to justify positions taken in both the immigrant integration and European integration debates. In the 'immigration' debate, Republican bases for a critique of citizenship law and *jus soli*, voluntarist and statist, were extended to include nationalist and exclusive readings.<sup>172</sup> In the same way, critiques of the EU can be argued along Republican lines, stressing the democratic deficit, and the legitimate role of the sovereign nation, but can also be extended, by the extreme nationalists, to cover an exclusivist position.

The European integration process has been portrayed as synonymous with French interests. This was (relatively) unproblematic while France retained leadership of the Community, but the potential for opposition was to be realised in the 1990s as France's distinctive post-war foreign policy stance shifted in response to the end of the Cold War and the end of superpower rivalry. Some have heralded the end of French exceptionalism and the acceptance of a more pragmatic and flexible partnership role in Europe. The end of Cold War and unification of Germany have changed France's position—and perceptions of national interest—in Europe dramatically. The Maastricht Treaty was in part a reaction to these major events, and served to politicise the question of European integration in France. Two points need addressing in light of the thesis. First, with the emergence of the integration debate into the public domestic arena via the MTEU referendum process, the FN, with its 'defence of the nation', has been able to ally itself to other anti-EU parties. Dissatisfaction and apprehension have centred on the threat to national sovereignty in this changed environment. The pro – anti integration cleavage indicates a new line of division in French politics and society. Second, while major geo-political changes might be expected to alter the French position on European integration, there should also a degree of continuity if ideational structures have a role to play.

The following chapter will examine the MTEU debate with particular reference to the ways in which commitments in Maastricht were bound up in the national identity debates of the 1990s. As a gauge of public opinion, it will analyse the 1994 and 1999 EP elections, and explain the success of the anti-EU parties, including the FN, with reference to French understandings of nationhood and the far right's alleged 'defence of the nation'.

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<sup>172</sup> As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, and noted by Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, pp.142-4.



## Chapter 8 Euro-scepticism in the 1990s: Survival of the Nation via *Souverainisme* or Integration?

The Fifth Republic will officially die on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1999 when France abandons the currency which symbolically bears its name, the *franc*, for the euro  
*National Hebdo*, 19-25 March 1998<sup>1</sup>

The nation is an unshakeable reality, the beating heart of democracy, the space where social links and the strongest feelings of solidarity are interwoven  
Lionel Jospin, 1999<sup>2</sup>

The FN in the 1980s and 1990s achieved relative success due to its exploitation of the idea of the 'nation', portrayed as threatened at both a cultural and a political level. This chapter considers the impact of the Maastricht Treaty and referendum as new issues confronted France in the post-Cold War environment. The shifting balance following German unification has resulted in some reappraisal of the national interest, and the dual themes of sovereignty and identity have become central in the debate on integration. The enduring power of the national idea has fuelled opposition to the EU, and influenced policy-makers and government as well as the electorate. As the EU has developed, both understandings of nationhood are perceived as being endangered by integration, and this has contributed to growing concern about the future of the nation-state within the EU. The issue of nationhood came explicitly to the fore in the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty in September 1992.

The MTEU referendum indicated a new cleavage in French politics, between the *souverainistes* (those defending national sovereignty) and the 'integrationists'. Both sides justified their stance on the basis of a particular interpretation of the national idea and a particular conception of the national interest. In the former, 'no', camp, national sovereignty was at the fore with the political reading of nationhood dominant, albeit with a scarcely disguised exclusive cultural reading from the extreme right. The themes of opposition put forward by the extreme right—loss of national independence; loss of the national currency; and opposition to supranationalism, the abolition of national borders, and to European citizenship—all correspond to traditional French understandings of nationhood. The success of the FN alongside other *souverainiste* parties in the European elections of the 1990s points to the continuing salience of the national sovereignty theme in French politics which the FN has exploited to its advantage.

The idea of the nation, however, is not ignored in the latter 'integrationist' camp. Here, a more nuanced and pragmatic reading of sovereignty, influence and identity was at play, one which

<sup>1</sup> From the front page editorial entitled 'Chirac-Jospin ... prepare the end of France'.

<sup>2</sup> Speech after the introduction of the euro, reported on the front page of *Le Monde*, 14 January 1999.

sought to increase French influence in European-level policy and transferred the notion of French grandeur, influence and *rayonnement* to the European level.<sup>3</sup> This second group uses elements of French national self-understanding to bolster the European ideal, and transfers the concept of a strong France with both global influence and an Enlightenment mission to the European level. Europe is also increasingly referred to in competitive global terms. The earlier idealistic vision has increasingly given way to a vision of a powerful and globally competitive Europe, set up as a counterweight to American and Japanese power and influence. Thus Chirac called for the acceptance of the euro 'if we want to affirm ourselves as a great economic and political power, equal to the dollar and the yen'.<sup>4</sup> Apart from the small group of integrationists supporting federalism, as noted in the previous chapter, this pragmatic integrationist camp is 'caught in the contradiction of wanting both a strong Europe and weak shared institutions'.<sup>5</sup>

The ratification process of the Maastricht Treaty indicated increasing levels of opposition to 'Europe'. The surrounding debates pointed to the continuing power of the national idea and a developing cleavage between those who stubbornly asserted a traditional reading of nationhood and those who argued for some transfer of power to the European level. This chapter summarises the background and the content of the treaty itself and then examines the main themes of the referendum debate; public opinion as reflected in the polls and in the referendum result; the positions of the various parties in the referendum; and the EP elections of 1994 and 1999. Overall, the political understanding of the nation as the basis for a sovereign, democratic order underpinned critiques from both sides of politics as well as providing legitimacy to the nationalist and exclusivist policies of the extreme right.

### The Maastricht Treaty on European Union

The Treaty on European Union marked the most significant step towards closer integration in Europe since the creation of the European Communities. Signed in a small Dutch town on 7 February 1992, it asserted 'a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe' (Article A). The treaty not only established an economic and monetary union, it also included aims of a distinctly political nature, including a common foreign and security policy.

<sup>3</sup> As examined in Chapter 6, the argument runs that sovereignty has already been *de facto* eroded in a number of areas. Integrationists would argue that France had little 'true' monetary sovereignty—and was bound to the decisions of the Bundesbank—and that the country would exert more influence through participation in a single European currency.

<sup>4</sup> 'Chirac calls snap poll over Europe', *Guardian Weekly*, 27 April 1997.

<sup>5</sup> See Furet's analysis, 'Europe after Utopianism', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 6 (1), 1995, pp.79-89; quote on pp.85-6. He argues for a democratisation of European institutions, which have 'little democratic legitimacy' and 'lack a clear origin in the sovereignty of the people'.

The MTEU resulted from two parallel Intergovernmental Conferences (IGCs) on economic and political union respectively, which concluded in agreement in late 1991.<sup>6</sup> The first IGC on Economic and Monetary Union, proposed before the end of the Cold War, had clear agenda, focusing on specific set of objectives.<sup>7</sup> Working within explicit parameters, the negotiations focused on coordination of monetary policy with the aim of monetary union and a single European currency. Details of all three stages of the project, with target dates set for each, were included in the resultant treaty.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, the second IGC, on European Political Union (EPU), was reactive, its agenda controversial and its aims ill-defined.

While the EC and its member states centred on internal policy development—notably EMU—in the late 1980s, events overtook them. Momentous changes in the international arena with the end of the Cold War, the demise of communist regimes in eastern Europe, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the sudden prospect of a united Germany in the centre of Europe resulted in a radically altered European environment. The political component of the MTEU was, at least in part, a reaction to these changes.<sup>9</sup> German unification and the transformation of the international balance of power were crucial external factors.

The prospect of German unification was central. At the 1989 Strasbourg Summit the EC agreed to German unification 'in the perspective of European integration'<sup>10</sup>—a decision influenced by a perceived political choice for a 'European Germany' rather than a 'German Europe'.<sup>11</sup> The prevalent view was that it was necessary to bolster the political authority of the EC in order to anchor the new Germany firmly within it: political as well as economic union was required. Germany was unified on 3 October 1990 and the former East Germany acceded to the EC.

<sup>6</sup> An IGC comprises negotiations between the governments of the member states required to amend the treaties founding the EC and EU. It consists of a series of meetings at different levels, not a single event; with one date: officials meet weekly; foreign ministers meet monthly; heads of state meet at European Council sessions, either regular (every six months) or special. Decisions must be unanimous. It is chaired by whoever holds the presidency of the Council at the time: so in July–December 1991, The Netherlands. There is now some questioning as to whether IGCs are the appropriate fora for treaty negotiation. See J.Pinder, 'From Closed doors to European democracy: beyond the intergovernmental conferences' in M.Westlake (ed.), *The European Union after Amsterdam*, London, Routledge, 1998, pp.47–60.

<sup>7</sup> In 1988 the European Council in Hanover asked a committee to put forward proposals for the development of an EMU. The subsequent Delors Committee's *Report on Economic and Monetary Union* in April 1989 proposed a three-stage development of EMU, starting in July 1990, and then an IGC to map out its later stages. The report was largely of French origin—see M.Sutton, 'France and the Maastricht Design', *The World Today*, Vol. 49 (1), January 1993, pp.4–8. The final decision to convene the EMU IGC was taken at the December 1989 Council meeting in Strasbourg, under the French presidency. December 1990 was set for the IGC's opening. Tsoukalis also concludes that France was the major national force behind EMU—see 'Economic and Monetary Union', pp.164–5.

<sup>8</sup> In fact the June 1989 Madrid Summit had already agreed on the first stage—the close coordination of economic and financial policies.

<sup>9</sup> It is also argued that the essential compromise at the heart of the Treaty was Kohl's agreement to give up the DM in return for French agreement to German unification. This tends to underplay the fact that the EMU IGC was already planned before the shock prospect of German unification. On the origins and making of the Treaty, see Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, pp.59–65.

<sup>10</sup> Strasbourg European Council, 8–9 December 1989, Summit conclusions.

<sup>11</sup> Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, pp.131–2.

The unification of Germany presented a dual challenge to the French view of the Community. First, it was apparent that the era of undisputed political leadership of the EC was at an end. Second, there was a fear that a united and powerful—even dominant—Germany would possibly form new coalitions to pursue its interests, breaking the close Franco-German partnership which had driven European developments since the 1950s.<sup>12</sup> Moïsi and Rupnik argue that the French aim from this point on was, above all, to tie Germany into a strong and united Europe.<sup>13</sup> Central to such a policy was balanced Franco-German leadership of the Community. Analysts have described the maintenance of this close partnership, and the avoidance of German hegemony (including over the *Mittleuropa* area) and unilateralism, as primary objectives of French foreign policy.<sup>14</sup> Mitterrand's comment that German unification would only proceed under a European roof—and that European unification needed to accompany the German unification process—was widely accepted as rational and realistic foreign policy.<sup>15</sup>

As well as the regional change in the balance of power, global transformation also contributed to the establishment of the EPU IGC. The prospect of the end of an era dominated by two superpowers offered Europe an opportunity to assert an international presence and to complement its undoubted economic presence at an international level. The idea that 'the time of Europe has come' as a foreign policy power—an illusory aim given Europe's unsuccessful attempts to broker a solution to the Yugoslav crisis—nonetheless inspired the negotiation of the political aspects of the Maastricht Treaty.<sup>16</sup>

Under the influence of these external events, then, the idea of a second IGC on political union took shape, with particular reference to the EU as an international actor, took shape. The first state to make a formal proposal was Belgium: Foreign Minister Eyskens in March 1990 proposed 'strengthening the effectiveness and democratic character of our institutional mechanism, codifying the subsidiarity principle and increasing the impact of our external action'.

<sup>12</sup> See for example this 'worst-case scenario' described by G.Ayache and P.Loriot, *La Conquête de l'Est. Les atouts de la France dans le nouvel order mondial* (The Conquest of the East. France's cards in the new world order), Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1991, p.95.

<sup>13</sup> D.Moïsi and J.Rupnik, *Le nouveau continent. Plaidoyer pour une Europe renaissante* (The new continent. Plea for a rebirth of Europe), Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1991, pp.111, 142.

<sup>14</sup> A.Fontaine, *L'un sans l'autre* (One without the Other), Paris, Fayard, 1991, p.306.

<sup>15</sup> On French foreign policy approaches, see Hopmann, 'French Perspectives on International Relations'; M-C.Smouts, 'The Study of International Relations in France'. As noted in Chapter 7, the fundamental unit of analysis is the nation-state, and geo-political rather than socio-economic considerations tend to take precedence.

<sup>16</sup> On the negotiation and development of CFSP see Dinan, *Ever Closer Union*, 1999, pp.508-26. He notes that Yugoslavia showed the dominant foreign policy reflex remained national—and that European foreign policy (CFSP) was an example of 'ineffectual involvement', p.521.

Mitterrand initially lingered, but in April 1990, when convinced of the reality of German unification, he took the lead with Kohl.<sup>17</sup> The Kohl-Mitterrand joint letter of April 1990 once again illustrated the centrality of the Franco-German partnership in EC developments. The brief document proposed an IGC on political union to be run in parallel with the first IGC.<sup>18</sup> The subsequent European Council meeting in Dublin in April 1990 could reach agreement, however: Thatcher was adamantly opposed to a political IGC, and Portugal reluctant. The decision was postponed until the June Dublin Summit, and it was here that the decision was taken to convene an IGC on political union starting on 14 December in Rome.<sup>19</sup>

A week before the opening of the IGCs in December 1990 a further Franco-German joint letter proposed the agenda for the conference. The major items included enlarging the role of the European Council; setting up a common foreign and security policy; and giving Europe a defence identity by incorporating the WEU into the Community.<sup>20</sup>

The 'political' component of the Maastricht Treaty, then, resulted from a far vaguer and more contentious set of proposals than the EMU component.<sup>21</sup> The EPU IGC had to cover a wide array of potential topics and issues, from foreign and defence policies to reform of institutions and decision-making, the creation of a European citizenship as well as the extension of Community policy into new areas.<sup>22</sup> At the EMU negotiations, the unification of Germany encouraged a strong French commitment to EMU and single currency.<sup>23</sup> At the EPU IGC, France supported increased external powers, including the creation of a European defence and security arm, with the particular aim of diminishing US influence in Europe. Both foreign and

<sup>17</sup> On Mitterrand's initial wavering, and French reaction to the prospect of German unification, see R. Fritsch-Bournazel, *Europe and German Unification*, New York, Berg, 1992, particularly pp. 171-80. Mitterrand's ambiguous stance on East German reform and subsequent unification proposals was signalled by his visit to the Democratic Republic in December 1989, neglecting to advise Kohl in advance, and his insistence that European unity take precedence over German unification. On the more private reservations of French policy-makers, see S. Hoffmann, 'A Plan for a New Europe', *New York Review of Books*, 18 January 1990, pp. 18-21.

<sup>18</sup> 'Kohl-Mitterrand letter to the Irish Presidency, 19 April 1990', *Agence Europe*, 20 April 1990.

<sup>19</sup> See details in Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, pp. 62-5.

<sup>20</sup> 'Kohl-Mitterrand letter to Andreotti, 6 December 1990', *Agence-Europe*, 10-11 December 1990.

<sup>21</sup> Council asked the IGC to pay particular attention to democratic legitimacy, including reform of the institutions, in particular the role of the EP; foreign and security policy; European citizenship; extension of Community action in social, environment, health and infrastructure fields; and the principle of subsidiarity. Initial hopes that the IGC would conclude within six months—from the Rome European Council of December 1990 to Luxembourg, June 1991—were too ambitious. Such broad, complex and controversial proposals were unable to be finalised within this time-frame.

<sup>22</sup> This enormous and controversial agenda contributed in part to the final outcome—a compromise which satisfied few. EPU was murky, overly complex, compromise-ridden and difficult to implement effectively. See M. Baun, *An Imperfect Union*, Boulder, Co., Westview, p. 95.

<sup>23</sup> On the negotiating position of France at the EMU IGC, see Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht*, pp. 104-24. She notes that 'on EMU French logic was clear and simple. Increased integration was necessary in order to anchor Germany firmly in the West and to avoid dominance in the monetary field by the Bundesbank', p. 45.

security policy, as well as home affairs cooperation, however, were to be strictly intergovernmental, outside the established processes of the Community.<sup>24</sup>

### *Structure and Content*

The Maastricht Treaty established a 'European Union'. Article B set out its overall objectives:

- to promote economic and social progress which is balanced and sustainable, in particular through the creation of an area without internal frontiers ... and through the establishment of economic and monetary union, ultimately including a single currency;
- to assert its identity on the international scene, in particular through the implementation of a common foreign and security policy;
- to strengthen the protection of the rights and interests of the nationals of its Member States through the introduction of a citizenship of the Union;
- to develop close cooperation in justice and home affairs.<sup>25</sup>

This union is organised within three separate 'pillars'. The first is the Community pillar, where the unique combination of supranational and intergovernmental Community institutions set Community policy. The second and third pillars are decidedly intergovernmental and compartmentalised from the Community decision-making processes. Entitled 'Common Foreign and Security Policy', and 'Justice and Home Affairs' respectively, they promote enhanced cooperation within these areas.<sup>26</sup>

EMU lay at the heart of the Maastricht Treaty, in the Community pillar.<sup>27</sup> Establishing a three-stage process towards a single currency, the euro, the treaty set out specific 'convergence criteria' for each participating member state to achieve, relating to inflation, interest rates,

<sup>24</sup> On the French negotiating position at the EPU IGC, see Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht*, pp.137-54. On the positions of all twelve member states, see F.Laursen and S.Vanhoonacker (eds), *The Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union: institutional reforms, new policies, and international identity of the European Community*, Maastricht, EIPA, 1992. The negotiating positions of France, Germany, UK and the Commission at both IGCs are usefully summarised in Moravcsik, *The choice for Europe*, pp.382-3 (EMU) and 384-5 (EPU).

<sup>25</sup> For the full text of the Treaty on European Union, see *European Union. Selected instruments taken from the Treaties*, Luxembourg, OOEPC, 1995, pp.11-105. The treaties are also published on the EU web site at <<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex>>. This site also provides a more legible, consolidated version of the treaties.

<sup>26</sup> Provisions on a common foreign and security policy are contained in Title V of the Treaty; provisions on cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs in Title VI. For details of the major reforms introduced by the MTEU, see A.Duff, 'The Main Reforms' in A.Duff et al. (eds), *Maastricht and Beyond*, pp.19-35; G.Edwards and A.Pijpers (eds), *The Politics of European Treaty Reform*, London, Pinter, 1997.

<sup>27</sup> Although it does not conform to the Community decision-making processes governing other Community policies—indeed some analysts have suggested that it forms, in reality, a fourth pillar of the Union—EMU is characterised by supranational policy-making processes, and governed by a supranational body, the European Central Bank.

public deficit, public debt and exchange rates.<sup>28</sup> Their stringent nature and effects were to attract much public criticism in the 1990s.<sup>29</sup> Following the introduction of the single currency, an independent European Central Bank (ECB) would set monetary policy and interest rates. MTEU also codified the concept of 'subsidiarity', namely that decisions should be taken at an appropriate, effective level and as 'closely as possible to the citizen'.<sup>30</sup> The EP was granted given increased powers of 'co-decision', increasing the leverage of this supranational and pro-integrationist institution.

The treaty also created citizenship of the Union, and every member state national is automatically given the status of an EU citizen. The rights are limited, but nonetheless this was a significant move in rethinking the link between citizenship and nationality.<sup>31</sup> According to MTEU Article 8, EU citizens have the right to:

- vote in and stand for elections at the municipal and European level;
- move and reside freely within the member states of the EU;
- receive diplomatic protection from other EU embassies in third countries;
- petition the EP and apply to the European Ombudsman.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the embryonic nature of this 'citizenship', it was the subject of much debate, particularly as it necessitated an amendment to the French constitution. No longer was the national French citizen the only arbiter of government.

The French influence in the agenda setting, negotiations and final outcome was pivotal. In a 1992 television address Mitterrand squarely referred to the resultant treaty as '*un projet de la France*'—conceived and designed as a French project.<sup>33</sup> The EMU agenda was largely set by the Delors report, facilitated by the French government.<sup>34</sup> The EPU outcome largely reflected

<sup>28</sup> For a clear overview of the five convergence criteria, see P.Jacquet, 'European Integration at a Crossroads', *Survival*, Vol. 38 (4), Winter 1996-1997, pp.84-100. The criteria are set out on p.89.

<sup>29</sup> See the differing views on EMU expressed in articles by André Grjebine, Pierre Jacquet and Philippe Lagayette in *Le Débat*, no. 71, September-October 1992, pp.16-54. The economic benefits are contested; however EMU was above all a political decision. From a French 'integrationist' viewpoint, a major advantage is the regaining of (some) national sovereignty ('*la souveraineté retrouvée*'), according to Jacquet—while the *souverainistes* argue the reverse.

<sup>30</sup> See D.Cass, 'The Word that Saves Maastricht? The Principle of Subsidiarity and the Division of Powers within the European Community', *Common Market Law Review*, Vol. 29, 1992, pp.1107-36. Article A of the MTEU refers to a Union 'where decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen'. The concept remains open to interpretation, however!

<sup>31</sup> See E.Guild, 'The Legal Framework of Citizenship of the European Union' in Cesarani and Fulbrook (eds), *Citizenship, Nationality and Migration*, pp.30-54.

<sup>32</sup> The article numbers have changed since the signing of the Amsterdam Treaty. See analysis of the revised articles and rights in Hall, 'Fundamental Rights, National Sovereignty and Europe's New Citizens', pp.204-8.

<sup>33</sup> Address published in *Le Monde*, 14 April 1992.

<sup>34</sup> Noted by S.Meunier-Aitsahalia and G.Ross, 'Democratic Deficit or Democratic Surplus? A Reply to Andrew Moravcsik's Comments on the French Referendum', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 11 (1), Winter 1993, pp.57-69; quote on p.61. The final outcomes, however, did not necessarily accord with all



French negotiating positions.<sup>35</sup> Both the content and structure of the MTEU accorded with the 'pragmatic' French position on integration, respecting but adapting traditional understandings of nationhood and identity. From a content point of view, the treaty accorded with French views in policy 'deepening' (notably EMU) and tying Germany in to the Union; the strengthening of intergovernmental institutions; and the development of a stronger international identity and a European security dimension. From the point of view of structure, the treaty cordoned off foreign, security and interior policy in separate pillars where intergovernmental structures and processes remained the norm.

However, this compromise became the object of widespread opposition, voiced for the first time not just from the extremes—such as the FN—but also from mainstream parties and a significant section of the electorate. The nature and extent of the opposition was illustrated in the French MTEU referendum campaign and results. The gulf between the parliamentary vote and the electorate's choice not only indicated the extent of the elite-public division, but also foreshadowed greater party-political scepticism towards the Union, notably with the emergence of new parties based on the cleavage between *souverainistes* and integrationists. As in the debates on integration, the FN was able to ally itself to Republican groupings which opposed, in this case, the perceived threat to a political understanding of the French nation, incorporating themes of democracy, sovereignty, legitimacy and identity. The opposition focused in particular on the theme of national sovereignty—the 'defence of the nation', a favoured domain of the extreme right.

### The MTEU referendum

There is a vast amount of material covering the MTEU referendum debate in France.<sup>36</sup> Leading political figures on the Right and Left wrote articles or books supporting or opposing the treaty.<sup>37</sup> The crux of the debate was concerned with national sovereignty: as Patrice Buffotot

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French positions, including those on the convergence criteria, location of the ECB, and, most importantly, political control of the ECB.

<sup>35</sup> See Moravcsik, *The choice for Europe*, pp.384-5.

<sup>36</sup> For detailed analyses in addition to the material already cited, see 'Dossier on the French Referendum' in *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. NS1 (1), 1993, pp.111-26 and accompanying articles; A.Appleton, 'Maastricht and the French Party System: Domestic Implications of the Treaty Referendum', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 10 (4), Fall 1992, pp.1-18; B.Criddle, 'The French referendum on the Maastricht Treaty September 1992', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 46 (2), April 1993, pp.228-38; Mazzucelli, 'The Maastricht Debate and Ratification in France: The Power of Public Opinion and the Status of Sovereignty' in *France and Germany at Maastricht*, pp.207-41; A.Moravcsik, 'Idealism and Interest in the EC: The Case of the French Referendum', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 11 (1), 1993, pp.45-56; see also responses from Meunier-Aitsahalia and Ross in the same issue; Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, pp.96-102; A.Stone, 'Ratifying Maastricht: France Debates European Union', *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 11 (1), Winter 1993, pp.70-88.

<sup>37</sup> See for example, from the (dissident) Gaullist camp M-F.Garaud, *Maastricht pourquoi non* (Why to say no to Maastricht), Paris, Plon, 1992; from the Left, H.Emmanuelli, *Plaidoyer pour l'Europe* (A Plea for Europe), Paris, Flammarion, 1992. Both were published before the referendum took place.

observed, 'it is a question of abandoning an element of national sovereignty to European authorities'.<sup>38</sup> While 'the nation' was invoked by both sides of the debate, the opponents of Maastricht drew a clear dividing line between those who supported a transfer of sovereignty to a European supranational entity and those who opposed this development. The central issue was sovereignty—the nation as a democratic political entity. The debates over the content of the MTEU and institutional reform were elements *within* the overarching theme of national sovereignty and independence. To a lesser extent, so was the question of Germany. As Hainsworth notes, 'the Maastricht issue was tailor-made for the FN to play the national card'.<sup>39</sup>

There was no need for Mitterrand to call a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty.<sup>40</sup> Initially, the treaty began its ratification process via the Constitutional Court and the national parliaments—the Assembly and the Senate—where voices of opposition appeared few and isolated. Mitterrand had realised that constitutional amendments would be necessary, and the Constitutional Council identified three MTEU Articles as contrary to the constitution. All had implications for state sovereignty. They comprised the provisions for European citizenship, in particular the right of foreigners to vote in municipal elections; the creation of the single currency and the ECB objectives; and qualified majority voting in visa policy.<sup>41</sup> There was no question of amending the treaty itself: in order to ensure that the MTEU no longer impinged on national sovereignty as set out in the constitution, the constitution itself had to be revised. This was achieved by adding clauses authorising EU nationals to vote in municipal elections and specifically allowing the transfer of competences necessary for the implementation of EMU.

While there had been isolated voices of opposition in the parliament, these constitutional amendments sparked some controversy at the parliamentary level when they were debated during May-July 1992.<sup>42</sup> Pasqua, Séguin, de Villiers and Chevènement were among those expressing dissenting views centering on national sovereignty.<sup>43</sup> Stone comments on 'the extraordinary spectacle of politicians arguing (not for hours, but for months) the meaning and content of state sovereignty', acknowledging that this abstract concept, sovereignty, has a

<sup>38</sup> P. Buffotot, 'Le Référendum sur l'Union Européenne' (The Referendum on European Union), *Modern and Contemporary France*, NSI (3), 1993, pp. 277-86; quote on p. 279.

<sup>39</sup> Hainsworth, 'The Front National and the New World Order', p. 200.

<sup>40</sup> Article 52 of the constitution empowers the president to ratify international treaties without recourse to a referendum. The Constitutional Council, however, must ensure that the treaty is compatible with the constitution. Any constitutional changes required must be ratified by both houses of parliament and then formally adopted. Mitterrand referred the MTEU to the Constitutional Council on 11 March 1992. On the details of the process and revisions, see Stone, 'Ratifying Maastricht'.

<sup>41</sup> The Council gave its opinion on 9 April 1992. See *Libération*, 10 April 1992.

<sup>42</sup> On the parliamentary debates, see also Mazzucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht*, pp. 207-41.

<sup>43</sup> They also published anti-Maastricht books: Chevènement, *Une Certaine Idée de la France*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1992 upheld a Republican viewpoint; de Villiers, *Notre Europe sans Maastricht*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1992, worried about the loss of national sovereignty and threats to French identity; Séguin, attacking a 'cult of federalism' in *Discours pour la France*, Paris, Grasset, 1992, was also loath to condone any further loss of sovereignty.

powerful symbolic connotation in France, and lies at the heart of political identity and legitimacy.<sup>44</sup> However the bill authorising constitutional change was overwhelmingly passed by the National Assembly, by 398 to 77 votes.<sup>45</sup> Following the vote, the bill moved to the Senate. However shortly after the Senate debate on the constitutional reforms opened on June 2, the Danes rejected Maastricht in a referendum, with a 50.7 per cent 'no' vote.<sup>46</sup> The leader of the Senate declared the MTEU dead and buried. It was at this point that Mitterrand announced the referendum.<sup>47</sup>

Differing justifications for Mitterrand's decision have been propounded, from the cynical to the altruistic. This was an opportunity to counter the negative impression left by the Danish 'no' vote; it was sufficiently momentous for the French people to vote upon; and—possibly most powerful—this was an opportunity to bolster his domestic popularity and authority, split the Right, and enshrine his European legacy. Whatever the motivational mix, he was convinced that the Maastricht Treaty would be endorsed by the French electorate.<sup>48</sup> The PCF and FN were the only political parties to have taken an opposing position by mid-1992. His PS, the UDF and part of Chirac's Gaullists all supported the treaty; and the Assembly had overwhelmingly voted in favour. Public support for the EC in mid-1992 hovered between 60 and 70 per cent.<sup>49</sup> No-one foresaw the closeness of the result—nor, as Hugues Portelli notes, such a passionate debate.<sup>50</sup>

### *The referendum campaign: the centrality of the nation*

With the onset of the referendum campaign, the question of Europe moved from being an elite-driven issue into the public arena. It invoked a fierce debate—Meunier-Aitsahalia and Ross describe it as 'passionate, virulent and traumatic'.<sup>51</sup> As with the headscarves affair in 1989, the debate totally dominated French politics in 1992 and was in itself a significant factor in giving voice to the opposition. This was especially useful to the FN, with the referendum campaign affording it a valuable opportunities to participate in the political debate alongside the mainstream parties.

<sup>44</sup> Stone, 'Ratifying Maastricht', p.86.

<sup>45</sup> The bulk of the 'no' votes came from the PCF and RPR, although most of the RPR abstained—there were 99 abstentions. For a breakdown of the parliamentary vote, see *Le Monde*, 14 May 1992.

<sup>46</sup> On the Danish vote, see N.Christensen, 'The Danish No to Maastricht', *New Left Review*, no. 195, September-October 1992, pp.97-101; C.Archer, 'Denmark says no', *The World Today*, August-September, 1992, pp.142-3. On the 'correct' decision taken at the second Danish referendum, see Duff, 'Ratification', in Duff et al. (eds), *Maastricht and Beyond*, p.63.

<sup>47</sup> He ruled that the Senate should continue to debate and vote on the Treaty, and that it would then be ratified via referendum.

<sup>48</sup> As noted by Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, p.66.

<sup>49</sup> Polls indicated a 63 per cent 'yes' vote at the beginning of June. See Buffotot, 'Le Référendum sur l'Union Européenne', pp.277-86.

<sup>50</sup> H.Portelli, 'Le référendum sur l'Union européenne', *Regards sur l'actualité*, September-October 1992, pp.3-12.

<sup>51</sup> Meunier-Aitsahalia and Ross, 'Democratic Deficit or Democratic Surplus?', p.57.

As Guyomarch notes, the referendum debate was 'the final factor which helped to crystallize party positions on Europe'.<sup>52</sup> More importantly, the referendum offered the anti-EU parties an ideal platform to disseminate their positions on the EU. As noted in Chapter 6, the MTEU referendum in France was crucial in raising questions concerning European integration in the broader public arena, and contributed to a shift away from the largely passive 'soft' consensus which had characterised the public attitude towards European integration up till this time.<sup>53</sup> As noted, the FN and PCF had already taken an anti-MTEU stance. But they were not alone in opposing moves towards further integration as set out in the treaty. There were signs of an increasing national resistance to closer integration among the nation-states of Europe, at least along the lines foreseen by Maastricht, and the loss of national sovereignty it entailed.<sup>54</sup>

The fact that the Constitutional Council had ordered revisions based on the constitutional meaning of state sovereignty served to highlight the centrality of the concept.<sup>55</sup> As Hoffmann noted, two differing conceptions of sovereignty were being contested: 'an absolutist one which happened to be deeply engraved in French culture' and 'a pragmatic and relative notion of sovereignty' viewed as 'a bundle of competences'.<sup>56</sup> The *souverainiste* opponents of Maastricht, then, are closely linked with the Jacobin Republican tradition of an indivisible Republic and indivisible popular sovereignty—be they from the Left or the Right. The integrationists, on the other hand, while justifying a more integrated Europe on the basis of national interest and influence, could not rely on Republican symbolism or histories to underpin their stance on the unbundling and pooling of sovereignty.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, p.80.

<sup>53</sup> Further, 'Europe' up to this time had been largely a western alliance based on the geography of the Cold War and linked to prosperity, and the integrationists were disadvantaged by the fact that this first great public discussion on the EU took place at the same time as the end of the Cold War and during a period of recession and high unemployment.

<sup>54</sup> On the evolution of political parties' positions on the EU, see Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, pp.74-94.

<sup>55</sup> The ruling allowed for 'transfers of competence' to international bodies. As Stone notes in 'Ratifying Maastricht', p.74, this recognises sovereignty as a bundle of competences, not a hermetically sealed whole. But each transfer of competence is assessed separately.

<sup>56</sup> Hoffmann, 'Thoughts on the French Nation Today', p.72. See also the discussion of differing conceptions of sovereignty in Chapter 6, pp.216-23.

<sup>57</sup> French Republican traditions, which stressed democratic legitimacy provided by government as representative of the nation, were also to prove a source of French opposition to the final shape of EMU. Dyson notes that 'Opposition to EMU within France crystallised around the issue of surrendering the sovereignty of the French people to a technocratic Europe built on German lines'. The democratic legitimacy of the project was at issue. French negotiators looked to the formation of an economic government, political direction of economic and monetary policy with the ECB and monetary policy-making subordinate. However decisions on a single European economic policy were deferred at Maastricht, and the independence of the ECB and the prime aim of inflation control, not subject to political control, asserted. K.Dyson, 'The Franco-German relationship and economic and monetary union: using Europe to "bind Leviathan"', *WEP*, Vol. 22 (1), January 1999, pp.25-44. See further on the important role of French Republican and statist traditions in the EMU negotiations, K.Dyson and K.Featherstone, *The Road to Maastricht*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp.64-71. This may also explain why the French negotiating stance was so unified; see A.Verdun, *European responses to globalisation and financial market integration*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000, pp.200-1.

The most divided of the mainstream parties was the Gaullist RPR, perhaps unsurprising given its historical position on the nation-state and national independence. However, the 'rally' had evolved from the time of de Gaulle with some major—and contested—shifts in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, the FN has been skilful in taking on the partly-discarded Gaullist rhetoric and using the language of sovereignty to lead its nationalistic and xenophobic anti-EU campaigns. Chirac, RPR party leader, had voted 'yes without enthusiasm' in the National Assembly.<sup>59</sup> However the party was split. Leading dissident Gaullists Séguin and Pasqua took part in a well organised and dynamic 'no' campaign, along with de Villiers from the UDF. They explicitly raised the question of national sovereignty in opposing Maastricht. Séguin, a former RPR president, published two books reaffirming the importance of the bounded nation-state as a basis for democracy.<sup>60</sup> RPR dissidents such as Pasqua and Séguin claim they are pro-Europe, but anti-MTEU. Indeed as Duhamel remarks, no one says they are against 'Europe': each in their own way claims they are 'European'.<sup>61</sup> At issue is the type of Europe being constructed and its impact on the nation-state.

There was also some division amongst the Left—most obviously between the PCF and the PS, but also within the PS. A trenchant critique of the EU as a construction serving the interests of

<sup>58</sup> See for example P.Fysh, 'Gaullism Today', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 46 (3), July 1993, pp.399-414. He identifies major elements of 'classical Gaullism'—the unique greatness of France; national military and diplomatic independence; the third way concept; and a strong state and leader, and argues that in the 1980s the RPR abandoned several classic Gaullist ideas. In particular he notes a shift in economic and social policy, from redistributive rhetoric and *dirigisme* in the economy to an acceptance of market forces: 'It would be hard to exaggerate the contrast between the heyday of Gaullist dirigisme and the new attitude to the economy first unveiled in Chirac's platform for the presidential elections of 1981', p.401. See also A.Knapp, *Gaullism since de Gaulle*, Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1994. Foreign and defence policy has also shifted with the continued relevance of national independence questioned, particularly in the MTEU referendum debate. On the evolution of the RPR position on Europe, see J.Derville, 'Les parties gaullistes: fidélité aux principes et évolutions doctrinales' (The Gaullist parties: loyalty to principles and doctrinal evolutions) in Bréchon (ed.), *Le discours politique en France*, pp.37-58.

<sup>59</sup> Stone notes that although leader of the party, Chirac refused to take the podium during the National Assembly debates on ratification. See 'Ratifying Maastricht', p.76.

<sup>60</sup> *Discours pour la France*, and *Ce que J'ai dit* (That which I have said), Paris, Grasset, 1993. In his *Discours* he refers to 1992 (with the ratification of the MTEU) as the 'antithesis' of 1789, p.17. In *Ce que J'ai dit* he attacks the idea that territorial frontiers are outdated as a 'dogma' and calls for the reintroduction of frontiers, pp.47-8. A Jacobin of the Right, he stresses the importance of the nation-state, and his anti-Maastricht stance may well have come at the cost of possible prime ministerial opportunities. See *European Voice*, 2-8 May 1995, where Thomas Klau ('French embrace dream of closer integration') argues that the French establishment has reached a consensus on the merits of further integration. However this is based on a cautious pragmatism, with nationalist opposition still significant, and integrative support allied with the invocation of the nation-state. Jospin's 28 May 2001 'vision' speech on integration ('The Future of an Enlarged Europe') explicitly reaffirms an attachment to the nation and talks of a 'nation-state federation' in response to the German vision propounded by Fischer. The fact that he is no doubt crafting his proposals with light of his 2002 Presidential ambitions only serves to underline a recognition of the strength of the national idea amongst the electorate. See Jospin's and Fischer's speeches in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 'Special dossier on Europe', at <<http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/cahier/europe>>, June 2001.

<sup>61</sup> See Duhamel, *La Politique Imaginaire*, p.276. Hence opponents of integration from the Right use the language of European civilisation and European values, but reject supranational integration. This is subverted by the FN into a blatantly racist argument. Opponents from the Left look to European solidarity and European workers' rights.

global capitalism and (US) multi-nationals, removed from the interests—and democratic control—of national citizens, is articulated not only by the PCF, but also by Chevènement's wing of the PS.<sup>62</sup> Leading the campaign of the '*Socialisme et République*' dissenting faction of the PS, the critique of a liberal (market-based) Europe and of globalisation was accompanied by the call for a 'Europe of the Citizens', accompanied by references to the 'indivisible' Jacobin Republic with democratic legitimacy.<sup>63</sup> Coming from differing ideological positions, elements on both Left and Right converge in a defence of the nation.

These critiques were picked up in a more populist vein by the FN, with calls for the preservation of national independence couched in the language of the disappearance of the nation (in *euro-mondialisme*) and a threatened national identity. The party focused on the sovereignty theme, asserting French power in the international arena and the need to ensure French independence.<sup>64</sup> To a lesser extent, the FN's approach was comparable with de Villiers' brand of conservatism, looking to defend French identity and its physical, intellectual and spiritual heritage.

The referendum debate did concentrate, for the most part, on the question of Europe—'the most striking feature of the Maastricht campaign', note Aitsahalia and Ross, 'was that the debate actually focused for the most part of Europe'.<sup>65</sup> Specific major items in the debate were EMU; foreign and security policy; the role of the institutions; European citizenship; and the question of Germany.<sup>66</sup> Opposition to EMU, CFSP, supranational institutions and European citizenship was couched in terms of nationhood, identity, sovereignty and democracy. The four national concerns as set out in Chapter 6—sovereignty, territory/borders, identity, and citizenship—underpinned the critique. All these elements of nationhood were portrayed as threatened by the deepening of the integration process. The nation, whether imagined in its political or cultural incarnation, was invoked to bolster the position of opponents. It was also used, in a more pragmatic fashion, to justify the position of Maastricht supporters. The positions taken on the central issues, with particular reference to question of 'national survival', the central theme of the FN, are set out below.

<sup>62</sup> This foreshadowed the creation of Chevènement's breakaway *Mouvement des Citoyens*, as noted in Chapter 7.

<sup>63</sup> This is similar to the Bourdieu critique of liberal Europe noted in Chapter 6. For the policies of the MDC, calling for democratic accountability and warning of dangers of a single currency before a 'true European conscience' emerges, see its web site at <<http://www.mdc-france.org/accueil.html>>. The MDC argues that the introduction of a new currency, entrusted to an 'unaccountable financial oligarchy' independent of government, will convince Europeans that this is a 'machine intended to crush them'—these terms are echoed in the rhetoric of the FN, which refers to the EU as a 'machine to crush the people'. Presciently, the movement also notes that such actions by the EU risk awakening '*des sentiments xénophobes et nationalistes*'.

<sup>64</sup> See *Présent*, 29 April 1997. The FN's anti-EU stance is elaborated in more detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>65</sup> Aitsahalia and Ross, 'Democratic Deficit or Democratic Surplus?', p.61. National issues tend to be at the forefront of EP election campaigns.

<sup>66</sup> For an overview of the yes and no camps' positions on these issues, see Buffotot, 'Le Référendum sur l'Union Européenne', pp.277-86.

### EMU

Opponents claimed that EMU represented an unacceptable transfer of sovereignty to an unaccountable European Central Bank.<sup>67</sup> Printing money was one of the central attributes of sovereignty and the attachment to the franc as a symbol of nationhood, identity and unity also figured widely.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, monetary policy would be set not to serve economic development and growth, but to serve the capital markets and large TNCs.<sup>69</sup> The overriding concern with inflation—monetary stability being the core aim of the ECB—could lead to an increase in unemployment.<sup>70</sup> Supporters argued that EMU increased French room for manoeuvre, and gave it more national control and choice in an increasingly 'global' economy. Few nation-states now have economic and monetary independence, insulated from the outside world, thus France would benefit from participation in a regional grouping. Further, the weight of 'Europe' would enable a truly independent monetary policy, not subject to speculative attack nor changes in the value of the DM or US\$. Thus the 'nation-writ large' could influence at a European level what it could not control at a national level.<sup>71</sup>

### CFSP

For Maastricht opponents foreign and security policy was seen as crucial arena in which to retain national control and a national veto. Security—and possibly in the future, defence—were core attributes of national sovereignty. This was a sensitive area vital to the French national interest where independence should not be compromised. Further, opponents cited experiences of both the Gulf War and Yugoslavia to back up claims that a common foreign policy was not possible and attempts were doomed to failure. Supporters claimed that CFSP<sup>72</sup> would precisely enable European nation-states to work together, would avoid reversion to alliance politics, and enable Europe to exert political as well as economic power. The creation of the 'pillar' structure—a French proposal—meant that CFSP remained separate from Community

<sup>67</sup> Robert Elgie has argued convincingly that the level of political and economic independence granted to the ECB goes far beyond that which the French central bank—the Bank of France—enjoyed previously, and that there is a strong case for reform to address this democratic deficit. See 'Democratic accountability and central bank independence: historical and contemporary, national and European perspectives', *WEP*, Vol. 21 (3), July 1998, pp.53-77.

<sup>68</sup> See Dyson, 'The Franco-German relationship'. Agreeing with French 'Republican' criticism, he also argues—convincingly—that 'the ECB's proposed structures are largely incompatible with the basic principles of representative government'.

<sup>69</sup> An argument found in the MDC and PCF critiques.

<sup>70</sup> The major aim of monetary policy set out in the Maastricht Treaty is ensuring price stability—reflecting the German quasi-obsession with anti-inflationary policies. In 'The Franco-German relationship' Dyson notes the cognitive dimension affecting national positions during the EMU negotiations: 'Behind German policy positions and attitudes of this type were historical memories of the way in which hyperinflation had ravaged liberal democracy in the 1920s and dislocated economic activity in the 1940s'.

<sup>71</sup> See the argument of 'refound sovereignty' put by Jacquet in *Le Débat*, no. 71, September-October 1992.

<sup>72</sup> 'PESC' in its French articulation: *Politique étrangère et de sécurité commune*.



institutions and processes and would operate only according to a consensus model.<sup>73</sup> While the failed European attempts in the case of Yugoslavia favoured the 'no' camp, the pro-integrationists argued that it was a matter of making progress.<sup>74</sup>

### *Institutions*

Opponents favoured strong intergovernmental institutions, notably the Councils, and less power for the EP and Commission. The EP lacked legitimacy, and the transfer of national sovereignty to unaccountable Brussels bureaucrats was seen as antithetical to a democratic polity. Rather, more control should be given to national parliaments, decision-making should remain the province of the Council, and the right of veto reestablished.<sup>75</sup> Supporters of Maastricht were also wary of granting increased powers to supranational institutions, but their response was to argue that Council had democratic legitimacy as an agent of the member states. While there was some recognition of the EP as a democratic representative, the French integrationist camp did not support more powers being given to the EP; the primacy of the Council(s) as the major decision-making bodies was affirmed. This continued the tradition of France desiring a strong Europe with weak (supranational) institutions.<sup>76</sup>

### *European citizenship*

Hostility towards the creation of the 'European citizen' was voiced on a number of levels. Opponents claimed that EU citizenship was a threat to national citizenship, and to national identity. From a statist point of view, only the nation-state had the right to confer citizenship; moreover, it was closely linked with the democratic order (and, conversely, the EU 'democratic deficit').<sup>77</sup> Further, the cultural diversity of Europe was as an impediment to a single European citizenship. Debate also centred on whether the citizens of other EU member-states should have the right to vote in municipal and European elections. In particular opponents pointed to the role of municipal elections in determining the composition of the Senate—a national institution, one

<sup>73</sup> See Moravcsik, *The choice for Europe*, and Mazucelli, *France and Germany at Maastricht*, for French intergovernmental preferences in foreign policy.

<sup>74</sup> For differing views on the CFSP, see J.Lodge, 'From civilian power to speaking with a common voice: the transition to a CFSP' in J.Lodge (ed.), *The EC and the Challenge of the Future*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London, Pinter, 1993. She argues that although the aims and instruments were limited, it was still a 'qualitative step towards supranational action in the security sphere'. In contrast, E.Noël, 'Future Prospects for Europe', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 30 (4), Autumn 1995, pp.452-68, states that a 'new label has been stuck on a package whose contents ... are practically identical to that of the previous one entitled "Political Cooperation"'. More recent analyses of CFSP are also divided, but tend to the critical—see for example Jan Zielonka's *Explaining Euro-Paralysis. Why Europe is unable to Act in International Politics*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998.

<sup>75</sup> See PS dissident wing led by Chevènement; right-wing dissidents led by Pasqua and Séguin. The FN also argued the case for national representation and against the 'democratic deficit' of the EU.

<sup>76</sup> Furet, 'Europe After Utopianism'.

<sup>77</sup> See Banchoff, 'National identity and EU legitimacy'.

that should only be determined through the votes of French citizens.<sup>78</sup> For some, the fact that long-term (non-citizen) residents of France had no entitlement to vote was an issue—Mitterrand's 1981 campaign pledge having been abandoned.<sup>79</sup> Finally, the lack of progress towards a 'social Europe' meant that important economic and social rights inherent in citizenship were overlooked at the European level.

The anti-Maastricht campaign also found resonance with the (increasingly vocal) anti-globalisation movement in France. The commitment of the EU to deregulation, liberalisation and fiscal restraint—a liberal idea of Europe—was criticised as leading to a Europe for capital rather than for workers or citizens.<sup>80</sup> In the French context, this development was also seen as antithetical to the traditional, *dirigiste* approach of the French state. Further, opponents of this trend noted that the movement of power away from state is not necessarily transferred to 'Brussels', but in fact to the market.<sup>81</sup> However Maastricht supporters portrayed the EU as a means of defence against the 'free market forces' of globalisation: these could be staunches at a European level and a 'European' social-democratic model championed. Thus the EU, it could be argued, shifted from being a bulwark against communism to a bulwark against the effects of neo-liberalism and globalisation.

As noted, the question—even fear—of Germany was an ever-present consideration, both for pro- and anti-MTEU campaigners. In the 'yes' camp, there were those who viewed the EC/EU as a Franco-German creation, thus serving Franco-German interests.<sup>82</sup> More widely-acknowledged was the view that Maastricht would firmly bind Germany into a European system of states, while EMU would limit the influence of the Bundesbank and the strength of the DM, and increase French influence. Similar considerations led to different conclusions in the 'no' camp: MTEU would cement German dominance in the EU and lead to a loss of French sovereignty.

Reference to the position of the FN on each of these central themes illustrates how it used concepts of sovereignty and nationhood to further its aims.<sup>83</sup> In brief, the FN claimed that

<sup>78</sup> As noted, this aspect was underlined by the constitutional revisions necessary to allow voting rights for other EU citizens.

<sup>79</sup> See the critiques in M.Martiniello, 'European citizenship, European identity and migrants: towards the post-national state?' in Miles and Thränhardt (eds), *Migration and European Integration*, pp.37-52.

<sup>80</sup> As noted in Chapter 6, there has been significant opposition to the free-market direction taken by the EU.

<sup>81</sup> See also B.Moss, 'France, EMU and the Social Divide' in B.Moss and J.Michie (eds), *The Single European Currency in National Perspective*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1998, pp.58-86.

<sup>82</sup> Alain Prate, *Quelle Europe?*, Paris, Julliard, 1991, p.397.

<sup>83</sup> From FN program for Europe as set out in *Le Grand Changement*. On its anti-EU platform see also Chapter 2, pp.64-73; Chapter 6, 233-5.

Maastricht would destroy the French nation-state.<sup>84</sup> The central themes of its anti-Maastricht campaign included the rejection of the single currency, which would deprive France of monetary sovereignty as well as increasing unemployment and poverty; the reestablishment of the supremacy of French law; and the development of a Europe of nations, a 'French France in a European Europe'.<sup>85</sup> Thus according to the FN, Europe should not be a Brussels-built super-state, destroying the nations of Europe; rather, it should be based on a common European identity and constitute a powerful force against external threats.<sup>86</sup> These themes fall into an overall defence of the nation.

An additional theme favoured by the FN was that of 'borders'—a powerful concept when allied with that of national sovereignty. Open borders, according to the FN, would lead to unacceptable and uncontrollable levels of immigration from the 'Third World' and from the East. French and European civilisation would be threatened via this loss of sovereignty.<sup>87</sup> This in turn is linked to an increased threat of terrorism and international crime. The abolition of frontier controls agreed to under the Schengen accords were also denounced by the FN as threatening the territorial integrity of France. According to the FN, the opening of borders is a 'betrayal', in the same way as the creation of a supranational Europe that will supercede the nation-state.<sup>88</sup>

Notwithstanding the inconsistencies in the FN anti-EU campaign, the party was able to exploit the centrality of its favoured themes—nationhood and identity—and ally a racially-informed vision of a future Europe with a nationalist rhetoric defending the sovereign nation.

### *The referendum result: 'petit oui'*

Both sides in the campaign were guilty of over-simplification and hyperbole. A last-minute editorial in *Le Monde* predicted that a 'no' vote would be the greatest catastrophe for Europe since the rise of Hitler!<sup>89</sup> As it turned out, on 20 September 1992 the French electorate approved

<sup>84</sup> In common with other MTEU opponents, the FN claimed it was not opposed to the idea of European countries acting together, but rather to the form taken by the EU. The party is favourable to the idea of 'Europe' as a community of identity.

<sup>85</sup> This is not only an attack on the EU but also more broadly on globalisation, deregulation and free trade. According to the party program 'The Europe which is being built in Brussels, with the complicity of the French political class, is a step towards globalisation'.

<sup>86</sup> *Le Grand Changement*: 'Europe must organise itself around the common identity of Europeans and form a powerful bloc in the face of external threats'.

<sup>87</sup> *Le Grand Changement* promotes particular forms of European unity and identity: 'Europe is not only a large market of industrialised nations, it is above all a community of civilisation'. Europe, then, is opposed culturally to 'third world immigrants' and economically to America and Japan.

<sup>88</sup> At best, Le Pen would support a Europe made up of independent sovereign states—possibly not so far removed from de Gaulle's concept of a '*Europe des patries*'—but constituting a fortress against the outside world.

<sup>89</sup> *Le Monde*, September 19 1992.

the treaty by a whisker.<sup>90</sup> The so-called '*petit oui*' of 51.01 per cent won the day, against 48.98 per cent of 'no' voters. Overall, the 'yes' vote was urban (Marseille the exception, voting no); better educated; and from the higher socio-economic groups. The 'no' vote, conversely, was rural (although the regional frontier areas voted yes); less well-educated; and from the lower socio-economic groups. Broken down territorially, 53 of the 96 departments voted 'no'.

**Table 8.1 MTEU referendum results: socio-economic breakdown**

<i>Profession</i>	<i>Yes %</i>	<i>No %</i>
Farmer	38	62
Blue-collar worker	39	61
Clerical worker	42	58
Retail / small business	47	53
Middle management	61	39
Higher management	80	20

Source: *Le Monde*, September 22 1992.

The political affiliations of the voters are set out in Table 8.2. 'Loyal' PCF and FN supporters voted no. As could be expected, given the focus on national sovereignty, Gaullist voters also leant to the 'no' camp. But even the pro-EU party of the president, the PS, garnered under 75 per cent of its supporters. As will be examined in the next section, these results foreshadowed party splits on the European question which came to the fore in the 1994 and 1999 EP elections.

Duhamel and Grunberg identified five major cleavages amongst the electorate: socio-economic (education, class, occupation); party political; authoritarians-liberals; rural-urban; historical-religious.<sup>91</sup> Those on the extremes voted no, the centre voted yes; authoritarians voted no, liberals yes. They also noted that those opposed to the wearing of the headscarf in school voted no. Finally, Catholic France, including ex-MRP strongholds, voted yes; old Republican-secular strongholds voted no (except Paris). There are plenty of exceptions to the rule in this schematic. However it does highlight the connection between the opposition to cultural features intruding in the public sphere—due to concerns over French national identity, be it exclusive or Republican—and the vote against giving up (nominally) sovereign powers in an increasing range of spheres. The final cleavages—referencing the headscarf affair and secular Republicanism—indicate how reactions were grounded in a particular reading of the 'national': a stern, even authoritarian approach vs. a pragmatic approach to the question of nation and identity.

<sup>90</sup> For breakdown of results, see *Le Monde*, September 22 1992, a special referendum issue. The participation rate of over 70 per cent is regarded as high.

<sup>91</sup> O. Duhamel and G. Grunberg, 'Référendum: les dix France' in SOFRES, *L'état de l'opinion*, Paris, Seuil, 1993, pp. 79-86. See also *Le Monde*, 25 September 1992, and Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, pp. 99-100.

Table 8.2 MTEU referendum results: party-political identification

Yes	%	No	%
Socialist	74	FN	95
Green	69	Communist	92
UDF	58	RPR	67
Left	57	Extreme Left	82
		Right	68

Source: SOFRES poll, *Le Monde*, September 25 1992.

The German question was less decisive, although omnipresent. Daniel Vernet observed that 'in France, all of us, whether we are supporters or opponents of Maastricht, are afflicted with the 'German obsession'<sup>92</sup>—and 40 per cent of 'no' voters, and 21 per cent of 'yes' voters, cited German domination of Europe as a reason for their decision.<sup>93</sup>

It is clear that—notwithstanding the 'protest vote' and domestically-driven aspects of the referendum—the integration of France into a supranational body is opposed by significant section of the electorate.<sup>94</sup> Polls consistently indicated the major reason for voting 'no' was related to the loss of national sovereignty. Of those voting no, 57 per cent did so because of concerns over sovereignty; 55 per cent cited the concentration of power in non-elected Brussels bureaucrats.<sup>95</sup>

Overall, public support for the Union and for further integration was on the decline in the 1990s. While the deteriorating economic conditions and rising unemployment were factors in this shift, broader questions about the future of France in the EU were at play which related closely to the idea of France as a political community, embodied in a national state. These were also linked to the debates surrounding globalisation and its consequences.

In addition to the controversial debate on the Maastricht Treaty and the results of the referendum, this shift is reflected in the opinion polls. Polls show marked falls in support for the Union in comparison with the 1980s, and an increase in those wishing to defend specific French interests, however defined.<sup>96</sup> Cameron illustrates how French support had already

<sup>92</sup> 'The dilemmas of French foreign policy', *International Affairs*, Vol. 68 (2), 1991, pp.655-64.

<sup>93</sup> Criddle, 'The French referendum', pp.228-38.

<sup>94</sup> Although some urged a 'no' vote against Mitterrand, Stone notes that 'the vast majority, 90-93 per cent, based their vote on opinions about the European integration process'. See 'Ratifying Maastricht', p.83.

<sup>95</sup> *Libération*, 22 September 1992, pp.4-6.

<sup>96</sup> For ongoing statistics on EU polling, see the European Commission's regular *Eurobarometer*. Both the percentage of those supporting the EU and the percentage agreeing that France has benefitted from EU membership have fallen in the 1990s. For analysis, see Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, pp.94-103; E.Dupoirier, 'L'enjeu européen dans l'opinion publique française' (The European stake in French public opinion), *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 12 (2-3), Spring-Summer 1994, pp.1-12. French government polling indicates a split between those who support further integration and those who view it as a threat to national identity and sovereignty. In 1999 those defending national values

begun to erode in the late 1980s, and then dropped sharply in 1991. Notably, this is now (marginally) below the EU average, where once French support was consistently higher than average. Cameron notes that the move to a below average position coincided with the Autumn of 1989 and suggests that specific events at that time played a major part.<sup>97</sup> Certainly, it is generally held in France—by supporters as well as opponents of the treaty—that the debate and the strong French opposition to Maastricht have ‘durably reinforced euro-scepticism’.<sup>98</sup> However it is not clear why anxieties provoked by the end of the Cold War or the unification of Germany should necessarily translate into a decline in support for European integration, although the economic and employment concerns could certainly be linked to (and blamed on!) the *franc fort* policy. Rather, the linked issues of national sovereignty and identity gained salience—Dupoirier refers to a reflex of ‘national defence’.<sup>99</sup>

The referendum also highlighted divisions within the nominally pro-EU mainstream parties on the issue. Anti-EU sentiment was not necessarily confined to the extremes of the political spectrum, although the FN and the PCF have been the most unified and rigid on the question. Post-Maastricht, the French political spectrum has undergone some major changes, in particular an ‘explosion’ (*éclatement*) of anti-EU parties emerging and achieving success at the European elections.<sup>100</sup>

#### Anti-EU successes: the 1990s European elections

As noted, there has clearly been an increase in public scepticism about continuing rapid European integration. This is both reflected in and promoted by the increase in anti-EU parties standing (and succeeding) in elections to the European Parliament.<sup>101</sup> For the majority of these parties, it is ‘the national’—French national traditions, interests and identity—which they purport to defend. Thus despite the split within the FN in 1998-99, and subsequent drop in its supporter base, there have been other parties which have garnered the ‘national’ vote by

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surpassed those desiring further integration. See the annual *The French and Europe* (Les Français et l'Europe) poll published by the Foreign Ministry at <[www.france.diplomatie.fr/](http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/)>.

<sup>97</sup> Cameron, ‘National Interest’. These included anxiety concerning the end of the Cold War and unification of Germany; concern re. *franc fort* policy and downturn in the economy and employment; dissatisfaction with Mitterrand; the MTEU campaign; and two EU crises—the ERM crisis of Summer 1992 and European (CFSP) failure in Yugoslavia.

<sup>98</sup> L.Cohen-Tanugi (a supporter), ‘La politique européenne de la France à l’heure des choix’ (The European politics of France at the moment of choice), *Politique étrangère*, Winter 1992, pp.857-64; quote on p.859.

<sup>99</sup> Dupoirier, ‘L’enjeu européen dans l’opinion publique française’.

<sup>100</sup> The system of proportional representation in EP elections also advantages the emergence of new parties, with seats allocated to all those who win over five per cent of the vote.

<sup>101</sup> For listing of political parties with anti-EU positions, see P.Taggart, ‘A Touchstone of Dissent: Euro-scepticism in contemporary Western European party systems’, *EJPR*, Vol. 33, 1998, pp.363-88.

appealing to national sovereignty and identity. Table 8.3 indicates the number of anti-EU parties and their levels of support in EP elections in the 1990s.

**Table 8.3 1994 and 1999 EP election results: anti-EU parties**

	1994 %	1999 %
FN	10.50	5.69
MNR	-	3.28
Majorité pour une autre Europe	12.30	-
RPF <sup>102</sup>	n/a	13.05
L'autre politique / MDC	2.50	-
PCF	6.90	6.78
LCR / Extreme Left	2.70	5.18
CPNT <sup>103</sup>	3.95	6.77

Source: *Tribune pour L'Europe. Informations du Parlement Européen*, July-August 1999; *Le Monde*, 15 June 1999; Taggart, 'A Touchstone of Dissent', 1998.<sup>104</sup>

On the Right, the RPR and UDF presented a single list at the 1994 EP elections, although within that list positions varied from pro-federal (Bayrou's strand in the UDF) to the more sceptical (Séguin/Madelin).<sup>105</sup> Disagreements on Europe within both parties had already taken place, and both had factions and reflection groups representing an anti-Maastricht line. From the neo-Gaullist RPR, Charles Pasqua led the *souverainiste* group, 'Tomorrow France', while from the UDF the maverick de Villiers led the nationalistic 'Movement for France'.<sup>106</sup> Come the 1994 elections, de Villiers contested the election on an anti-EU and anti-Maastricht platform. His nationalist party 'Majorité pour une autre Europe' called for a loose association of states with few powers for the supranational EP.<sup>107</sup> This went beyond a defence of

<sup>102</sup> Formed in 1998 from de Villiers' *Mouvement pour la France* and Pasqua's 'reflection group', *Demain La France*.

<sup>103</sup> *Chasse, Pêche, Nature et Tradition* (Hunting, Fishing, Nature and Tradition)—often referred to as The Hunters (*Les Chasseurs*) party, representing a rural-urban divide and taking a strongly nationalistic line.

<sup>104</sup> There is a growing level of abstention in EP elections, from 47.3 per cent in 1994 up to 53.2 per cent in 1999. This is explained in part by the characterisation of EP elections as 'second-order' and the perception that the role of the EP is insignificant. Although the EP has markedly increased its powers in the 1990s, EP elections do not affect the composition of the Council or Commission. Moreover, as a result of the 'list' system, there is little close contact or recognition between the electors and the elected.

<sup>105</sup> Séguin initially sided with Pasqua in setting up 'Tomorrow France' but has since softened his line on Europe, taking a more pragmatic approach and arguing that France 'has no future without Europe'. See *The Economist*, 'France, Divided by Europe', p.29. Once a champion of a *dirigiste* approach to the economy, Séguin also now argues that an open liberal economic model is the key to France's economic growth.

<sup>106</sup> On de Villiers' political evolution, see Chebel d'Appollonia, *L'Extrême Droite en France*, pp.395-402. His voters are drawn from traditional conservative areas, particularly from western France, with a clerical base. For details of the MPF program, see its web site at <<http://www.mpf-villiers.org>>.

<sup>107</sup> See his two anti-Maastricht publications, *Notre Europe sans Maastricht*, and 'Pour L'Europe contre Maastricht. Livre blanc sur le projet de traité de Maastricht et sur l'avenir de l'Europe', *La lettre de Philippe de Villiers*, Les Herbiers, Combat pour les valeurs, 1992. Europe is rejected as a threat to national traditions and values, resulting in the loss of sovereignty, economic and political over-



sovereignty argument. De Villiers' Maurrassien idea of a nation based on *enracinement*, a rooted civilisation based on a Christian culture and a national cultural community which needs protection, leads him to oppose 'Europe' on political, economic and cultural grounds. His party polled well in 1994, gaining thirteen parliamentary seats, and as its leading MEP, de Villiers founded the '*Europe des nations*' EP party group.<sup>108</sup>

As indicated by the RPR anti-Maastricht faction during the referendum, the EU also posed a dilemma for the Gaullist party. Once a central pole of Gaullist philosophy, the RPR has now moved away, in practice, from the uncompromising defence of the nation-state. Although its primary value is still proclaimed as 'the nation', it has situated the construction of Europe within this context, asserting that 'because we have confidence in the future of the nation-state we are attached to the construction of Europe'.<sup>109</sup> Nonetheless, this is somewhat ambiguous: if democracy and nationhood remain centrally linked, it is not clear how this may be reconciled with a supranational approach, in particular in sensitive areas where national sovereignty has been sacrosanct. The actions of Chirac after winning the 1995 presidential elections suggest that, despite the national rhetoric, the party has moved towards a tacit acceptance of 'pooling' of sovereignty. The party—and its supporter base—is split, however, with those who adhere to a strict *souverainiste* reading of Gaullist values setting up a separate party to contest the European elections in 1999.

The 1999 EP elections illustrate significant party fragmentation. Not only do we have the more 'traditional' euro-sceptic defenders of the nation-state—the FN and the PCF—but also new parties and off-shoots of mainstream parties which have, as their fundamental basis, opposition to the current direction of the EU (if not integration overall). By 1999, the main EP election battles were not fought between Left and Right, but within the main established groupings.

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centralisation, and a polity dominated by social democracy. Although associating Europe with immigration, unemployment and insecurity, he rejects any association or similarity with Le Pen and the FN. Chebel d'Appollonia, *L'Extrême Droite en France*, concludes that despite some similarities, Le Pen and de Villiers 'represent neither the same political traditions nor the same sociological realities', p.402.

<sup>108</sup> For the results of EP elections in France, 1979-1994, see Guyomarch, *France in the European Union*, p.78.

<sup>109</sup> See the Manifesto of Gaullist values as set out at the party conference, 17 January 2000, at the RPR web site at <<http://www.rpr.org>>. The nation is of primary importance, situated '*au premier rang*' of its values, and has not been superseded. The RPR asserts that its concept of the nation is not that of the conservatives and those nostalgic for the past—a refuge and a fixed reference. Rather, the nation is the privileged domain of democracy, liberty and solidarity, and acts in the general interest. The party rejects a 'Europe of the regions' and the idea of the global village, and looks to the continuing central political role of the 'nation'. At the 1998 RPR congress, the party shifted from a traditional Gaullist economic approach and accepted the 'free market'.

There are now significant minorities in the mainstream parties on the Left and Right who oppose aspects of European integration, and who have been prepared to set up separate 'lists' for the EP elections. On the Right, the 1999 campaign was particularly fragmented, with a federal list under UDF leader Bayrou, a Gaullist RPR/DL list, as well as the Pasqua-de Villiers joint *souverainiste* off-shoot, the RPF. Additionally, the anti-EU CNPT party sought to represent the concerns of rural France, in particular concerning the EU directives on hunting, with a staunchly nationalistic program defending 'French values'. Finally, the split in the FN led to two extreme right parties contesting the election, Le Pen's FN and Mégret's MNR.

Table 8.4 1999 EP election results

List	Votes	%	Seats (1994)
Le Pen (FN)*	1 005 225	5.69	5 (11)
Pasqua (RPF)*	2 304 285	13.05	13 (13) <sup>110</sup>
Sarkozy (RPR/DL)	2 263 476	12.82	12 (28) <sup>111</sup>
Bayrou (UDF)	1 638 680	9.28	9 -
Saint-Josse (CNPT)*	1 195 760	6.77	6 (0)
Hollande (PS, PRG, MDC)	3 873 901	21.95	22 (15)
Cohn-Bendit (Greens)	1 715 450	9.72	9 (0)
Hue (PC)*	1 196 310	6.78	6 (0)
Laguiller (LCR, LO)*	914 860	5.18	5 (0)

\* indicates anti-EU parties

Source: Adapted from Buffotot and Hanley, 'L'éclatement de l'offre politique', p.166.<sup>112</sup>

The election results epitomise the Gaullist 'problem' with Europe and the continuing attraction of arguments based on national sovereignty and identity, with the RPF (Pasqua-de Villiers list) gaining the most votes. Its thirteen seats represent the largest grouping on the French Right.<sup>113</sup> Its 13.05 per cent share compares with the RPR/DL list's 12.82 per cent and

<sup>110</sup> De Villiers 1994 result.

<sup>111</sup> RPR plus UDF unified list in 1994.

<sup>112</sup> P. Buffotot and D. Hanley, 'L'éclatement de l'offre politique: les élections européennes de juin 1999' (The explosion of political offerings: the June 1999 European elections), *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol. 8 (2), 2000, pp.157-73. For results and commentary, see also *Le Monde*, 14 June 1999.

<sup>113</sup> For a listing of all French MEPs, see *Libération*, 14 June 1999. At the EP they organise and sit in overall party, not national, groupings. The PS belongs to the Party of European Socialists; PCF to the European United Left; RPR/DL to the Union for Europe; the UDF to the European People's Party-Christian Democrats; *Les Verts* to The Greens; and RPF to Independents for a Europe of Nations. The FN, LO/LCR and CNPT are currently unaffiliated. For details of European-level parties, see S. Hix and C. Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union*, London, Macmillan, 1997, and the EP web site.

the UDF's 9.28 per cent. CNPT did surprisingly well with almost 7 per cent of the vote.<sup>114</sup> Pasqua continued to attack further integration as endangering the nation, describing the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty as 'the death knell for France's sovereignty and independence'.<sup>115</sup> His 1999 campaign material centred on the EU as a danger to sovereignty: 'Every people, every nation is being asked to give up its sovereignty and its liberty for the benefit of technocrats in Brussels'.<sup>116</sup>

On the Left, the *gauche plurielle* put forward a joint list at the 1999 EP elections, incorporating the PS, PRG and MDC.<sup>117</sup> Chevènement did consider putting up a separate list representing the 'Republican Left', but failure at the 1994 elections, accompanied by pragmatic concerns for those MDC candidates who were in a position to gain a seat, led him to opt for a common position with the PS. This, however, did cause resentment amongst party members, and once elected, the MDC MEPs were labeled separately within the European Socialist party.<sup>118</sup> With 21.95 per cent, the Left represented the largest single grouping, but overall the results show that French EP parties and offerings were fragmented, with nine separate party groups winning seats. These comprised *souverainistes*, pragmatic Gaullists, federal-centrists and the CNPT on the Right; and on the Left, socialists, greens, communists, and the extreme left.

The anti-EU bloc included three parties from the Right—the FN, RPF and CNPT<sup>119</sup>—and two from the Left, the PCF and Laguiller's extreme left. As indicated in Table 8.4, parties opposing the current direction of the EU, or the EU union *tout court*, have 35 out of 87 seats—a substantial minority, particularly bearing in mind the anti-liberal EU current in the PS and the Gaullist attachment to the nation-state remaining strong within the RPR. Sarkozy called for a 'Europe of nations but not for a federal Europe' in his campaign speeches. How such a vision might be transferred into practice is, however, not clear. The French concept of

<sup>114</sup> Along with the RPF, it gained from the split in the FN at the 1999 elections. See Rillardon, 'Front contre Front'.

<sup>115</sup> The Economist, 'France, Divided by Europe', p.29. As indicated by the 1996 IGC negotiating positions of the French government, however, the preference for intergovernmental fora and for decision-making at Council level remained central to the official government position. See *White Paper on the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference: France*, published by the EP at <<http://europa.eu.int/en/agenda/igc-home/>>. More recently, French European affairs minister Pierre Moscovici has called for the creation of a new powerful ministerial body, 'Ministers for Europe', based in Brussels but reporting directly to the national heads of state or government. This retains a distinctly intergovernmental flavour accompanied by a close association with the national governments. See *European Voice*, 8 February 2001.

<sup>116</sup> See S.Cross, 'Euro-sceptic tide rises in France', *European Voice*, 14-20 January 1999, p.11.

<sup>117</sup> On the early history of the Left's position on Europe, see M.Newman, *Socialism and European Unity. The Dilemma of the Left in Britain and France*, London, Junction Books, 1983.

<sup>118</sup> See Buffotot and Hanley, 'L'éclatement de l'offre politique'. The PS allocated three 'winnable' seats to each smaller faction. François Hollande (PS) led the overall list.

<sup>119</sup> While CNPT is more indicative of the rural-urban cleavage, the conservative nature of its aims, and its rejection of environmental politics, place it on the Right of the political spectrum.

nationhood sits uneasily with transfers of sovereignty inevitable in a successfully integrating Europe (particularly when taking enlargement into account).

The European issue is indicative of a new divide within French politics—and within some political parties—moving beyond the traditional Left-Right division. Michel Gueldry notes the emergence of a 'new vision of the nation—open and liberal (that is to say, *girondin*) and also Europeanised and globalised in its own way'—and one that is rejected by the defenders of a traditional Jacobin position.<sup>120</sup> This is similar to the cleavage noted by Hoffmann above—that based on differing approaches to sovereignty. The 'open and liberal' camp, however, is finding it difficult to install itself as the dominant grouping. Until it finds a means of expressing its aims and policies with reference to a democratic and Republican framework, which acknowledges the continuing role of the nation-state, this will remain problematic for it.

This is not to suggest that a cohesive or stable coalition of anti-Maastricht parties is likely to emerge. Despite a focus on national sovereignty and national identity, there are marked differences dividing the parties. Extreme nationalism and xenophobia continue to underpin the FN position and its rhetoric of the 'survival of the nation' derives from an exclusive cultural reading of nationhood, albeit articulated with reference to Republican values. It holds that a 'Confederation of Europe' based on (unspecified) European values will protect European identity, while the retention of frontier controls and economic protectionism will protect French identity. However the party's 1990s conversion to protectionist economic policies was a pragmatic and populist attempt to promote 'France for the French' rather than a left-wing inspired program for social equality and workers' rights.

However, the scenario does suggest that anti-EU sentiment amongst the electorate will be continue to be given voice in the political arena, with a diverse set of parties which are concerned, for varying reasons, about increasing supranational integration. While there was an 'elite consensus' and a (public) 'passive consensus' on the merits of integration from the signing of the Treaties of Rome up until Maastricht, this is now contested. The 'Europe of enlightened despotism', as *Le Monde* noted in its post-referendum issue, has had its day.<sup>121</sup> The formation of new parties that explicitly reject the integration process, such as those set up by Pasqua, de Villiers and Chevènement to contest the European elections, illustrate that this opposition is not limited to the extremes. Central in the rejection is the question of national sovereignty and the imagining of the nation. The emergence of a powerful 'sovereignty' camp

<sup>120</sup> M. Gueldry, 'Où en est la République?' (Where is the Republic in all this?), *French Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 18 (1), Spring 2000, pp.101-4. He identifies a deep cleavage between Jacobin *souverainistes* and supporters of shared sovereignty.

in the MTEU debates and during the 1994 and 1999 European elections, and the continued insistence on intergovernmental structures whenever possible by the pragmatic mainstream, suggest a strong and continuing adherence to the nation-state as the source of sovereignty, democracy and identity.

It may be argued that 'Europe' is not the major issue, or the main motivating factor, for electoral choices in EP elections.<sup>122</sup> However the overlap of party identification / 'no' vote at the MTEU referendum with EP election results suggests that these are an accurate indication of the electorate's views on the EU. 1999 exit polls indicated that 41 per cent of voters preferred a 'Europe of nation-states', with 29 per cent opting for a federal Europe (and 30 per cent not responding).<sup>123</sup> The anti-EU camp portrays integration as the ultimate risk to the essence of political nationhood—national sovereignty and self-determination. Further, FN, MNR, CNPT and RPF describe it as a risk to French identity and values, culturally understood. Overall, the results indicate that the EU as a threat to the nation holds more sway with politicians and electors of the Right—a sign, perhaps, that the 'national idea' is stronger on the Right, in particular where there are elements of a cultural understanding of nationhood at play. Meanwhile the appeal to a defence of the nation within the context of an integrating Europe—as expressed by the pragmatic integrationist camp—looks to the construction of a European entity which defends national values and allows for an increase in national influence in a globalised environment.

#### ***Souverainisme vs. integration: the defence of the nation***

Early integration, as noted, was seen as being very much in the French national interest. The French were able to fulfil their nation's universal mission as leaders of Europe. The nation was in effect being transferred to a European level, but with the right to national veto, national sovereignty was maintained, and French political leadership was undisputed. A European (as opposed to US-dominated) entity with French leadership also benefited France economically while binding Germany into western Europe. In terms of the national understanding—universal values, grandeur, identity, independence—the EC also fitted the bill, at least at a European level, as long as the French remained the unchallenged leaders. This factor was particularly strong in a post-war, Cold War environment where French influence and rank were eroding. Europe could potentially fulfil the national 'mission'.

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<sup>121</sup> *Le Monde*, 22 September 1992.

<sup>122</sup> Buffotot and Hanley, 'L'éclatement de l'offre politique', note that 44 per cent of voters were thinking of domestic issues; 37 per cent gave priority to the EU. The relevance of the elections was also undermined by the debate on military intervention in Kosovo raging at that time.

<sup>123</sup> See *Le Figaro*, 14 June 1999; also Buffotot and Hanley, 'L'éclatement de l'offre politique'.

Moreover, in its early manifestation as the EEC, European authority encompassed the CAP, a customs union and unified external trade policy, but nothing in area of 'high politics'. Unlike EDC/EPC, then, the EEC and then EC were accepted without too much concern.

But even during this early period, as noted in Chapter 7, there was a tension between French desire for a strong Europe, on the one hand, and leadership and control, on the other. As François Furet points out, 'The French, almost since the beginning and in any case since de Gaulle, have been caught in the contradiction of wanting both a strong Europe and weak shared institutions'.<sup>124</sup> It was only with the MTEU, according to Furet, that this contradiction was brought out into the open, resulting in 'the first great public discussion in France of the organization of Europe'.

Certainly, by 1992 the EU's internal development coupled with external seismic changes had led to a shift in French attitudes towards European integration. Opposition to the EU began to coalesce around the dual themes of national sovereignty and identity. In terms of internal development, two factors were notable. First, the increasing scope of EU policy areas—with the MTEU significantly expanding areas of EU competence—meant that EU policy impinged more noticeably and more directly on domestic action and national affairs. Second, the EU had moved from the realm of economics to encompass a number of spheres traditionally seen as the preserve of national government and decisive attributes of national sovereignty. These included immigration and visa policy; minting of the national currency; citizenship; foreign policy; and security-defence issues. Although these latter two remain at the intergovernmental level of cooperation, the potential compromise of national sovereignty in such sensitive and crucial areas have contributed to concerns over the future of the nation-state and the demise of the nation, politically understood.

As noted above, the nation has been called upon to advance the arguments not only of the nationalist-opposition (including the FN) but also the pragmatic integrationists. Chirac's pragmatic acceptance of 'Europe' is firmly grounded in an intergovernmentalist approach which resists further powers for the Commission and Parliament and calls for increased national participation.<sup>125</sup> Internal and external developments influenced this position: German unification gave impetus towards increased political integration, while the euro was accepted as a means of regaining some control over monetary policy and increasing the effectiveness of the EU as an international trade bloc and single market. A related external aspect was the

<sup>124</sup> Furet, 'Europe After Utopianism', pp.86-7.

<sup>125</sup> In his campaign pamphlet for the 1995 presidency, Chirac set out an intergovernmentalist, state-centred vision for the EU: a stronger Council; weaker Commission; longer (EU) presidency term; and a greater role for national parliaments, with France, inevitably, as the indispensable 'motor'. See his *La France pour tous*, pp.34-6.

recognition of the imperatives of the global market-place, including the need to compete as a region. As a whole, the question related to the changing nature of the nation-state, and may be viewed as indicative of a crisis of the nation-state.<sup>126</sup>

A continuing theme in European integration is the belief that integration is, *per se*, good for France. French interests are synonymous with European integration. Such arguments have at their core the belief that France's future is dependent on the success and continued integration of Europe.<sup>127</sup> But France is only with great difficulty prepared to give up those aspects of decision-making which are viewed as crucial to the nation-state, and the crux of the debate again falls within differing readings of nationhood and identity. René Schwok evaluates this resistance in terms of the politics of identity and values. French identity, he states, is linked to territory, agriculture, borders, Jacobinism, *colbertisme*, and the welfare-state—all of which are challenged by the EU. Is France historically condemned to call the EU into question and revert to a '*crispation identitaire*'? The position of the integrationists is to respond 'no!'—there is no necessary contradiction between France and Europe, and identities are fluid and multiple.<sup>128</sup>

This corresponds to a modified vision of the nation with a layered approach to sovereignty—an outward looking and flexible view influenced by French membership of the EU and by international forces, notably globalisation.<sup>129</sup> This more moderate approach contests the simplistic equation of integration versus sovereignty. Duhamel points to the misleading way in which opponents of integration portray 'Europe' and 'the nation' as mutually exclusive, antithetical values. In common with the integrationist camp, he attacks the 'political mythology' of those opponents of integration who set up a direct conflict between 'Europe' and the 'nation'. Rather than set up competing, antagonistic values, supporters incorporate the nation into a European vision. Thus Duhamel describes Europe as part of the national legacy (*patrimoine national*), one which offers France an opportunity for increased influence in a world where 'globalisation condemns every nation which remains isolated'.<sup>130</sup> Rather than

<sup>126</sup> On the crisis of the nation form in general, see Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation*.

<sup>127</sup> See for example, the influential book of Cohen-Tanugi, *L'Europe en Danger*, Paris, Fayard, 1992. Prior to the Amsterdam Treaty he published *Le Choix de l'Europe*, Paris, Fayard, 1995, which also sees French interests best served by promoting European integration, even ensuring French survival. He was apprehensive about the choices France would make in the mid-1990s, particularly with an inconsistent President (Chirac) with strong party and electoral reservations about the integration process. Tanugi's suggestions on possible reform go further than those advocated by the 'pragmatic' strand, promoting rapid economic and political integration. Here he is closer to a federalist vision such as that set out in Club de Florence, *L'Europe, l'impossible statu quo*, Paris, Stock, 1996, on the challenges to be met in the Amsterdam Treaty.

<sup>128</sup> Schwok, 'La France et l'intégration européenne'; also arguing this position, see Alain Duhamel.

<sup>129</sup> Stone, 'Ratifying Maastricht'. He argues that this is the view now held by the mainstream French political elite. This position is also held by Gueldry, as noted above.

<sup>130</sup> Duhamel, *La Politique Imaginaire*, pp.280-1.



worrying about France's dissolution into Europe, attention should be given to ways of ensuring French influence within this entity. In this context, Stone raises the idea of sovereignty becoming 'de-coupled' from the political nation.

This is however a difficult concept when the nation is portrayed as the basis for sovereignty and, indeed, the dominant understanding of nationhood is political. Stone goes on to note that the 'traditional Gaullist fetish of the nation-state and of French exceptionalism was unexpectedly revived' in the referendum process.<sup>131</sup> Perhaps this should not have been so unexpected, given first, the non-involvement of the electorate and the non-politicisation of the issue up till this point, and second, the immigration and citizenship debates which asserted a political reading of nationhood. But the MTEU debate certainly illustrated how the concept of nation-state de-coupling was not fully shared by leading politicians, and certainly not by the electorate. As noted, the 'loss of national sovereignty' was cited as the main factor for those rejecting the Maastricht Treaty, and the central issue of the referendum debate was 'the surrender of a part of national sovereignty in favour of European institutions'.<sup>132</sup>

Stone's point also (unfortunately) provides backing for the populist assertion that European integration is an elite-driven process that does not take the interests of electorate into account. The argument that the establishment / political class does not have the interests of 'the nation' at heart is commonplace in FN policies and speeches, including with widespread reference to the 'betrayal' of the elites at Maastricht leading to the 'disappearance' of France. The overlapping of the European integration debate with the immigrant integration debate, with the idea of the nation looming large in both cases, has proved beneficial to the extreme right.

Proponents of integration need to find a way of retaining the relevance of nationhood without resorting to the notion that political nationhood may be transferred to Europe while cultural understandings may be protected at the national level. Some have suggested that the nation-state in western Europe retain the cultural dimension at the national, state level, while economic-political competencies are transferred to European level.<sup>133</sup> This would involve the de-linking of identity and politics, with cultural identity remaining at a national or even sub-national level. However it is not clear how cultures are maintained without some element of political power or how conflicting claims might be mediated. The adage that a national language is a 'dialect with an army' comes to mind. Further, the inherent danger of this concept is that nationhood will become a more culturally exclusive and culturally determined construct. If the EU increases its scope to the extent that the political nation loses meaning and relevance, there is

<sup>131</sup> Stone, 'Ratifying Maastricht', p.86.

<sup>132</sup> Buffotot, 'Le Référendum sur l'Union Européenne', p.279.

a risk of a reversion to the secondary understanding of citizenship, the ethno-cultural. Such a development would meet the aspirations of those promoting an exclusive ideal of nationhood, where cultural and national identity move closer together.

Political mythology has been a powerful weapon for opponents of integration who draw on various political myths and traditions to promote their nationalist agenda. Despite their sometimes misleading and simplistic nature, however, such critiques can incorporate important issues of democracy and representation. Indeed Duhamel's own listing of reasons why the EU attracted so much antagonism in the 1990s include not only the end of the Cold War and the EU's elitist nature, but also the democratic deficit, the lack of vertical communication, and the embryonic nature of a social policy.<sup>134</sup>

The role of political meta-narratives, in particular, the understanding of the nation as primarily political, was bound to be significant. As examined in Chapters 4 and 5, powerful understandings of nationhood and identity were at the fore in the debates over immigrant integration, and these have also played a major role in debates over European integration. As Banchoff notes, in France 'with its dominant conception of civic identity, both proponents and opponents of Maastricht considered national political institutions the legitimate expression of popular will'.<sup>135</sup> However, the legitimacy of the European entity was vulnerable to attack from the *souverainiste* camp. The political nation ties citizens together in a democratic body, and this cannot be unproblematically transferred from the national to the European level—particularly a Europe where the democratic deficit looms large and democratic legitimacy is seen to be lacking. If integration is perceived as an attack on national democracy, with political and economic elites transferring difficult and unpopular decisions to the European level, opposition is likely to increase.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, such opponents to integration look to the nation as the best available framework for the reconstitution of a properly functioning, vibrant democratic polity. While Thibaud's analysis is broadly communitarian and concerned with democracy, his arguments can be hijacked by those Euro-sceptics who support a more populist and nationalist approach.

<sup>133</sup> For an example of this argument, see O.Waever et al., *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, London, Pinter, 1993, in particular Chapter 4.

<sup>134</sup> All valid concerns—see Duhamel, *La Politique imaginaire*, p.276.

<sup>135</sup> Banchoff, 'National Identity and EU legitimacy', p.193.

<sup>136</sup> See Paul Thibaud (former editor of *Esprit*), *Et Maintenant ... contribution à l'après Mitterrandisme*, Paris, Arléa, 1995. In this essay he describes Mitterrand's 'Europeanism' as an attempt to externalise France's difficult modernisation in the 1980s—a fundamentally undemocratic means of achieving this end. While he argues that the challenge of reconstituting a vibrant democratic polity in France will not be met by turning to old ideologies, genuine civic identity and solidarity can only exist within the framework of the nation. Again, the nation is central.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the challenges to the French nation-state as traditionally conceived have been contested by both Left and Right. Integration has met with stiff resistance, not only on the extremes of the political spectrum but also among Gaullists and Republican Socialists. National sovereignty is held by both to be sacrosanct, with the strict interpretation of the political idea of the nation holding sway. The four national markers set out in Chapter 6—sovereignty, territory, identity, citizenship—are contested by the deepening of the integration process. Opponents of the integration process have successfully drawn on political and cultural understandings of nationhood to oppose the further pooling of sovereignty and to resist threats to a distinctive 'French' model of nationhood. Jean-Louis Burban is not alone in suggesting that 'Europe' (meaning the EU) is France's 'new Dreyfus affair'.<sup>137</sup>

The FN has portrayed France as an endangered nation-state, not only in the less acceptable—and thus using a 'disguised' discourse—in an ethno-cultural sense, but also, and perhaps more importantly, in a political sense. The fact that the FN split has resulted in a substantial loss of votes in the 1999 EP elections might suggest that the far right, for the moment, has been wounded and is temporarily in retreat. However the ideas to which it gave impetus have not dissipated. Notably, the parties that have garnered the votes resulting from the FN split were characterised by a staunchly nationalist anti-EU stance—those stressing the importance of French traditions (CNPT) and the preservation of French national sovereignty (the break-away *souverainiste* group of Pasqua and de Villiers).<sup>138</sup> As Hainsworth notes, the success of the RPF—'neo-populist, eurosceptic, staunchly nationalist'—in the 1999 EP elections illustrates the political space for such a grouping to emerge outside of the extreme right.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, it indicates that the sovereignty theme promoted so forcefully by the FN has found resonance amongst the French electorate. The continuing importance of the nation-state was visible in the government approach to the Union in the latter half of the 1990s—and indeed reiterated by Jospin in his May 2001 'vision' speech. The recognition of the nation as a central value is reflected both in nationalist anti-EU campaigns and in a nationally-grounded official approach—sometimes cited as a mainstream official consensus—on further integration. It is possible that this latter tendency will result in a lessening in support for the more extreme assertions of national sovereignty and increase the weight of the national within the 'pragmatic integrationist' camp. Clearly, the question of further European integration provides a fertile ground for parties claiming to represent the interests and values of the nation.

<sup>137</sup> 'The Impact of the EC on French Politics' in *France and EC Membership Evaluated*.

<sup>138</sup> On the vote redistribution, see Rillardon, 'Front contre Front', p.102.

<sup>139</sup> P.Hainsworth and P.Mitchell, 'France: The Front National from Crossroads to Crossroads?', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 53 (3), July 2000, pp.443-56.

## Chapter 9 Conclusion. A Crisis of the Nation-State: the Extreme Reaction

Many of the sacred, moral, identity or national values defended by the national movement have been preached by counter-revolutionary, anti-democratic or anti-republican movements or thinkers. The *Front national*'s mission consists precisely in enabling the renaissance of these values at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the framework of the Republic and the democratic principle of popular sovereignty  
Bruno Mégret, 1998<sup>1</sup>

The rise of the FN in the 1980s and 1990s was paralleled by an increasing concern about the future of French nationhood and identity. Deeply held assumptions about the French nation-state and French national identity were challenged; the demise of French exceptionalism mooted. The clear cultural, geographical, economic and political boundaries which once characterised the French nation became blurred and the country experienced a much-vaunted 'crisis' of national identity, fuelled by the bicentenary celebrations of 1989. The challenges, epitomised in this analysis by the settlement of ethnic minorities in a country where 'there are no minorities' and by the incorporation of France into a European Union defying the territorial-political understanding of the nation, have allowed the 'nationalist' extreme right to present itself as the 'defender of the nation'.

These challenges have also resulted in major problems for the mainstream political parties, who have found it difficult, and at times impossible, to harness national or political traditions to support their policy choices. Initial responses to these questions of integration moved away from French Republican thought and tradition. With the persistence of the national idea, and as the lines between Left and Right become less evident, the extreme right garnered support for a nationalist approach to these complex problems, and splits within the mainstream parties weakened their position. This was compounded by increasing disillusion with the political system in general and the parties/politicians in particular. The once dominant Left-Right cleavage, then, has been challenged by an extreme nationalist reaction and the powerful amalgam of myth and tradition that it claims to embody. This chapter concludes with reflections on the nexus between identity, nationhood and the extreme right, drawing on the debates analysed in the thesis. It stresses the use of the nation not only as a core referent in both debates, but also as a concept utilised by the differing camps. Overall, the thesis concludes that the centrality of the 'nation' has served to bolster the success of the FN's agenda and that a more nuanced rethinking—and articulation—of the national may be required to combat the ideas of the extreme right. It does not support the idea of a new 'national' vs. supranational/international cleavage—this is overly simplistic and does not accurately reflect the French position. It concludes that the exploitation of a multiform idea of nationhood in a rapidly evolving new world (dis)order can account for the success of the *Front national*.

### French nationhood and the extreme right

The thesis has highlighted the persistence and the multiform nature of the concept of nationhood in contemporary France. Its hold on the national imaginary is reinforced in two ways. First, *la nation* has been used as a central referent in both the immigration debates and the European debates. Second, it has been utilised by all the major factions. It is a central reference amongst Republican 'integrationists' as well as differentialist neo-racists, and amongst the 'national-Europeans' as well as the *souverainistes*. It is not limited to the extreme margins of the political arena. As noted, the extreme right was able to build upon, or extend, the 'national' references of the mainstream to justify its self-designation as 'defender of the nation'.

The FN has drawn on various traditions of the historical French Right—including the non-liberal and bonapartist French Right—in attacking the political establishment and elites, claiming to represent the true spirit of the French nation.<sup>2</sup> However the FN is a new type of extreme right party, responding to new challenges in a post-Cold War, globalising environment. It appeals to the nation as an unchanging core identity which offers protection in times of rapid change. The extreme right's two core policy tenets—opposition to ethnic difference and opposition to the EU—are couched in terms of protection of national identity. The central political debates of the 1980s and 1990s, relating to national identity, immigration and European integration, reflect the power of the national idea in France and help explain the support for the FN.

The thesis has argued that appeals and references to nationhood have met with success and have been taken up by mainstream political forces in both the integration debates. In many ways, this is unsurprising. The nation is a founding myth of the Republican state—strong, persistent and multiform, based on universal values which are implicitly superior. In the French context, then, the primary markers in the immigration debate are an attachment to Republican values; the separation of Church and State (and the implementation of this principle, secularism, where religion is confined to the private sphere); the absence of cultural specificity in public life; and recognition only of the individual *qua* citizen. In the European debate, the markers relate to national sovereignty, citizenship and democracy. So the French response to diversity is necessarily different from those countries which do not have similar value attachments and beliefs.<sup>3</sup>

The ongoing debate on the end (or not) of French exceptionalism is pertinent to this conclusion. Proponents of this thesis see a convergence of ideological opinion, with France moving closer to

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Le Monde*, 21 March 1998. At the time, Mégret was FN Delegate-General.

<sup>2</sup> On the diverse traditions of the Right in France, see Chapter 2, pp.44-46.

<sup>3</sup> See for example the pillarisation model in the Netherlands; the existence of 'ethnic lobbies' in the US.

the models of its European partners.<sup>4</sup> In particular, it looked to a more consensual, liberal form of politics taking hold in France. Later works have noted the decline of overt conflict, the decline of the PCF and of traditional Gaullism, less class conflict, acceptance of the market economy, compromise, and modernisation.<sup>5</sup> While France is now a less radical and militant polity, however, with fewer major ideological differences, protest and extremism on both Left and Right remain.<sup>6</sup> The 'end of exceptionalism' thesis does not necessarily mean that there is satisfaction with the system: levels of apathy and distrust, especially given high level corruption and the 'out of touch' nature of political leadership, have markedly increased. Alongside the crisis of national identity ran a crisis of representation.<sup>7</sup> 'End of history'-style explanations and the logic of capitalist development can also contribute to an explanation of change in France of the 1980s and 1990s.

As noted in the Introduction, the issues facing France are not unlike those in the other developed countries of western Europe. Germany struggles with the incorporation of ethnic minorities, the UK struggles with its incorporation into the EU. France, then, is not an exception in terms of the problems faced. What differs is not the question but the proposed answers—'the political and intellectual culture within which the debate develops'.<sup>8</sup> What make the French responses unique are the cultural and political contexts that frame the question, with the nation-state as a central point of reference. Here there remains a case for French exceptionalism.<sup>9</sup>

### *The nation as referent*

In the cases of both the immigrant integration debate and the European integration debate, it may be argued that a mainstream quasi-consensus has emerged—at least at the mainstream political party level—which has reinvented the significance of the 'national', in its political-civic guise.

<sup>4</sup> As noted, the seminal 1988 work that sparked the debate was *La République du centre*. The argument ran that this era marked the end of French exceptionalism—a normalisation. French politics and society were no longer distinctive or particularistic, but akin to the other western European democracies.

<sup>5</sup> See the useful surveys of Jill Lovecy, 'Comparative politics and the Fifth French Republic', *EJPR*, Vol. 21, 1992, pp.385-408; 'The End of French Exceptionalism?', *WEP*, Vol. 22 (4), October 1999, pp.205-24.

<sup>6</sup> See N.Hewlett, *Modern French Politics*: Chapter 3, 'Political Exceptionalism, 1945-1981', pp.36-59; Chapter 4, 'The End of Exceptionalism? The 1980s and 1990s', pp.60-91. He notes that the current 'conformity' will not necessarily endure and there are prospects for dissatisfaction and change—certainly from the Left's perspective, the market is not necessarily the answer. For an overview of the debate, see Elgie and Griggs, *French Politics. Debates and Controversies*. They identify three schools of thought: exceptionalism; conformity; and bounded singularity. I would concur with those holding to this latter interpretation—including Cole, Hoffmann, Hollifield, Kassim, Ross, and Wright of the scholars referenced in this thesis—who argue that France has indeed moved closer to other western democracies, but still retains important differences.

<sup>7</sup> See Doyle, 'The French Malaise'.

<sup>8</sup> Quoting Wieviorka—see Introduction, note 16.

<sup>9</sup> As noted in Chapter 3, the French approach to nationhood remains distinctive: the affirmation of the Republican approach to citizenship and nationhood—and the rejection of multiculturalism—is at odds with Anglo-Saxon approaches.

In the debate on immigrant incorporation, there has been a move to French-style integration, as analysed in Chapters 4 and 5. The brief, but significant, rejection of automatic *jus soli* citizenship was overturned by legislation which militates against the ethnically-informed reading of national identity by the extreme right. The decision for integration fits a Republican reading of nation and identity, but paradoxically can also act to legitimise an extreme right stance which portrays a society endangered by ethnic division. One consequence of the decision for integration has been to stress the unacceptability of cultural difference in the public sphere. This fits with an extremist reading of a culturally homogeneous nation and tends to downplay the effects of racial discrimination by the majority. In the European integration debate, the 'defence of the nation' has also been taken on board by the bulk of the integrationist camp. However party divisions, the creation of new anti-EU parties, and the results of the EP elections in the 1990s suggest that this has had limited success.

The FN played a major role in both these debates, operating in its preferred domains of identity and nation. Subsequent developments—integration *à la française* and a cautious, intergovernmental approach to the EU—reflect FN influence and participation, and the reaffirmation of the national among the mainstream.

The continuing affirmation of the unitary nation, where 'there are no minorities', was epitomised in the recent French refusal to ratify the European Charter on Minority Languages. Although signed on 7 May 1999 by Moscovici, the Minister for European Affairs, it was subsequently judged to be contrary to the constitution.<sup>10</sup> According to reports, Chirac was giving priority to the 'fundamental principles of the Republic' via the refusal. Jospin, meanwhile, had to defend himself on the floor of parliament from attacks that he had called the Republic into question, undermined national unity and weakened the French language—which is, of course, the language of the Republic.<sup>11</sup>

France has consistently refused to sign up to international obligations which grant group-specific rights to cultural minorities within the Republic. Drawing on the constitutional stipulations that France is one indivisible Republic, it posits the equality of all citizens before the law without reference to origin, race or religion. The language of minority rights is antithetical to such an understanding. For example, when signing up to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the French government included a legal reservation to Article 27 which specifies that minorities should not be denied the right to enjoy their own culture, practise their own religion or

<sup>10</sup> On the ruling by the Constitutional Council, see *Le Figaro*, 24 June 1999.

<sup>11</sup> The *Figaro* report noted that Jospin would have had major difficulties persuading Chevènement, who had already attacked this attempt to 'balkanise' France, to agree to the treaty. According to *Le Monde*, 25 June 1999, 'regional languages smash political France' (*la France politique*), as the question of minority languages cross-cuts traditional political cleavages. Note the invocation of the political reading of national identity while referencing cultural attributes—in this case, language.



use their own language. According to this reservation, Article 27 is not relevant to France: it is an indivisible Republic whose language is French.<sup>12</sup>

The mainstream parties have recently begun to use the 'national' theme more widely and explicitly. As a 1999 *Le Monde* editorial noted, Jospin has 'changed his tune'. 'Praise for the *patrie*, defence of the strong state and of a nation proud of its history, which refuses to dissolve' have become central themes in his discourse.<sup>13</sup> The national interest has always been an automatic referent in French dealings with the EU, and as Chapter 7 illustrated, this was complemented by an instrumental approach based on a realist reading of the Union as a means to maintain and extend French interests. Following the admission of majority voting in the SEA and moves to closer integration with Maastricht (albeit with a 'national' rationale), a defence of the nation has been mounted not only by the extremes—who have utilised national paradigms with some success—but also by the mainstream.

The fact that both the integration debates—the integration of France into the EU and the integration of foreigners into French society—developed over the same period is of importance. In both cases, dual aspects of French nationhood were, suddenly, seen to be threatened. The QMV provisions of the SEA in the mid-1980s did not evoke calls for the 'defence of the nation'. There was little public opposition to this as a threat to national sovereignty. With MTEU in the 1990s, however, there was a rise in nationalist pressure. Support grew for the increasing number of euro-sceptic parties. In the immigrant integration debates, another aspect of the civic-political nation was asserted, not based on national sovereignty but on the non-recognition of differing ethnic identities in the public sphere. This debate in particular is vulnerable to being undermined by extremist support for a homogeneous national identity, privileging an ethno-cultural interpretation of nationhood.

This confluence of factors has allowed the rise of a xenophobic nationalist party such as the FN. The fact that it is now experiencing electoral difficulties due to the personality- and power-fuelled split does not imply that the factors underpinning its rise have in any way disappeared. Its electoral downturn could prove temporary. Racism and xenophobia have to some extent become normalised, and opposition to supranational integration has been taken on by new euro-sceptic parties. Foreign ministry polling indicates that over 50 per cent agree that France should retain its sovereign powers, even if that should lead to limiting decision-making powers at the European level.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> N. Jones, 'The French "Affair of the Veil": in law, politics and society', paper presented at conference 'Nation and Identity in Contemporary Europe', Monash University, Melbourne, 12-14 July 2000.

<sup>13</sup> *Le Monde*, 14 January 1999. Warning against this stance, the editorial is headed '*la tentation du repli*'—the temptation of turning in on oneself.

<sup>14</sup> See annual report, 'Les Français et l'Europe' at <<http://www.france.diplomatie.fr/europe/>>.

*Rethinking the national?*

This thesis does not wish to ignore other readings of difference and integration which have contributed to both debates. There is evidence for a more pragmatic reading of nation, identity and sovereignty than either the strict 'Jacobin' reading, or an extreme right reading, might imply. In particular, there are voices which call for a rethinking of nation and integration, and which argue that the EU *versus* nation-state scenario is simplistic and misleading.<sup>15</sup> Just as there is a rethinking of sovereignty and national independence in relation to European integration and to globalisation, there are also proponents of a rethinking of French traditions of universalism and Republicanism which could influence the immigrant integration debate. Those who denounce the demonisation of so-called Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism, and criticise the simplistic opposition of integration *versus* multiculturalism, are working towards a more accurate reconstruction of the problematic. Just as the past mythologising of a homogenous, unitary France with proud traditions of integration and upholding universal values needs to be more closely scrutinised, so the extent of integration needs to be more accurately depicted.<sup>16</sup> There are calls for a 'French-style multiculturalism' which moves away from caricature and deconstructs the myths of universal and secular values.<sup>17</sup>

There has also been a more nuanced French response to the binary nature of 'difference' and 'assimilation'. Wieviorka, for example, argues that the question of cultural difference needs rethinking in France. He asserts that cultural fragmentation is a fact of life, and not reducible to the effects of globalisation. The state is commonly perceived as no longer able to manage difference, either to maintain it in the private sphere and/or promote integration. He posits two sets of reasons. First, the Republican integration model is something of a myth: it is breaking down and can no longer function as it did. Second, multiculturalism is often caricatured and misunderstood. Unusually for a French person, he does not criticise affirmative action policies, but stresses the importance of linking demands for civil rights with identity. In place of an over-simplified opposition of universal-specific or Republican-multicultural, he proposes a re-articulation of the two spheres.<sup>18</sup> So while he does not advocate the end of the separation between Church and State,

<sup>15</sup> See for example the work of Thibaud and Duhamel referenced in Chapter 8.

<sup>16</sup> As discussed in Chapter 4, historical research points to the inaccuracies in the national depiction of a smooth integrative process of immigrant minorities in the past. Research on the current situation (e.g. that of Tribalat, *Faire France*) depicts a desire for 'integration' alongside persisting inequalities in the socio-economic sphere. This suggests that greater socio-economic opportunities for migrants and anti-racism campaigns and legislation are key.

<sup>17</sup> See for example J. Roman, 'Un multiculturalisme à la française?' (A French-style multiculturalism?), *Esprit*, no. 212, June 1995, pp. 145-60.

<sup>18</sup> Wieviorka, *La Démocratie à l'épreuve*. He constructs a 'triangular' model of ethnicity that incorporates individualism, communalism, and subjectivity: 'a space organised around three poles in which the actor circulates, but with considerable difficulty'. All three poles are essential, but inadequate when alone. Individualism comprises political-civic aspects, including access to the welfare state and social rights; communalism comprises links with country of origin, cultural or religious networks of solidarity; subjectivity

or automatic representation for all identity-based groups, he does resist the confinement of culture to the private sphere: there must be anti-discrimination policies, for example, and culture should not be regarded as totally separate from politics.

However such voices are not widespread, and dominant understandings of nationhood past and present are enduring. The reassertion of the Jacobin model of national belonging, and the overturning of the *jus sanguinis* aspects of citizenship legislation in the 1990s, are linked to a generalised reassertion of the 'political' model of nationhood. The idea that citizenship is open to all who are born on French territory, an individual right regardless of background, remains strong. Citizenship forms a direct link between the individual citizen and state, not mediated by any group or collective. Thus group identity, including religious identity, is assigned to the private sphere, supporting 'the principle of equality of rights within the founding social contract, without group-specific policies'.<sup>19</sup> It is, however, mistakenly colour-blind and unmindful of discrimination. This national community—a community of citizens—is given form in the sovereign nation-state. The growing opposition to the EU and the support for a Europe of nation-states in the 1990s relates, in part, to this understanding.

At the same time, the secondary 'organic' understanding of nationhood has also played a powerful role in both the 'integration' debates examined in this thesis. The understanding of the nation as a single cultural entity, and in particular the antipathy towards Islam, has contributed to the success of racist movements such as the FN and growing hostility towards migrant difference. At a European level, it has manifested itself as hostility towards the 'non-European'—those of a different colour and culture.

As examined in Chapter 3, the French state has played a major role in creating, or at least developing, a sense of nationhood to bolster its legitimacy. The construction of a French Republican identity went far beyond the narrow confines of the political. Under the Third Republic, assimilation—based on the classic tools of school and army, education, and national service—was the order of the day. This model of Republican integration not only transformed, in Weber's words, Peasants into Frenchmen, but has also traditionally been the means whereby immigrants 'became' French. So although the political aspect of nationhood has always been strong—the nation as a territorially bound community of citizens—this has been tempered by a history of Jacobin centralisation and Republican assimilation. A strong cultural element is embedded in the civic-territorial model.

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of the actors is related to the personal and may be distant from ideas of community, unstable, fragile, and even hedonistic.

<sup>19</sup> Wihtol de Wenden, 'Immigrants as Political Actors'.

Cultural difference, although supposedly assigned to the private sphere, is seen as endangering national identity. Fears surrounding the settlement of Muslim immigrants in this context may be exploited by the far right with its rhetoric of an 'immigrant invasion' and 'cultural swamping'. At the same time there is a recognition that traditional models of assimilation are no longer effective in contemporary France.<sup>20</sup> This coexists with a widespread acknowledgment of what the French term *exclusion*—indeed Chirac was voted into office in 1995 on the promise to address the 'social fracture'—a condition which overlaps with the immigrant population.

Some recent French work on racism has called for the '*droit à l'indifférence*' towards cultural identity in the public sphere.<sup>21</sup> This allows the existence of cultural pluralism within the public sphere, but does not take any measures to specifically protect—or encourage—differing cultures. Such measures should exist solely within the private domain. Christian Joppke argues that no liberal state should require immigrants to give up their culture—but then they are not obliged to protect them either, unless in the context of an indigenous population and redressing historical injustices.<sup>22</sup> The objection, then, that the liberal state is not culturally neutral may be met by the answer that it represents the rights / interests of the majority culture.<sup>23</sup> But the constitutional liberalism of the Anglo-Saxon world is less applicable in the French case where 'liberalism' struggles to take hold.

It is argued that the liberal model allows for a separation between state and civil society that is more in keeping with the imperatives of contemporary western society, and which will allow a form of 'soft' multiculturalism. However, it is not clear how either of the two liberal approaches can be made to apply in Republican France which holds firm to the theoretical divide between the two spheres, the public and the private. Distinctions certainly need to be made between the long-established nation-states of western Europe, on the one hand, and settler societies such as USA and Australia, on the other. The French Republican tradition has always maintained a theoretical distinction between the 'public' and the 'private', insisting on the neutral values of the public sphere, however imperfectly this might work in practice. In the same way that the French model of the secular, neutral state and the 'political nation' has been proven flawed, or an incomplete reading, so the supposed neutrality of the liberal state (with its respect for the

<sup>20</sup> On the crisis of the traditional means of integration, see Schnapper, *La France de l'intégration*.

<sup>21</sup> See for example A. Chebel d'Appollonia, *Les Racismes Ordinaires*, Paris, Sciences Po, 1998. This same call—that the liberal state should ignore difference—has also been made in Australia. See C. Kukathas 'Liberalism and Multiculturalism: The Politics of Indifference', *Political Theory*, Vol. 26 (5), October 1998, pp. 686-99.

<sup>22</sup> There are of course different models of 'liberal' societies: Charles Taylor in 'The Politics of Recognition' distinguishes two that are relevant here: first, the strictly neutral liberal state, based on impartiality and equal treatment of all (see e.g. Rawls); second, one in which the 'good life' has a minimum definition and asserts collective goals while guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms for all. His preferred model—the second—implies that the state should take an active role in minority rights protection. For a critique of this position, see S. Auer, 'Reflections on Minority Rights and the Liberal State in Central Europe' in Hancock and O'Brien (eds), *Rewriting Rights*, pp. 69-90.

public-state – civil society split) has also been proven a misnomer.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps Taylor's preference for the second-type of liberal state—one that holds out a conception of the common good—is more closely allied with the French model. The 'common good', in this case, is one best represented by the secular state along Republican lines. However, Republican principles and the understanding(s) of nationhood do not allow for special recognition of, and treatment for, ethnic minorities.

Overall, the challenges faced by the French nation-state—immigration, settled ethnic minorities and (*de facto*) multiculturalism, alongside increasing economic and political integration in the EU—have invoked a 'national', if not a 'nationalist', response. It may be argued, along 'Habermassian' lines, that such challenges may still be best met via the defence of Republican principles—not in the more traditional sense of cultural integration, or appeals to shared tradition or destiny, but by a form of 'constitutional patriotism'.<sup>25</sup> The first part of his remedy—the defence of universal ideals, in the face of a post-modern equation of universalism = (forced) assimilation—meets with a favourable response in France. Universal Republican ideals are still espoused as the best response to the contemporary challenges posed to the nation-state; the Enlightenment model of the 'political' nation continues to be a central referent; and the consensus on the merits of 'Republican integration' remains well entrenched in political discourse.<sup>26</sup>

However the idea that shared national (and, inevitably, cultural) traditions and values may be disregarded in favour of a constitutional patriotism based on respect for and pride in the democratic order is more difficult to imagine in a French context.<sup>27</sup> While citizenship—membership of the political nation—is seen as being open to all, regardless of creed or colour, the cultural corollary is seldom absent. National values—even if they are seen at their most neutral, in the defence of secularism or equality—are intrinsically marked by cultural understandings. The fact that these may be seen as 'inclusive' does not preclude their development and setting in a particular (national) cultural context.

<sup>23</sup> See Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*; Miller, *On Nationality*.

<sup>24</sup> As noted, scholars researching in the field of liberalism and nationalism point to the embedded cultural values and traditions in the workings of, and the decisions of, the liberal state.

<sup>25</sup> J. Habermas, *L'intégration républicaine: essais de théorie politique*, trans. R. Roehlitz, Paris, Fayard, 1998.

<sup>26</sup> Favell, *Philosophies of Integration*.

<sup>27</sup> 'Constitutional patriotism' (the term *Verfassungspatriotismus* was originally coined by Habermas) found widespread support in a Germany struggling with notions of national identity. See for example A.-M. Le Gloannec, 'On German Identity', *Daedalus*, Vol. 123 (1), Winter 1994, pp. 129–48. Prominent calls for an identity based on liberal-democratic values have also come from the Right in Germany, see for example D. Oberndörfer, *Der Wahn der Nationalen* (The Madness of the National), Freiburg, Herder, 1993, although the 1999 debate on dual and second-generation immigrant citizenship suggests that for the most part, an ethno-cultural concept of 'German-ness' continues to hold sway on the Right. More broadly, at a European and international level, concepts of a 'post-national' identity have been put forward in the 1990s: see for example Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship*.

The historical link between Republicanism and nationalism, while always throwing up a problematic tension between 'universal' and 'national' rights, has proved to be durable in France. The embryonic EU citizenship has little chance of establishing itself along the more usual lines of a 'national' identity, as Anthony Smith, among others, has argued.<sup>28</sup> It may indeed need to be based on some form of constitutional patriotism. However, the difficulties encountered in the acceptance of even this limited form of citizenship in France, and the mistrust towards the loosening of the nation-state-citizenship nexus, indicate that such an understanding of nation-state membership is a long way off.

### **The *Front national* and the defence of the nation**

In conclusion, two themes emerged as central to the political discourse of the *Front national*: the defence of French cultural identity and the defence of French sovereignty. The former theme is articulated via opposition to immigration and cultural diversity within the boundaries of the nation-state. The latter theme stands out most clearly in FN's position on European integration and is articulated via its opposition to the EU. The dominant political questions of the 1980s and 1990s—immigration and European integration—allowed the FN to exploit differing understandings of nationhood. Both debates centred on the organising theme of the nation—and the FN has both fed and profited from this centrality.

As examined in Chapters 4 and 5, the FN was able to exploit the focus on issues of nationhood and identity that emerged in the controversial and sensitive debates on immigrant integration. While making use of the 'received version' of French nationhood, it also highlighted the underplayed cultural aspects of belonging. Given that the debate was concerned, essentially, with the future of culturally-different, settled minority groups, the FN was able largely to set the terms of the debate. The concept of 'national identity' became a favoured and favourable territory for the extreme right. Further, the mainstream insistence on the nation as a political entity became enmeshed within the debates on further European economic and political integration, as Chapters 6 to 8 illustrate. The FN was able to draw on the Republican narrative of nationhood to underpin its position as an anti-EU party. Thus its appeal to the secondary, cultural understanding of nationhood was opportunistically coupled with a 'democratic' defence of the nation-state.

The reaffirmation of the continuing significance of the nation in the 1990s has also served the FN well. The decision for integration *à la française* in domestic politics, and the stress on intergovernmental structures within a confederal EU, affirm the salience of the nation in domestic and European politics. At issue, as the integration debates show, are complex and intertwined

<sup>28</sup> See for example his 'National Identity and the Idea of European Unity'.

cultural and political understandings of nationhood. While the impact of such norms cannot alone account for electoral and policy choices, they have been exploited effectively by the French extreme right and provide an overall framework in which to account for its electoral success and for the propagation of its ideas. Overall, the norms associated with nationhood in France contribute to the understanding of the FN's political emergence and successes.



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