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**Beyond Left and Right: Les Républicains and the Challenges
of a Party System in Transition, 2012-2017**

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Declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

Parts of chapter 2 have been published as an article in *Modern & Contemporary France*; see: William Rispin (2019) 'Division within the French Centre Right during the Hollande presidency: the case of cultural insecurity', *Modern & Contemporary France*.

Abstract

This thesis offers a new model of the French party system to explain the political realignment that occurred during the Hollande presidency, and the problems that this posed for the Centre Right party, Les Républicains.

It argues that sections of the electorate became less attached to traditional political ideologies and the parties that previously represented them. This caused the emergence of a new arrangement of parties, according to three axes based on attitudes towards: national identity and social values; liberal economic policies; and Europe.

Each axis presented challenges for the Centre Right.

That concerning identity was the most divisive. I argue that the concept of cultural insecurity explains how the party became divided into two camps: social liberals and social conservatives.

As regards economic issues, many voters became more favourable towards liberal measures, but Les Républicains failed to benefit from this. Fillon's radically liberal programme proved popular among sympathisers of the Centre Right, but alienated floating voters who might have supported the candidate of Les Républicains in the presidential elections.

The issue of Europe distanced Les Républicains from potential allies in the Centre, with the former supporting an approach based on nation states, while the latter preferred more federalist solutions.

The problems highlighted by the axes were exacerbated by the failure of the Centre Right to unite behind an accepted leader, following Sarkozy's resignation in May 2012. I offer a new model of leadership, to explain both Fillon's victory in the primary, and his subsequent defeat in the presidential elections.

Macron, who offered a socially and economically liberal programme, and who was an enthusiastic European federalist, benefitted from the problems of Les Républicains. His victory in the presidential elections encouraged defections from the Centre Right, and left Les Républicains' future as a united movement looking uncertain.

Abbreviations

EELV – Europe Ecologie – Les Verts

FN – Front National

LR – Les Républicains

MoDem – Mouvement Démocrate

OFCE – Observatoire français des conjonctures économiques

PCF – Parti Communiste Français

PS – Parti Socialiste

RPR – Rassemblement pour la République

RN – Rassemblement National

UDF – Union pour la Démocratie Française

UDI – Union des Démocrates et Indépendants

UDR – Union des démocrates pour la Cinquième République

UMP – Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (except during 2002 elections when this acronym stood for Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle)

Introduction

In the 2017 presidential elections, the representatives of the two parties that had dominated the Fifth Republic were both eliminated in the first round.¹ The candidate who received the most votes on 23 April 2017, and who would go on to be elected president, Emmanuel Macron, had only been made a minister in 2014, and had created his own movement in April 2016. He claimed to be neither of the Right nor of the Left, and promised a new approach to politics,² that would look to move beyond the historical dividing lines within the traditional party system. While the outgoing Socialist government had been deeply unpopular, and the PS candidate had long been expected not to make the second round, it had been assumed that this would be to the benefit of the Centre Right, which made the failure of Les Républicains to go through to the second round even more surprising.

For many, the explanation for the downfall of Les Républicains lay in the Penelopegate scandal, that had tarnished the reputation of their candidate, François Fillon.³ It was alleged by the *Canard enchaîné* that Fillon had paid his wife large sums of public money to be his parliamentary assistant, when there was little evidence of her having done much, if any, work in this role. This was certainly a crucial factor in alienating potential voters, as it both destroyed Fillon's reputation for integrity which had been crucial to his success in the primary of 2016, and distracted attention from his campaign.

However, the disintegration of Les Républicains in the aftermath of their defeat in the presidential and legislative elections revealed deep and long-term divisions within the party, which had also handicapped Fillon's campaign, and left the party with serious difficulties after his defeat. Macron awarded several members of the Centre Right positions in his government, while others formed their own parliamentary group, Les Constructifs, to support the president from outside his movement. This group would later transform itself

¹ Although Les Républicains was only founded in 2015, it was a direct successor to the UMP and to the Gaullist parties that had existed throughout the Fifth Republic

² AFP, *Macron lance "En Marche", un "mouvement politique nouveau"* YouTube 6 April 2016
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2FP9EdbPRg>> [Accessed 02/04/19]

³ See for example Yves Mény, 'A tale of party primaries and outsider candidates: the 2017 French presidential election' *French Politics* Vol.15 Issue 3 (September 2017) 265-278 p.273 and Matthieu Goar, 'François Fillon, les raisons de la défaite' *Le Monde* 23 April 2017
<https://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2017/article/2017/04/23/francois-fillon-les-raisons-de-la-defaite_5116013_4854003.html> [Accessed 02/01/19]

into a new party, Agir. At the same time, consensus was lacking within Les Républicains, as a significant number of its supporters were alienated by the election of Laurent Wauquiez, known for favouring a tough approach to immigration, and for being something of a Eurosceptic. It therefore seems clear that the problems of the PS government had masked the Centre Right's own inability to respond to the political realignment that was occurring in France.

This thesis seeks to understand the divisions that emerged within Les Républicains during the Hollande presidency, and which were crucial to its defeat in the presidential and legislative elections of 2017, and its subsequent fracturing into several different parts. It will show how this failure was not simply due to the Penelopegate scandal, but rather to an inability to respond to the political realignment that was taking place in French politics. The thesis will argue that a new model for understanding the French party system, based on three axes of identity, economic liberalism and Europe can help explain both the internal divisions that developed within Les Républicains and also the problems the party faced in attracting support from outside the movement.

The difficulties faced by the Centre Right in France during the Hollande presidency are of particular interest, as they are related to part of a wider movement in the Western world, where voters would appear to have become disillusioned with traditional parties and politics. This could be seen, for example, in Britain, with the Brexit vote of 2016, and in the rise of radical movements of the Left and Right across Europe. Party systems that had been based on the alternation in power of Centre Left and Centre Right movements were coming under strain.

Not only are voters more distrustful of traditional movements than in the past, but they also adopt a more personalised approach to political activity. As Perrineau has argued, whereas in the past a large number of voters strongly identified with a particular class, a factor which influenced their voting habits, this is arguably less likely to be the case nowadays.⁴ As a result, the Left/Right divide that had been underpinned by class differences has been undermined, and it could be claimed that traditional ideologies that are related to this split have a weaker appeal to much of the electorate. As some such as Brochet have noted,⁵ voters no longer adopt a coherent worldview, but rather pick and

⁴ See Pascal Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* (Paris: Fayard, 2012) p.68

⁵ Francis Brochet, *Démocratie smartphone: Le populisme numérique de Trump à Macron* (Paris: Editions François Bourin, 2017) p.171

choose (often contradictory) policies from across the political spectrum. This has meant that they are less likely to support the parties of government with which they previously identified, and are open to new, and often more radical, movements.

While much attention has been paid to the problems of Centre Left parties in this context, there has been less focus on the issues facing the Centre Right. Various parties of the mainstream Right faced significant problems during the period between 2012 and 2017, including the Conservative Party, which saw splits emerge following the Brexit referendum, the German Christian Democrats who were challenged by Alternative für Deutschland, and the mainstream of the Republican Party, who were not able to prevent the maverick Donald Trump from securing the party's nomination as its candidate for the 2016 presidential elections. In France, the Centre Right was not only split internally, but was challenged by 'unconventional' parties from the outside, first by the FN, and then by both the Far Right and En Marche. The French experience therefore forms part of a wider trend. This thesis will consider the difficulties encountered by the Centre Right within the French political system during the Hollande presidency. Under the Fifth Republic, Centre Right movements had produced a majority of the presidents and of the governments in the National Assembly, yet in 2017, the party was in disarray, and it was difficult to see how its various currents could come together and win elections. We will show that the downfall of Les Républicains was not simply a political accident but was part of a more general trend in the evolution of the French party system.

Division had for many years been prevalent among the parties of the Right but by the early 2000s many believed that it was necessary to bring together its disparate elements into a single movement - the UMP - in order to win elections. Unity would be maintained through allegiance to a single leader, Jacques Chirac, and by the common aim of holding onto power, rather than by agreement over a particular programme. The UMP was initially successful, and, in 2007, survived the transition from Chirac to Sarkozy, but the latter's defeat in 2012 heralded a new stage in the party's history, for two reasons.

Firstly, this was because the period 2012-2017 was the first during which the UMP held neither the presidency nor a majority in the National Assembly, and as a result the party was now faced with a period of at least five years in opposition. Some *députés* had been uneasy with Sarkozy's campaign in the 2012 presidential elections, and in particular his

hard-line stance on immigration and identity.⁶ Without the necessity to present a united front as when in government, debates over strategy would become a source of contention as the party tried to define a programme for the 2017 elections, and would reveal key differences of opinion between its members that would threaten the existence of a coherent movement.

Secondly, following Sarkozy's resignation, the UMP found itself without a leader, and with no obvious candidate to replace him. The question of who should succeed the former president would continue throughout the Hollande *quinquennat*. Centre Right parties had often united around a leader capable of gaining power, as was seen under de Gaulle, Chirac and Sarkozy. Without a single, accepted figure at its head, one of the key features that had ensured the cohesion and stability of the Centre Right, and had preserved unity and harmony within the movement, was no longer present.

It was often thought that the problem of unifying the Centre Right could be solved if the appropriate leadership candidate could be identified, but finding a solution to this issue was made more complicated by the realignment of the party system that was occurring. As Perrineau and Sainte-Marie have argued,⁷ the Left/Right bipolar divide that had long dominated French politics under the Fifth Republic was under increasing strain, and the need to react to the growth of more extreme movements provoked debates and splits within both the Centre Left and Centre Right. Any leader would have to have a programme acceptable to his party, but also be capable of winning support from outside the movement.

The party looked to resolve debate over leadership by holding a primary. This in itself was a sign that the party system was evolving, as, in the past, the established parties of government had enough supporters to be fairly certain that their candidates would qualify for the second round. This was no longer the case during the Hollande presidency, and so both Les Républicains and the PS felt that they had to organise primaries in an attempt to broaden their support.

⁶ See, for example, Sylvia Zappi, 'Pour Jouanno, la "droitisation" de Sarkozy est "un mirage douloureux"' *Le Monde* 24 April 2012 <https://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2012/article/2012/04/24/pour-jouanno-la-droitisation-de-sarkozy-est-un-mirage-douloureux_1690218_1471069.html> [Accessed 02/04/19] and Jean-Pierre Raffarin, 'Sarkozy: les cinq occasions manquées' in *L'Etat de l'Opinion* 13 (Paris: Seuil, 2013) pp.21-30, p.26

⁷ See Pascal Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* (Paris: Fayard, 2012) p.20 and Jérôme Sainte-Marie, *Le nouvel ordre démocratique* (Paris: Editions du Moment, 2015) p.23

The aftermath of Fillon's victory in the primary of November 2016 also showed how the link between voters and parties had evolved. Normally, it would have been expected that the party members and supporters would have rallied behind him. However, many of the supporters of his defeated opponents, both within the party and among the general public, seemed to feel a greater loyalty to their candidate for whom they had voted in the primary than to the party itself. Some defected to En Marche before the elections, whilst others did so following Macron's victory. The travails of Fillon therefore provide further evidence of the decline in the electorate's ties to traditional movements and ideologies, and its adoption of a more individualistic and volatile attitude to voting.

Many commentators have considered the question of the historical division on the Right. Rémond⁸ has argued that there are three main families – the Legitimists, the Orleanists and the Bonapartists, whose roots can be traced back to the Restoration in the early 19th Century. Despite the decline of the Legitimists, and the creation of the UMP as a union of Right-wing movements, he still argued in 2005 that his model was relevant to the contemporary political scene.⁹ However, this analysis no longer explains the contemporary political landscape. As Richard notes, the 'typologie rémondienne n'a plus beaucoup de sens aujourd'hui [...] parce que la société a profondément changé et on ne peut comprendre la vie politique actuelle si on ne l'insère pas dans la société actuelle.'¹⁰ At a time when the Republic has been accepted by the overwhelming majority of parties and voters, a model that claims to be able to trace the political families of today far back to differences of opinion over the type of monarchical regime people considered best in the early nineteenth century, seems ill-suited to understanding the contemporary situation.

Others have proposed models that are based on more contemporary factors. Writing in the early 1990s, Donegani and Sadoun argued that the Right was divided between liberals and conservatives.¹¹ More recently, Winock has argued that there was a 'tension entre une droite libérale, plus ouverte à l'évolution des mentalités, et une droite républicaine, plus attachée à préserver les spécificités nationales, fût-ce au prix d'une certaine dose de

⁸ René Rémond, *Les droites en France* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1982) (First published as *La droite en France* in 1954)

⁹ René Rémond, *Les droites d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Louis Audibert, 2005) p.18

¹⁰ Alexandre Devecchio, '60 ans après René Rémond, la nouvelle typologie de la droite' (Interview with Gilles Richard) *Le Figaro* 2 April 2017

<<http://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/politique/2017/03/31/31001-20170331ARTFIG00382-60-ans-apres-rene-remond-la-nouvelle-typologie-de-la-droite.php>> [Accessed 14/09/18]

¹¹ Jean-Marie Donegani, Marc Sadoun, 'Chapitre VI. 1958-1992: Le jeu des institutions' in *Les droites françaises: De la Révolution à nos jours*, Jean-François Sirinelli ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1992) pp.663-822 p.812

protectionnisme et de limitation du libre jeu du marché.¹² Richard sees the existence of a similar split between nationalists and neoliberals.¹³ Although these analyses have the benefit of being based on contemporary debates rather than historical divisions, in both cases they fail to recognise that, during the Hollande presidency, many on the Centre Right wanted both liberal economic policies and an approach to immigration and national identity that promoted assimilation and traditional social values. As we shall see, Fillon's success in winning the Primary of the Right and Centre of 2016 arose from his ability to appeal to Right-wing voters in both these areas.

Finally, concerning the Right as a whole, Haegel has examined the history of the UMP, its membership and its internal structures.¹⁴ However, this is a largely sociological study, and was published in 2012, before the Hollande presidency, and so does not offer much concerning the divisions that would emerge during this period.

In order to understand differences of opinion within Les Républicains, it is important to consider the long-term political realignments, which intensified during the Hollande presidency, and several different models have been proposed to explain this.

For some, such as Guilluy¹⁵ and Fourquet¹⁶, society is now divided between the winners and losers of globalisation, a split that both Macron and Marine Le Pen seem also to detect.¹⁷ Yet this analysis largely ignores the fact that, as we shall see in this thesis, globalisation is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, involving economic, cultural and political aspects. Although Guilluy and Fourquet both acknowledge (and, in Guilluy's case, define) the issue of cultural insecurity, they often group together the different types of rejection of globalisation, and struggle to recognise that it is possible for voters to support certain elements, whilst being wary of others.

¹² Michel Winock, *La droite: hier et aujourd'hui* (Paris: Perrin, 2012) p.221

¹³ Gilles Richard, *Histoire des droites en France* (Paris: Perrin, 2017)

¹⁴ Florence Haegel, *Les droites en fusion: Transformations de l'UMP* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2012)

¹⁵ Marc-Olivier Bherer, 'Christophe Guilluy: « Macron, le candidat des métropoles mondialisées »' *Le Monde* 26 April 2017 <https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2017/04/26/christophe-guilluy-m-macron-est-le-candidat-des-metropoles-mondialisees_5117791_3232.html> [Accessed 14/09/18]

¹⁶ Jérôme Fourquet, 'Un nouveau clivage: Perdants vs gagnants de la mondialisation' *Commentaire* Vol.158 (2017), 265-270

¹⁷ See Simon Barbarit, '« Patriotes » contre « mondialistes », Marine Le Pen lance sa campagne à Lyon' *publicsenat.fr* 5 February 2017 <<https://www.publicsenat.fr/article/politique/patriotes-contre-mondialistes-marine-le-pen-lance-sa-campagne-a-lyon-54258>> [Accessed 08/03/19] and Emmanuel Macron, *Révolution* (Paris: XO Editions, 2016) p.42

Other commentators have produced more useful models. Gougou and Persico¹⁸ claim that the division in French politics around the time of the 2017 presidential and legislative elections was based around two axes – the more important of these divided those parties that held anti-immigration and socially conservative views from others who supported pro-immigration and socially liberal opinions, while a second related to the difference between those political movements in favour of liberal economic reforms, and others who adopt an anti-globalisation and pro-ecologist stance. Although helpful, this framework is not sufficient because the authors ignore the question of Europe, which as we shall see in Chapter 4, played an important role in the 2017 elections, in which Macron gained support from those who were particularly favourable towards the development of a more integrated Europe, while Le Pen lost support when her plans for a referendum on Euro membership alienated many voters. Europe was therefore an area which presented its own distinct challenges, and which cannot merely be subsumed into a wider schema. The ranking of the divide over immigration higher than that over the economy also seems misguided. Although issues relating to identity were the cause of most disagreement on the Centre Right, among the population as a whole, the most important concerns were those about the economy. As we shall see in this thesis, Macron's appeal to the electorate on the question of liberal economic reform was crucial to his success at the expense of Les Républicains.

Another multidimensional model has been proposed by Martin, who argues that since 2015, Western party systems have been split along two different axes.¹⁹ In one case, the division is between defenders of traditional identities and others with a more cosmopolitan vision. The other separates supporters of neoliberal economic policies and those who wanted a traditional, more state driven, economic system. This has produced three blocs, which he calls, from Left to Right, 'Démocrate-écossocialiste', 'Libéral-mondialisateur' and 'Conservateur-identitaire.'²⁰ For Martin, the new system has replaced the old arrangement, where the Centre Left and Centre Right could exercise power through either *alternance* or *cohabitation*. Martin's explanation has the advantage, like that of Gougou and Persico, of acknowledging that the situation is complex, and based on a number of different divisions, but it fails to provide an accurate picture in several respects. Most importantly for this

¹⁸ Florent Gougou, Simon Persico, 'A new party system in the making? The 2017 French presidential election' *French Politics* Vol 15. (2017) 303-321

¹⁹ Pierre Martin, 'Un séisme politique: L'élection présidentielle de 2017', *Commentaire*, 158 (2017), 249-264

²⁰ Ibid p.263

thesis, it does not properly represent the Centre Right, which combined liberal economic policies with the defence of a traditional approach to identity, and which therefore might be seen to share elements with both the 'liberal-mondialisateur' and 'social-conservateur' blocs. Furthermore, he downplays important differences in the economic sphere between the Centre Right and the Far Right, claiming that 'le pôle conservateur, la droite, comprend les « identitaires » qui dans leur grande majorité ne remettent pas en cause le capitalisme néolibéral.'²¹ While it is true that the Far Right is more accepting of capitalism than the Far Left, there were still great differences between Les Républicains, who wanted much greater economically liberal reform, and the FN, which defended an important role for the state in the economy.

In some cases, concepts have been devised to explain developments on the French political scene, but have not been sufficiently applied to discussion of the Right. Bouvet and Guilluy have outlined the concept of cultural insecurity, arguing that the rise of the Far Right in France is not solely a reaction against economic globalisation, but is also driven by fears related to the development of a more multicultural society.²² Yet, while Bouvet uses cultural insecurity to explain why a large section of the working class no longer supports the Centre Left, and Guilluy considers the same concept to analyse the division between metropolitan centres and 'la France périphérique', they do not develop this analysis to show the problems that cultural insecurity posed for the Centre Right. As we shall see, how to respond to concerns relating to the evolution of society was a crucial element in dividing Les Républicains into irreconcilable camps, and breaking up the party. Fourquet and Le Bras note the importance of Fillon's ability to combine traditional Catholic values with a hard-line approach to immigration in his victory in the primary of 2016.²³ They focus on this particular context, and fail to consider the role of debate over 'cultural' concerns in undermining unity on the Centre Right throughout the Hollande presidency, and how this allowed Macron to win over Juppéistes, when Fillon became the candidate of Les Républicains.

In other areas, scholarship on French attitudes towards social and political values that is helpful in understanding the fortunes of the Right needs to be updated in order to fit the

²¹ Ibid p.263

²² See Laurent Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle* (Paris: Fayard, 2015); Christophe Guilluy, *Fractures françaises* (Paris: François Bourin Editeur, 2010) and *La France périphérique* (Paris: Flammarion, 2014)

²³ Jérôme Fourquet, Hervé Le Bras, *La Guerre des trois: La primaire de la droite et du centre* (Paris: Editions Fondation Jean Jaurès, 2017) p.136

new context. Hayward, Jennings, Smith and Waters²⁴ have all considered why the French have traditionally been wary of liberal economic measures. However, one of the features of the Hollande presidency was the rise in the number of voters who believed that more freedom needed to be given to businesses in order to improve the French economy. This evolution must be understood in order to explain why Macron was able to be elected as president in 2017 by winning votes from supporters of both the Centre Left and Centre Right.

While there has been much work carried out on the Centre Right in France, it remains more neglected as a subject of study than its opponents on the Far Left and Centre Left. It is, however, worthy of study not only because the Centre Right has been (along with the Centre Left) one of the two currents that have dominated politics under the Fifth Republic, but also because the problems faced by Les Républicains can help us to understand broader political trends that occurred between 2012 and 2017. In terms of the study of the evolution of the Right in France, it is crucial to understand the problems faced by the UMP (and later Les Républicains) and why the union formed in 2002 fell apart in 2017. To achieve this, a new model is required to explain the evolution of the French party system – one that takes into account the key areas of identity and economic liberalism considered by others, but which also gives Europe its proper place. Such an analysis must also recognise the multifaceted nature of globalisation, and how different policy areas affected the Centre Right in different ways.

Defining the ‘Centre Right’

The focus of this thesis is on the party which from 2002 was called the UMP, before being renamed Les Républicains by Sarkozy in 2015, following his re-election as leader. In order to make observations about the evolution of this movement both throughout the course of the Hollande presidency, and also during the wider period from 2002, the term ‘Centre Right’ will be used to refer to both parties. This allows us to avoid phrases such as ‘in the UMP, and later, Les Républicains’, as well as the problem of anachronism, which would arise were we to ignore the name change and continue to refer to the UMP. The refounding of the party under a different name by Sarkozy was mainly an attempt to draw

²⁴ Jack Hayward, *Fragmented France: Two Centuries of Disputed Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Jeremy Jennings, ‘France and the “Anglo-Saxon” Model: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives’, *European Review* Vol. 14, No.4, 537-544 (2006); Timothy B. Smith, *France in Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Sarah Waters, *Between Republic and Market: Globalization and Identity in Contemporary France* (London: Continuum, 2012)

a line under internal disputes and allegations of financial malpractice, which had dogged the movement since the 2012, and to provide a new impetus, rather than an attempt to radically reshape the UMP. It was also Sarkozy's way of asserting his control over the movement, as its president. For these reasons, even if the party changed little, the decision to change the party name reflected some of the problems that it faced, and so deserves to be recognised.²⁵

MoDem and the UDI, which some might class as being part of the Centre Right, will be referred to as the Independent Centre parties. This highlights their desire to have greater freedom of action, as could be seen when both parties chose to form a separate list from Les Républicains for the European elections, and by their decision not to present candidates in the Primary of the Right and Centre of 2016. MoDem in particular was more a party of the Centre than one of the Centre Right. In the 2012 presidential elections, Bayrou chose to support Hollande rather than Sarkozy, and in 2017, he rallied behind Macron rather than Fillon. Surveys also showed that MoDem voters often found themselves between the PS and the Centre Right. In the 2015 *Fractures françaises* survey, 51% of MoDem sympathisers agreed with the statement 'Pour établir la justice sociale, il faudrait prendre aux riches pour donner aux pauvres', compared with 72% of those close to the PS, and 30% of those close to the UMP.²⁶ On social issues that were less related to the economy, MoDem supporters were closer to the Centre Left in some cases, and had more in common with sympathisers of the Centre Right on others. For example, 53% of MoDem supporters felt that anti-white racism was a relatively rare phenomenon in France, compared with 70% of those of the PS, and 47% of those from the UMP.²⁷ The situation was reversed on some issues concerning the integration of immigrant communities. 60% of MoDem sympathisers felt that immigrants made an effort to integrate, which was much closer to the 63% of those from the PS who shared this view, than the 29% of UMP

²⁵ The only exception to this rule will be in chapter 4, where we will examine Europe as a key area of division between the UMP/Les Républicains, and the Independent Centre parties of the UDI and MoDem. In order to avoid any confusion that might arise from referring to the 'Centre', and 'Centre Right', in this chapter alone, we will use 'the Right' to refer to the UMP/Les Républicains. The FN shall always be distinguished by being referred to either by its name, or by the terms 'the Far Right' or 'the Radical Right.'

²⁶ Brice Teinturier, Stéphane Zumsteeg, *Fractures françaises Vague 3: Ipsos/Sopra Steria pour Le Monde, La Fondation Jean Jaurès et Sciences Po, Avril 2015* p.32 <<https://jean-jaures.org/nos-productions/fractures-francaises-edition-2015>>

²⁷ Ibid p.69

supporters who agreed with this statement.²⁸ For this reason, MoDem is better classified as an Independent Centre party.

The term 'Centre Right' will also exclude Macron and his party, En Marche. During the presidential elections, Macron stressed several times that he was 'ni de droite, ni de gauche', situating himself above the bipolar divide. Commentators have offered slightly different interpretations of his position within the political landscape. Jaffré has argued that the leader of En Marche was a 'candidat au centre gauche et [est maintenant] président au centre droit'²⁹, while for Elgie:

LREM can be interpreted as a combination of moderate right and moderate left *députés* that has won some support from moderate right and moderate left *députés* in the *Assemblée* and that has been systematically opposed there by both the extreme right and what we can interpret as the extreme left in the context of the contemporary French party system.³⁰

There is therefore some agreement that Macron combines elements of both the Right and the Left, and we shall argue here that he is best characterised as being both of the Right and of the Left, and so will not be considered as part of the Centre Right.

A note on Primary Sources

In order to analyse the evolution of the Centre Right, and of the French party system as a whole, we will use a number of primary sources, each of which presents potential problems. When considering the evolution of the Centre Right and comparing the visions of the main candidates in the presidential primary, we will examine party literature (including manifestos), speeches and books produced by the politicians themselves. These represent the formal positions adopted by political movements and their representatives, and sometimes reveal more about parties and candidates than other sources such as newspaper reports where statements are mediated by journalists. Even when it is clear that politicians have embellished an account of events in order to support their programme, this in itself can tell us about their views and motivations, and the response to

²⁸ Ibid p.67

²⁹ Jérôme Jaffré, 'Jérôme Jaffré: « Macron était un candidat du centre gauche, c'est un président du centre droit »' *Le Figaro* 18 December 2017
<<http://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/politique/2017/12/18/31001-20171218ARTFIG00241-jerome-jaffre-macron-etait-un-candidat-de-centre-gauche-c-est-un-president-de-centre-droit.php>> [Accessed 14/09/18]

³⁰ Robert Elgie, 'The election of Emmanuel Macron and the new French party system: a return to the *éternel marais*?' *Modern & Contemporary France* Vol.26 No.1 (2017) 15-29 p.25

it can reveal much about the beliefs of both their supporters and their opponents, and illustrate the terms of debate. For example, we will see in chapter 2 the story told by Jean-François Copé during the 2012 UMP internal election campaign of a boy who had his pain au chocolat taken from him by Muslims, because it was Ramadan. There is no way of telling whether this event actually took place, but it is of interest for three reasons. Firstly, because it shows that fears relating to the Muslim community in France were an important feature in the political debate. Secondly, it illustrates the nature of Copé's campaign for a *droite décomplexée*, which was a key reason for his victory in this election. Finally, the reaction of figures such as Alain Juppé, who would later campaign for an *identité heureuse*, and who was critical of Copé's remarks, also help to reveal the deep political differences within the Centre Right.

Another important type of source that we will use in order to analyse the views of the electorate is the opinion poll. This thesis covers a period when opinion polls were often mocked for failing to predict key events such as Brexit and the victory of Donald Trump, and in France, the success of Fillon in the primary. Despite these issues, they remain the best way of gauging what people believed, and in the case of polls such as the *Fractures françaises* surveys, which are published once a year, are more likely to pick up long-term trends than others conducted at periods of high volatility, such as during an election campaign.

The final main primary sources that will be used in this thesis are newspaper and magazine articles. These provide details of events and the reaction to them by politicians and the general public from the immediate period, and usually offer an accurate report of what happened, even if the interpretation of the significance of events is subjective.

Having examined the existing literature, defined what we will refer to as the 'Centre Right', and discussed the primary source material that will be used, it now remains to us to explain in more detail the argument of this thesis and how it will be developed in the chapters that follow.

Understanding the problems faced by the Centre Right through a new model

In this thesis, we will argue that the fracturing of Les Républicains and the disintegration of the party following the 2017 presidential and legislative elections was due in a large part to its failure to respond to an ongoing political realignment that reached its culmination during the Hollande presidency. We will demonstrate how the Left/Right divide that had

long dominated the French party system was undermined, as citizens became less attached to traditional ideologies, and would pick and choose policies from across the political spectrum. In place of the old system came a new arrangement. Rather than being based on a single divide, such as Left/Right or pro- and anti- globalisation, we will show that parties were arranged on three axes, according to their policies relating to identity, economic liberalism, and membership of the European Union. As we shall see these axes were not of equal importance for all voters and in all contexts, since individuals and groups often prioritised one or other of them. Each one of these areas posed different challenges for Les Républicains.

In chapter 1, we will examine the sociological (and, to a certain extent, the political) factors that developed from around the early 1980s, which led increasing numbers of voters to turn away from the established parties of government towards more radical alternatives, particularly to the FN. The effect of this was that the bipolar party system based on a division between the Left and the Right had been significantly weakened by the start of the Hollande presidency in 2012.

The following three chapters will each consider an axis of the new model to explain the problems faced by the Centre Right during the Hollande presidency. In chapter 2, we will use the notion of 'cultural insecurity', as discussed by Bouvet and Guilluy, and which is a concept that has been used to explain the problems faced by the Centre Left, but has often been ignored in study of the Centre Right, to understand how Les Républicains were divided into two camps, the Traditionalists and the Modernists. This has often been linked to a new class divide between the winners and losers of economic globalisation, but in this thesis, we will demonstrate that it is rather a question of different outlooks, and that economically secure groups can feel equally ill at ease when faced with a changing society as those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In our discussions of economic liberalism in chapter 3, we will demonstrate that arguments over different economic systems are less important than in the past. In practice, there has been a 'consensus of government', that is to say that parties of both the Centre Left and the Centre Right in France implement fairly similar economic programmes when in power. During the Hollande presidency, French voters as a whole became more receptive to the idea of giving support to private enterprise and to reducing the size of the state. At the same time, many voters still wanted to preserve some state protection. We will show that the 2017 elections were, to a certain extent, a contest to see who could offer the best

programme that balanced liberal economic reform of the capitalist system with the preservation of some elements of state protection, and how Fillon's programme of radical reforms caused him to start losing support even before the Penelopegate scandal was reported in *Le Canard enchaîné*.

In chapter 4, we will consider the question of Europe. Although the impact of the issue of French membership of the European Union in influencing voters during the 2017 presidential election campaign has often been overlooked, we will demonstrate how it played an important role in the success of Macron. His pro-European federalist agenda revitalised what had been a traditional dividing line between the Right and the Centre, and which also ran through Les Républicains, and encouraged a significant number of the sympathisers of the Independent Centre parties and of those who had voted for Juppé in the primary of the Right and Centre to support the candidate of En Marche.

The problems of the Centre Right were not confined to defining a programme, but also included selecting an appropriate leader, capable of uniting the party and then of gaining power. In addition to the three axes, we will therefore discuss the question of leadership in chapter 5. We will argue that although leadership has always been important under the Fifth Republic, particularly for the Centre Right, the decline in allegiance to traditional ideologies and the parties that represented them put even greater emphasis on this area. Many voters who struggled to identify with a party looked for a figure in whom they could have confidence. In order to understand how voters choose the leader they would support as presidential candidate, we will argue that traditional models of leadership classified as 'charismatic'³¹ or 'heroic'³² are outdated, and that in the modern context, the head of a party must balance questions of personality and representation in order to be successful, when appealing both to militants and to the wider electorate. We will then assess the three main candidates of the 2016 primary, and Macron, according to these criteria, and show how this model can explain both Fillon's success in the primary, and his failure in the *présidentielles*.

This thesis will therefore explain how many of the elements that have been observed in political systems throughout the Western world, such as the decline in allegiance to traditional parties, citizens' adoption of a more independent and volatile approach to

³¹ Max Weber, 'IX. The Sociology of Charismatic Authority' in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2012) p.245

³² Stanley Hoffmann, *Decline or renewal? France since the 1930s* (New York: Viking Press, 1974) p.77

voting, and the rise of new and also more radical movements, were witnessed in France during the Hollande presidency. It will show how these factors helped to cause the political realignment, which is essential in explaining the problems faced by Les Républicains in the presidential and legislative elections of 2017. Through analysis of the Centre Right, it seeks to demonstrate how the Fifth Republic has evolved, and to understand why the defeat of Les Républicains in 2017 did not mark the end of its struggles, but rather suggested that a long period of difficulty for the party lay ahead.

Chapter 1: A changing French society and the rise and fall of consensus (c.1981-2012)

Introduction

As we have discussed in the introduction, the 2017 French presidential and legislative elections could be seen as a moment of rupture that put an end to the Left/Right bipolar arrangement of the party system that had structured politics throughout the Fifth Republic. However, rather than reflecting a sudden change, the election results confirmed a realignment that was a consequence of a number of issues that had been developing for some time. In this chapter, we provide an overview of the literature on the sociological and political evolutions within French society from around 1981 to 2012. We will show that, in many cases, the factors that were driving the political reconfiguration had their roots in the longer-term evolution of French society since the 1980s. These elements would be crucial in driving the realignment of the French party system, which we analyse using our new model in chapters 2, 3 and 4.

French politics under the Fifth Republic has long been approached according to a conflict between the Left and the Right.¹ By the 1970s, this took the form of a four-way contest between the PCF and PS on the Left, and the UDF and RPR on the Right. The decline of the PCF and UDF in the 1980s and 1990s produced a new arrangement, and by 2007 Haegel and Grunberg could argue that French Politics was now based on a bipolar, bipartisan relationship between the PS and the UMP.² As Hewlett has argued, from the 1980s, the differences in the policies supported by members and sympathisers of the Centre Left and Centre Right declined, creating a form of consensus.³ Yet by 2012, this traditional party system was already under strain, as was revealed by the strength of the FN in the presidential elections of that year, when Marine Le Pen came third with 17.9% of the vote.⁴

¹ Although the Parti Socialiste would only gain power in 1981, the Left/Right divide still structured political competition, such as when de Gaulle faced Mitterrand in the second round of presidential elections of 1965, and in the 1974 and 1981 presidential elections, where the run-off was between Mitterrand and Giscard d'Estaing.

² Gérard Grunberg and Florence Haegel, *La France vers le bipartisme? La présidentialisation du PS et de l'UMP* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2007) p.119

³ Nick Hewlett, *Modern French Politics: Analysing Conflict and Consensus since 1945* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998) p.66

⁴ Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats de l'élection présidentielle 2012'
<[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__PR2012/\(path\)/PR2012/FE.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__PR2012/(path)/PR2012/FE.html)> [Accessed 02/11/18]

The question of how to respond to the rise of the Front National would prove to be an important area of discussion within the Centre Right during the Hollande presidency. This debate was already present under Sarkozy's leadership of the UMP. He had managed to secure the support of many FN voters, which contributed to his winning the presidency in 2007,⁵ and when faced with poor approval ratings as president, turned further to the Right, notably in the *Discours de Grenoble* in 2010, in which he explicitly linked the issue of crime to those relating to integration and immigration.⁶ The election of Marine Le Pen as leader, and the increase in support enjoyed by the Far Right, further encouraged this move, and Sarkozy's 2012 presidential election campaign was firmly based on appeals to FN voters.⁷ The FN claimed to be 'ni droite, ni gauche – Français!'⁸, and its relative success in 2012 significantly undermined the bipolar and near bipartisan arrangement of parties. This chapter will examine both the long-term and short-term factors that had undermined the traditional party system based on a Left/Right divide in the period before Hollande came to power.

The decline in voter identification with parties

A key factor in destabilising the traditional Right/Left divide was the decline in the number of voters identifying strongly with the established parties of government which had historically represented them, a development which had been in progress since the 1970s. As we shall see, this was in part due to changes in society, such as the reduction in size of the blue-collar working class, and the narrowing of the difference in living conditions between the working and middle classes. These changes led to evolutions within political parties, which became focused on attracting many of the same categories of voters from within the enlarged middle class, and this encouraged ideological convergence between

⁵ On this point, see Hewlett, who argues that 'Sarkozy's aggressively right- and in parts extreme right-oriented campaign and programme [...] won over many voters, leaving Le Pen with only 10.4 per cent of the total, compared with 16.9 per cent in 2002.' Nick Hewlett, 'Nicolas Sarkozy and the Legacy of Bonapartism. The French Presidential and Parliamentary Elections of 2007', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 15:4 (2007), 405-422, p.413. Mayer has demonstrated that of those voters who had voted for Le Pen in the first round of the 2002 presidential elections, 26% stated in 2007 that they would vote for Sarkozy in the first round of the presidential elections of that year. See Nonna Mayer, 'Comment Nicolas Sarkozy a rétréci l'électorat Le Pen', *Revue française de science politique*, 57:3 (2007), 429-445 p.439

⁶ For the text of the speech, see Sophie Guerrier, 'Le discours de Grenoble de Nicolas Sarkozy' *Le Figaro* 27 March 2014 <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/le-scan/2014/03/27/25001-20140327ARTFIG00084-le-discours-de-grenoble-de-nicolas-sarkozy.php>> [Accessed 03/11/18]

⁷ Sarkozy's 2012 campaign, and particularly his attempts to win over those affected by cultural insecurity, will be discussed in Chapter 2

⁸ J.G. Shields, *The Extreme Right in France: From Pétain to Le Pen* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) p.274

politicians on the Centre Left and Centre Right. This development would also contribute to the destabilisation of the party system as some other groups that these parties had historically represented (in particular the blue-collar working class) felt marginalised.

Perrineau notes that in the second round of the 1974 Presidential election, 74% of manual labourers voted for Mitterrand, and 66% of those in upper management and the liberal professions chose Giscard d'Estaing. By 2007, this social divide was no longer reflected in voting patterns. Nicolas Sarkozy received 52% of the votes of blue-collar workers and 57% of those in upper management and the liberal professions.⁹ This leads Perrineau to conclude that '[l]e scénario de la « lutte des classes » entre la bourgeoisie et le prolétariat a pris un « coup de vieux ». Aujourd'hui, la bourgeoisie salariée est souvent plus à gauche que le prolétariat ouvrier : les cadres supérieurs et professions intellectuelles sont nettement plus nombreux à se classer à gauche (38% dans l'enquête Ifop de septembre 2010) que les ouvriers (33%) au sein desquels le « ni gauche, ni droite » triomphe (37%).'¹⁰

This might be explained by the increased importance of cultural rather than economic criteria in defining notions of Left and Right. Following the conversion of the Parti Socialiste to a more moderate approach in the early 1980s, the established parties of government from both sides of the political divide often proposed similar liberal economic policies, as for example, when in 1984, under the Mitterrand presidency, taxes on businesses were cut.

This trend of the Left moving closer to the Centre continued under the Jospin government of 1997-2002, which privatised sections of some state-owned businesses. By 2012, it was easier to distinguish between parties of the Left and Right using cultural values, such as attitudes regarding gay rights, than economic issues. As Bouvet recognises, those from more economically disadvantaged backgrounds were often more socially conservative, and so less likely to identify as left-wing than those in upper management and the intellectual professions, who tended to be more socially liberal.¹¹

In the past, the Left, and particularly the PCF, was able to rely on the support of a large proportion of the blue-collar working class. However, as Dalton notes, from the 1970s

⁹ Pascal Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* (Paris: Fayard, 2012) p.67

¹⁰ Ibid p.68

¹¹ Laurent Bouvet, *Le sens du peuple: La gauche, la démocratie, le populisme* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2012) p.219

there was a decline in heavy industry, while the service sector greatly expanded.¹² This shift in the structure of the French economy reduced the size of the blue-collar working class and increased the divisions within this socio-economic group. As a result, Perrineau observes that the working class was now found more in smaller businesses in the service sector than in heavy industry, a feature that weakened the ability to create a specific class identity¹³. New dividing lines emerged, which mean that, by 2012, workers often saw their identity in a more fragmented way than they did in the past. Whereas in the legislative elections of 1978, 69% of the blue-collar working class voted for candidates of the Left¹⁴, this had fallen to 40% by the presidential elections of 2012.¹⁵

Bouvet shares this analysis, dating the rise of a more individualist approach to the years following 1968.¹⁶ For Perrineau, the working class became fragmented into different categories, an evolution that accelerated from the 1980s.¹⁷ Those with stable jobs had different expectations from those with unstable or marginal positions. French workers had different requirements from their foreign counterparts, and young workers had different expectations from those of older generations.¹⁸ For example, Aunis notes that younger workers, who had become used to periods of economic crisis, were keen to protect their job, but did not see their work as a vocation, unlike many of their older counterparts who entered the job market at times of economic growth.¹⁹ Young workers were also more supportive of moves to increase the flexibility of the workforce.²⁰ To these differences, Mayer adds those between workers in the private and public sector. The former were much more affected by the continuing high level of unemployment, and came to consider those working in the public sector as privileged, because their jobs were protected and they received better pensions.²¹ Class solidarity was much weakened.²² This fragmentation

¹² Russell Dalton, *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Fifth edition (Washington: CQ Press, 2008) p.7

¹³ Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.72

¹⁴ Florent Gougou, 'Les mutations du vote ouvrier sous la Ve république' *Nouvelles fondations*, 1(5) (2007) 15-20 p.18

¹⁵ Grégoire Fleuret, 'Pour qui ont voté les jeunes et les ouvriers' *Slate.fr* 22 April 2012 <<http://www.slate.fr/france/53797/jeunes-ouvriers-vote>> [Accessed 24/11/18]

¹⁶ Bouvet, *Le sens du peuple* p.143

¹⁷ Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.72

¹⁸ *Ibid* p.73

¹⁹ Emilie Aunis, 'Perceptions des mutations du monde de travail: les jeunes ouvriers s'opposent-ils à leurs aînés ?' *Revue Interdisciplinaire Management Homme et Entreprise* 4 (No.4) (2012) 27-41 p.33

²⁰ *Ibid* p.35

²¹ Nonna Mayer, 'What remains of class voting?' in *Politics in France and Europe*, Pascal Perrineau and Luc Rouban eds. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) pp.167-181 p.176

²² Laurent Bouvet, *Le sens du peuple* p.155

of class identity was recognised by political parties. Whereas Socialist parties in the past had often sought to emphasise the importance of the working class as a coherent whole, sharing similar aspirations, the PS noted in its programme *Un nouvel horizon* published in 1991:

[L]es socialistes, trop longtemps confondus avec les tenants du collectivisme, réaffirment que l'autonomie de l'individu, le droit au bonheur pour chaque femme et chaque homme sont les fins qu'ils s'assignent.[...] Dans cette perspective, la société peut être vue comme l'immense faisceau des relations entre individus.²³

A further indication of the decline of class divisions can be seen in changes in the way people have chosen to identify themselves in sociological terms over time. Whereas in 1966, of those French people who identified as being members of a particular socio-economic group, 39% felt that they belonged to the working class, and 21% to the middle class, by 2006, this relationship was reversed, with 75% identifying as middle class and 16% as working class.²⁴ Even among those who, according to sociological statisticians, formed part of the working class, 64% felt that they were middle class.²⁵ Guilluy argues that so many people were keen to identify as middle class as it was a way of differentiating themselves from those who lived in the banlieues, and of allowing those falling down the social ladder to claim that they still maintained cultural links with their former status.²⁶ This further weakened the class divide, as many voters tried to emphasise that they belonged to the same social group, rather than focusing on the specificity of their own class as distinct from other sections of society.

It was not just the reduction of the size of the blue-collar working class that weakened class divisions but also the narrowing of the standard of living between the working and middle classes. As Mendras argued in the late 1980s:

les conditions de vie de l'ouvrier se sont rapidement améliorées [...] Les foyers ouvriers se sont équipés avec retard par rapport aux autres catégories sociales mais aujourd'hui ils possèdent comme tous les Français presque tous frigidaire, télévision, lave-linge etc [...] Pour Michel Verret (1979) : « Une conclusion s'impose : sous tous les indices, valeur d'usage, valeur d'échange, surface sociale,

²³ Quoted in Bouvet, *Le sens du peuple* p.181

²⁴ Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.74

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Christophe Guilluy, *Fractures françaises* (Paris: François Bourin Editeur, 2010) p.78

aire d'existence, la classe ouvrière a, dans un laps de temps extraordinairement court, réduit le retard extraordinaire de ses conditions d'existence sur les autres classes.»²⁷

Such change was not limited to the 1980s. Between 1996 and 2007, average wealth in France increased by 16.7%. However, for those in the lowest decile the increase was 21%, whereas it was 14.7% for those in the highest decile.²⁸ Nor was the reduction in the difference between classes solely based on material factors. Cultural changes also played a role. As Guilluy states, 'Jean Viard note à juste raison que nous sommes tous devenus urbains, que nous regardons le même journal télévisé et que nous fréquentons les mêmes grandes surfaces.'²⁹ While it might be objected that people of different backgrounds bought different products, many often still mixed in the same spaces, and enjoyed similar cultural experiences. This evolution led to the weakening of what was once a strong particular working-class culture, and parties that used to rely on this, particularly the Parti Communiste, now struggled in elections.

While the social conditions of the blue-collar working class improved, convergence also occurred through the reduction in living standards of certain sections of the middle class. Dalton, writing about evolutions in the Western world, notes that:

the expanding ranks of low-paid and low-status white collar employees and the growth of white-collar unions are producing a *proletarianization* of part of the middle class. Few individuals now possess exclusively middle-class or working-class social characteristics, and the amount of class overlap is growing over time. In sum, the convergence of life conditions may contribute to the convergence of class voting patterns.³⁰

As Guilluy has demonstrated, in France, between 1995 and 2010, house prices increased 2.5 times, while wages only rose by 1.6 times their starting level.³¹ Sections of the lower middle class were faced with the prospect that they would never be able to own their own home, and, due to rising property prices and rents in big cities, were forced to move into

²⁷ Henri Mendras (avec la collaboration de Laurence Duboys Fresney), *La Seconde Révolution française 1965-1984* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988) p.37

²⁸ Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.76

²⁹ Christophe Guilluy, *La France périphérique: Comment on a sacrifié les classes populaires* (Paris: Flammarion, 2015) p.23

³⁰ Dalton, *Citizen Politics* p.151

³¹ Guilluy, *Fractures françaises* p.79

the smaller towns, where there were fewer opportunities, and therefore found themselves marginalised.³² Whereas previous generations could aspire to be more prosperous than their forebears, by the time of the Hollande presidency, around a quarter of 30-40 year olds were poorer and located lower down the economic social scale than their parents.³³ Class divisions were therefore no longer as clear as they had been, and the close identification between sections of society and particular parties historically considered to represent them had diminished.

The evolution of the party system

The traditional Left/Right bipolar divide was further undermined by the convergence in the policies pursued by the parties of government of both Left and Right from the 1980s. This was encouraged by the growth of the middle class and the reduction in class divisions. Voters disappointed with one of the established parties of government would find that its rival did not offer a significant alternative, and would therefore turn to more radical movements. Parties were generally unable to rely on the support of a specific class or section of society, and had to try to broaden their appeal as far as possible. As Martin states:

A partir des années soixante, un nouveau type de parti se développe : le « parti attrape-tout »- Catch-All-Party, selon la terminologie de Otto Kirchheimer- ou « parti d'électeurs» selon celle de Jean Charlot...Par rapport aux anciens partis de masse (ou d'intégration), le nouveau type de parti se caractérise par...a) réduction du contenu idéologique du discours ; b) le renforcement du pouvoir du groupe dirigeant du parti, qui doit être dorénavant jugé sur sa capacité à gérer les intérêts du pays plutôt qu'à atteindre les objets spécifiques de l'organisation ; c) le déclin du rôle des adhérents ; d) la mise en sourdine du caractère sectoriel (de classe, religieux) du parti pour pouvoir s'adresser à l'ensemble de l'électorat ; e) la volonté de nouer des relations avec le plus grand nombre possible de groupes d'intérêts divers dans la société et de ne pas paraître se poser en porte-parole d'un seul ou de quelques-uns seulement.³⁴

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid p.82

³⁴ Pierre Martin, *Comprendre les évolutions électorales: La théorie des réalignements revisitée* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2000) p.91

Part of this analysis is echoed by Dalton, who argues that:

[o]ver the latter half of the twentieth century, many political parties tried to broaden their electoral appeal to attract new middle-class voters. This outreach led parties to moderate their positions on traditional class-based issues. Socialist parties in Europe....adopted more moderate domestic and foreign policy goals. Conservative parties also tempered their views and accepted the basic social programs proposed by the Left. Socialist parties vied for the votes of the new middle class, and conservative parties sought votes from the working class.³⁵

An example that fits the analysis of both Martin and Dalton can be found in the changes in the policies supported by the Parti Socialiste. While in 1971, Mitterrand had talked of 'une rupture avec la société capitaliste'³⁶, and in his 1981 programme he had proposed to expand the public sector through the nationalisation of 9 industrial groups,³⁷ he soon abandoned his more statist approach once in power, as the difficult economic situation, made worse by international competition, forced him to perform a u-turn. In 1983; he stated in an interview: 'les Français commencent à comprendre: c'est l'entreprise qui crée la richesse, c'est l'entreprise qui crée l'emploi, c'est l'entreprise qui détermine le niveau de vie et notre place dans la hiérarchie mondiale.'³⁸ This was seen as a key moment in the evolution of the PS's approach to economic policy, and an event that increased convergence between the parties of government on the Left and on the Right. The support by the PS for more liberal policies did not end with Mitterrand. As Behrent argues, in economic terms, the Jospin government combined measures that followed socialist principles, such as the 35-hour week, with more liberal ones such as the privatisation of state industry.³⁹ Mitterrand's turn towards economic liberalism was therefore not a short term adaptation intended to respond to particular problems, but rather the start of a more definitive shift in the direction of the PS.

³⁵ Dalton, *Citizen Politics* p.151

³⁶ Gérard Grunberg, 'Le parti d'Épinay: d'une rupture fantasmé à un réformisme mal assumée' *Histoire@Politique*, 13:1 (2011), 99-111 p.100

³⁷ Le Monde diplomatique, '110 propositions pour la France : Programme de gouvernement préparé par le Parti Socialiste (PS) pour l'élection présidentielle d'avril-mai 1981' *Le Monde diplomatique* <<https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/mav/124/A/51865>> [Accessed 17/11/18]

³⁸ François Mitterrand, 'Réponses de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, au questionnaire de la revue "Challenge", Paris, décembre 1983' <<http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/847007000.html>> [accessed 16/04/14]

³⁹ Michael C. Behrent, 'Twilight of the political? On the ideological disarray of French politics' *Modern & Contemporary France*, 25:1 (2017), 75-81 p.77

The narrowing of the Left/Right divide was not solely due to a *droitisation* of the traditional Left. On the Right, parties moved closer to the Centre on questions of social values. For Raymond, this process had already started in the 1970s under Giscard d'Estaing, whose government legalised abortion and lowered the age of majority to 18.⁴⁰ Attitudes on the Right would continue to develop in a more liberal direction, reflecting the changing views of the electorate. For example, whereas in 2000, 54% of Right wing voters supported the reintroduction of the death penalty,⁴¹ by January 2012, only 46% were in favour of such a measure.⁴²

This convergence in both policy and attitudes between both the parties of the Centre Left and Centre Right, and also their supporters, would cause Sainte-Marie to state, in 2015, that 'la France connaît une crise du clivage gauche-droite depuis un certain temps.'⁴³ Although he is writing during the Hollande presidency, the change he describes could certainly be observed before 2012. His view of the decline of the Left/Right divide is supported by an OpinionWay poll in 2011 in which 59% agreed that the idea of Left and Right no longer had any meaning.⁴⁴ As Touchard argues, '[l]a vérité [...] c'est que la gauche et la droite ne peuvent se définir qu'historiquement et relativement, en fonction de l'époque, en fonction des problèmes posés à une époque déterminée, en fonction aussi de ce qu'est à cette même époque la droite ou la gauche à laquelle elle s'oppose.'⁴⁵ For Sainte-Marie, 'sur la durée, le seul critère qui demeure valable de cette dichotomie relève du pur déclaratif: est de gauche qui se dit de gauche, ou accepte d'être désigné comme tel, et de même pour la droite.'⁴⁶ Such was the convergence between the parties of government of the Left and the Right that when trying to distinguish them, the best way to do so was to ask voters how they defined themselves. If Left and Right remained terms in the political debate, as Martin notes, this was because the political system imposes an adversarial arrangement between a government and an opposition. In Parliament, parties must either support or oppose laws, and parties struggling for power must choose between

⁴⁰ Gino Raymond, 'Ideological uncertainty and the path of convergence: the impact of the 1970s in France and the UK', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 24:3 (2016), 317-330 p.320

⁴¹ Olivier Duhamel and Edouard Lecerf, 'Conservateurs-libéraux-socialistes, évolutions idéologiques 1985-2015' in *L'Etat de l'Opinion 2016* Olivier Duhamel and Edouard Lecerf eds. (Paris: Seuil, 2016) p.185

⁴² TNS-Sofrès for Le Monde, franceinfo and Canal+, *Baromètre d'image du Front national* January 2012 p.6 <<https://www.tns-sofres.com/sites/default/files/2012.01.12-barofn.pdf>>

⁴³ Jérôme Sainte-Marie, *Le nouvel ordre démocratique* (Paris: Editions du Moment, 2015) p.23

⁴⁴ Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.19

⁴⁵ Jean Touchard, *La gauche en France 1900-1981* revd. ed. (Paris: Seuil, 1981) p.16

⁴⁶ *Ibid* p.19

siding with or opposing the government.⁴⁷ Yet this adversarial relationship which was imposed by the institutions was not reflected in policies supported by the Centre Left and Centre Right.

In addition to the various sociological and political factors that we have discussed above, the evolution of the PS and Centre Right in relation to one another further weakened the traditional arrangement of the party system. In the words of Sainte-Marie:

si des sujets ressentis comme conflictuels par l'opinion sont traités comme consensuels par les principaux leaders de gauche et de droite [...], ou si la politique réelle de ceux-ci apparaît semblable lorsqu'ils sont aux affaires [...] le système en place est soumis à une tension.⁴⁸

The fact that the PS and the UMP were both seeking the support of many of the same sections of the electorate led certain groups, such as the blue-collar working class, to feel excluded and to seek representation elsewhere. In 2012, both Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon were arguably able to benefit from the feeling that, unlike the established parties of government, they offered a real alternative, and claimed to take into account the concerns of those who felt ignored by other political movements. This was demonstrated in an Ifop poll concerning the 2012 presidential elections, which showed that 61% of those who voted for the Front de Gauche candidate did so because he represented change, and 46% of Le Pen voters justified their own decision in this way.⁴⁹

The impact of globalisation

A final important, long-term factor which was influential in reshaping the French party system was globalisation, a multifaceted concept that will be considered in several different chapters of this thesis.⁵⁰ As regards economic globalisation, more and more businesses operated at an international level. This led not only to freer movement of capital around the world, but also to the transfer of businesses to areas where production costs were lower and the migration of workers to areas where salaries were higher. For some commentators, the rise of radical movements on the extremes of the political

⁴⁷ Martin, *Comprendre les évolutions électorales* p.18

⁴⁸ Ibid p.22

⁴⁹ Ifop-Fiducial for Le Monde, Paris Match and Public Sénat, *Premier tour de l'élection présidentielle 2012: profil des électeurs et clés du scrutin: Sondage Jour de vote 22 avril 2012* p.24 <https://www.ifop.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/1848-1-study_file.pdf>

⁵⁰ For a full discussion of the definition of globalisation and its different elements, see Chapter 2.

spectrum in Europe during the early part of the new millennium was the result of economic changes brought about by globalisation, where the decline of blue-collar jobs in industry hit the white working class particularly hard. For example, Goodliffe argues that the success of the FN:

suggest[s] that the break-up of the Fordist economic and social model has had a profound impact on France [...] Capitalising on the fears and uncertainties raised by the new post-Fordist economic realities, the FN has succeeded in combining the extreme right's age-old appeal among *petits indépendants* with a politics of 'welfare chauvinism' directed to the working class.⁵¹

He adds that continued economic globalisation will probably perpetuate this trend and that 'the extreme right is likely to remain the principal refuge for the losers of globalisation in France for the time to come.'⁵²

Economic factors were certainly important in encouraging some voters to turn to the radical parties by 2012. As Guilluy argues, in France, globalisation produced new divisions, between the big cities, where jobs and investment were concentrated, and 'les espaces ruraux, les petites villes, les villes moyennes...certains espaces périurbains qui rassemblent aujourd'hui près de 80% des classes populaires.'⁵³ Yet the insecurity created by globalisation transcended the class divide, as the 'plus modestes, ouvriers, employés, petits paysans, petits indépendants, jeunes, actifs, occupés, chômeurs et retraités'⁵⁴ were all concerned by the geographical changes brought about by globalisation. As Guilluy notes, '[h]ier opposés, elles partagent désormais le même destin...L'effacement des classifications traditionnelles entre la classe ouvrière et les employés, entre les secteurs secondaire et tertiaire participe à la structuration des nouvelles classes populaires.'⁵⁵

It is these groups that suffered most from the closure of factories outside major cities, which was a key effect of globalisation, as French factories faced increased competition from those in Eastern Europe and Asia, where production costs were cheaper. Guilluy argues that the wider public was often unaware of most factory closures and industrial job

⁵¹ Gabriel Goodliffe, 'Globalization, Class Crisis and the Extreme Right in France in the New Century' in *Varieties of Right-Wing Extremism in Europe* edited by Andrea Mammone, Emmanuel Godin and Brian Jenkins (London: Routledge, 2013) pp.85-103 p.97F

⁵² Ibid p.97

⁵³ Guilluy, *La France périphérique* p.11

⁵⁴ Ibid p.18

⁵⁵ Guilluy, *La France périphérique* p.19

losses, as they happened in small towns and received little media attention, despite the fact that their impact on the local economy was considerable.⁵⁶ These areas suffered economically from globalisation, and, by 2012, the inhabitants had in many cases turned away from the traditional parties of Right and Left to the FN.

Having examined the longer-term factors that undermined the traditional party system based on an opposition between Left and Right, the next part of this chapter will consider the shorter-term issues that brought about the crisis in the traditional arrangement of the party system. These were already important factors in the 2012 elections, and would continue to be prominent in political debate throughout the Hollande presidency.

The importance of the cultural element of globalisation in the rise of ‘populism’: the issue of cultural insecurity

As Bouvet observes, ‘[l]a montée des populismes, en France comme ailleurs en Europe, est le témoignage politique le plus saillant de la crise profonde que traverse le pays et le continent.’⁵⁷ In France, it was the rise of the Front National and the Parti de Gauche that demonstrated that the established party system was coming under strain. The disengagement of certain sections of the electorate from their traditional allegiances was not only driven by economic factors, as Goodliffe’s analysis might suggest, but also by cultural issues, as some sections of society no longer identified with the values promoted by the parties they used to support.

Part of the explanation for this trend is economic. Bouvet states that the success of the parties of the Far Right and Far Left ‘est une réaction inquiète et apparemment inexorable, aux symptômes d’une société bouleversée par un chômage persistant, des inégalités croissantes, un sentiment de déclasserment généralisé, une pauvreté de plus en plus visible, ou encore la rélégalion territoriale pour une part croissante de nos citoyens.’⁵⁸

However, as scholars such as Giddens recognise⁵⁹, globalisation is a complex phenomenon that comprises economic, cultural and political aspects which will be examined in chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this thesis. The concept of ‘cultural insecurity’, developed by both Bouvet and

⁵⁶ Ibid p.56

⁵⁷ Laurent Bouvet, *L’insécurité culturelle* (Paris: Fayard, 2015) p.7

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World : How Globalisation is Reshaping our Lives* (London: Profile Books, 2002) p.xxii

Guilluy⁶⁰, relates to concerns that arise from increasing cultural globalisation. While, as Goodliffe's analysis demonstrates above, events such as the rise of the Front National have been explained by the economic effects of globalisation, Bouvet considers that cultural insecurity is also a key factor. He identifies various social issues, in particular that some elements of the white working class feel that their way of life and national identity are under threat from immigration and the rise of a more visible presence of Islam within the Republic. This is the reason why many turn towards the FN. This phenomenon became more relevant since the attacks on America on 11 September 2001, and was reinforced by the emergence of terrorist movements from the Arab Spring.

As Bouvet argues, were economic globalisation the sole factor behind the disillusionment of sections of society with traditional parties, then one might expect to see the Front de Gauche perform as well as the FN, as both parties share a similar opposition to globalised capitalism.⁶¹ However, in the first round of the 2012 presidential elections, Marine Le Pen received 6% more of the vote than Jean-Luc Mélenchon.⁶² In the following legislative elections in the *11ème circonscription du Pas de Calais*, a Northern area significantly affected by the decline of heavy industry and mining, where both Le Pen and Mélenchon were candidates, the FN leader scored 42.26%, almost double that of her counterpart from the Front de Gauche, who received 21.46% of the vote.⁶³ As Bouvet notes, it could be argued that part of the explanation of the success of the FN was that it was better at appealing to blue-collar workers affected by issues covered by the term cultural insecurity.⁶⁴

As regards the role of Islam in France, in 2010, an Ifop poll found that 42% saw this religion as a threat to French identity, almost twice as many as those who considered that it

⁶⁰ See Laurent Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle*; Guilluy, *Fractures françaises* and Guilluy, *La France périphérique*. As Guilluy focuses his analysis particularly on the white working-class in towns suffering from the decline of heavy industry, while Bouvet offers a broader picture of groups affected by this phenomenon, we will refer mostly to Bouvet in this discussion.

⁶¹ Laurent Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle* p.138

⁶² See Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats de l'élection présidentielle 2012' <[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Présidentielles/elecresult__PR2012/\(path\)/PR2012/FE.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Présidentielles/elecresult__PR2012/(path)/PR2012/FE.html)> [Accessed 27/02/18]

⁶³ Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats des élections législatives 2012: Pas de Calais: 11^{ème} circonscription' <[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Législatives/elecresult__LG2012/\(path\)/LG2012/062/06211.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Législatives/elecresult__LG2012/(path)/LG2012/062/06211.html)> [Accessed 13/05/19]

⁶⁴ Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle* p.140

enriched French culture (22%).⁶⁵ The prominence of fears relating to immigration and Islam in Marine Le Pen's 2012 campaign, such as her claim that all meat in Paris was halal, supports the idea that cultural insecurity had already become an important issue by the end of the Sarkozy presidency.⁶⁶

Whereas opposition to immigration had been based, in part at least, on concerns about certain ethnic groups, by 2012 it had become focused particularly on Islam. As Bouvet notes, '[c]'est désormais avant tout par la méfiance, voire l'hostilité vis-à-vis de l'islam et des musulmans que passe le rejet de l'immigration. Clairement les critères ethno-raciaux et la dénonciation des « Arabes » ou des « Africains » sont devenus secondaires au regard de la religion, c'est-à-dire l'islam.'⁶⁷ The focus of concerns about immigration is now 'cultural', and while objections to the economic threat of globalisation still exist, it can be argued that they are often of secondary importance.

The question of cultural insecurity is frequently linked to that of anti-elitism, as certain parts of the electorate arguably feel ignored by the traditional parties which they consider to represent an elite. As we shall see below, some analysts claim that this divide between the elites and some parts of the population became visible not only over the issue of identity, but could also be seen in responses to political globalisation, and, for example, were evident in the evolution of attitudes of different sections of society towards the European Union. As Hooghe and Marks have argued, Europe became a feature of debate particularly following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. They claim that whereas the creation of the single market was considered to be something that had little impact on the general public, the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty 'opened a complex elite bargain to public inspection, and precipitated referendums and a series of national debates that alerted publics to the fact that European integration was diluting national sovereignty.'⁶⁸ The effect of this was to reveal a difference in appreciation of Europe between the elite

⁶⁵ Ifop for Le Figaro, *L'image de l'islam en France* October 2012 p.5 <https://www.ifop.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2028-1-study_file.pdf>

⁶⁶ See, for example, Marine Le Pen, *Mon projet pour les Français* <https://www.rassemblementnational.fr/pdf/projet_mlp2012.pdf> [Accessed 02/11/18] p.6 and Le Parisien, 'L'offensive anti-viande halal de Marine Le Pen' *Le Parisien* 18 February 2012 <<http://www.leparisien.fr/election-presidentielle-2012/candidats/marine-le-pen-veut-saisir-la-justice-et-cible-la-viande-halal-18-02-2012-1867138.php>> [Accessed 05/11/18]

⁶⁷ Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle* p.25

⁶⁸ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, 'A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus' *British Journal of Political Studies* Vol.39 (2008) 1-23 p.21

and a more sceptical people,⁶⁹ and to provoke splits within the established parties of government and their support groups.

Once again, these divisions concern several different elements of globalisation, one relating to economic aspects and others which are ‘cultural’ and, as we have seen above, political. As Bouvet notes, ‘[l’]Union européenne [est] largement perçue comme le « cheval de Troie » d’une mondialisation destructrice plutôt que comme un rempart efficace contre ses effets.’⁷⁰ Bouvet identifies the cultural element in the feeling amongst sections of the working class that there exists an elite which gives preference to the demands of minorities on issues such as open borders, free movement of people and the deregulation of markets.⁷¹ Nor is the elite solely represented by political parties in the eyes of this section of the electorate; it also includes the media and big business. In 2005, the editor of left-leaning *Libération*, Serge July, raged against the workers and those politicians on the Left who had voted against the European Constitution in the referendum. In an article entitled ‘Chef d’œuvre masochiste’, he argued that the ‘Non’ represented ‘un désastre général et une épidémie de populisme’⁷².

It might be argued that the word ‘populism’, in particular, could often be seen as a way by which some groups and politicians stigmatise those who do not subscribe to their own values. As Delsol notes, ‘le vocable “populisme” est d’abord une injure: il caractérise aujourd’hui les partis ou les mouvements politiques dont on juge qu’ils sont composés par des idiots, des imbéciles et même des tarés.’⁷³ Mouffe offers a similar analysis, arguing that ‘It is very convenient for parties of the Centrist consensus to use the term populist to disqualify their opponents. The “populism” accusation is particularly useful for the so-called ‘left-wing’ parties, as it allows them to avoid self-criticism, and any recognition that, having abandoned the defence of the popular classes, they are to a large extent responsible for the crisis of representation that is the underlying cause of the emergence of a wide-range of ‘anti-establishment’ parties.’⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Ibid p.21

⁷⁰ Bouvet, *L’insécurité culturelle* p.19

⁷¹ Ibid p.73

⁷² Serge July, ‘Chef d’œuvre masochiste’ *Libération* 30 May 2005

<https://www.liberation.fr/planete/2005/05/30/chef-d-oeuvre-masochiste_521500> [Accessed 05/11/18]

⁷³ Chantal Delsol, *Populisme: les démeurés de l’Histoire* (Paris: Editions du Rocher, 2015) p.7

⁷⁴ Iñigo Errejón and Chantal Mouffe, *Podemos: In the name of the people* (London: Laurence & Wishart, 2016) p.96

This crisis of representation contributed greatly to the rise of the Front National, due to its programme based on the rejection of the 'establishment' and the way it attacked the parties of government which seemed to be defending a broken system, and referred frequently to the UMPS, claiming that Left and Right both proposed the same failing policies.⁷⁵

The sense that there was an opposition between 'an elite' and 'the people' did not merely arise because voters have turned against certain political parties, but also because some parties rejected those sections of society that used to form part of their core electorate. As Bouvet observes, whereas in the past, the working class was seen as admirable, and praised by many on the Left, since 1968, the attitude towards the workers, particularly from sections of the Left, has become hostile. He argues that many sections of the working class fail to recognise themselves in the more liberal social values incarnated by political parties, and so have been seen as an obstacle, resistant to change, rather than a means of bringing it about. He claims that in popular culture, a 'prolophobia' emerged, where the white, working-class man, who had been celebrated in the 1930s as incarnated by Jean Gabin, became a figure of fun, to be mocked and looked down on. Bouvet argues that this further reinforced the alienation of the workers from traditional parties, seen as representing an elite, and made them more likely to turn to the extremes, who claimed to listen to their views.⁷⁶ The decision by sections of the Left to seek new electorates, and to give less priority to winning over working-class support could be seen in a report published in 2011 by the Left-wing think tank *Terra Nova* for the Parti Socialiste, which argued:

Il n'est pas possible aujourd'hui pour la gauche de chercher à restaurer sa coalition historique de classe: la classe ouvrière n'est plus le cœur du vote de gauche, elle n'est plus en phase avec l'ensemble de ses valeurs, elle ne peut plus être comme

⁷⁵ For examples of the use of the term, see Steeve Briois, 'Bayrou se heurte au monolithe UMPS' 13 February 2012 <<https://www.rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/bayrou-se-heurte-au-monolithe-umps/>> [Accessed 05/11/18]; Nicolas Bay, 'Valls declare il faut assumer "l'UMPS": la caste passe aux aveux' 13 November 2015 <<https://rassemblementnational.fr/tribunes-libres/valls-declare-il-faut-assumer-lumps-la-caste-passe-aux-aveux/>> [Accessed 03/04/19], and Dominique Martin, 'Parlement européen: le système UMPS tombe les masques' 15 April 2016 <<https://rassemblementnational.fr/communiqués/parlement-europeen-le-systeme-umps-tombe-les-masques/>> [Accessed 03/04/19]

⁷⁶ Bouvet, *Le sens du peuple* p.164

elle l'a été le moteur entraînant la constitution de la majorité électorale de la gauche.⁷⁷

Rather than looking for support in its traditional constituencies, the report argued that the Left should seek to bring together those who shared its progressive values.⁷⁸

While the rise of the FN was in part linked to a gap emerging between the views of Left-wing parties and the traditional blue-collar working class, Mondon has argued that the position taken by the Centre Right also played an important role in allowing the rise of the FN, through legitimising the party and its policies. He states:

The combination of five years of Sarkozism and two decades of “vocabulary wars” had been a major factor in mainstreaming the FN, or more precisely, Lепенising the mainstream. Amongst an increasingly disillusioned and frightened French electorate voting for the FN was no longer a shameful act. For many, voting for the FN was no longer considered a pointless act.⁷⁹

This claim can be challenged, as it seems more likely that the increase in support for the FN was due to the sociological factors mentioned earlier in the chapter, which led certain sections of the population, and particularly elements of the blue-collar working class, to feel unrepresented by the mainstream parties. Significant numbers of voters had already switched their support to the Far Right before Sarkozy became president, and, as Mayer states, the percentage of the working class voting for the FN rose from 1% in 1978 to 26% in 2002.⁸⁰ While Mondon points to Sarkozy's statement that the FN was a democratic party, compatible with the Republic, as evidence of his legitimisation of the Far Right,⁸¹ as we can see above, many voters had not needed the party to be legitimised by its rivals in order to vote for it. Sarkozy's capture of a large share of the working class vote in 2007⁸² was an interruption of a longer term trend by which an increasing part of that electorate supported the FN. Le Pen's vote rose in 2012 because Sarkozy failed to maintain the support of these voters, who, as we shall see in chapter 2, felt that his actions as president

⁷⁷ Bruno Jeanbart, Olivier Ferrand, Romain Prudent, 'Projet 2012, Contribution no.1: Gauche: Quelle majorité électorale pour 2012 ?' <<http://tnova.fr/rapports/gauche-quelle-majorite-electorale-pour-2012>> p.13

⁷⁸ Ibid p.13

⁷⁹ Aurélien Mondon, 'The Front National in the Twenty-First Century: From Pariah to Republican Democratic Contender?' *Modern & Contemporary France* (2014), 22:3, 301-320 p.313

⁸⁰ Mayer, 'What remains of class voting?' p.175

⁸¹ Ibid p.311

⁸² See Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.67

had not matched his election promises and so abandoned their support for the Centre Right.

Triggering a realignment

Although the presence of cultural issues linked to economic concerns were an essential element in destabilising the French party system based on the traditional Left/Right divide, their effect was compounded by the economic and political crises that emerged after 2008, which preceded the Hollande presidency, and their impact would be exacerbated during the period 2012-2017.

The global economic recession that started in 2008 led larger numbers of voters to turn to political parties challenging liberal economic policies across Europe. One of the early indications that a realignment would take place was the rise in support for the Front National, a party which arguably sat outside the traditional Left-Right arrangement. In 2012, the FN proposed a programme that combined elements of both the Left and the Right, arguing in favour of tougher measures to reduce immigration,⁸³ which was closer to the policies proposed by the Centre Right, whilst also supporting more state intervention in the economy,⁸⁴ which placed it closer to the Left. In this way, the Far Right was not simply an extension of the Right, but often brought together a coalition of those who were opposed to the current political system, if for different reasons.

An important feature that undermined the faith of sections of the electorate in the established parties of government concerned the failure of Sarkozy as president, and the Fillon government, to deal with the economic crisis. As Cole, Meunier and Tiberj argue, '[b]y 2012, the ongoing and highly unpredictable economic crisis had sapped the popularity of most incoming governments, including of the French.'⁸⁵ This loss of confidence, not just in parties but also in politicians themselves, can also be seen in the changes in the popularity ratings of Sarkozy during his presidential terms. When he came to power in 2007, 63% of French people had confidence in him, a percentage which fell to 20% by May

⁸³ Marine Le Pen, *Mon projet pour les Français*
<https://www.rassemblementnational.fr/pdf/projet_mlp2012.pdf> [Accessed 02/11/18] p.6

⁸⁴ *Ibid* pp.2-3

⁸⁵ Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier and Vincent Tiberj, 'From Sarkozy to Hollande: The New Normal?' in *Developments in French Politics Five*, ed. by Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier and Vincent Tiberj (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) pp.1-18 p.9

2011, before rising slightly to 37% in May 2012⁸⁶. Although this loss of public support was due to a range of factors, a TNS SOFRES report on the evolution of the public's faith in the president noted that, from 2009, 'les difficultés économiques et sociales dues à la crise plombent [...] le morale de l'opinion, en raison d'un chômage en hausse constante.'⁸⁷

Another key element in the rise of the Far Right at the expense of the established parties of government was driven by fears about terrorism and also by the refugee crisis. Concerns about terrorism increased following the attacks by Mohamed Merah in Toulouse in 2012. Marine Le Pen linked these to the arrival of migrants, when she stated during the 2012 Presidential election campaign, 'Combien de Mohamed Merah dans les bateaux, les avions qui arrivent chaque jour en France?'⁸⁸

The 'migrant crisis', and the problems faced by the Euro that emerged from the recession of 2008 also undermined confidence in the European Union. Between the Spring of 2007 and the Spring of 2012, the proportion of French people who had confidence in the EU fell from 57% to 31%.⁸⁹ Furthermore, as Cole, Meunier and Tiberj note, that European economic policy during the crisis generally aligned with the stance of Germany rather than that of France,⁹⁰ no doubt harmed the idea that these two nations were equal partners at the head of Europe in the eyes of the French public,⁹¹ and was potentially one of the factors that increased scepticism about the EU.

⁸⁶Kantar TNS, 'Côtes de popularité des Présidents et Premiers ministres: Nicolas Sarkozy' <http://www.tns-sofres.com/dataviz?type=1&code_nom=sarkozy> [Accessed 09/01/17]

⁸⁷ TNS Sofrès, *La popularité de Nicolas Sarkozy: Retour sur l'évolution de la côte de confiance du Président (2007-2011)* April 2011 p.11

⁸⁸ L'Obs avec AFP, 'Le Pen: Combien de Merah dans les bateaux qui arrivent en France ?' 25 March 2012 <<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/politique/election-presidentielle-2012/20120325.OBS4544/le-pen-combien-de-merah-dans-les-bateaux-qui-arrivent-en-france.html>> [Accessed 10/03/17]

⁸⁹Leendert de Voogt, 'L'Europe dans la crise' in *L'état de l'opinion 13* Olivier Duhamel and Edouard Lecerf eds.(Paris: Seuil, 2013) pp.165-184 p.175

⁹⁰ Cole, Meunier and Tiberj 'From Sarkozy to Hollande: The New Normal?' p.9

⁹¹ This would be suggested by a poll carried out in 2014, which found that 86% of French people surveyed felt that since the start of the crisis, Germany had shown itself to be the dominant country in Europe. See Marion Desreumaux, 'Le couple franco-allemand: toujours lié mais de moins en moins exclusif', *Délits d'opinion* 21 February 2014 <<http://delitsdopinion.com/1analyses/le-couple-franco-allemand-toujours-lie-mais-de-moins-en-moins-exclusif-15626/>> [Accessed 05/11/18] The impact, particularly of diverging economic performance of France and Germany on French citizens' appreciation of their own country's status in the world will be covered in chapters 3 and 4.

The decline of political parties and the rise of individualism

One of the most important consequences of the long-term decline in ideological attachments, and reactions to globalisation, and more short-term destabilising events such as the economic and migration crises was to undermine traditional attachments to political parties and create a more individualised approach to voting. Voters became less likely to identify strongly with a particular party, another factor which weakened the traditional Left/Right bipolar system and created a more volatile party system. As Rouban would observe, 'il est...possible de montrer que les électeurs se décident de plus en plus sur la base de considérations personnelles, et de moins en moins à partir d'une position de classe, d'un groupe de référence voire d'une situation professionnelle.'⁹² As we shall see, evidence of this change could be found well before 2012.

This more individualised approach to politics could be seen in the decline in the number of people joining political parties. As Duhamel notes, party membership has gradually declined since the Liberation. Whereas there once were mass movements, and the Gaullist *Rassemblement du peuple français* had around 400,000 members and the Communists over 500 000 during the period that followed the Liberation,⁹³ in 2012, both the PS and the UMP (the dominant parties of this period) claimed to have around 200,000 militants.⁹⁴

This disassociation between parties and their membership size was driven by two different major dynamics. On the one hand, as we have seen, many voters ceased to identify with political parties. On the other, as Duhamel notes, the parties placed less emphasis on enlarging membership and now focused more on voters rather than members.⁹⁵ As Lefebvre argues, because, since 1988, parties have received most of their funding from the

⁹² Luc Rouban, *Elections municipales 2014 les enjeux: Du vote de classe au vote privatif No.1 octobre 2013*

<<http://www.cevipof.com/rtefiles/File/ELECTIONS%20MUNICIPALES/note%20Luc%20ROUBAN%20.pdf>> p.3 [Accessed 10/01/17]

⁹³ See Jean Charlot, *Le gaullisme d'opposition 1946-1958: Histoire politique du gaullisme* (Paris: Fayard, 1983) p.88 and Paul Boulland, 'Des militants qui (se) comptent: Mesurer le parti et les pratiques militantes au sein du PCF (années 1920-années 1980)', *Histoire et mesure*, XXIII/1 (2018), 31-60 p.39

⁹⁴ See Erwan Bruckert, 'Alain Duhamel: « Le déclin des partis est irréversible »' *Le Parisien* 23 April 2016 <<http://www.leparisien.fr/espace-premium/actu/leur-declin-est-irreversible-23-04-2016-5738041.php>> [Accessed 10/01/17] and Adrien Gaboulaud, 'Les partis politiques: revue d'effectifs' *Le JDD* 6 January 2012 <<https://www.lejdd.fr/Politique/Combien-de-militants-comptent-les-principaux-partis-politiques-446867-3119171>> [Accessed 07/06/18]

⁹⁵ Bruckert, 'Alain Duhamel: « Le déclin des partis est irréversible »'

State, there is less incentive to look for members⁹⁶. The time of mass membership of parties appears to be largely over, at least in France.

The 'rise in individualism' is also confirmed by the decline of other representative institutions, such as the reduction in the number of people joining trade unions. In the immediate post-war period, over a quarter of all workers were members of a union,⁹⁷ a percentage which had fallen to around 8% by 2011⁹⁸. Not only has the number of unionised workers fallen, but so has the faith of the public in trade unions. Whereas in the 1970s, 60% of salaried employees had confidence in unions, and this figure was 54% in 2004,⁹⁹ by 2012, more people had confidence in big business (42.6%) than in trade unions (35.2%).¹⁰⁰

An important factor that has helped to drive this more individualised approach has been the growth of information media, which has reinforced this trend, which has transformed the way that citizens interact with politics. Now politicians can contact the public directly, independently of party structures, without having to pass through the traditional media channels. This importance of the Internet and social media to campaigns and its impact on party membership is recognised by Duhamel. He argues that:

[L]es campagnes se font dans les médias et sur les réseaux sociaux. Les partis politiques sont dépouillés de leur rôle...En dehors des grandes campagnes, les militants ne servent à rien. Ils s'en rendent compte et sont donc de moins en moins nombreux à s'engager.¹⁰¹

While the role of social media in politics has developed greatly since 2012, before this date, politicians were already making use of the opportunities that it offered. Pages were set up on Facebook to support political figures, and campaign teams were able to communicate the details of their meetings directly to the public. The meetings themselves would be

⁹⁶ Rémi Lefebvre, 'Les partis politiques: entre illégitimité et centralité', 14 October 2016 <<http://www.revuepolitique.fr/les-partis-politiques-entre-illegitimite-et-centralite/>> [Accessed 27/03/17]

⁹⁷ Thomas Amossé, Maria-Teresa Pignoni, 'La transformation du paysage syndical depuis 1945' in Insee, *Données sociales: la société française* Edition 2006 pp.405-412, p.405

⁹⁸ Dominique Perrin, 'Une France pas assez syndiquée' *Challenges* 2 February 2011 <https://www.challenges.fr/politique/observatoire-2012/une-france-pas-assez-syndiquee_240> [Accessed 18/03/17]

⁹⁹ Dominique Andolfatto, Dominique Labbé, 'La transformation des syndicats français : Vers un nouveau « modèle social »?' *Revue française de science politique* Vol. 56/2 (2006) 281-297 p.292

¹⁰⁰ Flora Chanvril, 'Baromètres de confiance politique- vagues 1 à 8: Les cercles de confiance 2009-2016' 17 January 2017 <<http://www.cevipof.com/fr/le-barometre-de-la-confiance-politique-du-cevipof/tendances/confiances/>> [Accessed 06/03/17]

¹⁰¹ Erwan Bruckert, 'Alain Duhamel: « Le déclin des partis est irréversible »' *Le Parisien* 23 April 2016

streamed over the Internet to reach all voters, not just those able to be present on the ground. For many voters, the advantages they might gain from being a member of a particular party are now less clear, and so fewer are prepared to join a political movement.

The rise of new media has also changed the way in which the electorate interacts with political parties. YouTube allows politicians to reach out to voters directly, and this was used by all main parties during the 2012 presidential campaign to spread their ideas and directly attack the proposals made by their rivals.¹⁰² The Internet also allows voters to contact their elected representatives, and to discuss policies and their implications with people from across the country and across the world. In such a context, people are less willing to accept parties or groups that seek to set an agenda without consulting their members. By 2012, there was already a proliferation of independent websites beyond the control of parties, able to participate in debates, and to influence the electorate. When an Ifop poll asked voters which media sources had been most useful in helping them to decide whom to vote for in the presidential elections of that year, 15% gave the Internet as one of their answers, which placed it in joint fourth place behind politics programmes on television, television news, and the radio.¹⁰³

The reduction in the number of people joining parties caused a change in the relationship between political movements and their members. This could be seen in the decision of the Parti Socialiste to hold an open primary in 2011 to choose its candidate for the 2012 presidential elections. This proved a great success, as it allowed the candidates to develop their ideas for the 2012 campaign in public, before the campaign itself started. Comment

¹⁰²See for example, Chaîne UMP, *KIKADIKOI: Hadopi*, YouTube, 20 January 2012

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pyv4YkGllhY>> [Accessed 23/11/18]

Parti Socialiste, *Mot à Mot, une semaine de campagne. J-79*, YouTube, 8 February 2012

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahHD3_DcC9w&list=PLD51BE1491AF19547&index=37&t=0s> [Accessed 23/11/18]; Front National, *TVA sociale: Marine Le Pen inquiète pour le pouvoir d'achat des ménages et des retraités*, YouTube, 10 January 2012 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0K9yVNL-v4>> [Accessed 23/11/18]; Jean-Luc Mélenchon, *Sarkozy soutient le Front de Gauche?* YouTube, 5 February 2012

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Z_z4WjIhqc> [Accessed 23/11/18]

¹⁰³ Ifop-Fiducial for Le Monde, Paris Match and Public Sénat, *Premier tour de l'élection présidentielle 2012: profil des électeurs et clés du scrutin: Sondage Jour de vote 22 avril 2012* p.51 <https://www.ifop.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/1848-1-study_file.pdf>

on the PS dominated the news agenda, and the first of the first round debates on 15 September 2011 was the most watched programme on television that night.¹⁰⁴

Another factor supporting the idea that the traditional party system had been destabilised by 2012 was the number of people who cast a vote in legislative elections. Participation in the first round fell from 81% in 1973 to 57% in 2012.¹⁰⁵ Between 1997 (the last election before the introduction of the *quinquennat*, which ensured that presidential and legislative elections would be held in the same year) and 2012, participation in the first round fell by just over 10%.¹⁰⁶ This can in part be explained by the fact that the result of the presidential elections strongly influences that of the *législatives*, as voters look to avoid cohabitation which would limit the ability of the new president to implement his programme. However, the evidence that participation fell by a further 7% between 2002 and 2012 also suggests that there was a growing feeling of disillusionment with politics.

This loss of faith was further shown by a TNS Sofrès poll in 2011, where 72% said that they felt that French politicians were 'plutôt corrompus',¹⁰⁷ a figure which had risen from 32% in 1977, and from 58% in 2002.¹⁰⁸ As Gaffney argues, scandal has played an important role in determining public appreciation of politicians.¹⁰⁹ Both sides of the political spectrum have been affected, and have had a history of using public funds for party political purposes. Notable examples from the 1980s include the *Urba affaire* for the PS, and the RPR's use of fake jobs when Chirac was Mayor of Paris. As regards Sarkozy, by 2012 he was linked to a significant number of scandals, including allegations that his 2007 presidential campaign had in part been funded by the Libyan government, and that his party had received substantial illegal donations from the L'Oréal heiress, Liliane Bettencourt. In 2012, allegations of political corruption were therefore prominent in the mind of the public.

¹⁰⁴ lefigaro.fr, 'Primaire PS: un débat télé bien suivi' 16 September 2011 <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2011/09/16/97001-20110916FILWWW00342-primaire-ps-bonnes-audiences-pour-le-debat.php>> [Accessed 16/11/18]

¹⁰⁵ Laurent de Boissieu, 'Elections législatives' <<http://www.france-politique.fr/elections-legislatives.htm>> [Accessed 18/03/17]

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ TNS Sofrès, 'L'honnêteté des hommes politiques: Sondage la Matinale de Canal +' September 2011 p.4 <<http://www.tns-sofres.com/sites/default/files/2011.09.28-corruption.pdf>>

¹⁰⁸ Gérard Grunberg and Nonna Mayer, 'Démocratie représentative, démocratie participative' in *Le désenchantement démocratique*, ed. by Pascal Perrineau (Paris: Editions de l'Aube, 2003) pp.215-230 p.217

¹⁰⁹ The role of scandal will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, which deals with leadership.

The fall in public confidence in political parties was a crucial part of the undermining of the traditional Left/Right divide that continued to develop during the Sarkozy presidency and which would be further exacerbated after 2012. As Dalton recognises, 'as long-term party and social-group cues are losing importance, the decision-making process shifts toward the issues and candidates of specific campaigns.'¹¹⁰ The focus on candidates rather than parties in Western democracies observed by Dalton (in relation to the USA, UK, France and Germany) could also be seen in France in relation to Sarkozy. His 'omniprésident' governing style,¹¹¹ where he sought to focus media attention largely on himself and his own personality was widely criticised. The 2012 presidential elections witnessed a backlash, and the result has been characterised more as a vote against Sarkozy than one in favour of Hollande. Cole, Meunier and Tiberj talk of the presidential elections as 'an anti-Sarkozy referendum',¹¹² while Gaffney argues that 'Sarkozy's defeat was...a passionate disavowing of the personality and character of the President.'¹¹³

While new politicians could be elected to replace those who had lost the confidence of the public, what was more significant in the longer term was that many people had also lost faith in the institutions themselves. Whereas in 2000, a Cevipof study found that 72% of those questioned were satisfied with the way the Assemblée Nationale functioned,¹¹⁴ this had fallen to 38% in a similar survey in 2009, which also showed that 33% had confidence in the presidency, and 42% in the EU.¹¹⁵ These values continued to fall, and by the time the same study was repeated in December 2012, only 31% had confidence in the presidency, and 28% in the Assemblée nationale. On the international stage, 33% of French citizens had faith in the European Union, showing that there was disaffection not only towards national, but also international bodies. The distrust towards politicians and political institutions that existed at the end of the Sarkozy presidency was not improved by the arrival of a new

¹¹⁰ Dalton, *Citizen Politics* p.186

¹¹¹ See, for example, Bruno Jeudy, 'Nicolas Sarkozy s'assume en omniprésident' *Le Figaro* 8 January 2009 <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2009/01/08/01002-20090108ARTFIG00002-nicolas-sarkozy-s-assume-en-omnipresident-.php>> [Accessed 02/11/18]

¹¹² Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier, Vincent Tiberj 'From Sarkozy to Hollande: The New Normal?' in Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier, Vincent Tiberj eds, *Developments in French Politics 5* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) pp.1-19 p.4

¹¹³ John Gaffney, 'Leadership and style in the French Fifth Republic: Nicolas Sarkozy's presidency in historical and cultural perspective' *French Politics*, 10: 4 (2012) 345-363 p.349

¹¹⁴ Grunberg and Mayer, 'Démocratie représentative, démocratie participative' p.218

¹¹⁵ Le Monde, 'La défiance des Français envers la politique atteint un niveau record' *Le Monde* 15 January 2013

<https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2013/01/15/la-defiance-des-francais-envers-la-politique-atteint-un-niveau-record_1817084_823448.html> [Accessed 19/10/18]

government in power, and the failure of the Hollande government to reverse this situation would further undermine the bipolar French party system. Voters arguably seemed not only unconvinced that politicians could resolve their problems, but also felt that the institutions would be unable to do so.

Conclusion: The emergence of a new model

The 2012 presidential elections, in which Marine Le Pen came third with 18% of the vote, revealed that the established arrangement of the party system, that had long been dominated by the Parti Socialiste and the Centre Right, was under threat. Both the Far Left and the Far Right gained support from those who were disillusioned with the established parties of government. Of these two it would be the FN, at least initially, which would have the greater impact on the political realignment that would occur during the Hollande presidency.

Many of the causes of this realignment could be traced back to the early 1980s. One significant factor was the weakening of the class divide. Whereas in the past, there had been close links between parties and certain sections of the electorate, such as between the Parti Communiste and the blue-collar working class, changes in French society had undermined these relationships. This evolution was in part driven by economic factors. The general trend of the French population benefitting from a growing economy from the 1960s to the 1980s had already reduced the difference in living conditions between the middle and working classes. The number of jobs in industry declined between the 1980s and 2012, and more working class people found employment in the service sector. The reduction in mass factory employment weakened the power of workers to organise, and also the ability of parties to appeal to them as a single group. As a result, among the working class, identity became fractured and attitudes more individualistic.

The class divide was also undermined by the problems faced by certain sections of the middle class. Whereas during the *Trente Glorieuses* this section of society had benefitted from improving wages and living conditions, over a number of years, wages stagnated and living standards declined. In this context, the economic gap between part of the middle class and the working class narrowed, and further disturbed traditional conceptions of class divisions. Nor were the changes solely economic. In cultural terms, there was a blurring of aspects of the working class and middle class identities. More people chose to identify as middle class. As Guilluy has noted, sections of the working class who had fallen down the

social ladder continued to identify as middle class so as to distinguish themselves from those who lived in the banlieues.¹¹⁶

These economic and social evolutions led to changes within political parties, which adapted to win over the support of the expanding middle class. In the 1980s, the Parti Socialiste moved closer to the Centre, with the adoption of more liberal economic policies, and from the 1990s, the Centre Right supported more liberal social policies, again reducing the gap between the established parties of government on both Left and Right. While this produced a greater sense of political stability, as changes of government were not followed by major shifts in policy, it created a void which allowed the radical movements of Left and Right to criticise the established parties of government as indistinguishable parts of a single political perspective, what the FN called the 'UMPS', and to appeal to those who felt excluded.

The crises that emerged after 2008, both the economic recession, and later the migrant crisis, further weakened confidence in the traditional parties that had alternated in power since 1981. The inability of the Fillon government to respond to the economic crisis further undermined the political system, and favoured the rise of the radical parties that criticised neoliberal capitalism. The emergence of the refugee crisis, and the increased threat posed by terrorism, heightened fears that France and its identity was under threat, and increased calls for a tougher approach to immigration and to the integration of migrants. The perceived failure of the government to address these questions caused sections of the electorate to turn to the FN.

Economic globalisation was increasingly blamed by analysts for the fall in public confidence in politicians. This has certainly played a role, as small former industrial towns found themselves isolated from areas of high employment where there were more public services, which were concentrated more in the major cities. Yet, this is not the main reason for the success of the radical parties, particularly the FN.

Whatever the role of underlying economic factors, it was the change in attitudes among the electorate that was the key explanation of the weakening of the traditional party system. As we have seen, traditional group identities were undermined. This extended to the relationship to both political parties and trade unions, membership of which declined,

¹¹⁶ Guilluy, *Fractures françaises* p.77

partly because citizens adopted a more individualist approach to political activity. The problem was not just that there seemed to be no significant ideological differences between the established parties of government, but there was also the feeling that there was a growing gap between the parties (which seemed to represent a separate social, political and economic elite) and the electorate. As Bouvet has shown, working-class voters did not recognise themselves in the more liberal social values and economic policies promoted by both the Centre Left and Centre Right.¹¹⁷ Meanwhile, certain factions from within the traditional parties stigmatised the working class for being stuck in the past.

It is therefore clear that even prior to the election of François Hollande in 2012, the traditional alignment of the French party system had been fundamentally weakened. The rise of a more individualistic approach meant that voters became more preoccupied with specific issues such as unemployment, terrorism, and border control, rather than allegiance to a particular vision incarnated by traditional party ideologies.

Under the Hollande presidency, the crises from 2008 brought three concerns to the fore: identity, economic liberalism and Europe, which became the axes that structured the French party system. Each one represented a collection of wider issues, with both social and economic elements. The complexity of the interaction between these axes made traditional party policymaking more difficult, and in several areas the political differences between the PS and Les Républicains were greatly reduced during the Hollande presidency. The decline of voter identification with particular political groups and the travails of the established parties of government led electors to seek alternatives and contributed to the further rise of the Front National.

The realignment of the party system according to the axes of identity, liberal economic policy and Europe mentioned above created new strategic dilemmas for the Centre Right, which found itself facing the challenge of having simultaneously to appeal to voters both in the Centre and on the Far Right. These two groups often supported conflicting policies, and would reveal and reinforce internal contradictions within Les Républicains. The axes of identity and Europe would prove to be the most contentious and would lead to the emergence of competing groups within the movement. The failure to find a convincing

¹¹⁷ See Bouvet, *Le sens du peuple: La gauche, la démocratie, le populisme* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2012) p.219

response to the new alignment would weaken the party and play a significant role in the election of Macron in 2017.

This thesis will now consider the fortunes of the Centre Right during the Hollande presidency in more detail, examining the problems that it faced due to the realignment, and why it fractured following the 2017 presidential and legislative elections.

Chapter 2: Axis 1: Identity

Division within the French Centre Right during the Hollande presidency: the question of cultural insecurity

Introduction

The presidential elections in 2017 were the first under the Fifth Republic in which the candidate of a Centre Right party was not present in the second round. This blow and the following defeat in the legislative elections led elected representatives of Les Républicains to divide into four camps. Some left the party to become ministers in Emmanuel Macron's government, other *députés* (Les Constructifs) sat separately from the rest of the party in the National Assembly, pledging to support the government from the outside, and would later form a new party, Agir. The remainder were split between a section that supported a *droite décomplexée* and those who believed that only a more moderate approach would allow the party to win back power.

For many analysts, one of the main reasons for the failure of Les Républicains in the 2017 elections and the subsequent disintegration of the party was that there had been a realignment in French politics. Rather than being structured according to a Left/Right divide, parties were now separated according to their attitudes towards debates around globalisation. That the second round of the presidential elections should be a contest between the committed European Emmanuel Macron and the protectionist Marine Le Pen seemed to support the view that the new dividing line in French Politics was between those who enjoyed the material benefits of increased global connections and those who suffered its effects.¹

However, such analyses, based on the second round of the presidential election, give a misleadingly simple picture. In the first round, the four candidates who finished highest in the polls were separated by only 4.4% of the vote. Although Macron and Le Pen defended opposing positions as regards globalisation, the picture becomes much less clear when we consider the other two leading candidates, and, particularly for the purposes of this

¹ See, for example, Jérôme Fourquet, 'Quatre mois après la Présidentielle, la récomposition politique a-t-elle eu lieu ?' *Le Figaro* 27 August 2017 and Cécile Philippe, 'Le clivage haut-bas en train de remplacer le clivage gauche-droite' *Contrepoints* 26 April 2016 < <https://www.contrepoints.org/2017/04/26/287713-clivage-haut-bas-passe-de-remplacer-clivage-gauche-droite> > [Accessed 01/09/17]

chapter, François Fillon. A survey of those who had voted for the candidate of Les Républicains found that 33% thought France should be more open to the world. The same percentage felt that more protectionist measures were required, and the remaining 34% supported the maintenance of the status quo.²

While talk of globalisation often places the focus solely or primarily on its economic aspects,³ such an approach gives an incomplete picture of this phenomenon. Globalisation is a complex, multifaceted and contested term, the elements of which will be covered in three chapters of this thesis. Heywood defines globalisation as ‘the emergence of a web of interconnectedness which means that our lives are shaped increasingly by events that occur, and decisions that are made, at a great distance from us, thus giving rise to “supraterritorial connections between people.”’⁴ He identifies three separate, if interrelated, elements. The first is economic globalisation, which is ‘the process through which national economies have, to a greater or lesser extent, been absorbed into a single global economy.’⁵ The second element is cultural globalisation, which is ‘the process whereby information, commodities and images produced in one part of the world have entered into a global flow that tends to flatten out cultural differences worldwide.’⁶ Finally, there is political globalisation, ‘the process through which policy-making responsibilities have been passed from national governments to international organisations.’⁷

In this chapter we will examine cultural insecurity, which is fuelled by cultural globalisation. As we shall see, concerns relating to cultural issues, in particular those concerning immigration and social questions such as the legalisation of gay marriage were the main

² Ipsos Sopra Stéria for CEVIPOF and Le Monde, ‘L’Enquête électorale française: comprendre 2017: Vague 14/mai 2017’ p.33 <<https://www.ipsos.com/fr-fr/enquete-electorale-francaise-vague-14-emmanuel-macron-en-position-de-force-malgre-des-fragilites>>

³ For examples, see Stiglitz, who says of globalisation that: ‘Fundamentally, it is the closer integration of countries and people’s around the world which has been brought about by the enormous reduction of costs of transportation and communication and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flow of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and (to a lesser extent) the flow of people across borders’ Joseph Stiglitz, quoted in Paul James, ‘Culture’ in *Handbook of Globalisation and Development* edited by Kenneth A Reinert (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017) pp.409-425 p.413. See also Martin Wolf, who argues that globalisation is ‘the integration of economic activities, via markets. The driving forces are technological, and policy changes – falling costs of transport and communications and greater reliance on market forces’ Martin Wolf, quoted in Antimo Verde, *Is globalisation doomed?* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) p.5

⁴ Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p.11

⁵ Ibid p.11

⁶ Ibid p.11

⁷ Ibid p.11

issues dividing the Centre Right during the Hollande presidency. In chapter 3, we will consider the question of economic globalisation and finally in chapter 4, we will examine the issue of political globalisation via a discussion of France's relationship with the European Union.

Attempting to define cultural globalisation, Giddens, like Heywood, argues that 'cultural standardisation is an intrinsic part of this process,'⁸ but he also notes that 'a more profound effect of globalisation is to produce greater local cultural diversity, not homogeneity.'⁹ Migration of people across the world has always played a significant role in the make-up of societies. However, more recent factors such the increased ability of people to travel around the world due to faster and cheaper transport, the threat of Islamist terrorism, and the development of a globalised economic system involving greater movement of labour have made immigration a contentious issue. These pressures have added to France's failure - arguably- to properly integrate some previous generations and have focused political attention on this area. The arrival of North African and Middle Eastern immigrants and the presence of the descendants of immigrants from previous generations have encouraged some parties to adopt a more multicultural approach to questions of identity, whilst others have remained more attached to the traditional principle of assimilation. This issue has created discontent within certain sections of society, as people seek to protect historic identities and traditions. They see multiculturalism as threatening their way of life, rather than a positive development. Therefore, as James argues, cultural globalisation can 'accentuate past and present identity politics.'¹⁰

Similar reactions to multiculturalism have been seen in many different parts of the Western world. Commentators such as Bouvet and Goodhart, considering why the Left has lost the support of many members of the working class, have put forward what might be labelled cultural explanations to accompany those based on economics.¹¹ Goodhart, considering the situation in contemporary Britain, argues that society is now divided broadly into two groups – social liberals who support changing customs, and social conservatives, who seek

⁸ Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalisation is Reshaping our Lives* (London: Profile Books, 2002) p.xxiv

⁹ Ibid p.xxiv

¹⁰ Paul James, 'Culture' in *Handbook of Globalisation and Development* edited by Kenneth A Reinert (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017) pp.409-425 p.416

¹¹ See Laurent Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle* (Paris: Fayard, 2015) and David Goodhart, *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics* (London: Hurst & Company, 2017)

to preserve long-standing traditions.¹² For Bouvet, certain sections of French society feel ill at ease when faced with the rise in immigration and the development of a multicultural society, a phenomenon that he labels 'cultural insecurity'. As political parties on the Left have aimed to attract new voters, particularly young people and minorities, by adopting a more open, multicultural approach,¹³ they have alienated certain voters from the working classes who have turned to the FN. The promotion of liberal cultural values by the established parties of government has also encouraged more conservatively minded voters to support the Far Right.

The role of cultural attitudes in affecting voting habits is important, because, as we shall demonstrate, it has been accompanied by another major social change: that voters have become more wary of traditional ideologies of Left and Right, and more inclined to choose policies from across the political spectrum. Cultural insecurity, which is based on an individual's appreciation of a changing society, and on their fears, whether justified or not, might be seen as a reflection of this more personalised approach.

However, while the analyses of scholars such as Bouvet and Goodhart have been used to highlight the difficulties faced by the Centre Left, it has often gone unnoticed that such reactions to the evolution of society pose serious challenges to the Centre Right. This is because the fears described by cultural insecurity do not simply reproduce a class divide, but rather reflect different visions of the ideas and values that society should promote, which bring together both some of those benefitting from economic globalisation, and some of those who feel left behind. In this way, the question of cultural insecurity has also proved essential to debates within Centre Right parties, particularly as they seek to respond to the challenge of the Far Right. Ahearne has examined the role of the Right in attempting to shape the values and attitudes of French society during the Chirac and Sarkozy presidencies, and Fourquet and Le Bras have noted that Fillon's promotion of Christian values and an assimilationist approach to immigration was key to his success in the primary of 2016.¹⁴ However, little consideration has been given to the problem of how the question of how to respond to the fears described by the concept of cultural insecurity

¹² Ibid

¹³ See, for example Bruno Jeanbart, Olivier Ferrand, Romain Prudent, 'Projet 2012, Contribution no.1: Gauche: Quelle majorité électorale pour 2012 ?' <<http://tnova.fr/rapports/gauche-quelle-majorite-electorale-pour2012>> p.13

¹⁴ See Jeremy Ahearne, *Government through Culture and the Contemporary French Right* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) and Jérôme Fourquet and Hervé Le Bras, *La Guerre des trois: La Primaire de la Droite et du Centre* (Paris : Editions Fondation Jean Jaurès, 2017) p.136

was a major cause of conflict on the Centre Right throughout the period between 2012 and 2017.

This chapter will argue that cultural insecurity was a main source of division within Les Républicains during the Hollande presidency. It will adopt an approach similar to Goodhart's analysis of contemporary Britain to demonstrate that the French Centre Right was divided between, on the one hand, the Juppéistes, who favoured a more open, socially liberal, approach (which we shall call 'Modernist'), and, on the other hand, the Sarkozystes and the Fillonistes, who supported a more socially conservative vision (which we will refer to as 'Traditionalist'). Fillon's attempts to appeal to those concerned about a changing society were crucial to his success in becoming the party's presidential candidate. However, it was this position which alienated many Modernists, leading to the defection of some Juppéistes to En Marche after the primary of 2016 and the presidential election of 2017, and to the later conflicts within Les Républicains, which occurred following the success of En Marche in the legislative elections.

Cultural Insecurity: a key divide in French Politics

In his examination of the evolution of the term *insécurité culturelle*, Ahearne notes that, although originally an Anglophone concept, it has become a greater subject for debate in France since 2012, notably due to the work of Christophe Guilluy and Laurent Bouvet.¹⁵ Guilluy seeks to use it as part of his analysis of the divide between *la France périphérique* and metropolitan centres, to describe the feelings of those left behind by the cultural effects of economic globalisation. Bouvet considers it as a factor that helps explain the fall in support for the Left amongst working-class voters.¹⁶ Whereas Ahearne identifies four different types of cultural insecurity, it is what he names the 'anthropological-political' sense which had been most relevant to debate concerning the French political system. He defines this as 'referring to the anxieties produced by immigration, economic globalisation, and post-traditional values among populations which had hitherto been the core electorates of left-wing governing parties, but who were now being pulled into the orbit of far-right populist parties.'¹⁷ Although this definition focuses on the interaction between the

¹⁵ See Christophe Guilluy, *Fractures françaises* (Paris: François Bourin Editeur, 2010); Christophe Guilluy, *La France périphérique: Comment on a sacrifié les classes populaires* (Paris: Flammarion, 2015) and Laurent Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle*

¹⁶ Jeremy Ahearne, 'Cultural insecurity and its discursive crystallisation in contemporary France', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 25:3 (2017), 265-280 p.271

¹⁷ Ahearne, 'Cultural insecurity and its discursive crystallisation' p.268

Left and the Far Right, we argue in this chapter that, during the Hollande presidency, the fears referred to by the term cultural insecurity affected a much broader section of the French electorate than solely the sections of the working classes that used to support the Left.

Cultural insecurity is an important phenomenon affecting the current French political system as a whole. Bouvet defines cultural insecurity as 'l'expression d'une peur confuse et multiforme face à un environnement, perçu comme chaotique et illisible, mais pour autant bien réelle dans la vie quotidienne.'¹⁸ He pays particular attention to concerns among certain parts of the electorate that France is losing its identity. Some of these fears relate to the impact of mass immigration, where some groups, particularly 'ceux qui se qualifient eux-mêmes de « Français de souche» ou de « petits blancs»' feel that their way of life is threatened by the presence of both cultural differences that stem from immigration and also by the rise of a more visible presence of Islam.¹⁹

In addition to the effect of immigration, cultural insecurity is also arguably affected by the promotion by the state of socially liberal values.²⁰ This was of increasing importance during the period 2012-17 due to the decision of the Hollande government to legalise gay marriage and adoption for same sex couples, which provoked protests from socially conservative groups, particularly Catholics.²¹

Analyses of similar phenomena outside France can help to deepen our understanding of the issue of cultural insecurity. Goodhart, writing on the impact of cultural values on British politics, has spoken of the 'Anywhere/Somewhere' divide. 'Somewheres' 'do not generally welcome change and older Somewheres are nostalgic for a lost [past]; they place a high value on security and familiarity, and have strong group attachments, local and national; Somewheres, especially young ones, accept the equality revolution but still value traditional family forms and are suspicious of 'anything goes' attitudes. They are not Hard Authoritarians [...] but regret the passing of a more structured and tradition-bound world.'²² In contrast, 'Anywheres' 'broadly welcome change and are not nostalgic for a lost [past]; they fully embrace egalitarian and meritocratic attitudes on race, sexuality and

¹⁸ Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle* p.15

¹⁹ Ibid p.10

²⁰ Ibid p.28

²¹ While Bouvet acknowledges that other religious groups, including Muslims, can be alienated by the promotion of liberal social values, this chapter will generally focus on Catholics, as practising Catholics have often formed a key section of the Centre Right electorate.

²² Goodhart, *The Road to Somewhere* p.24

gender...and think that we need to push on further; they do not in the main embrace a borderless world but they are individualists and internationalists who are not strongly attached to larger group identities, including national ones; they value autonomy and self-realisation before stability, community and tradition.²³ While his work focuses on Britain, I will suggest that the same divide also existed in France during the Hollande presidency, and posed a particular challenge to the Centre Right. While agreeing with much of Goodhart's analysis, this chapter will use the terms 'Modernists' and 'Traditionalists', mirroring Goodhart's 'Anywheres' and 'Somewheres', to highlight the divisions within the UMP and Les Républicains.

This division is important, because while much literature relating to cultural insecurity has focused on how the Left has lost the support of large sections of the white working class, the phenomenon of fears relating to cultural change in society cannot be reduced to simply class-based nor economic differences. Critics of Bouvet, particularly those on the Left, such as Corcuff, Dufal and Offenstadt, claim that cultural insecurity is merely a product of economic concerns. However, as Bouvet points out, were such concerns merely a reflection of broader economic or class-based issues, then one would expect the Front de Gauche (which became La France Insoumise in 2016) to receive as much support as the Front National, yet the Far Right outperformed the Far Left in elections during the Hollande presidency, particularly amongst working-class voters. For Bouvet, it was the cultural element of the FN's programme that made it more appealing to these sections of the electorate.²⁴

Cultural insecurity is not merely a reflection of economic issues, nor is it something that solely affects the working class. Much of the scholarship on cultural insecurity has focused on workers as it has sought to explain why large sections of the working class are no longer voting for the Left. When Guilluy extends his analysis to the Centre Right, by considering Sarkozy's 2007 campaign and its attempt to respond to cultural insecurity, his focus is again on blue-collar workers.²⁵ However, those who benefit from and support economic globalisation can at the same time be concerned by its cultural impact. This can be seen in the 2016 *Fractures françaises* survey, which found that 49% of those in managerial positions agreed that they no longer felt as at home in France as in the past,²⁶ and 47%

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle* p.138

²⁵ Christophe Guilluy, *Fractures françaises* p.177

²⁶ Brice Teinturier et Vincent Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016 Vague 4: Ipsos Sopra/Steria pour le Monde, La Fondation Jean Jaurès et Sciences Po* p.56

believed that anti-white racism was an important phenomenon.²⁷ While, in both cases, a majority disagreed with these statements, nearly half of those taking part in the survey felt some degree of cultural insecurity.

Further evidence that cultural insecurity was not limited to a class divide, and was not automatically combined with opposition to liberal economic policies, could be seen in the responses of pensioners to the same survey from 2016. Within this age-based, rather than class-based, group, 62% believed that 'Pour relancer la croissance, il faut limiter au maximum le rôle de l'Etat dans l'économie française et donner aux entreprises le plus de liberté possible'²⁸. This was the highest level of support for this statement expressed by any social category. At the same time, 69% of pensioners agreed that 'Aujourd'hui on ne sent plus chez soi comme avant.'²⁹ It is therefore clear that cultural insecurity was not solely tied to concern about economic globalisation and a desire for greater economic protectionism and regulation.

Although analyses of cultural insecurity, both in France and in Britain, have often focused on the Centre Left and the Radical Right, Goodhart argues that the Anywhere/Somewhere division cuts across both economic differences and those between the Left and the Right.³⁰ This was also true in France during the Hollande presidency, as many on the Centre Right in France felt ill at ease when faced with a changing society. According to the 2016 *Fractures françaises* survey, among supporters of Les Républicains, 76% felt that there were too many foreigners in France,³¹ 73% no longer felt as at home in France as in the past,³² 69% believed that immigrants did not do enough to integrate,³³ and only 35% felt that Islam was compatible with the Republic.³⁴

Similarly, attitudes towards liberal cultural values are not simply tied to economic issues, but to personal beliefs. It has long been recognised in France that practising Catholics form a key part of the Centre Right electorate, and so it is not surprising to see that debate over

<<https://www.soprasteria.com/docs/librariesprovider29/Publications-Ipsos/fractures-francaises-vague4-ipsos-soprasteria.pdf?sfvrsn=4>>

²⁷ Ibid p.59

²⁸ Ibid p.33

²⁹ Ibid p.56

³⁰ Goodhart, *The Road to Somewhere* p.3

³¹ Teinturier et Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016 Vague 4* p.55

³² Ibid p.56

³³ Ibid p.57

³⁴ Ibid p.66

cultural issues formed a key part of the debate in the primary, and divided voters within the Centre Right.

The idea of using the concept of cultural insecurity to understand social and political change has been rejected by certain analysts. For example, Dufal and Offenstadt, writing in *L'Humanité*, claim that '[i]l n'y a que les publicitaires et les communicants des partis politiques pour croire que "l'insécurité culturelle est un « concept » ou la conclusion d'une recherche, que le racisme « anti-Blancs » est un terme qui irait de soi, qui permettrait de faire émerger des réalités. Dès que ces expressions sont travaillées et mises à l'épreuve de la réalité sociale, elles s'écroulent d'elles-mêmes.'³⁵

However, the argument of Dufal and Offenstadt is contradicted by empirical studies including the *Fractures françaises* surveys. These show that in 2016, the year of the Primary of the Right and Centre, 65% of all voters felt that there were too many foreigners in France.³⁶ 63% agreed that 'Aujourd'hui on ne sent plus chez soi comme avant'³⁷ and 58% believed that 'de manière générale les immigrés ne font pas d'effort pour s'intégrer en France.'³⁸ The same percentage believed that 'le racisme anti-blanc est un phénomène assez répandu en France.'³⁹ Only 41% believed that Islam was compatible with French society.⁴⁰ These figures were generally stable throughout the Hollande *quinquennat*, although those who believed that Islam was compatible with French values fell to 26% in 2013⁴¹. The surveys therefore suggest that not only was cultural insecurity an important factor during the primary, but one that was an issue for the Centre Right throughout the Hollande *quinquennat*.

Other objections to the concept of cultural insecurity have been made on different grounds. Corcuff argues that cultural insecurity is not a valid concept because identities are not fixed entities but are constantly evolving and adapting in the context of their

³⁵ Juliette Grange, Blaise Dufal et Nicolas Offenstadt, Pierre Serna, 'Comment les penseurs de l'émancipation peuvent-ils réinvestir l'espace public ? (5)' *L'Humanité* 13 October 2015 <<http://www.humanite.fr/comment-les-penseurs-de-lemancipation-peuvent-ils-reinvestir-lespace-public-5-586517>> [Accessed 01/09/17]

³⁶ Teinturier et Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016* p.55

³⁷ Ibid p.56

³⁸ Ibid p.57

³⁹ Ibid p.59

⁴⁰ Ibid p.66

⁴¹ Brice Teinturier et Vincent Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2017 Vague 5: Ipsos Sopra/Steria pour le Monde, La Fondation Jean Jaurès et Sciences Po « Programme Viepol »* p.73 <https://jean-jaures.org/sites/default/files/fractures_francaises_2017.pdf>

environment.⁴² Nicolini has stated that one should not talk about ‘insécurité culturelle’ but ‘un sentiment d’identité culturelle’, as if cultural insecurity were to come under the umbrella of ‘l’insécurité’, then the government would have to take measures to respond, but it is difficult to see how ‘sécurité culturelle’ could be defined.⁴³

Nicolini is correct in stating that cultural insecurity describes a number of sentiments, that is to say that it is primarily a personalised emotional reaction rather than an objective analysis. It is this that reveals the flaws in the arguments of Dufal, Offenstadt and Corcuff. It does not matter whether anti-white racism in society is a real phenomenon. What makes it an important issue is that a significant number of voters feel that it exists and that this view influences their voting habits. Similarly, how voters have constructed their identity and the fact that this is in constant evolution does not matter in this context. As many surveys have shown, they still feel threatened by elements such as the rise of a more visible presence of Islam in France or the spread of liberal cultural values, and vote accordingly. As Bouvet himself states, ‘lorsque des citoyens s’expriment à travers un vote ou un sondage d’opinion, la distinction entre réalité et perception de la réalité s’estompe. Seul compte le fait: une réponse, un vote, une parole, un acte’⁴⁴.

It would seem clear that, whether based on fact or prejudice, fears contained within the term cultural insecurity did exist in France during the Hollande presidency, and that this was not confined to supporters of the FN or members of the working class, but extended to potential supporters of Les Républicains. This chapter will now consider how cultural insecurity fits with the debate surrounding the decline of traditional ideologies.

Cultural Insecurity and the decline of traditional ideologies

The political consequences of cultural insecurity have been heightened by the fact that voters have become less attached to traditional ideologies, and now adopt a more individualised and volatile approach to political activity. This is not to say that ideologies have ceased to exist, but rather that voters identify less readily with traditional all-

⁴² Philippe Corcuff, ‘Face à la montée du FN, la dérive des « néocons » de gauche’ *Libération* 30 March 2015
<http://www.liberation.fr/france/2015/03/30/face-a-la-montee-du-fn-la-derive-des-neocons-de-gauche_1231682> [Accessed 03/09/17]

⁴³ Patrick Nicolini, ‘Insécurité culturelle ou incertitude conceptuelle’ *Médiapart* 7 April 2015
<<https://blogs.mediapart.fr/patrick-nicolini/blog/070415/insecurite-culturelle-ou-incertitude-conceptuelle>> [Accessed 03/09/17]

⁴⁴ Bouvet, *L’insécurité culturelle* p.43

encompassing visions, and instead prefer to pick and choose policies from across the political spectrum.

The question of how to define ideology is complex, and many competing explanations have been offered. For Daniel Bell, ideology is an 'historically related belief system that fuses ideas with passion, seeks to convert ideas into social levers, and in transforming ideas transforms people as well...[and which is] a closed system which prefabricates answers to any questions that might be asked'⁴⁵.

Others have disagreed with such a restricted vision. For Heywood, an ideology is 'a more or less coherent set of ideas that provides the basis for organised political action, whether this is intended to preserve, modify or overthrow the existing system of power. All ideologies have the following features. They:

- a) offer an account of the existing order, usually in the form of a 'world view'
- b) advance a model of a desired future, a vision of the 'good society'
- c) explain how political change can and should be brought about.'⁴⁶

He adds that 'Ideologies are descriptive in that, in effect, they provide individuals and groups with an intellectual map of how their society works, and, more broadly, with a general view of the world.'⁴⁷

According to McCullough, 'Political ideologies are perspectives on the world that synthesize the philosophical, scientific, economic, religious, political and technological beliefs for the purpose of encouraging a course of action.'⁴⁸ He argues that every ideology offers a 'descriptive component', that offers a vision of features such as human nature, power and the economic system; a 'motivational component', that promotes a course of action, and an 'Unfalsifiable or Incorrigeable Component', 'under [which] ideologies turn out to be akin to secular religions, assuming the role of dogmas, doctrines or even myths.'⁴⁹

It would be an exaggeration to say, as Fukuyama and Bell do,⁵⁰ that many traditional ideological differences have been largely eliminated, particularly in the West, and that

⁴⁵ Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) p.xi

⁴⁶ Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* p.11

⁴⁷ Ibid p.12

⁴⁸ H.B. McCullough, *Political Ideologies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) p.2

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ See Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1992)

liberal democracy and capitalism will remain the dominant systems forever, with governments concerned in managing rather than shaping the economy. Fundamental ideological differences of opinion remain.

However we define ideology, as we shall see, a particularly important feature of contemporary politics is that many citizens no longer follow a traditional defined worldview as a coherent whole, convinced that it contains some 'unfalsifiable or incorrigible component.'⁵¹ Instead, they often choose policies from across the political spectrum, and this can be observed in several different political and societal evolutions.

The decline in the number of people joining particular belief groups since the 1970s might be seen as evidence of the weakening of attachments to traditional ideologies, and the rise of a greater sense of individuality within the French population. We have considered the fall of the Communist Party in chapter 1, and a similar decline can also be seen in the membership of the established parties of government. In 1980, the RPR had 500,000 members, but in 2016, its equivalent, Les Républicains had only 238,208 members. In the PS, there were 196,500 members in May 1981, but only 86,171 in January 2016.⁵² Nor was this decline in the number of people adhering to a defined worldview solely linked to political ideologies, as a similar phenomenon could also be observed in other areas such as the fall in the number of practising Catholics in France. Whereas 87% of French people declared themselves to be Catholics in 1972, this number had fallen to 65% by 2010, and the proportion of the French population attending Mass at least once a month had fallen from 20% in 1972 to 4.5% in 2010.⁵³ Arguably, as Giddens suggests, in modern society, individuals have access to a much greater range of information than before, and rely on this, rather than on traditional ideological systems, to guide their political choices.⁵⁴

This decline in identification with ideologies as a block was also recognised by Valls, who once argued that the name 'Parti Socialiste' should be dropped as its ideological connotations were no longer reflected in the policies pursued by the party. He stated, 'Parti socialiste, c'est daté. Ça ne signifie plus rien. Le socialisme, ça a été une merveilleuse idée,

⁵¹ H.B. McCullough, *Political Ideologies* p.2

⁵² Le Parisien, Service politique, 'Militantisme: les partis sont à l'agonie' *Le Parisien* 23 April 2016 <<http://www.leparisien.fr/politique/militantisme-les-partis-sont-a-l-agonie-23-04-2016-5739365.php>> [Accessed 11/09/17]

⁵³ AFP, 'L'Eglise catholique de France en chiffres' *L'Obs* 26 July 2016 <<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/societe/20160726.AFP2844/l-eglise-catholique-de-france-en-chiffres.html>> [Accessed 06/09/17]

⁵⁴ Anthony Giddens, *Beyond Left and Right: The Future of Radical Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) p.7

une splendide utopie. Mais c'était une utopie inventée contre le capitalisme du 19e siècle!⁵⁵ He therefore accepted that PS had ceased to be socialist in traditional terms, and instead sought to manage capitalism in a particular fashion.

Rather than following a single traditional defined ideology, most voters today pick and choose the values they believe in from a range of different traditions, and they select the candidate whom they feel best represents their views, rather than according to which party this candidate represents. As Finchelstein notes:

Plus éduqués, plus individualistes, plus sceptiques, [les citoyens] choisissent les élections où ils se déplacent et reproduisent de moins en moins mécaniquement leur vote d'une élection à l'autre : ils se comportent comme des consommateurs dans le marché électoral. Ils se constituent chacun leur propre bricolage idéologique et se sentent naturellement de gauche sur une question et de droite sur une autre.⁵⁶

This analysis is supported by Garrigues, who claims that:

[N]ous sommes devenus une société de consommateurs usant de sa classe politique comme d'un produit dont l'obsolescence est programmée. Les électeurs ne croient plus à des idéologies, ils consomment puis rejettent leurs élus, y compris leur président de la République.⁵⁷

This is not to say that defined ideologies do not exist, but that insufficient numbers of voters are influenced by them to make them decisive in electoral terms. As Perrineau states:

L'individu-citoyen construit de plus en plus ses choix politiques à partir de lui-même et de l'interaction qui se développe entre lui et une scène politique en changement constant. Les grandes références idéologiques, qui constituaient autant de « toiles de fond » à partir desquelles l'individu décidait de ses

⁵⁵ Charlotte Chaffanjan, 'L'heure de gloire de Manuel Valls' 31 March 2014 <http://www.lepoint.fr/politique/remaniement-l-heure-de-gloire-de-manuel-valls-31-03-2014-1807701_20.php> [Accessed 25/07/15]

⁵⁶ Gilles Finchelstein, *Piège d'identité: Réflexions (inquiètes) sur la gauche, la droite et la démocratie* (Paris: Fayard, 2016) p.84

⁵⁷ Jean Garrigues, interview with Henri Vernet, 'Crise à l'Elysée : « Le quinquennat est une grossière erreur »' *Le Parisien*, 7 October 2018 <<http://www.leparisien.fr/politique/crise-a-l-elysee-le-quinquennat-est-une-grossiere-erreur-07-10-2018-7912854.php>> [Accessed 07/10/18]

orientations existent bien sûr toujours, mais elles n'ont plus la même force ni la même emprise.⁵⁸

This could be seen in both the 2012 and 2017 presidential elections, where in each case the winner was chosen, to a large extent, as a rejection of the other candidates rather than because he represented a particular ideology.⁵⁹ Furthermore, in the 2017 presidential elections, a significant number of voters switched support between candidates who proposed very different measures. For example, 21% of those who voted for Emmanuel Macron in the first round had considered voting for Jean-Luc Mélenchon, while the same percentage of Mélenchon voters had thought about supporting Macron.⁶⁰ These two candidates defended radically different programmes – while Macron wanted more liberal economic policies and was an enthusiastic supporter of a federal Europe, Mélenchon believed in a greater role for the state in the economy, and was particularly critical of the European Union. Had voters still been strongly attached to traditional ideologies, it is highly unlikely that such large numbers would have considered voting for candidates with such different programmes.

The high number of voters who declined to participate in the presidential and legislative elections in 2017 also suggests that people no longer identify strongly with traditional parties and the world views that they represent. In the first round of the presidential

⁵⁸ Pascal Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne: Pourquoi et pour qui votons-nous ?* (Paris: Fayard, 2012) p.26

⁵⁹ See for example, for 2012, Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier, Vincent Tiberj 'From Sarkozy to Hollande: The New Normal?' in, *Developments in French Politics 5* Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier, Vincent Tiberj eds. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) pp.1-19 p.4 and John Gaffney, 'Leadership and style in the French Fifth Republic: Nicolas Sarkozy's presidency in historical and cultural perspective' *French Politics*, 10: 4 (2012) 345-363 p.349 and Pascal Perrineau, 'Introduction' in *The 2012 French Election: How the Electorate Decided* in Pascal Perrineau ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) pp.1-8, p.2. For 2017, see Grégoire Biseau, 'La France de Macron, un vote par défaut' *Libération* 25 April 2017 <http://www.liberation.fr/politiques/2017/04/25/la-france-de-macron-un-vote-par-default_1565365> [Accessed 21/09/17]

⁶⁰ Ifop-Fiducial, *Le profil des électeurs et les clefs du premier tour de l'élection présidentielle* 23 April 2017 p.24 <https://www.ifop.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/3749-1-study_file.pdf>

elections, the abstention rate stood at 22.23%⁶¹, which was above those recorded for 2012 and 2007 (20.52%⁶² and 16.23%⁶³ respectively).

Comparison of the 2017 and 2002 presidential and legislative elections is particularly useful in allowing us to consider the evolution of voters' attitudes towards traditional ideologies and parties. In 2002, the elimination in the first round of the PS candidate, Lionel Jospin, was a surprise. Many voters on the Left failed to support him in the first round because they felt that he was certain to be present in the second.⁶⁴ In contrast, during the Hollande presidency, polls had long predicted that the PS representative would be defeated in the first round of the presidential elections, and by March, it seemed likely that Fillon would be also. That the candidates of both traditional parties should be eliminated in the first round, and that this event had been envisaged as a possible outcome prior to the election, is clear evidence of the loss of confidence in traditional parties.

A comparison of the results of the legislative elections in 2002 and 2017 supports this view. The Left/Right split survived Jospin's elimination from the presidential elections on 21 April 2002, and Ysmal notes that the 'legislative elections were characterised by a re-bipolarisation of the party system around the classic left/right distinction.'⁶⁵ Furthermore, when compared with the presidential elections '[t]he abstention rate fell from 27 per cent to 20 per cent. All those who had been on holiday, or had ignored the campaign, or else had decided to teach the left a lesson by just waiting for round two to vote begrudgingly for Jospin, seemed to deeply regret their apathy.'⁶⁶ This was not the case in 2017, when abstention in the legislatives was over 30% higher than in the *présidentielles*, at 51.30%,⁶⁷ and the results gave an absolute majority to En Marche.

⁶¹ Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats de l'élection présidentielle de 2017' <[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__presidentielle-2017/\(path\)/presidentielle-2017/FE.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__presidentielle-2017/(path)/presidentielle-2017/FE.html)> [Accessed 22/10/18]

⁶² Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats de l'élection présidentielle de 2012' <[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__PR2012/\(path\)/PR2012/FE.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__PR2012/(path)/PR2012/FE.html)> [Accessed 22/10/18]

⁶³ Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats de l'élection présidentielle de 2007' <[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__presidentielle_2007/\(path\)/presidentielle_2007/FE.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__presidentielle_2007/(path)/presidentielle_2007/FE.html)> [Accessed 22/10/18]

⁶⁴ See John Gaffney, 'The 2002 Elections in Institutional and Comparative Perspective' in *The French Presidential and Legislative Elections of 2002*, John Gaffney ed. pp.1-15 p.1 and Colette Ysmal, 'The Presidential and Legislative Elections of 2002: An Analysis of the Results' in *The French Presidential and Legislative Elections of 2002*, John Gaffney ed. pp.57-82 p.57

⁶⁵ Ysmal, 'The Presidential and Legislative Elections of 2002' p.57

⁶⁶ Ibid p.70

⁶⁷ Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats des élections législatives 2017'

A further demonstration that the electorate is much less attached to traditional parties and ideologies was given by the choice of Emmanuel Macron as president. Rather than representing a political party with a particular ideology, Macron created a vehicle to support his personal campaign, the name of which came from his own initials. En Marche, founded in April 2016 as a movement rather than a party, cost nothing to join, and only required that those who wanted to sign up provide an e-mail address. Rather than uniting to defend a particular agenda, once he had announced the creation of En Marche, Macron and his supporters spent time gathering data on voters' opinions. He did not release a full programme until March 2017, but his movement shared information on what he had said about various issues. This was a complete reversal of the usual relationship between party, policy and the electorate.

Acknowledging that there has been a general decline in the influence of traditional ideologies does not mean that they have disappeared entirely, nor that they cease to be important for a section of the electorate. It is now generally the Far Left that makes reference to particular texts or thinkers to inspire or defend the political decisions that they take. While the Centre Right has its own references, these are not used as texts to set out a fixed, coherent ideological project, but are rather more general expressions of social and historical perspectives, and examples of behaviour to be followed. This can be seen in the frequent references that many on the Right make to de Gaulle. The Centre Right does not see the General as an inspiration in terms of policy, but rather in terms of values. A key example of this on the Centre Right was in August 2016, when Fillon attacked Sarkozy and his links to various political scandals by saying 'Qui imagine un seul instant le Général de Gaulle mis en examen'⁶⁸, a quote which would later be used against him, when the scandal involving his wife's role as his parliamentary assistant erupted.

In light of this, we might see the importance of issues related to cultural insecurity in modern political debate as evidence of the decline in importance of traditional ideologies and voters' adoption of a new, more personalised and independent approach to political activity. The fears described by the term cultural insecurity are based on personal perspective on events rather than a defined vision or theory. Furthermore, as we shall

<[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Legislatives/elecresult__legislatives-2017/\(path\)/legislatives-2017//FE.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Legislatives/elecresult__legislatives-2017/(path)/legislatives-2017//FE.html)> [Accessed 22/10/18]

⁶⁸ François Fillon, '« Je veux faire pour les Français » Discours à Sablé sur Sarthe'

< <http://fillon2017lacollesurloup.fr/index.php/2016/08/28/je-veux-faire-pour-les-francais-discours-de-sable-sur-sarthe/>> [Accessed 15/10/17]

demonstrate, they could be held alongside a wide range of other beliefs such as interpretations of the state of the economy.

The relationship of the Centre Right to ideological questions has often been a complicated one, and there have been attempts to avoid policy debates in order to protect unity. When the UMP was founded, it was initially called the Union pour la majorité présidentielle, and was created to enable different groups from the Right and Centre to put aside differences of opinion and come together in order to hold power. This was successful under Chirac in 2002, and survived a change of leader, when Sarkozy replaced him, as the Centre Right saw that unity would allow them to remain in government, whereas arguments over policy would most likely lead to defeat. This was only possible as long as the party continued to win elections. The failure of Sarkozy to be re-elected president in 2012, and the subsequent defeat of the UMP in the legislative elections, changed this dynamic, and brought discussion of policy back to the fore.

The next part of this chapter will employ this analysis of cultural insecurity to explain some of the main issues which divided the Centre Right during the Hollande presidency.

Cultural Insecurity and the Centre Right under the Hollande presidency.

The cultural insecurity debate within the Centre Right was based around key practical issues. Three will be examined here: firstly, that concerning integration of people from different cultures into French society; secondly, responses to terrorism; and finally social values as represented by the issue of gay marriage. In each case, the Centre Right was split between a *droite décomplexée* vision (the Traditionalists, corresponding to the Somewhere position recognised by Goodhart) and a more open, 'progressive' Centrist group (the Modernists). The division between the Modernist and the Traditionalist groups was also visible in their differing approaches to the question of anti-elitism, which widened differences over policy and strategy and weakened the possibility of uniting factions after the primary. Debate over policy did not lead to the reconciliation of opposing groups within Les Républicains around a common view, but instead exacerbated the differences that already existed. It also frequently reinforced the position of the Traditionalists within the Centre Right, giving them greater influence than within the population as a whole, and shifting the position of Les Républicains away from Centrist voters whose support would be needed for the party to regain power.

i. The question of integration of cultural and ethnic minorities

The question of how to bring people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds fully into French society was a central issue on the Centre Right during the period 2012-2017, and there was a clear division between a Traditionalist faction that favoured a traditional policy of assimilation (where immigrants were supposed to abandon their original culture and adopt that of France) and a Modernist group that believed in an approach based on integration (where foreigners were to create a new identity, based on acceptance of French values but without totally rejecting the traditions of their country of origin). In many cases, debate on this issue was intimately linked to the question of the place of Islam in the Republic. As Bouvet has argued, Islam has replaced more traditional questions such as the economic impact of migrants (as represented by the Polish plumber of the past) in debate concerning the issues of immigration and integration.⁶⁹ This division started during Sarkozy's presidential campaign in 2012, and continued during the November 2012 internal UMP election campaign, the leadership battle in 2014 and the primary of 2016. Each of these contests showed that whatever position the Centre Right adopted on integration, it risked alienating some of its traditional supporters as well as voters from other parties who might otherwise have been inclined to support the party. The creation of En Marche in 2016 presented further complications for the Centre Right in this respect, as Macron's celebration of diversity persuaded Modernist Juppéistes that they would be better represented outside Les Républicains.

Divisions over the approach to integration had already proved problematic in the 2012 campaign, when Sarkozy aimed to attract voters from the FN by emphasising his belief in a hard-line approach to the questions of immigration and identity, and particularly the need to control the practices of French Muslims. In a speech on the importance of borders, he referred not only to physical borders between countries, but also to metaphorical barriers that needed to be protected. He stated, 'Faites sauter la frontière de la citoyenneté et de la République et vous verrez les tribus et les communautés imposer aux membres des tribus et des communautés des comportements dont nous ne voulons pas sur le sol de la République française !'⁷⁰ Here he was deliberately appealing to those who were affected by cultural insecurity and believed that Islam represented a danger to society. However, such

⁶⁹ Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle* p.22

⁷⁰ Nicolas Sarkozy, 'Discours de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, candidat à l'élection présidentielle, notamment sur la Nation et la frontière, à Toulouse le 29 mai 2012' <<http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/123000880.html>> [Accessed 23/05/17]

a stance caused problems for Sarkozy, as it undermined relations between the UMP and the Centre,⁷¹ which had been important in ensuring the success of the Centre Right in previous elections. In contrast to a large number of UMP and FN voters, many of those in the Centre shared a more Modernist orientated view, and were alienated by his campaign. Indeed, as we shall see, in the second round of the presidential elections, Bayrou chose to support Hollande, and made it clear that Sarkozy's approach to immigration and identity was the reason for his decision, stating that:

La ligne qu'a ainsi choisie Nicolas Sarkozy entre les deux tours est violente, elle entre en contradiction avec les valeurs qui sont les nôtres, pas seulement les miennes, pas seulement celles du courant politique que je représente, mais aussi les valeurs du gaullisme, autant que celles de la droite républicaine et sociale.⁷²

The rejection of Sarkozy's position was not solely confined to the leader of MoDem. As Jaffré argues, 'Bayrou voters who transferred their vote to Hollande did not expect much of him. However, 67% of them did not agree with Sarkozy's proposals on immigration [and] 71% of them said that 'since the first round', Sarkozy did not appeal to them'⁷³. Although slightly more Bayrou voters chose Sarkozy over Hollande in the second round, the difference was not large enough to secure his election.⁷⁴ The divide between Modernists and Traditionalists was therefore an important factor that played a role in Sarkozy's failure to be re-elected.

The aftermath of Sarkozy's defeat revealed that not only had his 2012 campaign divided the UMP from potential allies in the Centre, but it had also split opinion among members of the UMP. Sarkozy's resignation allowed the re-emergence of debate over policy that had been side-lined during his presidency. Two camps were clearly present; the Traditionalists who believed that the substance of his campaign had been correct, and others who felt that any approach needed to take into account Modernist voters. Jean-Pierre Raffarin spoke for many Modernists, when he claimed that Sarkozy's strategy had increased division, stating that such a campaign 'ne pouvait pas être victorieuse tant l'essence même

⁷¹ Here Centre refers particularly to Bayrou and MoDem

⁷² Michel Veron et Philippe Lesaffre, 'Bayrou vote Hollande sans donner de consigne: les dessous d'une décision historique' *L'Express* 3 May 12 <http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/bayrou-vote-hollande-les-dessous-d-une-decision-historique_1111038.html> [Accessed 23/05/17]

⁷³ Jérôme Jaffré, 'Narrowing the Gap in the Second Round or the 'Referenda' of May 6 2012' in *The 2012 French Election : How the Electorate Decided* pp.189-206 p.204

⁷⁴ *Ibid* p.196

de la fonction présidentielle est le rassemblement'.⁷⁵ In contrast, Guillaume Peltier represented the views of many Traditionalists within the UMP when he argued that Sarkozy's campaign had successfully reduced the margin of Hollande's victory, at a time when circumstances were unfavourable to the UMP, as Sarkozy himself had been unpopular and France had been suffering from an economic crisis.⁷⁶ The conflict between Traditionalists and Modernists within the UMP that emerged following Sarkozy's defeat would persist throughout the Hollande presidency.

The domination of the Traditionalist line on policy within the Centre Right survived Sarkozy's defeat. The party hierarchy studiously avoided any review of the 2012 campaign in order to decide where mistakes had been made. Many within the party had believed in the strategy that Sarkozy had adopted and wanted to continue this line. Indeed, in order to demonstrate in his view that Muslims were imposing their values and customs on France, Copé used his story of the *pain au chocolat*, which became a defining image of his campaign to become party leader. He claimed that a group of Muslim men had taken a *pain au chocolat* away from a non-Muslim schoolboy, because it was Ramadan.⁷⁷ This encapsulated the fears of those who believed certain Muslims with a hardline view of their religion were imposing their own rules in France, and threatening national identity. That such an approach was popular on the Centre Right could be seen in the result of the leadership election. Polls had predicted that Fillon would win with over 60% of the vote. However, these had been conducted on a sample representative of all those who classed themselves as supporters of the UMP, rather than just on party members, and the official final result showed a narrow victory for Copé. Fillon had defended assimilation, but had also argued that many of the problems linked to integration could be solved by improving the economic situation.⁷⁸ His rival's more hard-line approach no doubt convinced some voters that he better reflected their concerns, and reinforced the presence of Traditionalist policies within the party.

⁷⁵ Jean-Pierre Raffarin, 'Sarkozy: les cinq occasions manquées' in *L'Etat de l'Opinion 13* (Paris: Seuil, 2013) pp.21-30 p.26

⁷⁶ Guillaume Peltier, 'Nicolas Sarkozy a-t-il fait la meilleure campagne possible ?' in *L'Etat de l'Opinion 13* (Paris: Seuil, 2013) pp.31-47 p.46

⁷⁷ See Ariane Kujawski, 'Pains au chocolat: retour sur une polémique en cinq actes' *BFMTV.com* 9 January 2013 <<http://www.bfmtv.com/politique/pain-chocolat-retour-une-polemique-quatre-actes-420688.html>> [Accessed 30/10/17]

⁷⁸ See Le Point, 'Contre les "problèmes d'intégration", Fillon veut "redonner de l'espoir à la jeunesse"' *Le Point* 8 October 2012 <https://www.lepoint.fr/politique/contre-les-problemes-d-integration-fillon-veut-redonner-de-l-espoir-a-la-jeunesse-08-10-2012-1514761_20.php> [Accessed 05/04/19]

Copé's anecdote exacerbated the unease of those within the UMP who supported a more open, Modernist approach to identity, and proved that debate over the party line was far from settled. Alain Juppé argued that 'La logique des campagnes électorales fait qu'on est conduit à durcir le ton. (...) Ces déclarations ne vont pas dans la bonne direction.'⁷⁹ Another more Centrist-leaning *député* within the UMP, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, stated 'Oui ça existe des attitudes de provocation à l'occasion du ramadan. Mais c'est extrêmement minoritaire, donc ça ne doit pas être présenté comme un cas particulier devenant une généralité.'⁸⁰ While there was no question at this time of any of these figures leaving the UMP, the controversy over the pain au chocolat incident did confirm that a Modernist section did exist within the Centre Right, and that the Traditionalist line on immigration and identity risked alienating them.

It might have been expected that Copé's victory would have decided this issue, but numerous irregularities that had taken place during the leadership election undermined his position to such an extent that the result was no longer accepted by the party as a whole. A mediation process began, which brought the Mayor of Bordeaux and former prime minister, Alain Juppé, back to frontline politics. This would have a decisive effect on the debate, as he would provide a figurehead for those who preferred an integrationist approach rather than a policy of assimilation.

Juppé's policy of integration and his aim to create an 'identité heureuse' gave a voice to Modernist voters within the Centre Right who had objected to Sarkozy's approach, and brought into the open the conflict between them and supporters of assimilation. This would encourage the differences to develop and intensify to such an extent that they would threaten the existence of the party. The mayor of Bordeaux argued that assimilation was impossible in a world with rapid communication between different countries. He also challenged the idea that French identity was under threat from new arrivals. Linked to his policy of integration, he celebrated diversity. In a speech in Strasbourg in 2016, he stated that 'l'identité française est singulière: elle est le fruit d'une tension créatrice, d'un dialogue entre la diversité de nos racines et l'unité de notre nation.'⁸¹ To illustrate his point, he

⁷⁹ Le Huff Post, 'Pain au chocolat de Copé: Morano, Estrosi, Borloo, NKM, Ciotti, Juppé, Baroin et Ayrault réagissent' *Huff Post* 10 October 2012 <http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2012/10/10/pain-au-chocolat-cope-reactions-politiques_n_1953515.html> [Accessed 05/09/17]

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ '[Vidéo] Discours d'Alain Juppé sur l'identité de la France' 13/09/16 <<http://www.alainjuppe2017.fr/discours-alain-juppe-strasbourg>> [Accessed 14/06/17]

pointed to Alsace where '[p]arce qu'ils ont été écartelés trop longtemps entre deux puissances qui se réclamaient de cultures différentes alors qu'eux les additionnaient, les Alsaciens ont joué un rôle irremplaçable pour inspirer le projet européen, c'est-à-dire la transformation des identités de combat en identités réconciliées, l'addition des différences. Pour agrandir la famille, non pour l'uniformiser.'⁸² The Alsatians had managed to combine elements of French and German culture, but remained a full part of France. Unlike some Traditionalist voters, he saw difference as something that could be celebrated and that did not have to be a source of fear.

The emergence of Juppé, as one of the favourites to be the candidate of the Centre Right in 2017, demonstrated a problem for the Centre Right as, while he represented the best chance of Les Républicains winning the presidential elections, his Modernist position was less popular among party members, a large proportion of whom were adopting a hard line on immigration and identity, than among the electorate as a whole. This issue became even more important following the 13 November 2015 attacks in Paris, carried out by French citizens of North African heritage, which raised concerns about how the state had integrated new arrivals and their descendants. In a 2016 Ipsos poll, 58% of voters felt that immigrants did not do enough to integrate,⁸³ and 80% agreed that '[o]n n'est jamais assez prudent quand on a affaire aux autres.'⁸⁴ Voters from all parties approved this statement, but supporters of Les Républicains and the FN did so in the greatest numbers (82% and 91% respectively).⁸⁵

While Juppé attracted support from PS sympathisers who had lost faith in Hollande and shared Modernist values, the majority of members of Les Républicains shared a Traditionalist view. Although overall, 63% felt that 'on ne se sent plus chez soi comme avant', only 23% of Front de Gauche supporters, and 41% of PS sympathisers, agreed, while among voters of Les Républicains and the FN, these percentages were 73% and 98% respectively.⁸⁶ Similarly, 31% of Front de Gauche supporters and 42% of those of the PS believed that anti-white racism was a widespread phenomenon, whereas the corresponding percentages were 69% for voters of Les Républicains, and 84% for those of

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Teinturier, Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises Vague 4* p.50

⁸⁴ Ibid p.18

⁸⁵ Ibid p.18

⁸⁶ Ibid p.50

the FN.⁸⁷ It was unlikely that these voters would recognise themselves in a candidate who promoted difference and diversity.

The difficulty that Juppé faced as a Modernist in a largely Traditionalist party was deepened as policy on immigration shifted further towards the Right in an attempt to win over voters who had left the party since 2012. Analyses showed that voters who had supported Sarkozy in 2012, only to turn to the FN in subsequent elections, still shared many beliefs with the Centre Right, and had chosen the FN for a harder line on immigration. Jaffré noted in January 2016 that:

parmi les sarkozystes ralliés au vote FN [on voit] une radicalisation des attitudes, qui dément le classement plus mesuré sur l'échelle gauche-droite [...] Cette radicalisation est manifeste sur l'immigration, la perception de l'Islam et le sentiment de haine éprouvé au lendemain des attentats du 13 novembre 2015. Il s'y ajoute le sentiment d'une société française « qui se détériore au fil des années » et un rejet des responsables politiques. Sur tous ces aspects, les réponses sont très proches de celles des électeurs frontistes fidèles, déjà acquis au vote FN dès 2012. Entre ces derniers et les sarkozystes ralliés au vote FN, des écarts existent sur d'autres points, principalement sur l'Europe (diminuer ou non la participation de la France à l'Union) et les inégalités (le refus ou non de prendre aux riches pour donner aux pauvres – ce qui répugne à beaucoup de sarkozystes, quel que soit leur groupe).⁸⁸

When Sarkozy returned to frontline politics as president of the UMP in November 2014, a strategy focused on traditional values and responding to cultural insecurity therefore seemed the best way of winning back Traditionalist former UMP voters from the FN, who would be alienated by the adoption of a more open approach to identity. Opinion polls and analyses such as those discussed above therefore encouraged Sarkozy to harden his stance, and this furthered division.

The question of integration became a central issue in the 2016 primary of the Right and Centre and showed a clear division between the Modernists, represented by Juppé and the Traditionalists, whose views were shared by Sarkozy and Fillon. It was one of the key

⁸⁷ Ibid p.51

⁸⁸ Jérôme Jaffré, 'L'Enquête électorale française: Comprendre 2017: LA NOTE/#7/vague 1: Janvier 2016: Les nouveaux électeurs du Front National' p.4

moments when the Modernist/Traditionalist divide within Les Républicains threatened the existence of the party. Before this point, Modernists and Traditionalists had been able to coexist, as whatever the results of the internal elections, it was recognised that the party's position would be determined by the primary of November 2016. However, rather than putting an end to debate, the primary further polarised the division between the Modernists and the Traditionalists within Les Républicains, and made it difficult to achieve the reconciliation that was needed between both camps following the vote in order to win the 2017 presidential elections.

Sarkozy's attitude in the primary demonstrated the dangers that the contest over who should represent the party posed to unity of the movement. In trying to appeal to Traditionalist voters, he widened existing divisions. His attitude towards integration was well-illustrated in a speech he made during his campaign to become leader of the UMP in 2014, when he stated, '[l]a République ne peut pas accepter les communautés et le communautarisme, et si je veux combattre l'immigration c'est parce qu'elle menace l'équilibre républicain. C'est parce que dans la République laïque, nous ne voulons pas de signes religieux ostentatoires, c'est au nom de la République que nous combattons pour ces principes.'⁸⁹ In this way, he reminded voters, and particularly those who shared Modernist values, why they had not re-elected him in 2012, and in casting those with a Modernist viewpoint as a danger to France, he almost certainly encouraged at least some of them to think that they might no longer be at home in Les Républicains.

Sarkozy's strategy alienated Modernists, and also failed to attract Traditionalist voters, as he gave the impression of being more concerned with being provocative rather than proposing solutions. One key example of this was a speech he gave on integration, when he stated 'Nous ne nous contenterons plus d'une intégration qui ne marche plus, nous exigeons l'assimilation. Dès que vous devenez français, vos ancêtres sont gaulois.'⁹⁰ This was in part a reference to the school textbooks of the Third Republic, which used to talk of 'nos ancêtres les Gaulois.' The quote itself is often used to demonstrate the problems with the Third Republic's education model, where all students, including those in colonies with

⁸⁹ Francis Barthe, *Nicolas Sarkozy La Reconquête (1): De la défaite à la présidence de l'UMP 2012-2014* p.199

⁹⁰ Le Monde.fr avec AFP 'Pour Nicolas Sarkozy, nos ancêtres étaient les Gaulois mais aussi « les tirailleurs musulmans »' *Le Monde* 24 September 2016 <http://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2017/article/2016/09/24/pour-nicolas-sarkozy-nos-ancetres-etaient-les-gaulois-mais-aussi-les-tirailleurs-musulmans_5002989_4854003.html> [Accessed 06/09/17]

no ethnic link to France's Gallic past, were taught about their Gallic 'ancestors.'⁹¹ Juppé underlined the feelings of many that this phrase was only meant to shock when he tweeted 'Nullité du débat politique que soulèvent certains à droite et à gauche : on débat des Gaulois !! Et si l'on parlait d'avenir?'⁹² However, Sarkozy also failed to convince many of those whom he had expected to support his position. Frédéric Lefebvre, the Les Républicains *député* who represented French nationals in North America, emphasised how Sarkozy's statement was a deliberate attempt to attract Traditionalist voters, when he said 'Ce sont des mots qui sont censés nourrir une stratégie assez cynique de dérive identitaire, pour essayer, un peu comme le fait Trump [...], de rallier une partie de notre population qui est aujourd'hui exaspérée.'⁹³ Rather than being successful as Trump had been, in Sarkozy's case his provocative statement alienated both Modernists and Traditionalists, who saw him as being more concerned with securing headlines and ridiculing his opposition than actually dealing with their concerns.

Fillon beat both Sarkozy and Juppé in the primary by placing emphasis on the need for assimilation, but without Sarkozy's provocative statements. By focusing on Islam, he was able to appeal to other sections of the Traditionalist electorate such as Catholics, who have historically been strongly inclined to vote for the Right. Many Catholics felt both alienated by the Hollande government's promotion of more liberal cultural values and also targeted by radical Islam (particularly following the murder of Father Jacques Hamel at Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray in July 2016). In order to appeal to these voters, Fillon was therefore keen to emphasise the need for Muslims to assimilate, rather than to talk of a stricter approach to laïcité, which would apply to all religions. He stated:

[J]e ne parle pas de lutte contre les communautarismes pour ne pas nommer le problème que nous avons avec l'Islam. Les catholiques, les protestants, les juifs, les bouddhistes, les sikhs ne menacent pas l'unité nationale. Cessons donc de faire croire qu'il faut durcir les règles de la laïcité au prix d'atteintes inacceptables à la liberté religieuse alors que la seule poussée intégriste qui enflamme le monde musulman est une menace pour notre société.

⁹¹ Eugen Weber, Gauls versus Franks: conflict and nationalism. In Robert Tombs (ed.), *Nationhood and Nationalism in France, from Boulangism to the Great War* (London: Harper Collins 1991) p.15

⁹² G.S. "'Nullité du débat" Juppé enfonce Sarkozy et ses "ancêtres les Gaulois" *L'Obs* 22 September 2016 <<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/politique/presidentielle-primaire-droite/20160922.OBS8571/nullite-du-debat-juppe-enfonce-sarkozy-et-ses-ancetres-les-gaulois.html>> [Accessed 06/09/17]

⁹³ G.S. "'Nullité du débat" Juppé enfonce Sarkozy et ses "ancêtres les Gaulois"

Fillon wanted to 'imposer aux musulmans de France les règles communes qu'ont acceptés, souvent après de longs combats, les chrétiens et les juifs.'⁹⁴

The debate over integration and cultural insecurity was not only important as a division between members of the Centre Right, but also within the wider electorate that voted in the primary of 2016. As Fourquet has demonstrated, Sarkozy's attacks on Juppé's vision of 'l'identité heureuse', during the primary, helped to erode the lead that the Mayor of Bordeaux had established in the polls, although because of his provocative manner, Fillon was the one to benefit. Evidence of this could be seen in surveys, which showed that FN supporters were more likely to vote for Fillon in the primary than for Sarkozy, with 43% voting for Fillon and 32% choosing Sarkozy. Judgements of the sincerity of the candidates, reinforced by the campaigns they led, were crucial here, as, to quote Fourquet:

Comme lors de l'élection présidentielle de 2012, on peut penser que le ton et le style de l'ancien Président ont réactivé un sentiment de duperie et une volonté de sanction dans une bonne partie de cet électorat qui s'était laissé séduire en 2007 par la rupture sécuritaire, économique et identitaire promise à l'époque par Nicolas Sarkozy et qui est resté sur sa faim à l'issue de son quinquennat.⁹⁵

A similar analysis is shared by Eric Zemmour, who argues:

On aurait pu croire que l'électorat le plus résolu de la droite choisirait Nicolas Sarkozy pour "faire barrage" à Juppé. Mais ce barrage-là prend l'eau. Le discours "identitaire" de l'ancien président sent trop tactique, "son gros rouge qui tache", son absence de convictions [...] Alors, pour faire barrage à Alain Juppé et son "identité heureuse", de nombreux esprits s'échauffent et plébiscitent Fillon...Pas le meilleur, mais le moins pire.⁹⁶

Although the primary decided the party line in favour of the *droite décomplexée* vision, it arguably exacerbated rather than put an end to debate, to the point of threatening the existence of Les Républicains as a united party. Juppéistes found that they no longer had a leader on the Centre Right who articulated their vision, as the Modernist/Traditionalist

⁹⁴ François Fillon, '« Je veux faire pour les Français » Discours à Sablé sur Sarthe'

⁹⁵ Jérôme Fourquet, 'Primaires de la droite: les frontistes ont préféré Fillon' 25 November 2016 < <https://jean-jaures.org/blog/primaires-de-la-droite-les-frontistes-ont-prefere-fillon> > [Accessed 07/09/17]

⁹⁶ Jérôme Fourquet, Hervé Le Bras, *La guerre des trois: la primaire de la droite et du centre* (Paris: Fondation Jean Jaurès, 2017) p.24

divide was one where it was difficult to find a compromise. The problem intensified as, during his presidential campaign, Fillon continued to put greater emphasis on the importance of the traditional vision of French identity. Unlike the Juppéistes, who had celebrated diversity, in several speeches, he explicitly talked about responding to cultural insecurity. In terms of immigration, he argued that French values ‘ne sont pas l’agrégation des spécificités de chacun. La France n’est singulière que lorsqu’elle est plurielle à condition que chacun accepte une entité collective qui préexiste à sa propre identité. Il n’y a pas de France sans l’effort de se vouloir français, de se dire français, de se penser français.’⁹⁷ He defended the French model of integration, stating: ‘Nous sommes une nation d’intégration. Et l’intégration signifie que celui qui vient légalement en France adopte la France, et, dès lors, la France l’adopte comme l’un des siens.’⁹⁸

This position created a fracture within Les Républicains, that would become ever greater as the electoral process progressed. In response to Juppé’s defeat in the primary, some of his supporters, including Aurore Bergé, who had been responsible for the digital element of his campaign, joined *En Marche*, and more did so following the presidential elections. Macron’s first government would include several Juppéistes such as Edouard Philippe, who became Prime Minister, who would join an even wider political group involving figures also from the Left and Centre. Despite coming from different parties, most of these figures shared a Modernist approach to immigration and identity.

ii. The question of responses to terrorism

Opinion polls showed that the terrorist attacks carried out in France during 2015 and 2016 ensured that terrorism overtook unemployment to become the main concern of French voters in the run up to the primary of the Right and Centre⁹⁹. That the attacks were carried out by French nationals of North African heritage meant that the debate was intimately linked to that concerning integration and assimilation.

⁹⁷ François Fillon, ‘Discours de François Fillon au Puy-en-Velay: “Je suis venu parler de l’identité de notre nation, je suis venu parler de la France”’ 15 April 2017 <https://www.republicains.fr/actualites_discours_francois_fillon_puy_en_velay_20170415> [Accessed 22/09/17]

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ L’EXPRESS.fr avec AFP, ‘La lutte contre le terrorisme devenue la préoccupation principale des Français’ *L’Express* 27 July 2016 <https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/la-lutte-contre-le-terrorisme-devenue-la-preoccupation-principale-des-francais_1816386.html> [Accessed 22/10/18]

Unlike the question of identity, the question of how to react to the terrorist threat was not a major source of policy difference between the candidates for the primary on the Centre Right, nor did it play an important role in the relationship between the Centre Right and the Centre. The same went for the presidential elections. This was because focus became redirected to the question of whether integration or assimilation was more effective. Yet it did have an important impact on the way that candidates' personalities were perceived.

In this area Sarkozy's ideas were seen as provocative and not particularly effective. One example was his proposal to imprison all those suspected of having been radicalised, which appeared more concerned with seeming to be tough than with actually addressing the cause of the problem. In contrast, Fillon was able to propose policies that were seen as both hard-line and effective, and which made him appear a better choice to represent the Centre Right in 2017. He attacked the measures of Sarkozy and others as a 'concours Lépine des solutions les plus stupides et les plus imbéciles, censées lutter contre le terrorisme.'¹⁰⁰ While he focused on identity as a means of fighting terrorism, he accused Sarkozy of ignoring the practical aspects to use it solely as an electoral tool. He declared:

Disons le tout net: il ne suffit pas de sauter sur sa chaise et de crier identité ! identité ! comme un cabri pour définir ce qu'est la France. Disons-le aussi au risque de froisser mais je ne crois pas que le temps soit à l'interrogation sur cette question [...] Il y a un temps pour l'agitation et un temps pour l'action.¹⁰¹

Fillon's approach to the question of how to respond to terrorism was an important factor in creating the dynamic in his favour that emerged during the primary. As Fourquet and Le Bras state, this was particularly clear during the television debates, when 'Interrogé sur l'attitude à adopter face aux djihadistes présents au Levant, il se distingue nettement de ses concurrents en déclarant qu'il fera en sorte que le plus grand nombre possible d'entre eux ne puissent pas entrer en France, ce qui sous-entend un accord avec la Turquie pour les bloquer à sa frontière, mais aussi une action militaire d'élimination physique. Ces positions, très dures sur le fond, mais exposés sans dérapages ou excès, trouvent un écho certain dans le cœur de l'électorat de droite, qui commence à modifier son regard sur François Fillon.'¹⁰² At a time when many French people felt under threat from terrorism, the more measured but still strict line adopted by Fillon seemed more appropriate than Sarkozy's

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ François Fillon, '« Je veux faire pour les Français » Discours à Sablé sur Sarthe'

¹⁰² Fourquet, Le Bras, *La guerre des trois* p.44

attempts to portray himself as being the toughest on terrorism. To many of those voting in the primary, the former president seemed more concerned with his image than with the problem that needed to be resolved, as had been the case with his proposals on assimilation.¹⁰³

iii. Social conservatism vs social liberalism

The third element of cultural insecurity that affected the Centre Right during the Hollande presidency was due to the rise in prominence of liberal social values in society. This is also particularly important in the Modernist/Traditionalist divide, as Modernists support the spread of liberal values, while Traditionalists look to defend traditional beliefs. This division ran both down the middle of Les Républicains, and also between the Right and its historic allies in the Independent Centre during the Hollande presidency. It would be an important focus of debate during the primary, and would continue into and beyond the election campaigns of 2017, dividing those who remained loyal to Les Républicains, from others who defected either to En Marche or who later formed the *Constructifs*.

Hollande's move to legalise gay marriage caused problems for the Centre Right as it brought into the open and emphasised fundamental differences between Modernists and Traditionalists that ran through the party. In part, this policy was put forward as a means of increasing support from more Left-leaning voters. At a time when they were divided over economic policy, and when the financial crisis meant that there was little possibility of economic redistribution, they could unite around their shared Modernist values on cultural liberalism (and a 2013 CSA poll showed that 70% of Left-wing sympathisers were in favour of *Le Mariage Pour Tous*).¹⁰⁴ In contrast, the Centre Right was divided between social liberals and others who supported a socially conservative position. Many sympathisers of the Right took part in the mass demonstrations in opposition to the law, led by the *Manif Pour Tous*. As we shall see below, key figures within Les Républicains, along with a significant section of party members and sympathisers, did not see the passing of the law as putting a definitive end to debate, and hoped to modify it if the Centre Right returned to power. This would increase the importance of cultural insecurity in debate on the Centre Right and the role of the Traditionalists in formulating policy. This development was further

¹⁰³ Jérôme Fourquet, 'Primaire de la droite: les frontistes ont préféré Fillon'

¹⁰⁴ L'EXPRESS.fr avec AFP, 'Sondage: les Français favorables au mariage pour tous et non pas à l'adoption' L'Express <https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/sondage-les-francais-favorables-au-mariage-pour-tous-et-non-pas-a-l-adoption_1237239.html> [Accessed 22/10/18]

encouraged by the formation of *Sens commun*, a political group which brought together opponents of gay marriage, once the law had been passed, with the intention of shaping the policies of the Centre Right. As Raison du Cleuziou notes, this movement was seen as a significant lobby group.¹⁰⁵ It would alienate many of the Juppéistes, who saw it as a radical conservative body,¹⁰⁶ and as for the Traditionalists, Sarkozy would seek to lessen its influence,¹⁰⁷ while Fillon would gain its support.¹⁰⁸

The debate over *Le Mariage Pour Tous* created a lasting division on the Centre Right, and hindered its chances of bringing together a large coalition of support from beyond its core vote, while reinforcing other splits such as that concerning integration between Modernists and Traditionalists. Debate was not ended by the passing of the law, but continued to provoke division on the Centre Right through the primary and the presidential elections. Sarkozy and Fillon wanted to re-write sections of the law on gay marriage, while Juppé believed that such a debate belonged in the past, stating 'l'union entre deux homosexuels est entré dans nos droits et dans nos mœurs et je n'y toucherai pas.'¹⁰⁹ Once again, his view was not one shared by a majority of voters on the Right. An *Opinionway* poll, in June 2016, of those who claimed that they were certain to vote in the primary of the Right and Centre found that 40% wanted to re-write the law on gay marriage to restrict adoption to heterosexual couples, 28% wanted to repeal the law altogether, and 31% supported it.¹¹⁰ As with the question of integration, it was Fillon who received more support from those who were affected by cultural insecurity.

The idea that Sarkozy was mostly interested in using social values as an electoral tool had already been suggested during the 2014 UMP leadership campaign. At a campaign meeting in Paris in 2014, the former president had been booed by members of *Sens commun*, when he argued that the gay marriage law would be rewritten, but not repealed. In response, he stated 'si vous préférez qu'on dise [...] abroger la loi Taubira pour en faire une autre... En français, ça veut dire la même chose [...] Mais enfin, si ça vous fait plaisir, franchement, ça

¹⁰⁵ Yann Raison du Cleuziou, 'Sens commun: un combat conservateur entre deux fronts' *Le Débat* 2018/2 (no.199) 105-199 p.110

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid* p.111

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid* p.112

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid* p.112

¹⁰⁹ Agnès Leclair, 'Le mariage pour tous, sujet de divergences entre François Fillon et Alain Juppé' *Le Figaro* 24 novembre 2016 <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/elections/presidentielles/primaires-droite/2016/11/23/35004-20161123ARTFIG00352-le-mariage-pour-tous-sujet-de-frictions-entre-francois-fillon-et-alain-juppe.php>> [Accessed 22/10/18]

¹¹⁰ Laurent de Boissieu, 'Les électeurs de droite veulent réécrire la loi Taubira' *La Croix* 6 juin 2016 p.7

coûte pas très cher.¹¹¹ Sarkozy's reputation suffered because by changing his policy under pressure, he appeared opportunistic rather than being genuinely committed to a particular programme.

Fillon's approach proved far more successful, as it was part of a number of measures that promoted Catholic values, and as Richard stated 'François Fillon s'inscrit [...] de façon plus crédible et plus résolue que Nicolas Sarkozy dans le contexte de la remobilisation catholique.'¹¹² He promised to '[remettre] la famille au cœur de notre projet politique', part of which would involve asking Parliament to 'réécrire le droit de la filiation afin de protéger les droits de l'enfant'.¹¹³ He also seemed more genuine in his desire to defend Traditional values, and, as Richard notes, was the only key figure from Les Républicains to attend the last demonstration of La Manif pour Tous in October 2016.¹¹⁴ His stance brought him the support of Sens commun, whose leadership backed him from September 2016. As practising Catholics are very likely to vote for the Centre Right, Fillon's promotion of traditional Catholic values was important in explaining his rise in popularity during the primary campaign and the vote itself. Practising Catholic sympathisers of Les Républicains were more likely to vote than other sections of the party (36% of practising Catholic LR sympathisers voted, compared with 28% of atheist LR supporters and 24% of non-practising Catholic LR supporters), and 59% of practising Catholics voted for Fillon.¹¹⁵

The problem for the Juppéistes, who promoted a more socially liberal vision that was more in keeping with the opinion of the majority of the French population, was that they were in the minority on the Centre Right regarding these values. This issue became more important in the second round of the primary, as Fourquet and Le Bras note that Juppé's campaign, which tried to attack Fillon on social values, alienated Sarkozystes and FN voters, while failing to make significant gains. Many Centrist and Left-wing voters who had voted in the first round did not participate in the second, considering that they had achieved their main aim, that of eliminating Sarkozy.¹¹⁶ Juppé's strategy therefore ensured a large victory for Fillon.

¹¹¹ A.G. 'Nicolas Sarkozy trébuche sur la loi Taubira' *Paris Match* 17 November 2014 <<http://www.parismatch.com/Actu/Politique/Nicolas-Sarkozy-trebuche-sur-la-loi-Taubira-652670>> [Accessed 10/06/17]

¹¹² Gilles Richard, *Histoire des droites en France: de 1815 à nos jours* (Paris: Perrin, 2017) p.542

¹¹³ François Fillon, '« Je veux faire pour les Français » Discours à Sablé sur Sarthe'

¹¹⁴ *Ibid* p.536

¹¹⁵ Fourquet, Le Bras, *La guerre des trois* p.97

¹¹⁶ *Ibid* p.119

However, Fillon's success in the primary, rather than strengthening the party, pushed some Modernists to defect, as debate over cultural issues had finally been decided in favour of the Traditionalists. Some Juppéistes joined En Marche. Among those who defected before the 2017 presidential elections was Aurore Bergé, who argued that Fillon's views were incompatible with her own. She said 'Je reste de droite, mais il y a eu un glissement entre le parti fondé en 2002 par Alain Juppé, puis dépoussiéré par Nicolas Sarkozy entre 2004 et 2007, et celui qui a choisi François Fillon comme candidat. Dérembourser l'IVG, démarier les homos, pactiser avec Poutine: ce n'est pas "ma" droite.'¹¹⁷ Bergé described herself as 'libérale, progressiste, européenne, féministe,'¹¹⁸ which was very much in keeping with the Modernist profile, at a time when Fillon was trying to attract voters who were concerned by the spread of progressive, liberal values.

The problem created by the adoption of a Traditionalist line by the Centre Right was not only that it divided Les Républicains, but that it is also likely to have alienated potential voters from the Centre and Left who had been unconvinced by Hollande's economic policies and who might have been tempted to vote for the Centre Right. The Traditionalist position on the Right on the question of gay marriage was not matched within society as a whole. Juppé's policies were more popular outside the party, and so the choice of Fillon weakened the chances of Les Républicains attracting a broad section of support.

iv. Cultural insecurity as anti-elitism

The Centre Right was not only divided over questions of policy, but the differences between factions were widened by questions of anti-elitism, which is often linked to cultural insecurity. This is because it concerns different ways of seeing the world, and those who are affected by fears of a changing society often believe that those in power have a more liberal outlook, and fail to recognise their concerns. Each side of the Modernist/Traditionalist divide on the Centre Right portrayed the other not simply as a rival with alternative policies, but as an opponent who represented a social elite, incapable of understanding the problems faced by many voters. Differences of opinion over policy were exacerbated, as in each case the opposing side was painted as illegitimate, and unable to represent the French people. Once such differences had emerged during the

¹¹⁷ Myriam Levain, 'Aurore Bergé, la militante féministe qui a quitté Les Républicains pour Macron' *Cheek Magazine* 17 February 2017 < <http://cheekmagazine.fr/societe/aurore-berge-republicains-macron-feministe/> > [Accessed 07/09/17]

¹¹⁸ Ibid

primary, it was difficult to reconcile the two groups in order for them to cooperate during the presidential election.

The breakdown of traditional class voting habits (that we have considered in Chapter 1) encouraged the use of the issue of anti-elitism on the Centre Right, as it sought to capture the votes of blue-collar workers. This move was further encouraged by the decision of the Centre Left to adopt a more open multicultural attitude. Bouvet argues that the Left has accepted the expression of cultural demands by ethnic minority groups, while rejecting those of other disadvantaged sections of society, such as the white working class, whose demands are seen as illegitimate as they represent a 'majority'.¹¹⁹ In response, the Centre Right sought to appeal to workers by claiming to recognise their views, particularly those relating to identity, which were rejected by an elite. This could be seen in Sarkozy's 2012 campaign. Like Bouvet, he recognised that the working class and its values were often stigmatised as racist and outdated, and argued that fighting this was just as important as fighting racism. He stated :

je déteste le racisme. Je hais l'homophobie. Je déteste quand quelqu'un désigne l'autre à la vindicte. Je déteste les boucs-émissaires ; je déteste l'amalgame ; je déteste la violence qui est faite à toute personne mais je demande qu'on ne fasse pas cet amalgame, cette violence, ce racisme à l'endroit de ceux qui aiment la France et qui veulent garder la France telle qu'ils l'ont reçue de leurs parents.¹²⁰

As part of his strategy in 2012 that sought to win over those affected by concerns linked to cultural insecurity, Sarkozy attacked the ideological domination of an elite. He stated '[a]u fond, l'Europe a trop cédé à une conception que l'on a trop entendue à la fin des années 70 d'un monde sans Etat, d'un monde sans politique, où les techniciens, les bureaucrates, les technocrates avaient raison sur tout, avec leur calculette et leur code.'¹²¹ In other cases, the shift away from defending traditional values was an ideological choice, and this allowed the President to criticise the Left for its more favourable attitude towards immigration. For Sarkozy, 'parce que la pensée unique voulait dominer le monde, on a voulu effacer les frontières ; ce fut une erreur.'¹²² The minority that composed the elite was therefore imposing its views at the expense of the majority.

¹¹⁹ Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle* p.130

¹²⁰ Sarkozy, 'Discours de M. Nicolas Sarkozy le 29 mai 2012'

¹²¹ Ibid

¹²² Ibid

The issue of anti-elitism on the Centre Right continued beyond the 2012 elections and became part of the internal divide between Modernists and Traditionalists. In part, this is because the Modernists are traditionally seen as more economically successful than Traditionalists, although this ignores the presence, particularly on the Centre Right, of voters who support economic globalisation but are opposed to cultural change. The Modernists are often labelled in journalistic Anglophone critiques as the 'Liberal, metropolitan elite'¹²³ by those in the Traditionalist camp, and are accused of being out of touch. Similar views could also be found in France during this period, as in 2015 when Sarkozy attacked 'la bien-pensance qui traite de petit-bourgeois quand on parle de la famille, d'islamophobe quand vous parlez d'Islam, de réactionnaire quand vous parlez d'identité et des valeurs de la France'¹²⁴ and, in 2016, when Fillon talked of 'sujets qui font rire à l'intérieur du périphérique.'¹²⁵ Both Sarkozy and Fillon tried to position themselves as the defenders of the ordinary people against the elite.

This debate was important during the primary, where both Sarkozy and Fillon looked to secure the votes of Traditionalists by criticising the Modernist elite.

Sarkozy cast Juppé as a member of an out-of-touch elite, focusing on his promotion of an 'identité heureuse' at a time when France was under attack from French-born terrorists. He stated 'Il n'y a pas d'identité heureuse quand des milliers de Français nés en France, élevés en France en viennent à haïr à ce point leur patrie. Il n'y a pas d'identité heureuse lorsque les règles de la République sont à ce point bafouées.'¹²⁶ He criticised Juppé's proposals that he suggested would lead to the rise of separate communities within France, arguing that:

¹²³ See, for example, Laurence Dodds, 'Was this the revenge of the liberal metropolitan elite?' *The Daily Telegraph* 9 June 2017 <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/09/revenge-liberal-metropolitan-elite/>> [Accessed 22/10/18]; Janet Daley, 'A liberal elite wants to brush Ukip aside' *The Daily Telegraph*; James Slack, 'May savages the liberal elite: PM will use keynote speech at the Tory conference to condemn those who sneer at ordinary Britons' worries and reach out to millions of blue-collar workers' *The Daily Mail* 5 October 2016 <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3822338/May-savages-liberal-elite-PM-uses-keynote-speech-Tory-conference-condemn-sneer-ordinary-Britons-worries-reach-millions-blue-collar-workers.html>> [Accessed 22/10/18]

¹²⁴ Xavier Oriot, 'A Rouen, Sarkozy s'en prend à la bien-pensance' *Ouest France* 2 December 2015 <<http://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/regionales/rouen-sarkozy-sen-prend-la-bien-pensance-3885156>>

¹²⁵ Thomas Liabot, 'Après Sarkozy, Fillon s'attaque à son tour aux élites' *Le JDD* 24 November 2016 <<http://www.lejdd.fr/Politique/Apres-Sarkozy-Fillon-s-attaque-a-son-tour-aux-elites-827122>> [Accessed 14/09/17]

¹²⁶ Nicolas Sarkozy, *Tout pour la France* (Paris: Plon, 2016) p.17

Il n'y a pas d'identité heureuse lorsqu'on accepte des accommodements "raisonnables" par souci prétendu d'apaisement. Il n'y a pas d'identité nationale heureuse quand la politique menée conduit à ce qu'il n'y ait plus une seule France, mais une agrégation de communautés, d'identités particulières, où le droit à la différence devient plus important que la communauté de destin.¹²⁷

As someone who, according to his opponents, was a representative of a liberal elite, and unable to understand the problems that the country faced, Juppé was portrayed not solely as a rival but as a danger to France.

Fillon also criticised an out-of-touch elite that failed to represent the ordinary person. He stated: 'J'ai des valeurs et je ne m'excuse pas d'avoir des valeurs. Je crois à la famille, à l'autorité de l'Etat, au travail. Ce sont des valeurs qui font rire à l'intérieur du périphérique, mais qui dans le cœur des Français sont au contraire des valeurs profondément ancrées.'¹²⁸ For Fillon therefore, anyone from the Modernist camp would be unable to represent the Traditionalists properly.

Whereas Sarkozy positioned himself as a defender of the Traditionalists, Fillon was more convincing when he claimed to be one of them, and tried to demonstrate that he would therefore be best placed to represent them. He argued that the people he saw as role models were 'mon instituteur de Cérans-Foulletourte, mon professeur de sciences naturelles au collège, le père Dubois, les fondateurs du premier groupe volailler de France « LDC » qui n'avaient que leur certificat d'études ou l'éleveur de « Maine Anjou » de Notre-Dame-du-Pé.'¹²⁹ In contrast, he attacked experts who formed part of the Modernist elite, claiming that '[q]uand de brillants économistes tentent de me convaincre que les taux d'intérêts négatifs générés par la politique monétaire de la BCE vont durer encore longtemps, je ne peux pas m'empêcher de penser qu'un paysan sarthois sait sans avoir besoin d'un doctorat que l'argent gratuit n'existe pas et que la facture arrivera tôt ou tard.'¹³⁰

As part of his approach to addressing the concerns of Traditionalists affected by cultural insecurity, Fillon attacked those who always sought to criticise France's past. He rejected arguments that had served to undermine any celebration of French history, that he saw as

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ François Fillon, '« Je veux faire pour les Français » Discours à Sablé sur Sarthe'

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ Ibid

being particularly used by the Left. He stated ‘Non, la France n’est pas née en 1789 et elle n’est pas passé de l’ombre à la lumière en 1981 !’¹³¹ Rather than seeing colonialism as a crime against humanity as Macron would later do, Fillon adopted the traditional view that it was part of France’s *mission civilisatrice*, arguing, ‘Non la France n’est pas coupable d’avoir voulu faire partager sa culture aux peuples d’Afrique, d’Asie et d’Amérique du Nord.’¹³² While he did not deny that France had participated in the slave trade, he attempted to relativize this part of her history, by stating ‘Non, la France n’a pas inventé l’esclavage.’¹³³ In a context of growing cultural insecurity, France needed to take more pride in its past.

In contrast to Fillon, Juppé accused political elites of creating fears relating to cultural insecurity, but for him the problem was caused by a nationalist elite, who posed as defenders of the ordinary people, only to manipulate and mislead them. He stated : ‘Ce qui est frappant aujourd’hui, c’est ce fatalisme, je dirai même complaisance que l’on trouve chez certaines élites politiques ou intellectuelles. A les entendre...**La France serait condamnée à la peur.** A la peur d’elle-même. A la peur de l’avenir. A la peur de l’autre.’¹³⁴ For Juppé, cultural insecurity was more an invented political strategy than a real social issue that needed to be addressed.

This debate had a major impact in securing Fillon’s victory in the primary. As we have seen in the opinion polls quoted earlier in the chapter, many of the voters on the Centre Right were Traditionalists, who were particularly concerned about issues such as immigration and the place of Islam in the Republic. In showing that he respected them, and genuinely shared their concerns, Fillon was able to win their support. This was particularly the case among Catholics. Bouthours argues that:

Pour les catholiques pratiquants, Fillon *est de la maison*. C’est la figure paternelle, très dans la tradition de ce que doit être un père catholique dans une famille nombreuse: de l’autorité, une certaine distance à l’égard des gens, et un homme qui ne sacrifie pas aux modes.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² Ibid

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ ‘[Vidéo] Discours d’Alain Juppé sur l’identité de la France’ 13/09/16 <<http://www.alainjuppe2017.fr/discours-alain-juppe-strasbourg>> [Accessed 14/06/17] Emphasis in original

¹³⁵ Quoted in Fourquet, *A la droite de Dieu* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 2018) p.111

This analysis is supported by Fourquet, who argues that Fillon's 'image et son parcours personnel: notable puis homme d'Etat issu d'une famille catholique de l'ouest ont permis une identification, ou du moins une certaine proximité [avec l'électorat catholique pratiquant].'¹³⁶ In contrast, Juppé appeared to many Right-wing sympathisers as a defender of the liberal elite.

Yet if the debate over elitism strengthened Fillon in the short term, it would eventually undermine both him and Les Républicains, and weaken their chances of winning in 2017. As we shall see below, several Juppéistes felt alienated by the primary where they were often cast as out of touch. This encouraged some to leave the party after the vote in 2016, but the debate would have an even more decisive impact on the presidential elections. When the allegations that he had used public funds to employ his wife as his parliamentary assistant, despite there being little evidence of her having done any work in this role, were made against Fillon by the *Canard Enchaîné*, there were suggestions that he might be replaced as the presidential candidate of the Centre Right by Juppé. Given that national polls had consistently shown the Mayor of Bordeaux to be the preferred presidential candidate of the national electorate as a whole, it seemed quite possible that he could lead the party to victory. However, the nature of the attacks from the Traditionalists during the primary had convinced Juppé that he was unable to represent their views and bring Les Républicains together. It could be argued that the presidential elections might have had a different outcome with a Juppé candidacy.

v. The Modernist/Traditionalist split in voting habits in the primary of the Right and Centre of 2016

This Modernist/Traditionalist divide was not only a feature that separated *députés* within the party, but could also be clearly observed between party members and supporters.

As Cayrol has demonstrated, the split between Modernists and Traditionalists within the voters of the Centre Right had already been suggested in polls conducted before the primary. He points to an Ifop poll for *Atlantico* from July 2015, which found that 59% of the supporters of Les Républicains felt that the existence of a Muslim community represented a threat to France's national identity, compared with 23% of PS sympathisers, and 90% of those of the FN.¹³⁷ In the 2016 *Fractures françaises* survey, in response to statements such

¹³⁶ Fourquet, *A la droite de Dieu* p.111

¹³⁷ Roland Cayrol, *Les raisons de la colère: L'élection de la dernière chance* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2017) p.99

as 'Aujourd'hui, on ne sent plus chez soi comme avant' 41% of PS supporters, 73% of LR and 98% of FN supporters agreed.¹³⁸ That the score for LR came between that of the Left and the FN suggests, as Cayrol notes, that LR voters were split between a more Centrist wing and a more Right-leaning wing.

Such a divide was also visible in voting patterns in the primary of 2016. Young people were more likely to support Juppé,¹³⁹ whilst practising Catholics and older people, groups identified by Bouvet as being more prone to the fears related to cultural insecurity, supported Fillon.¹⁴⁰ Another key traditionalist group, that of FN voters, also backed Fillon.¹⁴¹ This was because he was seen as being tough and effective, whereas, as Fourquet and Le Bras have shown, Sarkozy was provocative and reminded them of how they had been disappointed in his presidency.¹⁴²

While it had been possible to maintain party unity as debate over policy was neglected, once cultural insecurity came to the forefront during the primary, these fractures widened and, as we shall see below, led to a significant number of Modernists abandoning Les Républicains, and the party's candidate, Fillon, for Macron and En Marche.

Several Juppéistes who had been willing to support Fillon, in spite of their differences, when it looked as if he would win the *présidentielles*, turned to Emmanuel Macron following the accusations made by *Le Canard Enchaîné*. He was a candidate who offered a much more open vision of national identity, and like Juppé, he celebrated diversity, most notably in a speech in Spring 2017 in Marseille, where he referred to the many different nationalities which had come to make up a multicultural city.¹⁴³ As Chirac had done, Macron acknowledged dark sides to French history, and claimed that colonialism had been a crime against humanity.¹⁴⁴ Macron's approach to the question of identity was closer to the vision of Juppé, than the Mayor of Bordeaux's programme was to that of Fillon. The

¹³⁸ Teinturier et Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016 Vague 4* p.56

¹³⁹ Jérôme Fourquet, Hervé Le Bras, *La guerre des trois: la primaire de la droite et du centre* (Paris : Fondation Jean Jaurès, 2017) p.53

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid* pp.97 and 53

¹⁴¹ Jérôme Fourquet, 'Primaire de la droite: les frontistes ont préféré Fillon' 25 November 2016 <<https://jean-jaures.org/blog/primaire-de-la-droite-les-frontistes-ont-prefere-fillon>> [Accessed 07/09/17]

¹⁴² *Ibid* p.24

¹⁴³ Emmanuel Macron, 'Rassemblement à Marseille, Discours d'Emmanuel Macron, 1^{er} avril 2017' <<https://en-marche.fr/articles/discours/meeting-macron-marseille-discours>> [Accessed 05/04/19]

¹⁴⁴ Le Point.fr, 'Emmanuel Macron: "Le colonialisme est un crime contre l'humanité"' *Le Point* <https://www.lepoint.fr/presidentielle/emmanuel-macron-la-colonisation-est-un-crime-contre-l-humanite-15-02-2017-2105177_3121.php> [Accessed 05/04/19]

proposals that Macron made relating to immigration and integration also followed the Juppé model of recognising that both the State and immigrants had responsibilities. While arguing that anyone wishing to obtain French nationality should be expected to learn French,¹⁴⁵ and that failed asylum seekers should be deported within six months,¹⁴⁶ Macron emphasised the need to fight discrimination.¹⁴⁷ Some Juppéistes began to feel that Les Républicains had become an outdated party, and that they now had more in common with En Marche than with their fellow party members. For example, we have already seen how Aurore Bergé chose to join En Marche, and in March 2017, over 100 members of Les Jeunes avec Juppé gave their support to Macron, citing the ‘radicalisation’ of Fillon’s programme as one of the reasons for their decision, and stating that ‘Nous ne nous reconnaissons pas dans cette droite qui a fait le choix de Sens Commun.’¹⁴⁸ Such a reaction was not confined to Les Républicains, but could also be seen among sections of the Independent Centre parties, who had been expected to rally behind Fillon. Immediately following the primary, 130 members of the jeunes de l’UDI signed a letter outlining their support for Macron, notably because they felt he represented ‘un libéralisme à visage humain et de l’ouverture à la modernité du monde actuel, tant sur l’économie que sur le côté social.’¹⁴⁹ The divisions caused by debate over questions concerning identity were therefore a key reason for Fillon’s defeat in the presidential elections and the subsequent disintegration of Les Républicains.

Conclusion

In the first chapter, we saw how faith in traditional institutions and ideologies had gone into decline between 1981 and 2012, and that in many cases, a significant number of voters had tended to adopt a more personalised approach to politics. These trends continued during the Hollande presidency, and various aspects of the 2017 presidential elections would provide ample evidence of this. The most obvious was the victory of Emmanuel Macron, who had created a movement based on his own personality in 2016, and who did

¹⁴⁵ Emmanuel Macron, *Emmanuel Macron Président: Programme* (2017) p.19

¹⁴⁶ Ibid p.19

¹⁴⁷ Ibid p.19

¹⁴⁸ Jérémie Patrier-Leitus, François Vilar, Mathilde Pigné, Marine Cazard, Emmanuelle Brisson et al. ‘100 membres des Jeunes avec Juppé apportent leur soutien à Emmanuel Macron’ *L’Obs* 13 March 2017

<<https://www.nouvelobs.com/presidentielle-2017/20170313.OBS6485/100-membres-des-jeunes-avec-juppe-apportent-leur-soutien-a-emmanuel-macron.html>> [Accessed 05/04/19]

¹⁴⁹ Libération.fr, ‘Le Direct: Des jeunes de l’UDI vers Macron’ *Libération.fr* 28 November 2016 <https://www.liberation.fr/direct/element/des-jeunes-de-ludi-vers-macron_52896/> [Accessed 15/05/19]

not represent an established party. Another key indicator of the change could be found in the number of voters who struggled to decide between candidates offering very different policies, such as Macron and Mélenchon. Furthermore, there was a high level of abstention, as many citizens showed little enthusiasm to support the established parties of government. This new relationship between voters and political parties was confirmed by the legislative elections, in which En Marche won an absolute majority in the National Assembly, and following this, when Macron's government contained figures from both the Left and the Right.

The rise in prominence of what we have described as cultural insecurity was a further example of voters' adoption of a more personalised approach to politics. This referred to a number of fears relating to the evolution of French society, held by various sections of the population, which was important in influencing the voting habits of the French people. It is clear that there was a significant section of French society that was ill at ease with the rise of a more visible presence of Islam within France and with the spread of more liberal social values promoted by the Socialist government, and that this had an impact on their voting habits.

The debate around cultural insecurity has focused on the Left, but it had also become very much an issue for the Centre Right, which faced the question of how to respond to the rise of the Front National in a way that would not hinder attempts to build a broad coalition of support in order to win back power. It is cultural insecurity, more than any other issue, which explains the internal quarrels and fragmentation of the Centre Right during the Hollande presidency.

In many cases, this division grew out of the Sarkozy presidency, and particularly Sarkozy's 2012 presidential election campaign. Here he had put great emphasis on the need to defend traditional values and for immigrants to assimilate, in an attempt to win over FN voters. Although several members of the Centre Right would later criticise this strategy, at the time, the need to remain united in order to try to win power ensured that concerns were generally stifled.

The debate that followed the 2012 defeats as to how the UMP might regain the presidency and win a majority in the National Assembly, confirmed that the party was split between two camps: a Modernist wing which accepted the changes in society, and wanted to go further in some cases, and a Traditionalist wing, which looked to respond to the concerns of those affected by cultural insecurity, particularly by protecting traditional values. This

division ran through all issues related to identity, whether integration, responses to terrorism, gay rights or the question of elitism. The conflict between these contradictory positions would make it almost impossible to maintain party unity while building the broad coalition of support necessary to win the 2017 presidential and legislative elections.

This problem became clear in the years preceding the primary, which revealed that the Traditionalist position was much stronger within Les Républicains than amongst the French people as a whole. Copé exploited this to win the presidency of the UMP with the promise of a *droite décomplexée*. When Copé was forced to resign, Sarkozy returned as leader of the party and continued to follow the same strategy of appealing to the Traditionalists as he had done in 2012. Polls continued to show throughout the period that socially conservative views were dominant among the Centre Right electorate.

The Traditionalist position was reinforced by events outside the party. Hollande's decision to legalise gay marriage led to mass protests, out of which emerged Sens commun, and would have a strong influence on debate on the Centre Right. The terrorist attacks of 2015 and 2016 carried out by French nationals of North African heritage also increased the demand for tougher approaches to integration and terrorism, further tilting debate on the Centre Right in the direction of the Traditionalists. Yet in spite of this, Traditionalists and Modernists continued to coexist within the same party, as all understood that only the primary would solve debate over policy, and that any elections before then were of less importance.

This strengthening of the Traditionalist position harmed the prospects of those Centrists who might have been best placed to gather support beyond party members. This was the case for Alain Juppé, the figurehead of the Modernist faction within the Centre Right. Although his views in support of integration rather than assimilation and his desire to create an 'identité heureuse' helped him to become the most popular politician in France at this time, it put him at odds with the values of many supporters of Les Républicains. Similarly, his desire not to modify the law on gay marriage, which represented the opinion of the majority of the French population, was in the minority on the Centre Right. Therefore, although in the primary he was widely seen as the candidate most likely to win the presidential elections, he was not regarded as the person best able to represent the views of supporters of Les Républicains.

While it had long been thought that Sarkozy would be the representative of the Traditionalists within Les Républicains, he failed to make it past the first round. His

campaign was seen by many as one that sought to provoke his opponents rather than to propose practical solutions to the problems facing France. Sarkozy's apparent lack of commitment to his policies had already been illustrated in 2014 when he had changed his position on gay marriage when faced by the opposition of Sens commun, and continued in 2016, with his proposals on terrorism, which seemed more concerned with trying to appear tough than with actually resolving the problem. As Fourquet and Zemmour have noted, many Traditionalists who had abandoned the UMP in 2012 for other parties were reminded why they had rejected Sarkozy.¹⁵⁰

Instead it would be Fillon who captured the votes of Traditionalists by putting emphasis on the need to appeal to those affected by cultural insecurity. Unlike Sarkozy, he seemed more interested in seeking solutions than in creating conflict. He defended assimilation rather than integration, and stressed the need for Muslim citizens to accept laïcité, rather than the need to reinforce the law on laïcité itself, thereby avoiding alienating Catholics. His proposals to fight terrorism seemed potentially more effective than those of Sarkozy. In terms of social values, he was perceived not merely to be a defender of Traditionalist views, but also as someone who deeply believed in them, rather than adopting them as a political strategy. His apparent authenticity seemed a guarantee that he would actually implement the policies on which he was campaigning. These features allowed him to win over large numbers of Traditionalist voters and overtake Sarkozy and Juppé to come top in the first round with 44%. With Sarkozy in third place, the victory of the Traditionalists under Fillon seemed assured, and was confirmed a week later.

The combination of anti-elitism joined with the Traditionalist/Modernist divide in the primary widened existing divisions and further alienated the Modernists. Rather than being a debate over two different visions, each side tried to undermine the other by accusing it of representing an elite, out of touch with ordinary voters. This deepened and characterised divisions within Les Républicains, making it almost impossible to reunite the party later.

The voting in the primary itself further revealed the split between Modernists and Traditionalists on the Centre Right. Groups that were most likely to be affected by cultural

¹⁵⁰ Jérôme Fourquet, 'Primaire de la droite: les frontistes ont préféré Fillon' 25 November 2016 <<https://jean-jaures.org/blog/primaire-de-la-droite-les-frontistes-ont-prefere-fillon>> [Accessed 07/09/17] and Eric Zemmour, quoted in Jérôme Fourquet, Hervé Le Bras, *La guerre des trois : la primaire de la droite et du centre* (Paris : Fondation Jean Jaurès, 2017) p.24

insecurity — older voters¹⁵¹, Catholics¹⁵² and FN supporters¹⁵³ — voted in the majority for Fillon, as the candidate best able to address their concerns. In contrast, the largest section of the votes of those under 35 went to Juppé.¹⁵⁴ The division between the two camps was clear to see, and made it evident that the primary had done little to bring the two sides together.

Indeed, rather than resolve the debate over cultural insecurity, as had been hoped, the result of the primary highlighted and reinforced the existing problems. The contests for the party leadership following Sarkozy's resignation had not been decisive as all sides could remain together in the knowledge that the main competition would be that in 2016. Yet once the primary was over, it was clear that the Modernists had lost and, being very much in the minority within the membership Les Républicains, they would be forced to abandon their own project in favour of one with which they profoundly disagreed should they remain within the party.

The emergence of Emmanuel Macron deepened the problem for Les Républicains. He represented an open, Modernist alternative for those who felt uncomfortable with a party moving in a Traditionalist direction. In a period when voters were becoming much more independent, and less attached to traditional ideologies, movement between parties was much more likely than in the past. This could be seen in the way that En Marche attracted *députés* from both the PS and the Centre Right. Les Républicains also suffered as the socially liberal policies supported by Juppé were much more popular outside the party, and so defeat of the Mayor of Bordeaux almost certainly encouraged former Hollande voters who might have supported the Centre Right to back Macron.

Though the chance of winning power had discouraged defections on the Centre Right until after the presidential elections, the success of Macron and En Marche led to the appointment of several Modernists from Les Républicains to the government, including Edouard Philippe, who became Prime Minister, and Aurore Bergé who was made a spokesperson for En Marche, while others formed a separate parliamentary group, Les Constructifs, to support the actions of the government.

¹⁵¹ Fourquet, Le Bras, *La guerre des trois* p.53

¹⁵² Fourquet, Le Bras, *La guerre des trois* p.97

¹⁵³ Jérôme Fourquet, 'Primaires de la droite: les frontistes ont préféré Fillon'

¹⁵⁴ Fourquet, Le Bras, *La guerre des trois : la primaire de la droite et du centre* (Paris : Fondation Jean Jaurès, 2017) p.53

The issue of cultural insecurity was therefore one of the determining factors in the failure of Les Républicains to win the presidential and legislative elections of 2017. Debate in this area split the party into two camps, and prevented the unity required in order to regain power. This division could be seen following the results of the legislative elections, which led to the disintegration of the party into four different groups. There were those *députés* who left Les Républicains to join En Marche, while others sat separately from the majority of the party in the National Assembly. Amongst those who remained loyal to Les Républicains, there was a division between those who wished to continue the Traditionalist approach and others who favoured more appeals to the Modernists. The Traditionalist/Modernist divide within the Centre Right had developed under the Hollande presidency. It had undone much of the work of the UMP, which had supposedly united Right-wing currents, and fractured the party. The sources of division remained unresolved in June 2017. This made identity the most internally divisive of the axes, and would contribute to subsequent disintegration of the party.

Chapter 3: Axis 2, Economic liberalism

The Centre Right and the challenges of economic reform

Introduction

This chapter will consider how attitudes to economic liberalism provided another of the axes that structured the new alignment of parties.¹ We shall see how debate concerning economic questions proved as decisive as that over identity in determining the fortunes of Les Républicains during the Hollande presidency, and particularly its role in ensuring both the victory of Fillon in the primary of 2016 and his defeat in the presidential elections of 2017.

Firstly, this chapter will argue that analyses of French attitudes towards capitalism in contemporary society, such as those of Waters and Jennings,² which have focused on the population's suspicion of liberal policies, must be nuanced in order to explain the result of the 2017 presidential elections. Attitudes had been evolving since the 1980s, and voters' belief in the need for liberal measures grew during the Hollande presidency. The chapter will show that the increase in support for liberal economic reformist policies was one of the factors that drove a weakening of some ideological divisions in this area, as many voters were willing to accept what they felt might be practical solutions to improve the French economic situation. A large proportion of the electorate was now more open to pro-business measures, and keen for a balance between liberal economic reform and state protection. In order to demonstrate this evolution, this chapter will make extensive use of opinion polls conducted during the Hollande presidency.

Secondly, it will show how there existed a 'consensus of government', as the reduction in traditional ideological differences applied not only to the electorate but also to political parties, which, since the *tournant de la rigueur* under Mitterrand in 1982-3, often enacted similar liberal economic measures to each other when in power.

¹ While there has been much academic debate concerning 'neoliberalism', this chapter will instead use terms such as 'economic liberalism', 'liberal economic policy' and 'liberal policies,' which are less charged terms. The aim is to demonstrate the evolution of attitudes towards the place of the state in the French economy, and what effect this had on political parties, which may be best achieved by avoiding the most contentious terms.

² Sarah Waters, *Between Republic and Market: Globalization and Identity in Contemporary France* (London: Continuum, 2012); Jeremy Jennings, 'France and the "Anglo-Saxon" Model: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives', *European Review* Vol. 14, No.4, (2006) 537-544

Thirdly, it will consider the effect that this evolution has had on the political landscape and the realignment of the party system during the Hollande *quinquennat*, to explain the challenges that this posed to Les Républicains. It will demonstrate that the political landscape in 2017 differed from that in 2012, as many voters felt that urgent action was needed in order to liberalise the national economy, and prioritised this over improving their own economic situation. Following the inability of the PS to respond effectively to the economic crisis, it had been predicted that Les Républicains would win the presidential elections of 2017, and the reason for their failure to do so has often been explained through focus on the Penelopegate scandal.³ However, such analyses ignore a crucial problem faced by the Centre Right, which was that it lost its role as the party best able to represent the ‘consensus of government’ over liberal economic policy to Emmanuel Macron and En Marche, who came to represent the growing reformist trend. This chapter will demonstrate how Fillon’s economic proposals, which had played an important role in ensuring his success in the primary, were attacked by rivals, both within his own party and by other political movements, as ‘brutal’, and alienated a significant number of voters during the presidential election campaign, who considered his programme to be too radical. This loss of support started several months before the Penelopegate scandal broke.

It can therefore be seen that economic policies were a key reason for the defeat of the Centre Right in the 2017 presidential and legislative elections and that this aspect of the reorientation of the party system would represent a threat to its future as a united political force.

Long-standing French concerns about liberalism under the Fifth Republic

One of the main challenges faced by Les Républicains during the Hollande presidency was how to win support for a programme that promoted increased economic liberalism. Under the Fifth Republic, many parties and voters in France of both the Centre Left and the Centre Right had supported state-interventionist policies, and been wary of any increase in the

³ See for example, Mény, who argues, writing about Macron, ‘The “young Bonaparte” could have failed in his “foolish” enterprise had a certain number of events not occurred: Hollande’s withdrawal, Fillon’s mischiefs, and the PS’s choice of Hamon rather than Valls as a candidate.’ Yves Mény, ‘A tale of party primaries and outsider candidates: the 2017 French presidential election’ *French Politics* Vol.15 Issue 3 (September 2017) 265-278 p.273. This was also the view of key figures within Les Républicains, with Wauquiez claiming ‘On paye cher les affaires. Ce ne sont pas nos idées qui ont été battues.’ Matthieu Goar, ‘François Fillon, les raisons de la défaite’ *Le Monde* 23 April 2017 <https://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2017/article/2017/04/23/francois-fillon-les-raisons-de-la-defaite_5116013_4854003.html> [Accessed 02/01/19]

role of the private sector. As we shall see, even those who had looked to introduce some liberal reform had often done so cautiously and had faced widespread opposition from the general population.

Part of the explanation for this attachment to the state is that as the *Trente Glorieuses* period of rapid growth, and the development of the social security system, occurred at a time when the government played a major role in directing the economy, many voters had come to associate a strong public sector with a model which produced both economic growth and protected its citizens. As Gordon and Meunier note:

Because the 1950s and 60s saw a large increase in state benefits, like social security and generous health care and pension benefits, many French people remember *dirigisme* fondly [...] This favourable judgement – in contrast, for example, to Great Britain, where many people had judged their interventionist state a failure by the 1980s – would later contribute to France’s difficulty in adapting to the requirements of globalisation. Why, many French people felt (and continue to feel), fix something that is not fundamentally broken?⁴

Voters were attached to a state-driven approach not only because they considered it to be economically successful and beneficial for its citizens, but also because they saw it as being part of French national identity. As Smith states, one reason why state spending is seen as positive by many sections of the population is that it is considered to represent the second part of the Republican *triptyque, égalité*, as being a means to reduce inequality.⁵ This view is shared by Waters, who writes, ‘In France, identity is bound with a conception of the state which protects its citizens, redistributes wealth and guarantees equality’⁶. It is supported by an Ipsos poll conducted in December 2016. Although 58% of all voters surveyed (including 76% of supporters of Les Républicains and the UDI) thought that the role of the state in the economy should be reduced,⁷ a majority considered that ‘l’Etat n’intervient pas assez dans l’économie pour réduire les inégalités sociales’, with 74% of all voters and 57% of the supporters of Les Républicains and the UDI agreeing with this statement.⁸ It is

⁴ Quoted in Timothy B. Smith, *France in Crisis: Welfare, Inequality and Globalization since 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p.72

⁵ Smith, *France in Crisis* p.2

⁶ Waters, *Between Republic and Market* p.8

⁷ Brice Teinturier, Vincent Dusseaux, *Les Français, l’économie et la réforme de l’Etat: Sondage préparé pour la 18^{ième} édition du livre d’économie* p.10 <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/files-fr-fr/doc_associe/la_journee_et_le_prix_du_livre_deconomie_2016_vdef.pdf>

⁸ Ibid p.13

therefore clear that the view that the state should play a greater role in reducing inequality was shared even by some of those favourable to liberal economic reform.

Another reason also related to national identity that explained French support for a large public sector under the Fifth Republic was that liberal economic policies were often considered to be part of a foreign, Anglo-Saxon system. Hayward and Jennings both note that historically, French identity was in part defined against an English, and later British and American 'other', often grouped together under the term 'Anglo-Saxon'.⁹ Now that military conflict between these nations belongs in the past, much of the opposition within France to 'Anglo-Saxon' practices refers to economic policy. As Jennings notes, 'the 'Anglo-Saxon model' is a coded allusion to a whole series of things that are adjudged to be at once foreign and dangerous, most notably the 'neo-liberal' market economy, globalization, and Atlanticism.'¹⁰ An example of this could be seen in 2009, when Sarkozy claimed that 'la crise est venue de la dérive d'un modèle anglo-saxon, je veux pour le monde la victoire d'un modèle européen qui n'a rien à voir avec les excès d'un capitalisme financier.'¹¹

This perception that liberal reform is 'Anglo-Saxon' rather than French has encouraged resistance to economic policies aimed at making the economy more competitive. As Fougier recognises, 'What the French reject are the inequalities of a society entirely dominated by market forces, which demand continuous adaptation to improve the performances of the economic machine.'¹² Under the Fifth Republic, this view had historically been shared by those on both the Left and the Right, and was the case even among those who argued most strongly for liberal economic policies. For example, Sarkozy had promised 'une rupture tranquille'¹³ when he was candidate for the 2007 presidential elections, that would in part involve changes in economic policy. However, as Waters notes, '[h]e saw the Republic as the pioneer of a new moral order that would overcome the excesses of Anglo-Saxon liberalism.'¹⁴ These views heightened opposition to economic

⁹ See Jeremy Jennings, 'France and the "Anglo-Saxon" Model: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives', *European Review* Vol. 14, No.4, 537-544 (2006) and Jack Hayward *Fragmented France: Two Centuries of Disputed Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

¹⁰ *Ibid* p.538

¹¹ P.A. 'Nicolas Sarkozy ne veut pas d'une « politique de rigueur »' *lefigaro.fr* 1 December 2009 <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/conjoncture/2009/12/01/04016-20091201ARTFIG00440-nicolas-.php>> [Accessed 06/01/19]

¹² Quoted in Waters, *Between Republic and Market* p.19

¹³ *L'Express.fr*, 'Sarkozy promet une "rupture tranquille"' *L'Express.fr* 30 November 2006 <https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/sarkozy-promet-une-rupture-tranquille_461571.html> [Accessed 03/12/17]

¹⁴ Waters, *Between Republic and Market* p.42

reform within France, because, as Smith observes, 'since labour market reforms originated in Thatcher's UK, change is associated with an unpopular foreign model.'¹⁵ As we shall see later, this was a problem that Fillon would encounter during his campaign for the presidential elections, when his radical economic policies were often seen as foreign and ill-suited to France and French traditions.

In addition to these long-standing attitudes towards state intervention, the evolution of the French economy from the 1970s, which moved away from manufacturing towards a larger services sector, also increased hostility to liberal reforms, and distanced sections of the electorate from the traditional parties of government. As we saw in the first chapter, Guillyu has demonstrated that new divisions have appeared among the French population, which cut across traditional class divides. Many former industrial towns have suffered from the loss of manufacturing jobs, particularly due to competition from countries where labour is cheaper, and in an increasingly globalised economy, employment is now concentrated in large metropolitan centres. Sections of the blue-collar working class and lower middle class have suffered the consequences of this and feel increasingly alienated from parties of both the Centre Left and the Centre Right, both of which advocate liberal measures. Many members of these social groups have turned to the FN, which offers a more protectionist, state-driven approach.¹⁶ As we shall see, this would prove particularly difficult for Fillon, as while voters from the Far Right might support his policies on national identity and social values, many would be alienated by his economic proposals.

Political parties had hesitated to abandon a state-driven approach because a significant section of the electorate had been particularly wary of any liberal economic alternative. In 2009, a BBC World Service Globescan/PIPA poll, carried out in 27 countries, found that France had the largest minority opposed to free market capitalism, with 43% believing that a new economic system was needed.¹⁷ France was also the country with the third highest proportion of respondents wanting greater state intervention in business regulation, behind Brazil and Chile, with 76% in favour, compared with 73% of those from Spain, 56% of those from Britain and 45% of those from Germany.¹⁸ 57% of the French wanted greater state control of businesses.¹⁹ Policies of state intervention were therefore not solely an

¹⁵ Smith, *France in Crisis* p.15

¹⁶ Christophe Guillyu, *La France périphérique* (Paris: Flammarion, 2014) p.87

¹⁷ Pascal Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne: Pourquoi et pour qui votons-nous ?* (Paris: Fayard, 2012) p.148

¹⁸ Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.148

¹⁹ Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.148

ideological position adopted by political parties, but also reflected the wishes of significant sections of the electorate.

Another reason why parties had been wary of reshaping the economy was that previous attempts by the Right to do so had been politically disastrous. Schweisguth argues that Chirac's decision to stand on a platform of economic liberalism was largely responsible for his defeat by Mitterrand in the presidential elections of 1988.²⁰ Later, in 1995, after Chirac had won the presidential election with a campaign based on 'la fracture sociale', his reforms to reduce the size of the public sector, and particularly his pension reform measures, meant that the RPR lost the legislative elections called in 1997.²¹ Similar opposition to liberal measures could also be seen under the Sarkozy presidency, where although he had been elected following a campaign in which he had insisted on *rupture*,²² a series of strikes and demonstrations, combined with the economic crisis that started in 2008, meant that most of the promised reforms were either abandoned or emptied of much of their more radical content. As Grant and Wilson have noted:

[Sarkozy] won election in 2007 on a campaign platform as close to market liberalism – or the “Anglo Saxon model of capitalism” – as imaginable for a French Presidential candidate. But once the crisis hit, he changed his discourse entirely, becoming the champion of renewed “state capitalism” through calls for greater interventionism at the national level and his push for coordinated state regulation at the international level. In the end, he produced neither the extreme market liberalism of his campaign promises nor the old-fashioned state *dirigisme* of his initial crisis discourse, although he did produce both liberalizing reforms and statist actions.²³

Despite the economic crisis, calls for budget discipline within the Eurozone, and his own campaign promises, state spending rose under Sarkozy's presidency, from 52.2% of GDP in 2007 to 56.8% of GDP in 2012.²⁴ The opposition that economic reforms had often produced, particularly when they had come from the Right, and his own past experience of

²⁰ Etienne Schweisguth, 'Déclin et recomposition des cultures politiques' in *Les Cultures politiques en France* Serge Berstein ed. (Paris: Seuil, 2003) pp.377-414 p.401

²¹ Bruno Amable, Stefano Palombarini, *L'illusion du bloc bourgeois: Alliances sociales et avenir du modèle français* (Paris: Raisons d'agir éditions, 2017) p.46

²² Nick Hewlett, *The Sarkozy Phenomenon* (Exeter: Societas Imprint Academic, 2011) p.2

²³ Wyn Grant, Graham K Wilson, *The Consequences of the Global financial crisis: The Rhetoric of Reform and Regulation* (Oxford: OUP, 2012) p.174

²⁴ Ifrap, *Société civile: Le Mensuel de la Fondation Ifrap: Bilan 2007-2017 fiscalité, dette, dépenses publiques, chômage* p.8

the mass demonstrations against pension reforms when he was president, may go some way to explain why Sarkozy was less radical than Fillon in his economic proposals during the campaign for the Primary of the Right and Centre in 2016.

However, if it was clear that candidates proposing wide-ranging reform in the 2017 elections would have to win over an electorate traditionally suspicious of liberal measures, they could be encouraged by the fact that an increasing number of people considered that a reduction in the size of the state was necessary to improve the performance of the French economy.

The evolution of attitudes towards the French economy: a rise in demand for liberalism

As we have seen above, large sections of French society have traditionally been attached to state intervention. However, the continuing economic crisis from 2008, the failure of successive governments to overcome unemployment through interventionist methods, and the decline in French economic performance in relation to other countries, particularly Germany, meant that attitudes were beginning to change during the Hollande presidency, and increasing numbers of voters were willing to accept that some kind of liberal reform might be required.

The evolution of attitudes towards the economy is revealed in a series of opinion polls. In the IPSOS *Fractures françaises* polls, in response to the statement : 'Pour relancer la croissance, il faut limiter au maximum le rôle de l'Etat dans l'économie et donner aux entreprises le plus de liberté possible' 50% said that they agreed in January 2014, and this rose to 57% in April 2016.²⁵ The change was characterised by de Montvalon and Courtois, responding to the 2015 *Fractures françaises* survey, as 'les sympathisants socialistes se droitisent.'²⁶ Similar support for liberal measures was found by a Kantar Sofres poll for the Banque de France in November 2016, according to which 59% of those surveyed were in favour of policies to 'libéraliser davantage l'activité économique française, par exemple en privatisant certains services publics ou en ouvrant à la concurrence certains secteurs de

²⁵ Brice Teinturier et Vincent Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016 Vague 4: Ipsos Sopra/Steria pour le Monde, La Fondation Jean Jaurès et Sciences Po* p.56
<<https://www.soprasteria.com/docs/librariesprovider29/Publications-Ipsos/fractures-francaises-vague4-ipsos-soprasteria.pdf?sfvrsn=4>>

²⁶ Jean-Baptiste de Montvalon, Gérard Courtois, 'Une France moins pessimiste où les idées du FN s'enracinent' *Le Monde* 6 May 2015 <http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2015/05/06/une-france-moins-pessimiste-ou-les-idees-du-fn-s-enracinent_4628645_823448.html> [Accessed 20/12/17]

l'économie.²⁷ The popularity of Emmanuel Macron, who was named Economy Minister in the Valls government in August 2014, and was responsible for some of the liberal economic measures of the Hollande government, provides further evidence of the shift in public opinion away from support for traditional statist solutions. 59% approved of his actions in a poll in April 2016, and while there was a large section of supporters of the Right who had a favourable opinion of him (79%), 63% of PS sympathisers also were satisfied.²⁸ Such figures demonstrate the widespread support amongst the potential voters of both established parties of government for measures to reduce state regulation of businesses.

One of the key reasons for this development concerned the failure of successive governments to deal with the unemployment rate, which had not fallen below 7% since 1983.²⁹ This became a central issue during the Hollande *quinquennat*. The President had promised in September 2013 to reduce unemployment within a year, but the percentage of the active population out of work rose from its level of 9.7% when Hollande entered office in 2012 to 10.2% in the third quarter of 2015, before falling back to 9.3% by the first quarter of 2017.³⁰

In addition to the level of unemployment, a fall in the competitiveness of the French economy on the world stage also encouraged support for reform. France had run a budget deficit since 1974,³¹ and by 2012, it was the highest in the Eurozone.³² Whereas France has historically considered itself to be the joint leader of Europe, with Germany, during the Hollande presidency the great difference in economic performance between the two countries challenged this perception.³³ According to the OECD's calculations, in 2013, GDP per capita in France was 14% lower than that in Germany.³⁴ In the same year, France had an overall trade deficit of 61 billion euros, whereas Germany had an overall trade surplus of

²⁷ Kantar Sofres, *Les Français et l'économie* November 2016 p.20
<<https://www.citeco.fr/sites/default/files/documents/Enquête%20Kantar%20Sofres%20JECO%202016.pdf>> [Accessed 19/11/18]

²⁸ AFP, 'Emmanuel Macron, ministre populaire...surtout à droite !' *Le Point* 13 April 2016
<http://www.lepoint.fr/politique/emmanuel-macron-ministre-populaire-surtout-a-droite-13-04-2016-2032058_20.php> [Accessed 24/11/17]

²⁹ Jean Tirole, *L'économie du bien commun* (Paris: PUF, 2016) p.326

³⁰ Eléa Pommiers, Maxime Delrue, 'Emploi: Les modestes résultats du quinquennat Hollande' *Le Monde* 27 April 2017 <https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2017/04/27/emploi-et-chomage-le-mediocre-bilan-du-quinquennat-hollande_5118948_4355770.html> [Accessed 24/12/18]

³¹ Sophie Pedder, *Le déni français: les derniers enfants gâtés de l'Europe* (Paris: JC Lattès, 2012) p.28

³² Nicolas Baverez, *Réveillez-vous* (Paris: Fayard, 2012) p.94

³³ Michel Hau, 'France-Allemagne: chronologie d'un décrochage' *Revue française d'histoire économique* (2014) Vol.2 No.2 62-84 p.62

³⁴ *Ibid* p.65

199 billion euros.³⁵ Although both countries' share of global exports had fallen between 1998 and 2012, for France the decline was steeper, by 4.2% per year, compared with 1.4% for Germany.³⁶ In light of these differences, it was difficult for France to claim to be an equal partner in Europe, and losing this status was no doubt one reason why, as we shall see below, an increasing number of French people felt that their country was in decline.

Further evidence that French economic performance in comparison to other countries was not only a concern for the government, but also for the French population, could be seen in the results of surveys. In 2014, an Ifop poll for *L'Opinion* found that 75% of French people felt that their country was poorly placed to compete with other nations in the global economy, a figure that had risen by 25 points since 2006.³⁷ 73% believed that France had not done enough to remain competitive when faced with globalisation.³⁸ A majority felt that France was in decline, with 86% agreeing with this idea in April 2016.³⁹ As we have seen above, many voters agreed with the principle that liberal economic reform had to be carried out, even if they disagreed on the precise measures that should be implemented.

Added to the Hollande government's inability to reduce unemployment, the failure of traditional methods to improve economic performance through state intervention is another feature that explains the rise in support for increasing the role of the private sector in the French economy. The view that large tax increases hindered, rather than helped, French economic recovery is supported by a report by the *Commission des finances*, which noted, 'selon les récentes estimations de l'Insee, au cours de la période 2012-14, les mesures fiscales concernant aussi bien les entreprises que les ménages auraient eu une incidence négative sur la croissance de 0,9 point par an en moyenne.'⁴⁰ The report also stated that 'l'exécutif a dû faire face à une grogne croissante des contribuables, la montée d'un mécontentement précoce à l'automne 2012, symbolisée par le « mouvement des Pigeons», ayant laissé place à un «*ras-le-bol fiscal* » généralisé.'⁴¹

³⁵ Ibid p.77

³⁶ Ibid p.76

³⁷ Xavier Bertrand 'La société française, une société bloquée' in *L'Etat de l'Opinion 2015*, Olivier Duhamel and Edouard Lecerf eds. (Paris: Seuil, 2015) pp.91-110 p.94

³⁸ Bertrand 'La société française, une société bloquée' in *L'Etat de l'Opinion 2015* p.94

³⁹ Brice Teinturier et Vincent Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2017 Vague 5: Ipsos/Sopra Stéria pour le Monde, la Fondation Jean Jaurès et Sciences Po « Programme Viepol»* p.9 <https://jean-jaures.org/sites/default/files/fractures_francaises_2017.pdf>

⁴⁰ Albéric de Montgolfier, *Rapport d'information fait au nom de la commission des finances (1) sur l'évolution des prélèvements obligatoires entre 2012 et 2016 par M. Albéric de MONTGOLFIER, Rapporteur général, Sénateur* p.13

⁴¹ Ibid p.8

While other countries saw a significant increase in the proportion of their population in work, with unemployment at 4.7% in Germany and 5.6% in the UK in 2015, high taxes in France arguably undermined steps to reduce its unemployment rate, which stood at 10.2% in June 2015⁴², with the OFCE concluding ‘l’ampleur du choc fiscal en début de quinquennat [...] n’était pas compatible avec une baisse du chômage au cours de la première moitié du mandat.’⁴³ We can therefore argue more generally that, rather than protecting the traditional French social model, increased taxation had worsened the economic situation, and encouraged a growing number of voters to accept the idea of liberal reform.

Many began to lose faith in proposals for state intervention, which they thought were unrealistic during a period of economic crisis. As Sylvestre notes, summarising the responses of voters in opinion polls during the 2017 presidential election campaign:

Dans cette campagne présidentielle, aucun candidat n’échappe à la dérive populiste. Tous recommencent à promettre des dépenses qui ne seront jamais finançables. Le fait nouveau aujourd’hui, et les études le montrent, c’est que l’opinion entend les promesses, elle peut même y adhérer un moment, d’où les sondages, mais chose importante, l’opinion qui écoute la promesse ne croit plus qu’elle soit crédible.⁴⁴

This could be seen in the public’s reaction to the Parti Socialiste presidential candidate Benoît Hamon’s proposal to create a universal income. 73% opposed this measure, on the grounds that it would cost too much to implement and require massive tax rises, a view which cut across social classes. While a majority of those in the poorest sections of society approved a universal income in principle, 66% opposed it, considering it to be an ‘idée utopique’.⁴⁵ Rather than spending being increased, many voters thought that it should be reduced. This was shown in an Ipsos poll in 2016, where 61% of all voters believed that

⁴² Eurostat Press Office, ‘Euro area unemployment rate at 11.1%’, *Eurostat news release euro indicators* 135/2015 June 2015 <<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/6931690/3-31072015-AP-EN.pdf>> [Accessed 27/11/17]

⁴³ OFCE, *Le quinquennat de François Hollande: enlèvement ou rétablissement* 5 September 2016 <<https://www.ofce.sciences-po.fr/pdf/pbrief/2016/pbrief02.pdf>> [Accessed 20/12/17]

⁴⁴ Jean-Marc Sylvestre, ‘Fillon, Macron: les candidats de la crédibilité économique face à ceux des promesses irréalisables’ *Atlantico* 14 March 2017 <<http://www.atlantico.fr/decryptage/fillon-macron-candidats-credibilite-economique-face-ceux-promesses-irrealisables-2990072.html/page/0/1>> [Accessed 28/11/17]

⁴⁵ Ifop-Fiducial for Sud Radio, *Les Français et le revenu universel* 25 January 2017 p.6 <<https://www.ifop.com/publication/les-francais-et-le-revenu-universel/>> [Accessed 19/05/19]

spending cuts were the most important measure needed to lower the deficit (supported by a majority from all parts of the political spectrum, apart from the Far Left⁴⁶).

It is therefore clear that the attitudes of a significant section of French society towards economic policy had evolved, and that many voters wanted a new balance between the public sector and private enterprise that reduced the level of state intervention in the economy. Any candidate who wished to be successful in the presidential elections of 2017 would have to find a way of proposing reform, while at the same time managing concerns relating to the place of the private sector in the French economy. As we shall see below, this would become a particular challenge for the Centre Right. Fillon, as the presidential candidate of Les Républicains, paid little attention to traditional attachments to the state and put the emphasis on the need for change. This approach would be challenged from the Centre by an alternative programme from Macron, who, for many voters, seemed to offer a better balance between reform and protection.

The decline of traditional ideological conflicts, and the ‘consensus of government’ over economic policy

The increasing desire for liberal reform during the Hollande *quinquennat* demonstrates how economic policy is an area where there are many signs that might point to what could be called a ‘consensus of government’. This is not to say that all policy differences in this area have disappeared, but that French governments of both Centre Left and Centre Right have implemented similar policies designed to make the economy more competitive. In many cases, it has been the Left that has been able to go further in this area than the Right.⁴⁷ This convergence has not only concerned political parties, but also the electorate, as supporters of the Centre Left and Centre Right have both supported liberal reform. As Schweisguth notes, ‘dans le conflit idéologique où chacun désigne l’adversaire en cherchant à le disqualifier, le couple antagonique capitalisme-collectivisme d’avant 1980 a été remplacé par le couple étatisme-libéralisme économique.’⁴⁸ Although he is writing

⁴⁶ Brice Teinturier, Vincent Dusseaux, *Les Français, l’économie et la réforme de l’Etat: Sondage préparé pour la 18^{ième} édition du livre d’économie* p.21

⁴⁷ For example, referring to the Mitterrand presidency, Hewlett argues ‘Indeed, the PS achieved in some areas changes which the right had not been able to achieve when it was in government’ Nick Hewlett, *Modern French Politics: Analysing Conflict and Consensus since 1945* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998) p.88

⁴⁸ Etienne Schweisguth, ‘Déclin et recomposition des cultures politiques’ in *Les Cultures politiques en France* Serge Berstein ed. (Paris: Seuil, 2003) pp.377-414 p.402

before the Hollande presidency, he identifies a trend, that, as we have seen in this chapter, would intensify after 2012.

Under Hollande, as the Socialist government introduced measures to encourage the growth of the private sector, the convergence in the policies supported by the established parties of government continued. As we have seen in Chapter 1, although Mitterrand had talked of a break with capitalism in the 1970s,⁴⁹ and won the 1981 elections on a manifesto that promised a significant expansion of the public sector through a programme of nationalisations,⁵⁰ France's economic difficulties forced him into a U-turn with the promotion of private enterprise. A similar, if much less drastic, evolution took place during the Hollande presidency. During the 2012 campaign, Hollande had hardened his rhetoric on economic policy in order to appeal to those on the Left who might be tempted to vote for Mélenchon. In his *Discours du Bourget*, Hollande stated:

Je vais vous dire qui est mon adversaire, mon véritable adversaire. Il n'a pas de nom, pas de visage, pas de parti, il ne présentera jamais sa candidature, il ne sera donc pas élu, et pourtant il gouverne. Cet adversaire, c'est le monde de la finance.⁵¹

He went on to describe the world of finance as an 'empire',⁵² and later that month, pledged to tax those whose annual income was over 1 million euros at 75%. Yet, in 2014, the government changed direction and became much more favourable to economically liberal reforms. In January, plans were announced for the *Pacte de Responsabilité*, whereby the contributions paid by businesses would be reduced in return for employing more workers.

Further signs of this change in attitude were given by government reshuffles. Following the Ayrault government's failure to reduce unemployment, Manuel Valls, then a popular figure from the Right of the Socialist party, became Prime Minister in March 2014. At the summer conference of the MEDEF employers' union, he announced, 'J'aime l'entreprise',⁵³ a phrase

⁴⁹ Gérard Grunberg, 'Le parti d'Epinay: d'une rupture fantasmé à un réformisme mal assumée' *Histoire@Politique*, 13:1 (2011), 99-111 p.100

⁵⁰ Le Monde diplomatique, '110 propositions pour la France: Programme de gouvernement préparé par le Parti Socialiste (PS) pour l'élection présidentielle d'avril-mai 1981' *Le Monde diplomatique* <<https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/mav/124/A/51865>> [Accessed 17/11/18]

⁵¹ François Hollande, 'L'intégralité du discours de François Hollande' *Le JDD* 22 January 2012 <<http://www.lejdd.fr/Election-presidentielle-2012/Actualite/L-integralite-du-discours-de-Francois-Hollande-au-Bourget-467953>> [Accessed 25/11/17]

⁵² Hollande, 'L'intégralité du discours de François Hollande' *Le JDD* 22 January 2012

⁵³ Franceinfo, 'Manuel Valls "J'aime l'entreprise"' *Franceinfo* 27 August 2014 <https://www.francetvinfo.fr/economie/manuel-valls-j-aime-l-entreprise_1697575.html>

which echoed that of Mitterrand in 1984, namely, 'C'est l'entreprise qui crée la richesse.'⁵⁴ The previous day, Emmanuel Macron, a former Rothschild banker, who was at that point not a member of any party, had been appointed *Ministre de l'Economie, de l'Industrie et du Numérique*. This was part of a reshuffle following the departure of three key figures of the Left of the PS, Arnaud Montebourg, Benoît Hamon and Aurélie Filipetti, who had disagreed with the Prime Minister over the move away from the greater emphasis on the role of the state as presented in the 2012 PS manifesto.

The party itself split over this issue, when from March 2014 a *Frondeur* group was formed in the National Assembly to argue in favour of state intervention, and to oppose the policies of Valls and his ministers. However, from 2014, economic policy was in the hands of those more supportive of liberal measures, thereby placing the government closer to the Centre Right opposition, who also recognised this trend. In 2015, Nicolas Sarkozy, then party leader, said that if 'Monsieur Macron pense ce qu'il dit [...] dans ce cas-là il doit de toute urgence quitter le gouvernement et nous rejoindre, parce que nous pensons la même chose.'⁵⁵

This convergence was not only visible in the ministers appointed to the government, but also in the policies that were implemented. For example, among the measures included in the *Loi Macron*, passed in 2015, the number of Sundays when large shops could open was raised to 12, previously protected professions (particularly in the legal sector) were opened to competition, employment tribunal practices were simplified, and a cap on redundancy payments was introduced.⁵⁶ In 2017, the *Loi El Khomri* made further changes to the law governing redundancy, in the hope that businesses would be more willing to take on workers, if they knew that they could more easily make them redundant, should the economic situation worsen. This law also allowed employees to work up to 60 hours a week in exceptional circumstances.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Réponses de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, au questionnaire de la revue "Challenge", Paris, décembre 1983 <<http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/847007000.html>> [Accessed 16/04/14]

⁵⁵ BFMTV, *Macron doit rejoindre Sarkozy s'il "pense ce qu'il dit"*, YouTube, 2015 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ApeCuWuEqBM>> [Accessed 31/12/18]

⁵⁶ 'LOI n° 2015-990 du 6 août 2015 pour la croissance, l'activité et l'égalité des chances économiques (1)' <<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000030978561&categorieLien=id>> [Accessed 31/12/18]

⁵⁷ Ministère du Travail, 'Loi Travail 2016' <<https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/archives/archives-courantes/loi-travail-2016/>> [Accessed 31/12/18]

In many cases, the response of the Centre Right to the Loi Macron and the Loi Travail was not to argue that the measures proposed were wrong, but that they did not go far enough,⁵⁸ further demonstrating the convergence between the Centre Left and Centre Right in this area. During the debate concerning the Loi Macron, Fillon objected that ‘Tout ceci témoigne d’une bonne volonté, au sujet de laquelle je ne veux pas persifler, mais cela n’est pas à la hauteur de la situation!’⁵⁹ The Centre Right reacted in a similar fashion in 2016, in relation to the Loi El Khomri. Copé claimed that ‘nous étions tentés de voter cette réforme,’⁶⁰ and praised certain aspects, stating: ‘Certes, l’avant-projet allait encore plus loin. Il était opportun de vouloir développer le dialogue social direct dans l’entreprise. Il était opportun de vouloir encadrer les indemnités prud’homales par un barème contraignant. Il était opportun de vouloir simplifier le recours à l’apprentissage.’⁶¹ The only reason for his opposition was that many of the more radical measures it had originally proposed had been abandoned by the government.⁶²

To argue that there is a near consensus between parties of government over economic policy is not to claim that all ideological differences between political parties have disappeared, but rather that the rise of global connections between economies has meant that many governments find themselves obliged to pursue liberal policies in order to reduce unemployment and encourage investment in the national economy in a competitive environment. This does not mean that there exists agreement across the whole of the political system. The parties of the Far Right and Far Left both criticised the policies pursued under Hollande, and argued for a greater role for the state. In response to the *Loi Macron*, Marine Le Pen reflected traditional concerns seen earlier in the chapter. She claimed that the law represented the imposition of a foreign model decided by global institutions, which would threaten traditional protective measures. She stated:

⁵⁸ See, for example, Emmanuel Berretta, ‘Comment la droite accueille la loi El Khomri’ *Le Point* 22 February 2016 <https://www.lepoint.fr/politique/emmanuel-berretta/comment-la-droite-accueille-la-loi-el-khomri-22-02-2016-2020242_1897.php> [Accessed 18/11/18] and Judith Waintraub, ‘Loi Macron: L’UMP et l’UDI concentrent leurs critiques sur la méthode’ *Le Figaro* 9/12/14 <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2014/12/09/01002-20141209ARTFIG00357-loi-macron-l-ump-et-l-udi-concentrent-leurs-critiques-sur-la-methode.php>> [Accessed 18/11/18]

⁵⁹ Assemblée Nationale, ‘Assemblée Nationale : XIV législature: Session ordinaire de 2014-2015: Compte rendu intégral: Première séance du lundi 26 janvier 2015’ <<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cri/2014-2015/20150115.asp#P415189>> [Accessed 31/12/18]

⁶⁰ Assemblée Nationale, ‘Assemblée Nationale: XIV législature: Session ordinaire de 2015-2016: Compte rendu intégral: Deuxième séance du mardi 03 mai 2016’ <<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cri/2015-2016/20160179.asp#P775467>> [Accessed 31/12/18]

⁶¹ Assemblée Nationale, ‘Assemblée Nationale: XIV législature: Session ordinaire de 2015-2016: Compte rendu intégral: Deuxième séance du mardi 03 mai 2016’

⁶² Ibid

Ce texte est en effet un condensé de toutes les exigences exprimées par Bruxelles depuis des années: déréglementations de professions au bénéfice des gros contre les indépendants, privatisations en cascades, américanisation de notre société par le travail le dimanche...

Il n'y a rien à attendre de ces recettes ringardes, ni croissance ni emploi. C'est d'autant plus vrai que tous les tabous de l'Union européenne ont été consciencieusement tenus à l'écart de cette loi, qu'il s'agisse de la question monétaire, du protectionnisme ou du patriotisme économique. Il s'agit pourtant précisément des seules questions qui vailent pour relancer l'économie et l'industrie.⁶³

The *Front de Gauche* voiced a similar critique, stating:

Derrière son caractère formellement désordonné et sectoriel, ce texte porte en fait un message clair et global reposant sur une doctrine cohérente: la remise en cause de l'État social à travers l'application de vieilles recettes néolibérales.⁶⁴

While the radical parties of Left and Right continued to disagree with those in the Centre over economic policy, they also provided some evidence that differences between the Centre and the Extremes were being reduced, even if for pragmatic, rather than ideological reasons. During the 2017 presidential election campaign, Marine Le Pen dropped her commitment to leave the euro, when signing a pact with Nicolas Dupont-Aignan. While the FN remained opposed to French membership of the European Union, the party realised that many voters believed that a withdrawal from the euro would create deep economic problems, and so moderated its position, in order to widen its electoral appeal.

A similar development could be seen on the Far Left. While 75% of Front de Gauche sympathisers supported a universal income, 51% believed that this was a 'utopian' idea, because the cost of implementing it would be too high and involve large tax rises.⁶⁵ More surprisingly, 49% of Front de Gauche supporters believed that a universal income would

⁶³ Marine Le Pen, 'Loi Macron: L'UMP et Bruxelles en rêvaient, le PS le fait! Communiqué de Presse de Marine Le Pen, Présidente du Front National' 28 January 2015 <www.frontnational.com/2015/01/loi-macron-lump-et-bruxelles-en-revaient-le-ps-le-fait/> [Accessed 25/11/17]

⁶⁴ François Asensi et al, 'Loi Macron, loi des patrons – Tribune des députés Front de Gauche' 26 January 2015 <<http://www.pcf.fr/65494>> [Accessed 25/11/17]

⁶⁵ Ifop-Fiducial for Sud Radio, *Les Français et le revenu universel* January 2017 p.5

encourage people to rely on the state and reduce the value of work.⁶⁶ While criticising the liberal economic system, the radical parties also recognised that they would have to obey some of its constraints.

There appeared to be a further weakening of economic divisions between the parties of government and the Centre electorate of both Left and Right within France during the Hollande presidency, and a widespread acceptance of the need to work within the constraints of the global capitalist system. As we shall see later, the changes in the attitudes of both political parties and a large number of voters towards liberal capitalism would ensure that one of the key contests between political movements in 2017 would be over who could best respond to the growing acceptance of the need for liberal measures.

The weakening of traditional ideological attachments and the growing move towards reform

Following the reduction in ideological differences between the established parties of government, which we examined in the first chapter and above, there has been a decline in voters' attachment to particular parties that used to be considered as representing the interests of their class.⁶⁷ Voting has become more a matter of individual choice rather than the expression of a class identity. As Schweisguth notes, 'l'évolution va dans le sens d'une valorisation de l'individu au détriment de son groupe d'appartenance.'⁶⁸ This could in part be seen in evolutions in the structure of the French economy. By contrast with the situation in the past, where blue-collar jobs in particular conferred a sense of community on sections of the industrial working class, the expansion of employment in the white-collar sector, and particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises, mean that it is more difficult to organise in a communal fashion.⁶⁹

We have also seen in the first chapter, as Perrineau argues, that rather than sharing a single class identity, members of the working class became increasingly divided into different groups with different desires, according to factors such as age, employment status and national origin,⁷⁰ and this has encouraged the development of feelings of

⁶⁶ Ibid p.5

⁶⁷ See, in particular, the sections of Chapter 1 entitled 'The decline in voter identification with parties' pp.22-26 and 'The decline of political parties and the rise of individualism' pp.38-43

⁶⁸ Schweisguth, 'Déclin et recomposition des cultures politiques' p.381

⁶⁹ Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.72

⁷⁰ Ibid p.73

individualism. This was not only a change that affected debate over questions of national identity and social values, but also one that concerned economics. In this context, as we shall see, for voters, the impact they perceived that proposed economic measures would have on their own lives was much more important than a desire to express a class identity.

The importance of individualism in influencing voting habits regarding economic issues was clearly seen in the 2012 presidential elections. Reynié argues that one of the reasons for Hollande's success was that '[v]oters seemed to believe that, although Sarkozy was the best candidate to lead France, Hollande was better than him when it came to improving people's lives [...] The electorate seemed to separate the question of the role of France in the new global economy from the question of their standard of living.'⁷¹

This was one of the features that would undermine Fillon in 2017, as his goal, to 'faire de la France la première puissance européenne en dix ans,'⁷² seemed to come at the expense of the economic wellbeing of many French citizens. An Odoxa-Guibor poll from April 2017 showed that 60% felt that Fillon's proposals would have a negative impact on their own economic situation, the same number who feared that Le Pen's policies would be harmful for them personally, and far behind Mélenchon, who was thought to have the best programme for the French people, with 38% believing that his victory would have a positive impact on their lives economically.⁷³

The situation in 2017 differed from that in 2012, in that while voters' consideration of what the impact of each presidential candidate's policies would be on them personally remained important in influencing their choice of candidate, it was less of a concern than the need for a president who would be able to resolve the economic problems facing France. Fillon also failed to convince voters in this area, and instead it was Macron who benefitted. While the leader of En Marche was rated behind Mélenchon when people were asked which candidate's policies would benefit them most, he was ahead of all candidates when people were asked who had the best economic policies for France.⁷⁴ The success of Macron

⁷¹ Dominique Reynié, 'The Impact of Issues on Electoral Choice' in *The 2012 French Election: How the Electorate Decided* Pascal Perrineau ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) pp.169-187 p.186

⁷² François Fillon (@FrançoisFillon) Je veux faire de la France la première puissance européenne en 10 ans: un pays qui donne du travail à tous ses citoyens ! #FillonQuimper 30 March 2017

⁷³ Pierre-Alain Furbury, 'Sondage: le grand écart des Français vis-à-vis de Macron' *LesEchos.fr* 10 April 2017

<https://www.lesechos.fr/10/04/2017/lesechos.fr/0211960646190_sondage---le-grand-ecart-des-francais-vis-a-vis-de-macron.htm> [Accessed 03/12/17]

⁷⁴ Furbury, 'Sondage: le grand écart des Français vis-à-vis de Macron'

(despite the attraction many felt for Mélenchon's programme) showed that voters seemed to accept that they would have to work within the constraints of the global economy.

Having argued that there was a growing consensus of government concerning economic questions, the next part of this chapter will consider the effects of debate over economic policy on the Centre Right. It is important to examine the economic programmes of the three main candidates in the primary in detail for several reasons. First, we shall demonstrate that unlike the debates over national identity and social values, and Europe, the question of economic liberalism was not a major source of conflict within Les Républicains. Secondly, we will see how the emphasis that Fillon placed on the need for a more rapid liberalisation of the economy than was proposed by Sarkozy and Juppé was crucial to his success in the primary. Finally, we will show that Fillon's economic proposals were an important factor in his defeat in the presidential elections, as they would prevent him from winning over many floating voters, and from broadening his support significantly beyond those who described themselves as *sympathisants* of Les Républicains.

The general consensus within Les Républicains over economic policy

We have seen in the previous chapter how debate over national identity and social values split Les Républicains into two camps: the Traditionalists and the Modernists. This divide was not present in discussion over economic policy, where all candidates agreed in principle on the need for a reduction in the size of the state sector. While such programmes were presented in varying ways, the actual difference between the measures each candidate proposed was one of degree, and mostly concerned the pace of reform, with Fillon placing more emphasis on the need for more rapid change. As we shall see, while this enabled Fillon to win support among the Centre Right electorate during the primary, the difference between his policies and those of Sarkozy and Juppé was not so great as to cause major fractures within Les Républicains or to prevent the party rallying behind him following his selection as the presidential candidate.

The difference in approach to economic policy between the three main candidates could be seen in the language that they used when discussing their proposals, and, to some extent, differences in the programmes were exaggerated by the rhetoric each candidate chose. Fillon spoke of the need to 'casser la baraque.'⁷⁵ In contrast, Sarkozy and Juppé talked more

⁷⁵ BFMTV.com, 'François Fillon: "Il faut casser la baraque pour la reconstruire autrement"' BFMTV 22 November 2016 <<http://www.bfmtv.com/mediaplayer/video/francois-fillon-il-faut-casser-la-baraque-pour-la-reconstruire-autrement-887667.html>> [Accessed 06/12/17]

of finding a balance between the public and private sectors. Sarkozy emphasised the need to reform at a more measured pace. While he recognised that France had to become more competitive economically, unlike Fillon he also stressed the importance of protecting the French model where possible, arguing that '[c]ela ne signifie nullement que nous devons sacrifier notre mode de vie ou même revenir sur la totalité de nos droits sociaux fondamentaux.'⁷⁶ Later, he emphasised the need for gradual reform, and stated 'Il faut souvent contraindre l'opinion publique, mais sans jamais casser le fil du dialogue. Car, une fois celui-ci rompu, non seulement la réforme nécessaire se trouve stoppée, mais la marche arrière est engagée.'⁷⁷ Whereas, as we shall see later in the chapter, Fillon was often likened by both his supporters and his opponents to Margaret Thatcher, Sarkozy was keen to distance himself from such comparisons, claiming that following the 'Anglo-Saxon' strategies of the 1980s would not work in an era of mass communication. He stated 'L'époque de Margaret Thatcher ou de Ronald Reagan remonte au Moyen Age de la vie médiatique. L'importance des réseaux sociaux, des chaînes d'actualité qui émettent vingt-quatre heures sur vingt-quatre, l'immédiateté de l'information et son universalité ont complètement changé les codes. Il faut désormais tenir sans casser. Il faut avancer sans brutaliser.'⁷⁸ He also looked to calm French fears about liberal capitalism by arguing, 'Je n'ai jamais été un libéral pur et dur.'⁷⁹

Juppé, whilst advocating economic reform, also argued that he had no deep ideological attachment to economic liberalism, stating, 'Je suis un libéral par pragmatisme'⁸⁰, and spoke of the need for balance, claiming that he wanted to 'fonder un nouvel équilibre des relations entre l'Etat, la société et l'économie françaises.'⁸¹ We can see that while all three candidates proposed similar measures, Fillon emphasised the need for a particularly fast transformation of the French economy, while Sarkozy and Juppé looked to respond to traditional French fears about liberal reform, promising a more measured pace of change. Although Fillon's rhetoric was more radical, his programme shared common principles with those of Sarkozy and Juppé. The difference between them concerned mostly the manner of their implementation.

⁷⁶ Nicolas Sarkozy, *La France pour la vie* (Paris: Plon, 2016) p.216

⁷⁷ Ibid p.235

⁷⁸ Sarkozy, *La France pour la vie* p.235

⁷⁹ Nicolas Sarkozy, *Tout pour la France* (Paris: Plon, 2016) p.117

⁸⁰ Alain Juppé, *Cinq ans pour l'emploi* (Paris: JC Lattès, 2016) p.50

⁸¹ Juppé, *Cinq ans pour l'emploi* p.64

As we shall show later, the three axes of the new model acted in different ways. That concerning economic liberalism posed different problems for the Centre Right to those raised by questions relating to national identity and also Europe. The issue in this case was not that debate over economic liberalism would threaten party unity, but rather that Fillon's rhetoric and programme would alienate voters beyond the core electorate of Les Républicains, who might have been tempted to support the Centre Right.

i. Reducing the size of the state

The three leading candidates in the primary agreed that the size of the French state should be reduced, that greater priority should be given to the private sector, and that there should be large cuts in public spending. There was little disagreement over the principle or the amount by which spending should decrease. Juppé proposed that a reduction of between 85-100 billion euros should be made,⁸² while Sarkozy argued that the figure should be 100 billion euros,⁸³ and Fillon 110 billion euros.⁸⁴

There were some differences in the manner in which they proposed to reduce expenditure. While all agreed in principle that the number of public sector workers needed to be reduced, they disagreed somewhat on how many jobs should be cut. Juppé argued for a reduction of 250,000-300,000 people working in the public sector,⁸⁵ Sarkozy believed that this number should be 300,000,⁸⁶ while once again Fillon was the most radical, arguing that there should be 500,000 fewer jobs in the state sector.⁸⁷

This divergence could also be seen in the proposals concerning the pension age, where again Fillon argued for a more rapid pace of reform than his rivals. Both Fillon and Juppé supported raising the pension age to 65,⁸⁸ although Fillon proposed that this change should

⁸² Juppé, *Cinq ans pour l'emploi* p.217

⁸³ David Bensoussan, 'Quand Nicolas Sarkozy promet un plan d'économies pour le prochain quinquennat' *Challenges.fr* 9 April 2016 <https://www.challenges.fr/politique/les-republicains/quand-sarkozy-promet-un-plan-d-economies-pour-le-prochain-quinquennat_29630> [Accessed 30/12/18]

⁸⁴ Frédéric Schaeffer, Isabelle Ficek, 'François Fillon «La France est à la veille d'un accident financier grave»' *Les Echos.fr* 30 septembre 2014 <https://www.lesechos.fr/30/09/2014/lesechos.fr/0203820061512_francois-fillon----la-france-est-a-la-veille-d-un-accident-financier-grave-.htm> [Accessed 30/12/18]

⁸⁵ Juppé, *Cinq ans pour l'emploi* p.219

⁸⁶ Sarkozy, *Tout pour la France* p.46

⁸⁷ Sébastien Pommier, 'Fillon et Juppé peuvent-ils supprimer autant de postes de fonctionnaires ?' *L'Express* 22 November 2016 <https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/elections/fillon-et-juppe-peuvent-ils-supprimer-autant-de-postes-de-fonctionnaires_1853015.html> [Accessed 14/11/18]

⁸⁸ François Fillon, *Faire* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2015) p.107; Juppé, *Cinq ans pour l'emploi* p.122

take place by 2022,⁸⁹ while Juppé argued that it should rise more gradually.⁹⁰ Sarkozy, perhaps influenced by the protests against his decision to raise it from 60 to 62 during his presidency, proposed a more gradual rise to 63 by 2020, then 64 by 2025.⁹¹ He argued that reforming in this way would reduce the number of protests against the measure, and therefore save more money.⁹²

ii. Improving competitiveness

As well as seeking to reduce the size of the public sector, the candidates also agreed on the need to make the French economy more competitive. Once again, Fillon was often more radical in his proposals than his rivals, which, as we shall see, added to the view among much of the Centre Right electorate that he was the most committed to reforming France.

There was widespread agreement among Juppé, Sarkozy and Fillon concerning the need to reduce the number of regulations and employer costs. All three candidates believed that the French economy was being restricted by over-regulation and excessive taxation, and promised to reduce the pressures on businesses in order to encourage them to increase employment.⁹³

Among the other measures debated concerning the competitiveness of the French economy, the law on the 35-hour week was a key area where all three main candidates agreed that reform was needed. While this law had been passed by the Jospin government in 2000, and aimed to reduce unemployment by limiting the number of hours employees could work, thereby forcing employers to take on more staff, many believed that it had not been a success. Hau argues that:

cette mesure provoqua dans l'économie française un choc de compétitivité à l'envers. A partir de 1999, le coût horaire de la main-d'œuvre dans l'industrie manufacturière progressa deux fois plus vite qu'en Allemagne. Les plus gravement touchées furent les industries exportatrices, qui perdirent des marchés [...] Le taux

⁸⁹ Alexandre Lemarié, 'Economie: ce que proposent les prétendants à droite' *Le Monde* 2 September 2016 p.9

⁹⁰ Juppé, *Cinq ans pour l'emploi* p.122

⁹¹ Sarkozy, *Tout pour la France* p.32

⁹² *Ibid* p.32

⁹³ See Juppé, *Cinq ans pour l'emploi* pp.27 and 207, Sarkozy, *Tout pour la France* pp.99-100 and p.106, and Fillon, *Faire* pp.120 and 125

de marge des entreprises françaises plongeait à 22% pour les sociétés industrielles, alors qu'il dépassait 40% en Allemagne.⁹⁴

The effect of this, it was argued, was to make France less competitive than many other countries in Europe. While labour cost 34.80 euros per hour in France, it cost 30.90 euros per hour in Germany, 26.60 euros per hour in Italy and 20.90 euros per hour in Spain.⁹⁵ Nor did the law seem to have any great impact on unemployment.⁹⁶ Rather than improving the French economic situation, the 35-hour week had arguably worsened it.

All three leading candidates proposed giving more flexibility to businesses to define the length of their own working week, but Fillon again went further than his rivals. Sarkozy argued that businesses wishing to end observance of the 35-hour week could do so with the support of their employees. Should no agreement be reached, then workers would vote on the matter in a referendum.⁹⁷ Alain Juppé held a similar view, stating that negotiations should be opened within businesses to decide the length of the working week, with the maximum set at 39 hours.⁹⁸ Both candidates agreed that in return, salaries would be increased to match the increase in working hours.⁹⁹ Fillon proposed wider reform, arguing that the 35-hour week should be completely abandoned, and the maximum length of the working week would be fixed in French law at the European limit of 48 hours.¹⁰⁰ Questions such as salary increases, and rules on overtime would be left to businesses and their employees to negotiate.¹⁰¹

A similar pattern could be observed in the proposals for the public sector. Sarkozy argued in favour of increasing the working week to 37 hours with a comparable rise in salary,¹⁰² while Juppé argued for a similar approach to the one he proposed for the private sector - negotiations between employers and employees over the number of hours that should be worked, while salaries would rise in proportion to the increase in productivity that would

⁹⁴ Michel Hau, 'France-Allemagne: chronologie d'un décrochage' *Revue française d'histoire économique* p.83

⁹⁵ Grégoire Borey, Elise Coudin, Antoine Luciani, 'Une comparaison du coût de la main d'œuvre en Europe: quelle évolution depuis la crise ?' *Insée Références, édition 2015* 53-67 p.56

⁹⁶ Matthieu Chemin, Etienne Wasmer, 'Using Alsace-Moselle Local Laws to Build a Difference-in-Differences Estimation Strategy of the Employment Effects of the 35-Hour Workweek Regulation in France' *Journal of Labor Economics* (2009) Vol. 27, No.4 487-524 p.519

⁹⁷ Sarkozy, *Tout pour la France* p.21

⁹⁸ Juppé, *Cinq ans pour l'emploi* p.73

⁹⁹ Juppé, *Cinq ans pour l'emploi* p.73 and Sarkozy, *Tout pour la France* p.29

¹⁰⁰ Fillon, *Faire* p.119

¹⁰¹ *Ibid* p.119

¹⁰² Sarkozy, *Tout pour la France* p.45

be achieved.¹⁰³ Once again, Fillon went somewhat further than his rivals, as he stated that the working week should be set at 39 hours in the public sector, with targeted salary increases based on the savings made by increasing efficiency.¹⁰⁴

There was general agreement between Sarkozy, Fillon and Juppé over the nature of the economic reforms required by France. All proposed similar solutions, even if there were differences of degree. There was no major difference in principle that would stop the supporters of one primary candidate's economic programme from rallying behind that of Fillon. In this way, economic liberalism did not pose a problem of troubling internal party unity, unlike the other two axes of the new model.

In fact, rather than being a disadvantage, Fillon's slightly more radical proposals encouraged voters to support him in the primary, particularly because, as we have seen above, a large majority of sympathisers of Les Républicains wanted increased liberal economic reform. 33% of those who chose Fillon stated that they had done so because 'il veut vraiment changer les choses.'¹⁰⁵ While Fillon was only one point ahead of Sarkozy in this area, voters for these two candidates prioritised different issues. Those who chose the former prime minister emphasised the importance of economic factors in persuading them to support him, with 58% stating that his position on 'la situation économique' had determined their choice, and 40% were particularly convinced by his approach to public spending. In contrast, Sarkozy voters chose their candidate's position on 'la sécurité' (55%) and 'l'immigration' (53%) as the most decisive factors in convincing them to support the former president.¹⁰⁶

Therefore, it was clear that Fillon represented a general desire for rapid liberal economic reform among the core electorate of Les Républicains, with a key emphasis on breaking away from many of the traditions of French economic policy based on a large state. However, the presidential elections would demonstrate that his position would make it difficult for him to win the support of many floating voters, as a large section of the French electorate was still keen on finding a wider compromise between state intervention and reform. What had been one of Fillon's strengths in the primary would become a weakness in the presidential elections. To understand how the Centre Right found itself in difficulty in

¹⁰³ Juppé, *Cinq ans pour l'emploi* p.75

¹⁰⁴ Fillon, *Faire* p.120

¹⁰⁵ ELABE, *Comprendre le vote du premier tour de la primaire de la droite et du centre: Sondage « Jour du vote »* ELABE pour BFMTV 20 novembre 2016 p.23

¹⁰⁶ ELABE, *Comprendre le vote du premier tour de la primaire de la droite et du centre* p.28

May 2017, we must compare its proposals to those of other parties, and to do this, we need to consider a new model of party alignment.

Les Républicains and the realignment of the French Party system

We have seen that under the Hollande presidency, while a significant section of the population still remained attached to substantial state intervention in the economy, a growing number believed in the need to relax some of the regulations governing businesses. In order to be successful in 2017, candidates would have to propose a programme that could convince those in favour of reform without alienating other potential voters. We have also demonstrated how there emerged a growing consensus of government around the question of economic liberalism. In order to explain why Fillon was successful in the primary, but then failed to win the presidential elections (in part because of fears among the electorate concerning his economic proposals), we must first consider the realignment of the French party system, that developed further during the Hollande presidency.¹⁰⁷

This realignment affected parties in different ways, depending on which issue was discussed. We have already seen how the question of national identity and social values divided Les Républicains into two camps, the Modernists and the Traditionalists, with the Modernists closer to the Centre and the Left, while the Traditionalists sought to attract FN voters. Yet, we have also seen that while this division was valid for the question of identity, it was not for the issue of economic liberalism.

In the *présidentielles* of 2017, the question of economic liberalism split parties into two main groups: those favourable to liberal reform and others who opposed it. This did not mirror the Left/Right divide, as the extremes of Left and Right, and the PS candidate Benoît Hamon, put emphasis on protecting the role of the state, while Les Républicains and En Marche supported its reduction. The realignment according to separate axes, rather than the traditional bipolar arrangement, created problems for the Centre Right, as its position on economic reform risked alienating voters attracted by its policies on identity.

The demand for state intervention by sections of the FN electorate has been recognised by Perrineau, who has devised the term 'gaucho-lepénisme'.¹⁰⁸ Rather than simply being an

¹⁰⁷ This section of the chapter builds on the model that I first outlined in my MA thesis, *The Crisis in the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire: Leadership, Unity and Division*, University of Warwick (2015)

¹⁰⁸ Pascal Perrineau, *Cette France de gauche qui vote FN* (Paris: Seuil, 2017) p.13

extension of the Right, the FN attracts voters through a programme that rejects liberal capitalism. This has enabled the party to partially take over the role of representing significant sections of the working classes, formerly played by the Communists.¹⁰⁹

The phenomenon of 'gaucho-lepénisme' is clearly linked to the realignment of parties that we have observed in this thesis. As Perrineau notes, under the Fifth Republic, whereas there was, until the mid to late 1970s, a clear class divide between the blue-collar working class who supported the Left and upper management who voted for the Right, nowadays '[l]es forces de gauche se portent sensiblement mieux en haut de la pyramide sociale qu'en bas.'¹¹⁰ As we saw in chapter 1, from the early 1980s, the PS adopted a programme based on reconciling liberal capitalism with liberal social values. This appealed to the middle classes, but distanced many members of the blue-collar working class, who had once formed a bastion of support for the Centre Left.¹¹¹ Some of these turned to the FN, with 30% voting for Marine Le Pen in the presidential elections of 2012¹¹², and 37% doing so in 2017¹¹³.

Fillon's failure to win over many blue-collar working class voters would be important in his defeat. It is true that this section of society is smaller than in the past (representing only 20% of the working population in 2016, compared with 30% between 1982 and 1984.)¹¹⁴ However, as we have seen in chapter 1, one of the reasons for Sarkozy's success in the 2007 presidential elections was that he was able to win the votes of a significant proportion of blue-collar voters.¹¹⁵ As we shall demonstrate, Fillon's economic programme would alienate this section of the electorate, and undermine his chances of being elected president.

The issues that Perrineau identifies as driving blue-collar workers to support the Far Right were at odds with those represented by the candidate of Les Républicains, and this made it difficult for Fillon to gain votes from some FN sympathisers. It was opposition to liberal

¹⁰⁹ Ibid p.64

¹¹⁰ Ibid p.57

¹¹¹ Ibid p.57

¹¹² Ibid p.57

¹¹³ Ipsos/Sopra-Steria, *2017 élection présidentielle: 1^{er} tour: Sociologie des électors et profils des abstentionnistes* p.5 <<https://www.ipsos.com/fr-fr/1er-tour-presidentielle-2017-sociologie-de-lelectorat>>

¹¹⁴ See Simon Beck and Joëlle Vidalenc, 'Une photographie du marché du travail en 2016' *Insée Première* No.1648 May 2017 pp.1-4, p.2 and Anne Châteauneuf-Malclès, 'Les mutations de la population en emploi depuis 30 ans' <<http://ses.ens-lyon.fr/ressources/stats-a-la-une/les-mutations-de-la-population-en-emploi-depuis-30-ans>> [Accessed 21/05/19]

¹¹⁵ See Chapter 1, p.23

economic policies that was decisive in this area. Perrineau notes that ‘la dénonciation...de l’injustice engendrée par l’ultralibéralisme et la mondialisation, l’appel à un Etat porteur de protection et de redistribution et vecteur de la réindustrialisation sont autant de thèmes qui rencontrent un réel écho dans les milieux « ouvrier» et « employé ».’¹¹⁶ While Fillon aimed to introduce more liberal measures to make France more competitive in the global market, Marine Le Pen had attacked such policies in her first speech as party leader in 2011, criticising ‘le dogme de l’ultralibéralisme et du laisser-fairisme des bons élèves de la mondialisation.’¹¹⁷ In contrast to the Centre Right, which believed that intervention by the state needed to be reduced, Le Pen wanted to increase its role, stating ‘la clé, c’est l’Etat. Il faut retrouver l’Etat en le remettant au service du peuple [...] l’Etat est devenu la colonne vertébrale de la France que nous aimons.’¹¹⁸

This difference was demonstrated in the measures proposed by FN, which were the direct opposite of those defended by Fillon. While the Centre Right wanted to repeal the law on the 35-hour week,¹¹⁹ the FN pledged to maintain it.¹²⁰ In contrast to Fillon, who wanted to raise the retirement age,¹²¹ the FN supported lowering it to 60.¹²² As Perrineau notes, ‘En 2017, deux tiers des mesures économiques prônées par le Front National sont encore empruntées à la gauche.’¹²³ Fillon’s programme, therefore, was not one that would appeal to a significant section of the FN electorate.

The rejection of Fillon’s programme by a large number of those who shared the FN’s views on economic policy could be seen in opinion polls. Analysts have shown that there are different FN electorates. Fourquet claims that there is one type in former industrial towns in the North, where voters are looking for greater state control of the economy, and another in the South, more drawn to the Far Right’s policies on immigration, with a more liberal stance on economic matters.¹²⁴ Perrineau sees three divisions – between supporters of the party who come from a bourgeois right background and others who have more working-class origins and who are much less right-wing; between people from former

¹¹⁶ Pascal Perrineau, *Cette France de gauche qui vote FN* p.66

¹¹⁷ Ibid p.67

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Ibid p.67

¹¹⁹ François Fillon, *Mon projet pour la France* (2017) p.7

¹²⁰ Marine Le Pen, *144 engagements présidentielles* (2017) p.9

¹²¹ François Fillon, *Mon projet pour la France* p.10

¹²² Marine Le Pen, *144 engagements présidentielles* p.8

¹²³ Pascal Perrineau, *Cette France de gauche qui vote FN* p.68

¹²⁴ Jérôme Fourquet, ‘Front du nord, Front du sud’ *Huffington Post* 08/08/13

<https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/jerome-fourquet/front-national-sud-nord-france_b_3718135.html>
[Accessed 14/11/18]

industrial areas in the East, and others, who are often older, from the West, and finally, between rural voters and those in urban areas.¹²⁵ In both analyses, we can see that those who are wary of liberal economic policies make up an important proportion of the Far Right electorate. The result of this was seen in the results of the presidential elections. While 37% of blue collar workers voted for Marine Le Pen, only 5% chose Fillon¹²⁶ - far behind the score achieved by Sarkozy in the first round of the 2007 presidential elections, when he had won 26% of the votes of this group,¹²⁷ and less than half that in the first round of the 2012 presidential elections, when Sarkozy received 14% from the same section of society.¹²⁸ The economic programme of Les Républicains for the presidential elections was therefore a major factor in alienating one of the sections of the electorate whose support would have been needed for the Centre Right to be successful.

While in 2017, Les Républicains' economic policy cut them off from many of the voters on the Far Right, who wanted a more statist approach, the party also failed to win the support of voters in the Centre, and others close to the Right wing of the Socialist Party, (whose views were represented in the National Assembly by figures such as Manuel Valls), who wanted liberal economic reform and who would not support Hamon. In previous elections under the Fifth Republic, the economic failure of a government of the Left had been followed by the victory of the Right and vice versa. It had been predicted that this would be the case in 2017. A Cevipof study in 2016 found that, if the candidates for the PS and Les Républicains were to be Hollande and Juppé respectively, then 17% of those who had voted for the PS candidate in the first round of the 2012 presidential elections would support the Les Républicains Mayor of Bordeaux in 2017.¹²⁹

The failure of Juppé to win the primary of the Right and the Centre and the emergence of Emmanuel Macron changed this dynamic, as this meant that Les Républicains ceased to be the sole alternative to the PS for those wanting liberal reform. Macron's candidacy brought

¹²⁵ Pascal Perrineau, *La France au front* (Paris: Fayard, 2014) p.51

¹²⁶ Ipsos/Sopra-Steria, *2017 élection présidentielle: 1^{er} tour: Sociologie des électors et profils des abstentionnistes* p.5

¹²⁷ Sylvie Strudel avec la collaboration de Viviane Le Hay, *Le Panel Electoral Français CEVIPOF Enquête post-électorale présidentielle 2007: Nicolas Sarkozy Analyse sociodémographique et politique des votes* (2007)

<<http://www.cevipof.com/PEF/2007/V2/PEF07V2-SarkozySS.pdf>>

¹²⁸ Ifop-Fiducial for Le Monde, Paris Match and Public Sénat, *Premier tour de l'élection présidentielle 2012: profil des électeurs et clés du scrutin: Sondage Jour de vote 22 avril 2012* p.10 <https://www.ifop.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/1848-1-study_file.pdf>

¹²⁹ Martial Foucault, 'L'Enquête électorale française: Comprendre 2017: La Note/#23/vague 5: Qui sont les «décrocheurs» du vote Hollande' *Sciences Po Cevipof* July 2016 p.4

a decisive change since the need to resolve the economic problems facing France dominated voters' concerns, as could be seen in an Ipsos poll concerning those who said they were certain to vote in the first round of the 2017 presidential elections. This showed that purchasing power was cited by 27% as the main factor that influenced their choice of candidate, while unemployment was the third most decisive factor with 25% mentioning this.¹³⁰

As we shall see later, many voters, particularly those who classed themselves as sympathisers of the Centre or close to the Right of the PS, who, in view of the struggles of Hollande and the Socialist government to reduce unemployment, might have been expected to vote for the candidate of Les Républicains, instead rallied behind the candidate of En Marche.¹³¹ Macron would occupy a significant amount of the territory that had previously been the preserve of the Centre Right. Rather than supporting Fillon's more hard-line programme, large numbers of voters in favour of liberal economic reform preferred Emmanuel Macron, who appeared to strike a balance between giving more freedom to businesses, whilst at the same time recognising that the state had a role to play in the French economy. His position was strengthened when many sympathisers of the PS, who wanted economic reforms, did not share the more statist vision of Hamon, and turned to the candidate of En Marche.¹³²

The role Fillon's economic proposals played in his failure in the 2017 *présidentielles* can be seen in surveys carried out before the Penelopegate scandal. Following his success in the Primary of the Right and Centre in November 2016, he was predicted to receive the highest score of any candidate in the first round, with around 30% of the vote, ahead of Marine Le Pen with around 24% of the vote and Macron between 14% and 17% (figures which assumed that Bayrou would stand).¹³³ By the 5 January 2017, Fillon's predicted score had fallen to 23-25% of the vote (assuming Bayrou would stand), while Macron gained 3-4% and the estimation of those who would vote for Le Pen did not change.¹³⁴ When the hypothesis that Bayrou would not stand and that Hamon would be the PS candidate was

¹³⁰ Ifop Fiducial, *1^{er} tour présidentielle 2017: Comprendre le vote des Français* (2017) p.12

¹³¹ Ifop Fiducial, *1^{er} tour présidentielle 2017: Comprendre le vote des Français* p.13

¹³² Ifop Fiducial, *1^{er} tour présidentielle 2017: Comprendre le vote des Français* (2017) p.13

¹³³ ELABE, *Présidentielle 2017: les intentions de vote à 5 mois du scrutin : Sondage ELABE pour LES ECHOS et BFM TV* 30 novembre 2016 <https://elabe.fr/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/30092016_les_echos_bfmtv_intentions-de-vote-presidentielles_vague_4vf.pdf> [Accessed 01/01/19]

¹³⁴ ELABE, *Présidentielle 2017: les intentions de vote à 3 mois et demi du scrutin : Sondage ELABE pour LES ECHOS et RADIO CLASSIQUE* 5 janvier 2017 < <https://elabe.fr/presidentielle-2017-intentions-de-vote-a-3-mois-demi-scrutin/>> [Accessed 01/01/19] p.12

tested, Fillon was predicted to receive 26%, Le Pen 24% and Macron 23%.¹³⁵ Fillon was, therefore, already losing support before the Penelopegate scandal broke. The ELABE survey of 5 January 2017 put forward the reasons for this as:

La dynamique post-primaire mesurée fin novembre semble...s'émousser, le débat sur le programme dans le domaine de la santé et de la protection sociale y contribuant probablement. Pour rappel, dans un sondage *Elabe* pour *Les Echos* et *l'Institut Montaigne*, datant du 8 décembre 2016, 90% des Français considéreraient « pas acceptable » la baisse des dépenses publiques en matière de santé.¹³⁶

As Fillon's position weakened, so Macron's improved. Not only did his projected share of the vote increase, but so did his popularity in relation to Fillon. An Odoxa poll from December 2016 found that, given a choice between Macron and Fillon, 55% felt that the candidate of En Marche would make the better president, compared with 39% who chose the representative of Les Républicains (6% did not express a preference).¹³⁷ By January, it seemed as though Macron was already very close to qualifying for the second round, and that, should he be present in the run-off, he would have a reasonable chance of being elected president, ahead of Fillon. Rather than being the sole or main reason for Fillon's failure to be elected president, Penelopegate would accentuate a trend that was already occurring, and which was driven, at least in part, by fears concerning the economic programme of the candidate of Les Républicains.

Macron was able to benefit from Fillon's struggles, as he offered a balance between liberal reform and protection. He stated in his programme: 'La société que je veux sera à la fois libérée des carcans et des blocages, et protectrice des plus faibles.'¹³⁸ While he planned to reduce public expenditure, he proposed to make 60 billion euros worth of cuts,¹³⁹ rather than the 110 billion supported by Fillon. This balance was also visible in the measures proposed to improve competitiveness. Macron promised to reduce charges on employers to encourage them to hire more workers,¹⁴⁰ but to increase the taxes on those who only

¹³⁵ Ibid p.12

¹³⁶ Ibid p.7

¹³⁷ Odoxa, *Le grand débrief: François Fillon: levée d'embargo vendredi 23 décembre à 6H* p.16 <<http://www.odoxa.fr/sondage/desormais-francais-pensent-macron-ferait-meilleur-president-fillon/>>

¹³⁸ Emmanuel Macron, *Emmanuel Macron Président: Programme* (2017) p.4

¹³⁹ Challenges.fr, 'Macron veut réduire les dépenses publiques de 60 milliards d'euros en 5 ans' *Challenges* 23 February 2017 <https://www.challenges.fr/election-presidentielle-2017/macron-devoile-son-programme-60-milliards-d-euros-d-economies-sur-les-depenses-publiques_456355> [Accessed 02/12/17]

¹⁴⁰ Macron, *Emmanuel Macron Président* p.8

engaged employees on short-term contracts.¹⁴¹ In this way, Macron pledged to reform at a gentler pace than Fillon, which, as we shall see later, was more appealing to many voters. While the differences between the main candidates in the primary had been a question of degree, Macron and Fillon were separated by their principles as well. The candidate of En Marche's emphasis that liberal economic reforms should be accompanied by some protective measures was generally absent from debate on the Centre Right.

Unlike Fillon, who argued that the French model was unsustainable, Macron's programme protected many key elements of the existing system. The pension age would not be raised¹⁴², and the law on the 35-hour week would be made more flexible,¹⁴³ but not repealed. Unlike Fillon, he accepted that some concessions would have to be made to those who were attached to a protective state.

Macron's rhetoric was also gentler than that of Fillon, as in the emphasis on protecting the population in his speech following the results of the first round, when he pledged to be '[u]n président qui protège, qui transforme et qui construit.'¹⁴⁴ This language contrasted with that of Fillon, who, as we have seen, promised a much deeper and more rapid transformation of the French economy. Macron seemed to promise economic reform which was in keeping with French traditions. That this difference between the positions of the candidate of En Marche and that of Les Républicains was felt by the electorate could also be seen in polls. An Ipsos poll of those who said they were certain to participate in the first round of the presidential elections found that 55% believed Fillon's programme to be worrying, while only 39% felt the same about Macron's proposals.¹⁴⁵ Although the question addressed each candidate's programme as a whole, without identifying particular policy areas, given the long-standing suspicion of liberal economic reform among certain sections of the electorate, and the drop in support for Fillon that occurred when some of his economic proposals were debated after the primary, it seems almost certain that the economic policies of the candidate of the Centre Right were a significant factor in making his programme a cause of concern for these voters.

¹⁴¹ Ibid p.8

¹⁴² Ibid p.15

¹⁴³ Clémentine Maligorne, 'Retraites, chômage, 35 heures...Macron détaille son programme' *Le Figaro* 2 March 2017 <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/conjoncture/2017/03/02/20002-20170302ARTFIG00076-retraites-assurance-chomage-macron-detaille-son-programme.php>> [Accessed 02/12/17]

¹⁴⁴ Emmanuel Macron, 'Soirée électorale du 1er tour - Discours d'Emmanuel Macron' <<https://en-marche.fr/articles/discours/declaration-emmanuel-macron-23-avril-2017>> [Accessed 02/12/17]

¹⁴⁵ Ifop Fiducial, *1^{er} tour présidentielle 2017: Comprendre le vote des Français* (2017) p.17

The success of Macron's balanced approach in winning support for reformist measures has been shown in analyses of the voting behaviour of different socio-economic groups. While, as might be expected, he won 33% of the vote of those in managerial positions, he also received 16% of the votes of blue-collar workers, the third highest percentage behind Le Pen (33%) and Mélenchon (24%) but far ahead of the score achieved among this group by his other rivals.¹⁴⁶

Analyses of voting behaviour also showed how Macron was able to overcome a traditionally bipolar system and position himself as the candidate of reform to appeal across the party divide. He won 36% of the votes of UDI sympathisers, and 42% of PS sympathisers, who might otherwise have voted for the candidate of the Right, particularly if this had been Juppé.¹⁴⁷ It was Macron gaining the support of these groups, who would have been expected to vote for the candidate of Les Républicains, that was a crucial factor in Fillon's defeat.

We have considered how Macron was able to present himself as the candidate capable of reforming the French economy, whilst at the same time acknowledging the desire for protection on the part of certain sections of the electorate, in contrast to Fillon whose proposals were too radical for many voters. In the final part of this chapter, we shall see how Fillon's programme was targeted by his opponents both in the primary and in the presidential elections, who characterised it as 'brutal' and against French traditions – an electoral strategy which resonated with many voters.

François Fillon as anti-French

In this chapter, we have seen how there was a rise in demand for liberal economic reform amongst a large section of the French population, while at the same time many remained attached to state intervention. It has been demonstrated that while Fillon's programme based on key liberal reforms enabled him to win the Primary, it failed to garner much support from beyond the traditional Centre Right electorate. In the case of FN sympathisers, this was because many were looking for more protectionist measures and opposed further liberalisation of the economy, whereas many voters in the Centre, in favour of liberal economic reform, were concerned that Fillon's proposals went too far.

¹⁴⁶ Ipsos/Sopra-Steria, *2017 élection présidentielle: 1^{er} tour: Sociologie des électorats et profils des abstentionnistes* p.5

¹⁴⁷ Martial Foucault, 'L'Enquête électorale française: Comprendre 2017: La Note/#23/vague 5: Qui sont les « décrocheurs » du vote Hollande' *Sciences Po Cevipof* Juillet 2016 p.4

Fears about Fillon's economic programme led to him being cast as 'brutal' and anti-French, and prevented him from building a broad coalition of support.

The success of the use of the term 'brutal' to describe Fillon's programme demonstrates the difference between voters on the Centre Right and those supporting other parties. While there was widespread acceptance among the established parties of government that a liberalisation of the French economy was needed, Les Républicains argued for much greater change than did its rivals. In the second round of the primary, Alain Juppé said that Fillon's programme was 'd'une très grande brutalité sociale.'¹⁴⁸ As we have discussed in the previous chapter, during this contest, Juppé received a significant amount of support from supporters of parties of the Left, who wanted to stop Sarkozy becoming the candidate.¹⁴⁹ Calling Fillon's proposals 'brutal' was part of Juppé's strategy of exaggerating the differences between their economic programmes, even though these were more of emphasis than substance and concerned the pace of change rather than principle (and the Mayor of Bordeaux was keen to outline that his own proposals were 'aussi audacieuses [...] mais réalistes'¹⁵⁰). This was the same approach that, as Fourquet and Le Bras explain, Juppé used when he tried to frighten Modernist voters by claiming that Fillon's programme on identity was a threat to their vision of society, a feature that we have also analysed in chapter 2. This strategy failed in the primary because, on the one hand, it did not convince many on the Centre Right, and on the other hand, as Fourquet and Le Bras note, many Left-wing sympathisers who had voted in the first round did not participate in the second round, their aim to eliminate Sarkozy having already been achieved.¹⁵¹ Juppé's criticisms would have little impact on the primary, but would subsequently undermine Fillon during the presidential election campaign.

While the accusation that Fillon's programme was 'brutal' failed to convince those on the Right, it was soon picked up by rivals from other parties, and used to reinforce the idea that he represented a danger to the French model. As has been discussed, many voters wanted some role for a protective state, and this was recognised by Fillon's main competitors in the

¹⁴⁸ L'Express.fr 'Ça y est, Juppé et Fillon s'écharpent par plateaux télé interposés' *L'Express* 21 November 2016 <https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/lr/pour-juppe-fillon-a-une-vision-de-la-societe-extremement-traditionaliste_1852683.html> [Accessed 02/12/17]

¹⁴⁹ Jérôme Fourquet, Hervé Le Bras, *La guerre des trois: la primaire de la droite et du centre* (Paris: Fondation Jean Jaurès, 2017) p.119

¹⁵⁰ franceinfo, "'Le programme de François Fillon est d'une très grande brutalité sociale", affirme Alain Juppé sur France 2' *franceinfo* <https://www.francetvinfo.fr/politique/les-republicains/primaire-de-la-droite/video-le-programme-de-francois-fillon-est-d-une-tres-grande-brutalite-sociale-affirme-alain-juppe-sur-france-2_1932279.html> [Accessed 21/05/19]

¹⁵¹ *Ibid* p.119

presidential elections. Macron talked of Fillon 'qui recycle les vieilles recettes'¹⁵² and who supported 'une offre extraordinairement brutale et injuste.'¹⁵³ This criticism was also made by Marine Le Pen's campaign manager, David Rachline, who spoke of Fillon's 'projet économique délirant'¹⁵⁴ in November 2016. The FN leader herself stated, during the presidential election campaign, that Fillon had 'un programme extrêmement brutal pour les Français.'¹⁵⁵ Whereas these criticisms had not been successful when made by Juppé, they were much more effective coming from the opponents of Les Républicains, and when addressed to the wider electorate of the presidential elections, as we shall see below.

Fillon's rivals also exploited traditional concerns about liberal economic policies being 'Anglo Saxon' and not French, to dissuade the electorate from voting for him. As we have seen in the first part of this chapter, liberal economic policies have often been considered to be those of America or Britain, and the opposite of a French model designed to protect its citizens from extreme capitalism. Fillon himself encouraged comparisons between his policies and those of Britain in particular, stating, 'J'aimerais bien laisser dans l'histoire une trace aussi forte que celle de madame Thatcher.'¹⁵⁶ Such comparisons with Britain were not limited to the 1980s. Fillon's own micro-party, Force Républicaine, defended his programme, in the face of those who said that it was impossible to implement, by stating 'Sous Cameron, le Royaume-Uni a réduit de 500.000 son nombre d'agents publics, le chômage a diminué de 8,3 à 5,4% et 1,8 millions d'emplois ont été créés. Oui, le programme de François Fillon est possible !'¹⁵⁷

While such comparisons were seen as positive by those on the Centre Right, his rivals in the presidential elections used them as a weapon against him. The Left-leaning newspaper,

¹⁵² Romain Herreros, 'Pour Emmanuel Macron, François Fillon veut "réaliser le rêve de Patrick Buisson"' *HuffPost* 3 April 2017 <http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2017/04/03/pour-emmanuel-macron-francois-fillon-veut-realiser-le-reve-de_a_22023373/> [Accessed 02/12/17]

¹⁵³ Herreros, 'Pour Emmanuel Macron, François Fillon veut "réaliser le rêve de Patrick Buisson"'

¹⁵⁴ AFP, 'Le FN tire à boulets rouges sur François Fillon' *Les Echos* 21 November 2016 <https://www.lesechos.fr/21/11/2016/lesechos.fr/0211515582776_le-fn-tire-a-boulets-rouges-sur-francois-fillon.htm> [Accessed 02/12/17]

¹⁵⁵ Marie-Pierre Haddad, 'Présidentielle 2017: Le Pen juge Fillon "opportuniste et choquant"' *Le Parisien* 10 January 2017 <<http://www.leparisien.fr/flash-actualite-politique/le-pen-juge-fillon-opportuniste-et-choquant-10-01-2017-6549045.php>> [Accessed 02/12/17]

¹⁵⁶ Jules Pecnard, 'Primaire à droite: l'admiration de François Fillon à Margaret Thatcher' *L'Express* 21 November 2016 <https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/primaire-a-droite-les-declarations-d-amour-de-francois-fillon-a-margaret-thatcher_1852519.html> [Accessed 02/12/17]

¹⁵⁷ Force Républicaine 'Sous Cameron, le Royaume-Uni a réduit de 500.000 son nombre d'agents publics, le chômage a diminué de 8,3 à 5,4% et 1,8 millions d'emplois ont été créés. Oui, le programme de François Fillon est possible ! #CEstPossible' [Facebook Post] 23 November 2017 <<https://www.facebook.com/Fillon2017/posts/1028940783883738>>

Libération, placed a photograph of Fillon's face on an image of Margaret Thatcher, calling his programme 'ultraconservateur' and 'ultralibéral'.¹⁵⁸ For the FN, the regional councillor Bertrand Dutheil de la Rochère claimed that the candidate of the Right represented the combination of Thatcher and Reagan.¹⁵⁹ In the Centre, Emmanuel Macron criticised his rivals Fillon, Mélenchon and Le Pen as representing 'un choix entre Madame Thatcher ou Trotski, Fidel Castro ou Maurras'.¹⁶⁰ Fillon's rivals sought to portray his programme as particularly un-French, and the fact that, as we have seen above, many voters found his proposals worrying, suggests that they were successful.

The extent to which the criticisms of Fillon's proposals by his rivals were shared by the French population as a whole was revealed in polls. An Ipsos survey found that the candidate of Les Républicains failed to win widespread support amongst those in work. While he received 36% of the votes of pensioners, he only managed to attract 8% of white-collar workers (24% fewer than Marine Le Pen, and 11% fewer than Macron), 5% of blue-collar workers (32% fewer than Le Pen, and 11% fewer than Macron) and 13% of mid-level professionals (6% fewer than Marine Le Pen and 13% fewer than Macron).¹⁶¹ Although he did better amongst those in management, receiving 20% of votes cast by this group, he was only 1% ahead of Mélenchon, and 13% behind Macron.¹⁶² Fillon's economic programme was therefore certainly one of the key factors that contributed to his defeat.

Conclusion

The problems encountered by François Fillon during the presidential elections of 2017 stemmed in part from a failure by the Centre Right to respond effectively to the realignment of the French party system over economic policy, and to adapt to the concerns of the electorate relating to economic liberalism.

Under the Fifth Republic, French governments have historically supported the existence of a strong, interventionist state, and this has been popular with the French people. They have seen *dirigisme* not merely as key to creating a successful economy, but have also

¹⁵⁸ 'Moi Président' *Libération* 22 November 2016

¹⁵⁹ AFP, 'Le FN tire à boulets rouges sur François Fillon' *Les Echos* 21 November 2016 <https://www.lesechos.fr/21/11/2016/lesechos.fr/0211515582776_le-fn-tire-a-boulets-rouges-sur-francois-fillon.htm> [Accessed 02/12/17]

¹⁶⁰ Margaux Baralon, 'Présidentielle: Macron creuse son sillon en égratignant "Thatcher" et "Trotski"' *Europe 1* 17 April 2017 <<http://www.europe1.fr/politique/presidentielle-macron-creuse-son-sillon-et-fustige-thatcher-et-trotski-3297617>> [Accessed 02/12/17]

¹⁶¹ Ipsos/Sopra-Steria, *2017 élection présidentielle: 1^{er} tour: Sociologie des électors et profils des abstentionnistes* p.5

¹⁶² *Ibid* p.5

traditionally believed a protective state to be part of their national identity. In contrast to more economically liberal countries, such as Britain and the USA, which are seen as promoting untamed capitalism and the 'survival of the fittest', the French model was believed to be protective of its citizens and to promote equality. This view was still held by a significant section of the population during the Hollande presidency. The French economy was still characterised by a large state sector, and polls consistently showed that France was one of the European countries where the population was most sceptical about liberal capitalism.

However, the attitudes of a growing number of French citizens towards the economy were beginning to evolve, as successive governments had failed to resolve long-standing problems, and there was a growing acceptance of the case for some level of liberal reform. In domestic terms, many were concerned that, rather than promoting equality, the existing system was protecting those in state jobs at the expense of the rest. The failure to resolve the issue of unemployment, which had remained high for decades, also encouraged a change of attitude. On the international stage, whereas France had liked to consider itself a leader in Europe, its poor economic performance clearly showed that it was now Germany which had the most influence within the EU. In order for France to improve its economic position, it was generally agreed by those in the Centre that the role of the state would have to be reduced.

The increasing turn towards liberal economic policies has been part of the process of a wider decline in traditional ideological divisions between parties. As we saw in the first chapter, historic links between socio-economic groups and parties had been in decline since the 1970s. Mitterrand's abandonment of the Socialist experiment in favour of a greater role for business in the economy in the early 1980s started a period of convergence between the Centre Left and Centre Right over economic policy. Following Mitterrand's U-turn in the 1980s, politicians from both sides of the divide often enacted similar economic policies when in power, and so we might talk about a 'consensus of government' in this area. This was also seen during the Hollande presidency, particularly with the appointment of Emmanuel Macron as Minister of the Economy, who was responsible for the introduction of several liberal economic measures. There was a wide acceptance by parties and voters across the Centre Left and Centre Right of the need to reduce the role of the state and give support to private enterprise. Under the Hollande presidency, economic policy was not a Left/Right issue but one where a large number of voters in the Centre were looking for a candidate who would offer a balance between liberal reform and state

protection. Whereas on the other two axes of our model, the Centre Left and Centre Right adopted different positions, it was their proximity on the economic axis that was the cause of problems for Les Républicains.

The realignment over economic policy was symbolised by the emergence of Emmanuel Macron, who benefitted from the division within the Parti Socialiste to present himself as an alternative to the Centre Right in representing the 'consensus of government' in favour of liberal economic reform. The PS was split between those who supported liberal policies and the *Frondeurs* who remained favourable to state intervention. Hollande's inability to reduce unemployment was a key factor in his decline in popularity and was a major reason for his decision not to stand for re-election. However, the inability of the Socialist government to resolve the economic problems that faced the country did not discredit the move towards liberal policies that had occurred during his presidency. Many voters believed that it was the failure to implement these effectively, rather than the measures themselves, that was responsible for the continued poor performance of the French economy. This can be seen by the fact that Macron was able to win the presidential elections, despite having been the Economy Minister between 2014 and 2016.

The radical parties which continued to resist the liberalisation of the French economy also provide evidence to support the idea that there had been a weakening of traditional ideological divisions over economic issues. The FN, while opposed to French membership of the European Union, found that its stance on the euro alienated many voters who might have considered supporting the party, including those who shared its position on the EU in general, as they feared that returning to the franc would cause deep economic problems. Among sympathisers of La France Insoumise, while many believed in the principle of a universal income, they opposed the measure in practice as they felt that it would be impossible to implement it in the prevailing economic climate. In 2017, it was clear that a significant number of voters from all sides were placing pragmatism ahead of ideological preferences.

Approaching the new direction of French party politics with reference to a model containing three axes not only helps to explain the relationship between parties, but also helps to highlight the effect that different issues had within political movements. Convergence of opinion in support of liberal economic reform was particularly strong within Les Républicains. In contrast to the question of identity, there was much agreement on the Centre Right that measures needed to be introduced to reduce the size of the state

and make France more competitive in the global economy. Juppé, Sarkozy and Fillon all agreed that state spending should be cut, that the pension age needed to be raised, that the law on the 35-hour week needed to be made more flexible, and that business contributions should be reduced. They shared the same overall approach to the nature and mechanics of economic reform. The differences between their policies were a question of pace, rather than principle. Fillon, as the most radical, was able to secure support for his programme amongst a Centre Right electorate that was increasingly keen on a rapid economic transformation. Nor did it seem as though he would struggle to unite his party behind his economic programme.

Yet, Fillon's insistence on the need for a rapid liberalisation of the French economy, which had contributed to his victory in the Primary, proved to be a handicap, when it came to gathering support beyond the Centre Right, and show that his defeat in the 2017 presidential elections cannot solely be explained by the Penelopegate scandal. Although, as we have seen, there had been a rise in demand for liberal economic reform, there was still much attachment to a strong state. Many among the wider electorate wanted a balance between these elements that Fillon's programme did not provide. Whilst some FN supporters may have been wary of certain aspects of the Far Right's economic policy, such as the return to the franc, a significant number still supported its proposals to increase state intervention, and were opposed to arguments for deep cuts in the public sector. Fillon was therefore unable to win much support from this group.

The struggle to win support from the Far Right further demonstrated the problems posed to Les Républicains by the reconfiguration of the French party system, problems which have been highlighted by our new model. Whilst FN voters might be in favour of Fillon's identity proposals, they would not support him because of differences over visions of the economy. In a multidimensional system, where parties were aligned differently on different axes, transfers of allegiance became much less predictable.

Fillon's presidential hopes were further hindered by the new alignment of parties. He was not only rejected by those on the Far Right, who did not share his vision of the reforms needed to improve the French economy, but was also unable to win over those in the Centre, and others, who were disappointed with Hollande, and wanted more freedom for businesses. These voters turned instead to Macron, who challenged the position of Les Républicains to be the sole representative of liberal economic reform. His programme also proposed liberal measures, but ones that were less extreme than those defended by Fillon.

A decisive number of reformist voters preferred the policies of the candidate of En Marche, who promised change, but in a way that would be more in keeping with French traditions. Macron's programme recognised the importance of maintaining some protective measures, a feature which was absent from that of his rival on the Centre Right. That a significant proportion of the electorate chose to transfer their support from Fillon to Macron, after the Primary but before the Penelopegate scandal, at a time when Fillon's economic programme was becoming a focus of debate, confirms the impact of the realignment of the political system over the question of economic policy on the failure of the Centre Right in 2017.

The effects of the realignment continued beyond May 2017. In Edouard Philippe's government, appointed after the legislative elections, many of the key economic positions were given to former members of Les Républicains. The Centre Right therefore found itself in a position where it would have to oppose Macron by arguing that he was not going far enough in modernising the French economy - the very stance that had undermined them during the 2017 elections. As Macron had won the presidency by presenting himself as the candidate with the programme of liberal economic reform that seemed best suited to French society, the consequences of the defeat of Les Républicains would not end in May 2017, but would remain an unresolved challenge for the future of the Centre Right.

Chapter 4: Axis 3, Europe

Europe and the realignment of the French party system

Introduction

In previous chapters, we have examined two of the axes of our new model of the structure of the French party system during the Hollande presidency. We have seen that questions relating to national identity and social values divided Les Républicains, and how Fillon's hardline stance on this issue hindered attempts to win over support from the Centre. We have also seen that his particularly liberal economic policies also alienated many voters outside the party who had been expected to support Les Républicains. In this chapter we will examine how Europe formed a third axis of the new party system, and combined with both the others, to cause some supporters of Les Républicains, and many in the Centre to vote for Emmanuel Macron, at the expense of the candidate of the Right.¹

In its examination of the realignment of parties during the Hollande presidency, this chapter will challenge the analyses of those, such as Gougou and Persico and Martin,² who do not include Europe as a separate issue. It will also show how this axis provides evidence to contest the argument of those such as Fourquet and Schön-Quinlivan,³ who see the result of the 2017 presidential election as illustrating a new divide in French society between the winners and losers of globalisation. Debate over France's place in Europe was not simply a matter of economic issues but brought together other elements such as political and cultural globalisation. As we shall see, a significant number of those on the Right, who supported liberal economic policies, were at the same time concerned about the cultural and political consequences of globalisation that might result from a more federal and integrated Europe. This chapter will support the arguments of those such as

¹ As differences of opinion between Les Républicains and the Independent Centre parties are crucial in this chapter, to avoid confusion, we shall refer to the Centre and the Right. In this context, the Right should be understood as meaning the Gaullist movement, and later the UMP and Les Républicains. Where the FN is not referred to by name, it will always be called the Far Right (or the Radical Right).

² Florent Gougou, Simon Persico, 'A new party system in the making? The 2017 French presidential election' *French Politics* (2017) Vol 15 303-321 p.314; Pierre Martin, 'Un séisme politique: L'élection présidentielle de 2017', *Commentaire* (2017) Vol.2 No.158, 249-264

³ Jérôme Fourquet, 'Un nouveau clivage: Perdants *versus* gagnants de la mondialisation', *Commentaire* (2017) Vol.2 No.158, 265-270; Emmanuelle Schön-Quinlivan, "'The elephant in the room" no more: Europe as a structuring line of political cleavage in the 2017 presidential election' *French Politics* (2017) Vol.15 290-302 p.300

Grunberg and Perrineau⁴, who recognise the importance of European issues in their own right, and not merely as an extension of other debates, particularly those concerning economic globalisation.

We will show that since 1945, the question of Europe had been particularly divisive for the Right, and had often brought it into conflict with potential allies in the Centre. We will argue that these two political traditions agreed on the principles that a European project was a way of maximising French power, that this organisation should be independent of other superpowers, and that it should represent not only an economic union but also a cultural community. Where they disagreed was over how to achieve these aims. As we shall see, those on the Gaullist Right had often supported a Europe of Nation States, feeling that this structure could enable France to maintain control of its own destiny, while maximising its influence on the world stage, and because they saw the Nation as an ideal community. In contrast, many in the Centre believed that a federal structure would best enable France to achieve its aims and had an idealised vision of Europe.

As we shall demonstrate, the historical divisions between the Right and the Centre that had existed since 1945 were mirrored by those within Les Républicains. Leruth and Startin have argued that there were three divisions, which they refer to as ‘Euro-Populist’, ‘Euro-Federalist’ and ‘Euro-Pragmatist.’⁵ However, we will argue that an analysis based around two divisions is more helpful in analysing the positions adopted by candidates on the Right during the primary, and in understanding the role that Fillon’s programme on Europe played in his defeat in the 2017 presidential elections. During the Hollande presidency, there was still a crucial divide on the Right between those who were particularly federalist, and others who wanted to maintain a strong role for nations. There was also disagreement over the conception of European culture, with one side promoting a Traditionalist,⁶ white, Christian image, whilst others closer to the Centre emphasised the contributions of many different civilisations, including those outside Europe. Debate was therefore not simply about different policies, but involved opposing visions of what type of Europe should be

⁴ Gérard Grunberg, ‘Le nouvel espace politique européen’, *Telos* 19 February 2015 <<https://www.telos-eu.com/fr/politique-francaise-et-internationale/le-nouvel-espace-politique-europeen.html>> [Accessed 14/02/18]; Pascal Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne: Pourquoi et pour qui votons-nous ?* (Paris: Fayard, 2012) p.114

⁵ Benjamin Leruth and Nicolas Startin, ‘Between Euro-Federalism, Euro-Pragmatism and Euro-Populism: the Gaullist movement divided over Europe’ *Modern & Contemporary France* (2017) 25:2, 153-169 p.154

⁶ Here we refer to ‘Traditionalist’ in the sense of the division between ‘Traditionalists’ and ‘Modernists’ that we have outlined in Chapter 2, concerning questions relating to national identity and social values.

created, to which both politicians and voters were emotionally attached. Juppé and many of his supporters would be alienated by the position taken by Fillon, who was wary of certain aspects of integration, and wanted more priority to be given to the role of nation-states within the Union. Questions relating to sovereignty and federalism, in particular, which had long caused division within the Right, would be crucial in undermining unity within Les Républicains.

It was, most importantly, the presence of Emmanuel Macron on the political scene that caused Europe to become a factor that threatened both Les Républicains' chances of regaining power and also the continued existence of the party as a united entity. This is the reason why much of this chapter focuses on the 2017 elections. Previously, the UDI and MoDem had lacked a leader capable of rallying sufficient public support to win elections, and so, while remaining independent parties, they had often concluded electoral alliances with the Centre Right. As we shall see, the vision of the candidate of En Marche was very close to that of the Independent Centre parties, and so, to many in the Centre, he appeared to be a leader who best represented their position on this issue. Macron's appeal was not restricted to Centrists, but also attracted the support of pro-European politicians and voters from both the Right and the Left. Juppéistes, who were alienated by Fillon's stance on identity and who wanted a more positive approach to Europe, as well as those from the Left, unwilling to support Hamon, favoured Macron's position. Prior to the first round of the presidential elections, a sufficient number of sympathisers of the UDI and Les Républicains switched their vote to Macron to allow the candidate of En Marche to come top in the first round and see the elimination of Fillon.

The realignment of the party system continued beyond the *présidentielles*, as the divisions over the issue of Europe that were revealed within Les Républicains during the election campaign were not ended by Fillon's defeat, and continued to destabilise the party.

Europe: a key divide in the new party system

There has been much debate concerning the place of differences of opinion over Europe within the French party system during the Hollande presidency. Some see the question of Europe as being a key issue that divides voters and political movements in modern France and claim it was crucial during the 2017 presidential elections.⁷ Others ignore Europe as a factor of division in its own right, seeing it only as part of the broader issue of

⁷ See Olivier Costa, *Collège d'Europe Policy Brief: L'élection française: un référendum sur l'appartenance à l'Union ?* #3.17 Avril 2017

globalisation.⁸ As we shall demonstrate, the truth lies somewhere in between these two positions. Europe was not as important as questions of identity and economic policy in determining the result of the election. However, it did play an important role in the defeat of Les Républicains, by contributing to the rise of Emmanuel Macron, who was able to attract voters with a positive vision of Europe, and by undermining the alliance between Les Républicains and the UDI.

Those who have doubted the importance of the role of Europe in the elections of 2017 can find support for their position in surveys of the issues that influenced voters' behaviour.⁹ For example, Gougou and Persico argue that 'the political space at the 2017 presidential election is hence shaped by two cleavages. The most important conflict dimension [...] opposes anti-immigration authoritarian and socially conservative views to pro-immigration and culturally liberal opinions [...] The second conflict dimension [...] features neoliberal, pro-globalization, productivist opinions on the one hand, and anti-globalization, ecologist stands on the other.'¹⁰ This division into these two axes is also shared by Martin.¹¹

Analysis of the factors that influenced voters' choices in 2017 also lends support to those who do not see Europe as constituting a third axis. When Ipsos asked people to state which three issues had most influenced their vote, only 18% stated 'les questions européennes', placing it well behind the main three reasons which were purchasing power (mentioned by 27%), immigration (26%) and unemployment (24%).¹²

However, although European questions were not particularly important for a large number of voters, some found them influential in their choice of candidate. Voters for Emmanuel Macron placed European issues in third place, when asked to name the factors that had convinced them to support him – 25 % of them stating that Europe was important to them.¹³ This percentage was higher than that given by Mélenchon voters to the

⁸ See, for example, Fourquet, 'Un nouveau clivage' 265-270; Schön-Quinlivan, "'The elephant in the room' no more' p.300

⁹ See Ipsos-Sopra Steria, *2017 élection présidentielle: 1er tour présidentiel: Comprendre le vote des Français* p.12 <<https://www.ipsos.com/fr-fr/1er-tour-presidentielle-2017-comprendre-le-vote-des-francais>>

¹⁰ Gougou, Persico, 'A new party system in the making?' p.314

¹¹ Martin, 'Un séisme politique' p.261

¹² Ipsos-Sopra Steria, *2017 élection présidentielle: 1er tour présidentiel: Comprendre le vote des Français* p.12

¹³ Ipsos-Sopra Steria, *2017 élection présidentielle: Comprendre le vote des Français* p.14. Only unemployment on 32% and spending power on 30% were cited by Macron voters more frequently than European questions, when they were asked to name the issues that had persuaded them to support the candidate of En Marche.

environment as a defining factor (which is considered by Gougou and Persico, and Martin to be a key feature of the new party system, in that an ‘eco-socialist pole’ has been formed).¹⁴ The emergence of a strong, pro-European, Centrist pole should therefore be considered important.

As we shall see, the question of Europe reactivated traditional divisions between the Right and the Centre, and also within Les Républicains. It was a key reason for the defeat of François Fillon, and also explains some of the major divisions within the party following the 2017 legislative elections.

Nuancing the ‘winners vs losers of globalisation’ analysis: The importance of the questions of sovereignty and identity in relation to Europe

Some analyses have seen Europe as an issue that was of little importance in determining the result of the 2017 elections and the realignment of the French party system. Others have placed greater emphasis on its influence, but have reduced it to being a manifestation of a wider division between the winners and losers of globalisation. However, we have already seen in chapter 2 that globalisation is a multifaceted concept, which does not solely divide voters and parties according to their attitudes towards economic issues.

Many who support liberal economic policies also feel that their culture and traditions are under threat. The question of Europe can allow us to nuance this analysis, as voters from many different social backgrounds are concerned that too much power is being transferred from the national to the supranational level.

Several commentators have analysed Europe in the context of this new division between the winners and losers of globalisation. Jérôme Fourquet refers to the Brexit referendum, the election of Donald Trump and the victory of Emmanuel Macron to argue that ‘ces trois scrutins ont donné à voir la montée en puissance d’un clivage extrêmement puissant, celui opposant, pour faire court, les gagnants et les perdants de la mondialisation.’¹⁵ Schön-Quinlivan claims that during the 2017 presidential election ‘[t]he line of fracture was between the ones in favour of an open, Europeanised and globalised France versus those wanting a closed, outside of the EU and protectionist France.’¹⁶ This position is shared by Guilly, who states that ‘[l]a recomposition politique à laquelle nous assistons est le fruit

¹⁴ Gougou, Persico, ‘A new party system in the making?’ p.314 ; Pierre Martin, ‘Un séisme politique’ p.261

¹⁵ Fourquet, ‘Un nouveau clivage’ p.265

¹⁶ Schön-Quinlivan, ‘“The elephant in the room” no more’ p.300

d'un temps long, celui de l'adaptation de la société française aux normes d'un modèle économique et territorial mondialisé. Comme dans tous les pays développés, elle révèle logiquement le nouveau clivage entre gagnants et perdants de la mondialisation.¹⁷ This split has also been recognised by politicians, with Emmanuel Macron arguing that 'le clivage se situe entre partisans de l'ouverture et tenants de la fermeture',¹⁸ while Marine Le Pen talked of 'mondialistes' and 'patriotes'.¹⁹

Some evidence to support this analysis can be found in the results of elections held during the Hollande presidency. An Ipsos survey, carried out during the 2014 European elections, found that 43% of blue-collar workers voted for the FN, along with 38% of white-collar workers. In both cases, the Far Right was well ahead of its nearest rivals in terms of the support of these social groups, with the UMP receiving 17% of the manual worker vote, and the PS gaining 16% of the votes cast by white-collar workers.²⁰ The 2017 presidential elections, which saw Le Pen and Macron face each other in the second round are also taken as indicative of this new division.

However, the new party system is not solely structured according to attitudes towards economic policy, and the effects of globalisation upon it are more complicated than the discussion concerning the division between winners and losers might suggest.

We have seen in Chapter 2 that those who benefit economically from globalisation may be concerned about the way immigration can affect not only the economic situation, but also national identity. A similar set of reactions can be seen in debate concerning Europe. Hooghe and Marks argue that 'identity is critical in shaping contestation on Europe.'²¹ They go on to note that:

the European Union is more than a means to lower economic transaction costs. It is part of a system of multi-level governance which facilitates social interaction across

¹⁷ Marc-Olivier Bherer, 'Christophe Guilluy « Macron le candidat des métropoles mondialisées »' *Le Monde* 26 April 2017 <http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2017/04/26/christophe-guilluy-m-macron-est-le-candidat-des-metropoles-mondialisees_5117791_3232.html#kSTwwMi2vemASbXC.99> [Accessed 13/02/18]

¹⁸ Emmanuel Macron, *Révolution* (Paris: XO Editions, 2016) p.230

¹⁹ Simon Barbarit, '« Patriotes » contre « mondialistes », Marine Le Pen lance sa campagne à Lyon' 5 February 2017 <<https://www.publicsenat.fr/article/politique/patriotes-contre-mondialistes-marine-le-pen-lance-sa-campagne-a-lyon-54258>> [Accessed 13/02/18]

²⁰ Ipsos steria 'Elections européennes 2014: Comprendre le vote des Français' p.4 <<https://www.ipsos.com/fr-fr/europeennes-2014-comprendre-le-vote-des-francais>>

²¹ Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, 'A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus' *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol.39, 1-23 p.1

national boundaries, increases immigration and undermines national sovereignty. Economic losers are more prone than economic winners to feel culturally threatened, but the fit is loose.²²

That economic issues were not the only concern that affected French citizens' views on Europe was shown in the Eurobarometer polls. In the Spring 2017 edition, French voters felt that terrorism and immigration were the most important issues facing the EU (with 44% citing terrorism and 38% immigration), ahead of the state of the economy, which was far behind on 18%.²³

Where issues other than economic questions shaped public attitudes to the European Union, these did not show a strong class division. There was general suspicion about further European integration during the Hollande presidency. While a 2013 BVA poll showed that those with higher incomes were around twice as likely as those on low incomes, and four times as likely as manual workers to have faith in Europe (39% compared with 21% and 9%, respectively), there was still a majority who had lost confidence in the EU.²⁴

Further evidence that there was growing wariness of the EU across all sections of society could be seen in an Ifop poll for *Le Figaro* in May 2015. A majority from all socio-economic groups wanted to reform the Schengen area, with 52% of those in the upper socio-professional categories and 64% of those in the lower socio-professional categories in agreement.²⁵ Furthermore, both groups hoped for less political and economic integration, with 55% from the higher categories and 68% from the lower categories supporting this idea.²⁶

We have seen in previous chapters how the positions adopted by Les Républicains present a problem for the division of the party system between winners and losers of globalisation, in that the party supported liberal economic policies (which would put them in the open section), whilst defending a traditional vision of French identity (which might place them

²² Ibid p.11

²³ EU Directorate General for Communication, *Standard Eurobarometer 87: The key indicators: Spring 2017: France* p.2

²⁴ BVA, Sondage BVA for *le Parisien-Aujourd'hui en France* and *l'Iris, Les Français et l'Europe « espoir, crainte ou désenchantement*» February 2013 p.7

<https://staticswww.bva-group.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/fichier_bva-le_parisien_pour_liris_les_francais_et_leurope4f66e.pdf>

²⁵ Ifop for *Le Figaro, Les Français et l'Europe 10 ans après le TCE* May 2015 p.14

<https://www.ifop.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/3039-1-study_file.pdf>

²⁶ Ibid p.17

with those who shared a closed vision). On the question of Europe, as we shall see, Les Républicains supported French membership, but were concerned that France was losing control over its freedom of action, as more powers were transferred to the EU. François Fillon's position combined elements of both sides of the new divide, and that he should come within 1.3 percentage points of qualification for the second round suggests that the split is not as clear as has been suggested.

While it might be argued that the division between both an open and closed society, and the winners and losers of globalisation, was confirmed in the second round of the 2017 presidential elections, when Macron faced Le Pen, this ignores the fact that the scores of the top four candidates in the first round were within four and a half points of each other, and that Macron only received 24.01% of all votes cast.²⁷ If the split between 'winners' and 'losers' really had been the determining factor, one would have expected Macron and Le Pen, who epitomised the different sides of this divide, to score much more highly than their rivals. That they failed to do so, and that both received a lower percentage of the vote than candidates qualifying for the second round of the previous presidential elections (where Hollande received 28.63% of the vote and Sarkozy 27.18%),²⁸ as well as there being a higher abstention rate (22.23% in 2017 compared to 20.52% in 2012)²⁹, suggests that several factors were influencing voters' choices, and that these issues cannot be reduced to a single divide.

The divisions provoked by French membership of the European Union cannot therefore only be reduced to those between winners and losers of economic globalisation. As we have seen in chapter 2, globalisation is a term that brings together a range of different phenomena and includes economic, cultural and political elements. Those who benefit from the economic aspects can at the same time be concerned about cultural globalisation (fearing the arrival of large numbers of immigrants and the 'challenge' they might present to French traditions and culture) and political globalisation (worry about the transfer of powers away from France to Brussels).

²⁷ Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Election présidentielle 2017: résultats globaux du premier tour' 24 April 2017

<<https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Archives/Archives-elections/Election-presidentielle-2017/Election-presidentielle-2017-resultats-globaux-du-premier-tour>> [Accessed 20/12/18]

²⁸ Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats de l'élection présidentielle 2012'

<[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__PR2012/\(path\)/PR2012/FE.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__PR2012/(path)/PR2012/FE.html)> [Accessed 27/02/18]

²⁹ See Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Election présidentielle 2017: résultats globaux du premier tour' and Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats de l'élection présidentielle 2012'

The new divide over Europe

Having shown that the topic of Europe was an important issue in its own right during the 2017 campaign, and that it cannot solely be subsumed into the broader category of attitudes towards economic globalisation, we must now consider the impact that this cleavage had on the French political system, how it disrupted the traditional Left/Right divide and alliances between parties, and particularly the effect that it would have on the Right.

Both Perrineau and Grunberg recognise that Europe is a complex, multi-dimensional axis that upsets traditional divisions. Perrineau, writing just before the 2012 elections, notes that:

L'Europe est un enjeu qui traverse et brouille très fortement le clivage entre gauche et droite. La question européenne se pose à travers un système d'oppositions culturelles sur la conception de l'avenir, l'ouverture à l'autre, la confiance dans le changement ou encore le rapport à l'Etat. L'Europe qui est davantage un projet en élaboration permanente qu'un territoire aux confins circonscrits, fait éclater non seulement les vieux ancrages territoriaux de la gauche et de la droite, mais aussi le foyer et la scène de l'Etat-nation comme seul lieu d'expression et de médiatisation des conflits politiques. Au fond, le défi européen accentue les processus de déliaison idéologique, sociale et territoriale à l'œuvre dans la société et dans le système politique français.³⁰

Grunberg shares a similar analysis, arguing:

Ce clivage est orthogonal au clivage gauche/droite. Il crée ou réactive de profondes divisions au sein de la droite comme au sein de la gauche, séparant les radicaux des modérés. Gauches radicales et droites radicales s'opposent notamment aux gauches et aux droites de gouvernement sur la question européenne qui devient un enjeu politique majeur et qui réorganise l'espace politique européen autour d'elle. A droite, cet enjeu s'est politisé à partir de la question de l'immigration et de l'identité nationale. L'Europe est accusée à la fois de favoriser l'immigration et de miner la souveraineté et l'identité nationales.³¹

³⁰ Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.114

³¹ Grunberg, 'Le nouvel espace politique européen'

These analyses are more helpful than those that we have discussed previously, as they take account of how features other than economic policy have influenced debate over Europe. They highlight the importance of cultural issues, and that of sovereignty, which, as Grunberg notes, have been particularly influential in debate on the Right.

This more multi-dimensional approach can be developed further in order to explain the role played by attitudes to Europe in the realignment of the French party system, and in influencing the 2017 presidential and legislative elections. In focusing on how Europe has weakened the Left/Right divide, and created a new arrangement of political movements, where the radical parties have more in common with each other than with one of the established parties of government, both Grunberg and Perrineau were writing before the emergence of Emmanuel Macron as a presidential candidate. They therefore fail to mention another consequence of the new divide caused by Europe, which is the rise of the independent Centre. As we shall see, the Centre has historically been much more attached to the European project in its original form than the Right, but has often lacked a recognised leader, who could enable it to gain widespread electoral support. This would change with the emergence of Emmanuel Macron, who would undermine the traditional Left/Right divide and reignite some traditional ideological divisions between the Right and the Centre.

Europe and the Right

Having argued that Europe should be considered as a separate axis in the alignment of the French party system during the Hollande presidency, and not be simply subsumed into a wider divide concerning winners and losers of globalisation, we will now consider how the question of French membership of the European Union was a key issue that divided the Right during this period. We will show how in many cases, the differences that existed between various factions can be traced back to historical divisions that have existed throughout the development of the European Community, since the end of the Second World War. We will demonstrate how two main visions came to dominate discussion on the Right, one that foresaw the creation of a federal Europe, and another which gave preference to the role of nation states. Finally, we will analyse how these differences structured debate both between the Right and the Centre, and within Les Républicains as a party, during the Hollande presidency, and show how Macron was able to win over some of those who had supported Juppé in the Primary of 2016, and voters from the Independent Centre parties (which had often allied with the Right), with his positive, more federal vision.

I. A Right-wing vision of Europe

Before analysing the various issues that caused disagreement within the Right during the Hollande presidency, we should first consider what views politicians from this side of the political spectrum have often shared concerning the question of Europe.

It is difficult to define a single Right-wing vision, as the European Community is one that has gone through several stages of development, and parties have changed their policies to react to this, as well as having to adapt to new challenges on the wider international stage. Some elements of de Gaulle's vision, such as a Europe based firmly on nation states that was particularly resistant to moves towards greater integration, are now only strongly defended by the Far Right. However, some key principles that have often brought movements of the Right together could still be observed in 2017. These are: Europe as a power multiplier for France; Europe as an independent pole in relation to rival powers; and Europe as a 'civilisation'. In defining these aspects, we must also bear in mind that the structure of the Right itself has evolved, and that the creation of the UMP brought some Centrist elements together with those who represented the Gaullist tradition.

One of the major ideas that has often driven French policy and support for the European Community is that through uniting various countries in a broader institution, Europe can act as a power multiplier for France, enabling it to maintain influence in a world dominated by larger nations. This was something recognised by Monnet. In *Les Etats-Unis d'Europe ont commencé*, he noted that the international stage was dominated by:

[D]eux grandes puissances, immenses, qui développent leurs productions et leur productivité selon des systèmes différents et qui disposent de grands espaces de vastes marchés, avec des consommateurs nombreux.³²

He later concludes that 'l'Europe n'est plus en harmonie avec le monde.'³³ His solution to this problem is that for France, and Europe, to compete in the world, they must pool their resources in a large, supranational organisation.³⁴ This view was also shared by Robert Schuman, who claimed, 'Il faut que chacun soit pénétré de cette conviction que nous avons

³² Jean Monnet, *Les Etats-Unis d'Europe ont commencé: La Communauté européenne du charbon et de l'acier: Discours et Allocutions: 1952-1954* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1955) p.27

³³ Ibid p.29

³⁴ Ibid p.39

besoin les uns des autres, sans distinction de rang et de la puissance dont nous disposons.³⁵

This same attitude was held by members of the Gaullist Right, who, although they did not share Monnet's vision of a federal system, still saw Europe as a way of increasing French influence. As Petitfils notes, one of the reasons why de Gaulle supported the development of the European community was that it was 'a means for France, taking the head of this "European Europe", independent from both blocs, to affirm her international *grandeur* and *rayonnement*.'³⁶ His successor as President of the Republic, Pompidou, shared this view, stating in 1972, 'A l'époque des superpuissances, une nation comme la France ne peut préserver sa pleine existence politique, économique, monétaire qu'en s'unissant étroitement à ses voisins.'³⁷

While the dynamics of European cooperation would change, with a more integrated structure being developed following the creation of the European Union in 1992, this principle would survive, and in 2013, a UMP document outlining the party's position on Europe lamented that 'l'Europe ne joue plus son rôle de démultiplicateur de puissance pour la France.'³⁸ Although this was a criticism of the Hollande government, it was one that showed the continued ambition on the Right for Europe to act as a power multiplier for France, and would be repeated by Fillon during his presidential campaign in 2017, where he argued for 'une Europe lucide sur ses intérêts économiques, qui ose pratiquer une préférence européenne pour défendre ses intérêts face à la Chine et aux Etats Unis.'³⁹ Although France's rivals had changed, with China seen as a bigger threat in some respects than Russia, European cooperation remained the solution that would allow France to maintain an important role in the world.

There was also agreement over a second principle, that Europe must constitute an independent pole, free from alternative blocs dominated by the superpowers, which was seen as essential if France was to achieve its primary aim of maximising its influence. This

³⁵ Robert Schuman, *Pour l'Europe* (Paris: Les Editions Nagel, 1963) p.26

³⁶ Jean-Christian Petitfils, quoted in Andrew Knapp, *Gaullism since de Gaulle* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1994) p.417

³⁷ INA, 'Georges Pompidou présente le referendum sur l'élargissement de l'Europe' *Ina.fr* <<https://fresques.ina.fr/jalons/fiche-media/InaEdu05116/georges-pompidou-presente-le-referendum-sur-l-elandissement-de-l-europe.html>> [Accessed 28/11/18]

³⁸ Jean-François Copé, Valérie Debord, Hervé Mariton, Bruno Retailleau, "'Europe: Opération vérité": Mai 2013' p.7

³⁹ Les Républicains, 'Discours de François Fillon à Strasbourg' 7 April 2017 <https://www.republicains.fr/actualites_discours_francois_fillon_strasbourg_20170407> [Accessed 28/11/18]

idea explains why de Gaulle had been opposed to a federal Europe, which he feared would fall under the control of the USA. He stated:

[o]n a donc vu nombre d'esprits, souvent d'ailleurs valables et sincères, préconiser pour l'Europe, non point une politique indépendante, qu'en vérité ils n'imaginent pas, mais une organisation inapte à en avoir une, rattachée dans ce domaine, comme dans celui de la défense et celui de l'économie, à un système atlantique, c'est-à-dire américain, et subordonnée, par conséquent, à ce que les Etats-Unis appellent leur « leadership ».⁴⁰

This idea of an independent Europe was also supported by those leaders on the Right who came after de Gaulle. For example, in 1978, Chirac stated:

Favorables à l'organisation européenne, oui, nous le sommes pleinement. Nous voulons, autant que d'autres, que se fasse l'Europe. Mais une Europe européenne, où la France conduise son destin de grande nation. Nous disons non à une France vassale dans un empire de marchands, non à une France qui démissionne aujourd'hui pour s'effacer demain. Puisqu'il s'agit de la France, de son indépendance et de l'avenir, puisqu'il s'agit de l'Europe, de sa cohésion et de sa volonté, nous ne transigerons pas.⁴¹

Once again, this principle maintained its importance in debate on the Right in 2017. As we shall see below, Fillon would argue that the euro should become a reserve currency, so as to prevent France becoming a 'vassal' of the USA, which controlled the dollar,⁴² a position which echoed that of de Gaulle in the 1960s.

The third element that underpinned the Right's vision of Europe during the Fifth Republic was the idea of Europe as a community that possessed a particular identity. Historically, cultural differences have often been used to justify opposition to federalism. For example, in his memoirs, de Gaulle argued:

⁴⁰Fondation Charles de Gaulle, 'Citations du Général de Gaulle sur l'Europe' <<http://www.charles-de-gaulle.org/pages/l-homme/dossiers-thematiques/de-gaulle-et-le-monde/de-gaulle-et-l-rsquoeeurope/documents/citations-du-general-de-gaulle-sur-l-europe-ii.php>> consulted on 12/04/16

⁴¹Jacques Chirac, 'L'appel de Cochin de Jacques Chirac (6 décembre 1978)' <http://www.clubdelhorloge.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=181:l-appel-de-cochin-de-jacques-chirac-6-decembre-1978&catid=21&Itemid=101> [Accessed 28/11/18]

⁴² François Fillon, 'Discours de François Fillon sur l'Europe – Schiltigheim, le 9 Mai 2016' (emphasis in original)

[à] quelle profondeur d'illusion ou de parti pris faudrait-il plonger, en effet, pour croire que les nations européennes, forgées au long des siècles par les efforts et les douleurs sans nombre, ayant chacune sa géographie, son histoire, sa langue, ses traditions, ses institutions, pourraient cesser d'être elles-mêmes et n'en former plus qu'une seule ?⁴³

A similar view was presented in the UMP manifesto for the 2014 European elections, which talked of '**incertitudes sur l'identité de l'Europe et sur ses frontières.**'⁴⁴ It continued:

A force de refuser de parler des nations qui composent l'Europe et de leurs spécificités (histoire, culture...), à force de vouloir s'élargir à marche forcée sans réfléchir véritablement au nouveau projet politique que nous pouvions mener à 28, les conditions d'une Europe sans saveur, sans limites et sans culture ont été créées collectivement. Cela a engendré un sentiment de doute et d'incertitude chez nos concitoyens.⁴⁵

This theme of Europe as an area with a particular civilisation would form part of Fillon's 2017 presidential campaign, as he stated 'la situation est critique si nous ne voulons pas que le rêve des fondateurs, celui d'une civilisation européenne démocratique et ouverte sur le monde, tourne au cauchemar.'⁴⁶

However, it must be acknowledged that those who favoured a more integrationist approach also saw Europe as having a particular cultural identity. For example, Robert Schuman believed that 'l'Europe, avant d'être une alliance militaire ou une entité économique doit être une communauté culturelle.'⁴⁷ Unlike those who shared a vision similar to de Gaulle, Schuman was wary of nationalism. He believed that European nations should emphasise their similarities and common interests, and that history books should talk less of glorious events in the history of the nation, and more about the absurdity of war.⁴⁸ As we shall discuss later, some of these principles could be seen in the discourse of Juppé.

⁴³ Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de Guerre et Mémoires d'espoir* (Paris: Plon, 2016) p.736

⁴⁴ UMP, *Elections européens Le 25 mai 2014: Le Projet de l'UMP: Pour la France agir en Europe* p.5 (emphasis in original)

⁴⁵ UMP, *Pour la France agir en Europe* p.5

⁴⁶ Fillon 2017, *Une France souveraine dans une Europe respectueuse des nations* p.1

⁴⁷ Robert Schuman, *Pour l'Europe* (Paris: Les Editions Nagel, 1963) p.35

⁴⁸ Ibid p.50

These three key principles have remained important for the Right throughout the Fifth Republic. In many cases, under the Hollande presidency, these were also shared with the parties of the Centre. For example, in their manifesto for the 2014 European elections, the UDI and MoDem argued that Europe was:

une nécessité, parce que le monde est plongé dans une compétition violente, universelle, qui exige que se rapprochent et que s'unissent les pays qui ne sont pas assez puissants pour se mesurer aux mastodontes de la planète.⁴⁹

The Independent Centre parties also believed in Europe as a cultural community, and talked of the need for the EU to 'réaffirmer ses valeurs communes'⁵⁰, and to 'défendre la culture européenne.'⁵¹

II. Two approaches to Europe: federalism vs nation states

We have seen that while the Right and Centre had a similar view of the goals of European cooperation, they disagreed over how these should be achieved. As we shall see in this section, a division existed between an approach which placed emphasis on the role of nation states, and another that favoured a more federal structure. Historically, Gaullist parties had been supportive of the first, and the Centrist parties the second. However, this solution evolved as European cooperation developed. As Knapp notes:

De Gaulle had sought a Europe that would allow France to maintain her rank in the world without paying a price in terms of lost sovereignty. The demands of greater European integration and liberalized world trade made such a vision less and less attainable; to remain as an international player of any importance, France would have to accept constraints on sovereignty and especially on economic policy-making that would have been almost inconceivable a generation earlier.⁵²

The development of a more integrated Europe from 1992, and the union of several Right-wing parties in the UMP in 2002 complicated this distinction between the Right and Centre. While there remained issues that split a majority of supporters of the Right from the counterparts in the Centre, as we shall see, under the Hollande presidency, many of these same issues would also divide Les Républicains from within.

⁴⁹ UDI et MoDem, 'Les Européens: Notre programme: L'Europe, notre force. Elections européennes 25 mai 2014' p.4

⁵⁰ Ibid p.24

⁵¹ Ibid p.24

⁵² Andrew Knapp, *Gaullism since de Gaulle* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1994) p.422

We will now outline these two different approaches, starting with that based on a Europe of Nation States.

i. Enacting principles through a Europe of nation states

Differences of opinion between the Right and Centre over how to realise their goals in Europe had been important historically, and would continue to be so during the Hollande presidency. We will now examine the two dominant approaches – that of a Europe of Nation States favoured by many on the Right, and that of a Federal Europe which was more popular in the Centre. This will allow us to understand why in 2017, a significant number of supporters of the Centre would choose Macron over Fillon, partly because the programme of the candidate of En Marche regarding Europe was closer to their own conception of the EU.

One of the key visions of Europe that has been influential on the Right since 1945 is that of a Europe of Nation States. This had been particularly important for de Gaulle, who, had believed that, rather than allowing France to increase its power on the world stage through an independent bloc, a federalist structure would weaken the country and ensure that Europe would fall under the sway of the USA. As Pozzi notes, 'L'Europe gaullienne est celle qui doit donner à la France les moyens de préserver son indépendance et d'affirmer sa grandeur sur la scène internationale.'⁵³ He adds that, for de Gaulle, '[l]e souverainisme est pour ainsi dire consubstantiel à la notion d'indépendance nationale, dont l'homme du 18 juin s'est toujours présenté comme le gardien vigilant.'⁵⁴

Although the Right-wing party leaders after de Gaulle's presidency accepted increased European integration (as could be seen when Chirac supported the Maastricht Treaty), this idea of the importance of nation states remained. In 2000, a survey found that around 75% of RPR *députés* wanted a Europe of nation states, only 19% felt that Europe did not pose a threat to sovereignty, and none supported a federalist structure.⁵⁵ Although the situation would change slightly, with the merger of several right-wing parties in the UMP in 2002, and further progress towards closer union in Europe, there remained much support for nation states. In a 2013 CSA poll, supporters of the UMP wished that more power be given to nation states, with only 19% wanting further integration, while 43% desired less (28%

⁵³ Jérôme Pozzi, 'Le RPR face au traité de Maastricht: divisions, recompositions et réminiscences autour de la dialectique souverainiste' *Histoire@Politique*, 2014/3 (No.24) 131-152 p.138

⁵⁴ *Ibid* p.138

⁵⁵ Nick Startin, 'Maastricht, Amsterdam and beyond: The troubled evolution of the French Right' in *French relations with the European Union*, Helen Drake ed. (London: Routledge, 2005) pp.55-74 p.61

supported the status quo, and 10% did not express an opinion)⁵⁶. A similar trend was observed by an Ifop poll in May 2015, which found that 58% of UMP sympathisers desired less integration, and 42% hoped for more.⁵⁷

This position was not only represented by the views of its members, but also in the party's programmes. In 2014, the Right looked to protect national voices in Europe, and its manifesto for the European elections stated: '[N]ous pouvons être fiers de nous inscrire à la fois dans la lignée des pères fondateurs et dans celle du général de Gaulle qui a fait progresser l'Europe tout en étant exigeant sur les résultats,'⁵⁸ and argued in favour of '**une véritable ambition pour la France, qui soit aussi une ambition pour l'Europe**, une Europe unie mais pas uniforme.'⁵⁹ The focus on protecting the influence of nation states was also clear in the party's policy of different levels of cooperation, rather than simply calling for more integration. The UMP's manifesto demanded:

une construction européenne innovante, nouvelle, originale doit être imaginée à travers des coopérations à géométrie variable afin de **permettre aux pays qui veulent avancer plus vite et plus loin ensemble de pouvoir le faire.**

Par exemple : une coopération sur les questions d'immigration avec les Etats du Nord de la Méditerranée, une coopération dans le domaine nucléaire avec le Royaume-Uni et la Finlande, une coopération avec l'Allemagne et les pays nordiques dans le domaine du développement des industries électroniques et de communication [...] des coopérations différentes dans le domaine de la défense.⁶⁰

A key reason why the Right supported the idea of multiple levels of cooperation between countries was because they believed that France's influence on the international stage was in decline. There was a growing feeling among French voters that their country had lost its voice within the EU, and that Germany had become the most influential nation. This was shown in an Odoxa poll from 2015. When asked which European figure had the most influence over decision making, 67% chose Angela Merkel, ahead of Mario Draghi, the

⁵⁶ CSA, *Les Français et l'Union européenne* October 2013 p.7

<<https://www.csa.eu/media/1283/opi20130904-les-francais-et-l-union-europeenne.pdf>>

⁵⁷ Ifop for Le Figaro, *Les Français et l'Europe 10 ans après le TCE* May 2015 p.17. The difference between these results and those from the CSA study may in part be explained by the fact that the Ifop excluded 'don't know' and the status quo, offering a choice between more integration or less integration.

⁵⁸ UMP, *Pour la France agir en Europe* p.2

⁵⁹ Ibid p.3 (emphasis in original)

⁶⁰ Ibid p.7 (emphasis in original)

president of the European Central Bank, on 14%, and Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, on 10%. In contrast, only 2% cited François Hollande.⁶¹ In this context, the development of a much more integrated and federal structure risked forcing France to accept rules that it did not support, whereas a multi-tier Europe, based on different levels of cooperation, would better allow the nation to retain more control over decision-making, and increase its influence over global affairs.

A Europe of Nation States was not only considered the best way of preserving French influence and independence, but also reflected the fact that many on the Right saw the Nation as an ideal community. This is something that could be seen throughout the Fifth Republic. As Knapp has argued, a sentimental attachment to the nation has always been a crucial part of Gaullism. He states:

Gaullism is as much emotion as ideology. In itself, the assertion that “France cannot be France without greatness” is a fairly ordinary piece of nationalist rhetoric. But de Gaulle illustrates it, at the opening of his *War Memoirs*, by invoking princesses in fairy tales, Madonnas in medieval frescoes, the Arc de Triomphe in the sunshine, Notre Dame at dusk, his mother hearing the news of France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. The use of such imagery, rather than any argument, are what give the presentation of his “certain idea of France” a mystical, romantic intensity. “Sentiment”, he admits, “inspires it in me as much as reason.”⁶²

This element was certainly important, and de Gaulle himself noted in a press conference in 1962 that ‘il est vrai que la patrie est un élément humain, sentimentale.’⁶³

This strong emotional attachment to France on the Right lasted well beyond the de Gaulle presidency, and became important in debates over Europe. In 1992, speaking in the National Assembly to oppose the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, Philippe Séguin argued that:

La nation [...] est quelque chose qui possède une dimension affective et spirituelle. C’est le résultat d’un accomplissement, le produit d’une mystérieuse

⁶¹ Odoxa, *L’Europe: sondage réalisé par Odoxa CQFD sur i-Télé et Le Parisien/Aujourd’hui en France* 3 July 2015 p.8 <<http://www.odoxa.fr/sondage/espoir-leurope-fonte-continue/>>

⁶² Knapp, *Gaullism since de Gaulle* p.3

⁶³ INA, ‘Conférence de presse du général de Gaulle du 15 mai 1962’ *Ina.fr* <<http://fresques.ina.fr/jalons/fiche-media/InaEdu00096/conference-de-presse-du-general-de-gaulle-du-15-mai-1962.html>> [Accessed 16/02/18]

métamorphose par laquelle un peuple devient davantage qu'une communauté solidaire, presque un corps et une âme.⁶⁴

He gave further evidence of his strong belief in the idea of the nation, when he stated:

la nation ce n'est pas un clan, ce n'est pas une race, ce n'est pas une tribu. La nation c'est plus fort encore que l'idée de la patrie, plus fort que le patriotisme, ce noble réflexe par lequel on défend sa terre natale, son champ, ses sépultures. Car le sentiment national c'est ce par quoi on devient citoyen, ce par quoi on accède à cette dignité suprême des hommes libres qui s'appelle la citoyenneté !⁶⁵

As we shall see below, this ideal would be important for Fillon during the presidential election campaign, when he would make reference to his personal links to Séguin when setting out his own policies on Europe.

Despite the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, and the continued move towards more integration within the EU, there remained many on the Right who continued to support the idea of the nation as the ideal community, and to see this as being threatened on occasions by the development of Europe. In 2013, a group of seven *députés* from the UMP wrote an open letter in favour of a reorientation of European policy away from federalism, and opened by stating that they were 'députés de la Nation'⁶⁶, reinforcing their faith in the idea of France. A similar approach could also be seen when Geoffroy Didier, one of the founders of the *Droite forte courant*, which looked to win over voters from the FN, wrote 'Il ne suffit plus d'affirmer benoîtement: « *L'union fait la force !* » Il faut surtout aujourd'hui construire des nations fortes en Europe. « *La nation est le seul bien des pauvres* » avait prévenu Jean Jaurès.'⁶⁷ As we shall see later, Sarkozy and Fillon would both support this view of the nation in the Primary of 2016.

We have seen how those in the Right and in the Centre shared an idea of Europe as an area with a particular cultural identity. Yet while this principle was shared, there was again

⁶⁴ Jean Garrigues, '« Oui, nous voulons l'Europe, mais debout. ». Philippe Séguin s'oppose à la ratification du traité de Maastricht (5 mai 1992)', *Parlement[s], Revue d'histoire politique*, vol. hs 3, no. 3, 2007, 137-142, p.140

⁶⁵Ibid p.141

⁶⁶ Julien Aubert et al. 'Sept députés UMP veulent une refondation de l'Europe (Reuters, le 23 juillet 2013)' <julienaubert.fr/sept-deputes-ump-veulent-une-refondation-de-leurope-reuters-le-22-juillet-2013/> [Accessed 21/02/18]

⁶⁷ Geoffroy Didier, *La Fronde nationale* (Paris: Editions du Moment, 2015) p.93

disagreement over how this cultural community should be constructed. For those who believed in a structure based on Nation States, national cultures needed to be protected, and were crucial in defining the identity of Europe as a whole. As we have demonstrated above, de Gaulle felt that federalism posed a threat to national cultures, and this is an element that brought him into conflict with those in the Centre. In 1962, during a press conference, he stated:

Je ne crois pas que l'Europe puisse avoir aucune réalité vivante si elle ne comporte pas la France avec ses Français, l'Allemagne avec ses Allemands, l'Italie avec ses Italiens etc. Dante, Goethe, Chateaubriand appartiennent à toute l'Europe, dans la mesure même où ils étaient respectivement et éminemment Italien, Allemand et Français. Ils n'auraient pas beaucoup servi l'Europe s'ils avaient été des apatrides, et s'ils avaient pensé, écrit en quelque esperanto ou volapuk intégrés.⁶⁸

Members of the Centrist MRP then resigned from the government in protest at the president's stance.

Similar concerns about a federal Europe weakening national identities and cultures could also be found during the Hollande presidency. The UMP manifesto in 2014 spoke of '**incertitudes sur l'identité de l'Europe et sur ses frontières.**'⁶⁹ It continued:

A force de refuser de parler des nations qui composent l'Europe et de leurs spécificités (histoire, culture...), à force de vouloir s'élargir à marche forcée sans réfléchir véritablement au nouveau projet politique que nous pouvions mener à 28, les conditions d'une Europe sans saveur, sans limites et sans culture ont été créées collectivement. Cela a engendré un sentiment de doute et d'incertitude chez nos concitoyens.⁷⁰

Although, throughout the history of the Right, the nation state had been considered particularly important as a means of preserving French power and influence within Europe, the alternative conception of a more federal structure had always received significant support from Centrists, as well as, during the Hollande presidency, from certain members of the Right.

⁶⁸ INA, 'Conférence de presse du général de Gaulle du 15 mai 1962'

⁶⁹ UMP, *Pour la France agir en Europe* p.5 (emphasis in original)

⁷⁰ UMP, *Pour la France agir en Europe* p.5

ii. Enacting principles through a Federal Europe

The alternative federalist solution to maintaining European influence and prosperity was set out by Monnet in *Les Etats-Unis d'Europe ont commencé*, in which he wrote :

[d]es ressources gigantesques doivent être rendus accessibles pour faire un peuple prospère et ayant confiance en lui-même, en ce vingtième siècle. Cela ne peut être réalisé que dans de vastes régions économiques et par des politiques unifiées. Le sentiment de plus en plus développé que c'est là la condition essentielle d'un avenir en progression dynamique, pousse les Européens à s'unir.⁷¹

As we have seen, he contrasted the weakness of divided European nations with the strength of the federations represented by the USA and USSR. Historically, this federalist vision had been supported by certain sections of the Centre, but at the time of the Hollande presidency, it would also be favoured by some within Les Républicains. This view could be seen in the statutes of the UDI, which stated:

Animée par l'idéal européen des Pères fondateurs, elle agit pour la construction d'une Europe fédérale, seule capable de promouvoir son modèle de société et de défendre ses valeurs et ses intérêts dans la mondialisation.⁷²

In contrast to members of the Gaullist Right, those who supported the UDF and later the parties of the Centre were often very favourable towards further integration. In the same survey from 2000 that we have cited above for the RPR, only 12% of the UDF representatives wanted a Europe of nation states, while 62% supported a federal structure.⁷³ 72% of UDF *députés* believed that Europe did not pose a threat to French sovereignty.⁷⁴ A similar situation could be found during the Hollande presidency. Concerning the future of the EU, a 2013 CSA poll found that the largest group of UDI voters wanted more integration, with 42% in favour, 12% against, and 26% defending the status quo, with 11% holding no strong opinion.⁷⁵ This was confirmed by an Ifop poll in May 2015, which found 64% of UDI sympathisers in favour of more integration, and 36% seeking its reduction.⁷⁶ There were therefore still significant differences in the way voters from the

⁷¹ Monnet, *Les Etats-Unis d'Europe ont commencé* p.40

⁷² UDI, *Statuts de l'Union des Démocrates et des Indépendants* p.2

<http://partiudi.fr/wpcontent/uploads/2016/09/20150207_UDI__Statuts_version_compleete_presentation_CN_07-02-15.pdf> [Accessed 16/02/18]

⁷³ Startin, 'Maastricht, Amsterdam and beyond: The troubled evolution of the French Right' p.61

⁷⁴ Ibid p.61

⁷⁵ CSA, *Les Français et l'Union européenne* p.7

⁷⁶ Ifop, *Les Français et l'Europe 10 ans après le TCE* p.17

Centre and those from the Right believed that France would best be able to maximise its global influence through its relationship with the EU.

One reason for these differences was that the Centre saw the European Community itself in more idealistic terms. As Hazareesingh has argued, Monnet believed that war could be avoided, and freedom and progress promoted, by men working together, in a context where the general interest would take precedence over the national one.⁷⁷ This conception of Europe has remained influential among Centrists. In 2014, the UDI and MoDem's manifesto for the European elections stated '[p]our nous, forces du centre, l'Europe est un idéal autant qu'une nécessité.'⁷⁸

Finally, the Centre also had a vision of Europe as a cultural space, but it was one which differed from that of the Right. Whereas de Gaulle and others had seen federalism as a threat to national cultures, Centrist politicians were keen to build a European culture, and believed that this could be achieved alongside the development of a more integrated political structure.

We have seen how, while they shared many of the same objectives, the Right and the Centre had often possessed different visions of the nature of the European community needed to attain them. We shall now examine how these different visions would affect Les Républicains, splitting the Sarkozystes and the Fillonistes from the Juppéistes.

Europe: a key factor that divided members of Les Républicains

The two opposing visions, which had historically dominated debate over Europe within the Right and the Centre, would still be clear during the 2016 primary, and in many cases would also divide Les Républicains.

During the primary, the question of Europe would provoke a crucial division between Sarkozystes and Fillonistes on one side, and Juppéistes on the other. A Juppé victory, which many expected, would strengthen the alliance between the Right and the Centre. However, were Sarkozy or Fillon to be chosen as the candidate, this would not only endanger that alliance, but also open the possibility of further realignment with the emergence of a Centrist movement under Macron. It was therefore the outcome of the primary that gave Europe an important role in the presidential elections of 2017.

⁷⁷ Sudhir Hazareesingh, *How the French think: an affectionate portrait of an intellectual people* (London: Allen Lane, 2015) p.218

⁷⁸ UDI-MoDem, *L'Europe, notre force* p.4

i. Disagreement within Les Républicains concerning Europe as a way of maximising French influence

A similar division to that between the Right and the Centre over how France should achieve her goals in Europe could be observed within Les Républicains, with Sarkozy and Fillon putting emphasis on the need for an important role for nation states, while Juppé moved further away from the election programmes of the party, and supported a more federalist approach.

Since debate over the Maastricht Treaty put an end to the 'permissive consensus', as what had been an organisation based on discussion and agreement between elites, to which public opinion had paid little attention, was now to be influenced by the votes of electorates,⁷⁹ the question of sovereignty has been one that has divided political parties in France, both from each other and also internally. This could be seen in the case of Les Républicains, where the Juppéistes took a different approach from others in the party. This was because the two sides prioritised different aspects of France's relationship with Europe. Whereas the Juppéistes were close to Monnet in believing that France could have influence on the world stage by working closely with other countries in a more integrated structure, others in the party adopted a more Gaullist position, as they felt that the most important factor was for France to be able to decide its own policies, and that integration should be limited where possible.

Their differences over the question of how France could best increase its influence on the international stage could be observed in the debate over how to define 'sovereignty'. Juppé disagreed with other members of Les Républicains as, like Monnet in the 1950s, he argued that in a world of rising superpowers (with China and Russia gaining strength, and the USA already powerful) 'La France, comme les autres, veut et doit rester un Etat souverain, mais la souveraineté, au siècle de la mondialisation, c'est le pouvoir de choisir ses partenaires privilégiés et les modalités d'une interdépendance devenue incontournable.'⁸⁰ This was a position close to that of the Centre, who were keen on alliances to protect French influence.

⁷⁹ See Hooghe and Marks, 'A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus' p.2

⁸⁰ Alain Juppé, 'L'aventure européenne n'est pas derrière nous, elle est devant nous (Discours du 24 février 2016 à Bruxelles) < <http://regards-citoyens-europe.over-blog.com/2016/03/discours-d-alain-juppe-sur-lesprit-et-le-projet-europeen-bruxelles-24-fevrier-2016.html> > [Accessed 04/03/18]

His main rivals maintained that pooling more powers within Europe would undermine rather than promote French influence. Fillon argued that 'L'Europe doit être un instrument et non pas une religion. C'est pour cette raison que je suis l'un des seuls aux côtés de Philippe Seguin, à avoir fait campagne contre le traité de Maastricht.'⁸¹ Just as de Gaulle had feared that a federal Europe would fall under American control, so Fillon believed that, were integration taken too far, then both Europe and France would lose influence in world affairs. He was particularly critical of the EU for following the lead of America rather than charting an independent path. He stated:

Notre alignement sur la politique étrangère américaine, notre effacement de la scène internationale, notre soumission au processus délétère de décision européen, générateur de petits compromis médiocres, ne sont pas compatibles avec les aspirations des Français et avec la place que la France occupe encore dans le cœur de nombreux peuples à travers le monde.⁸²

Without a strong voice for individual nations, Europe would continue to move away from France's interests.

For Fillon, France found itself having to follow Europe's direction on the international stage, which, rather than projecting French power and influence, was forcing the nation to accept laws and principles that it did not support. He raised the possibility that the European Court of Human Rights might object to his immigration measures, but argued that it was not the role of this institution to tell a government whom it should allow into its country.⁸³

The belief that France needed to regain control of her sovereignty to recover her influence brought Fillon into direct conflict with Juppé. Fillon claimed, 'Puisqu'il faut un mot pour définir ce que nous sommes: je préfère le beau mot de souveraineté. Car oui, face aux temps sombres, c'est cette souveraineté qu'il nous faut reconquérir.'⁸⁴ His focus on the national was also clear in his response to the Brexit referendum, when he claimed to

⁸¹ Fillon 2017, *Une France souveraine dans une Europe respectueuse des nations*

⁸² François Fillon, '« Je veux faire pour les Français » Discours à Sablé sur Sarthe' <<http://fillon2017lacollesurloup.fr/index.php/2016/08/28/je-veux-faire-pour-les-francais-discours-de-sable-sur-sarthe/>> [Accessed 15/10/17]

⁸³ François Fillon, 'Discours de François Fillon sur l'Europe – Schiltigheim, le 9 Mai 2016' (emphasis in original) <<https://groupegaullistesceaux.wordpress.com/2016/05/09/discours-de-francois-fillon-sur-leurope-schiltigheim-le-9-mai-2016/>> [Accessed 21/02/18]

⁸⁴ Fillon, '« Je veux faire pour les Français » Discours à Sablé sur Sarthe'

recognise the feelings of Leave voters, stating: 'J'ai entendu les Britanniques qui sont fiers de leur appartenance nationale et qui craignent de perdre la maîtrise de leur destin.'⁸⁵

Sarkozy also represented those on the Right who continued to follow a Gaullist approach, believing that the importance of nations was a reality, rather than something open to debate. He stated:

Si le Général de Gaulle avait raison de dire que la politique doit se faire à partir des réalités, et que ces réalités sont historiques, culturelles, géographiques, démographiques..., la grande erreur de l'Europe, depuis les années 80 jusqu'à présent, aura été de vouloir se construire contre ces réalités.⁸⁶

The historical question of whether French influence was better preserved through a Europe of nation states or one based on a federal structure was therefore a divisive one within Les Républicains, and was made more significant as both sides held competing ideals, like their historical predecessors.

ii. Conflicting ideals on the Right: Europe vs the nation state.

As with the division between the Right and the Centre, the two sides we have observed within Les Républicains often differed over the ideals that they supported and this led to increasing conflict and alienation when Europe became a matter for debate, particularly during the primary.

Just as in the Centre, there were those on the Right who were strongly attached to the idea of Europe, and this was particularly evident among Juppé and his supporters. The Mayor of Bordeaux spoke in an emotional and affectionate way of the European project. In 2014, he stated that 'Je crois, plus que jamais, en l'Europe et je m'engage à fond pour elle.'⁸⁷ On 22nd April 2014, he wrote a blog post entitled 'Lettre d'amour à l'Europe' where he addressed a personified Europe, expressing his love for her and his distress that she was

⁸⁵ François Fillon, 'François Fillon : « La réforme de l'Europe est une obligation vitale »' *Le Monde* 25 June 2016 <www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2016/06/25/francois-fillon-le-federalisme-administratif-est-fini_4958102_3232.html> [Accessed 21/02/18]

⁸⁶ Nicolas Sarkozy, 'Discours de Nicolas Sarkozy à Schiltigheim' 26 November 2015 <https://www.republicains.fr/actualites_discours_nicolas_sarkozy_schiltigheim_20151126> [Accessed 21/02/18]

⁸⁷ Arnaud Leparmentier, Nicolas Lemarié, 'Alain Juppé « Il faut parler de l'Europe de manière affective »' *Le Monde* 5 May 2014 <www.lemonde.fr/europeennes-2014/article/2014/05/05/alain-juppe-il-faut-parler-de-l-europe-de-maniere-affective_4411656_4350146.html> [Accessed 21/02/18]

blamed for many things for which she was not responsible.⁸⁸ At a time when many in both France and elsewhere were criticising the way the EU functioned, Juppé argued, 'Je persiste à croire qu'il faut parler de l'Europe de manière affective et non pas institutionnelle, en réaffirmant que l'Europe est une chance pour nous et pour nos enfants.'⁸⁹

As the UDI and MoDem had done during the European elections, Juppé stressed his support for Europe as an ideal. In 2016, he spoke of 'le miracle européen', which was 'une famille de nations guéries du nationalisme, fières de partager les mêmes valeurs de civilisation'. In response to the Brexit vote of that year, he spoke of the need to re-engage voters with Europe because '[a]vant tout, il s'agit de définir ce qui fait notre bien commun, un idéal qui parle au cœur des peuples européens, pour vivifier le désir d'Europe.'⁹⁰

Juppé's positive vision of Europe was one that allowed him to rally Centrists to his cause, but made him the subject of virulent attacks from both Fillon and Sarkozy. The former president argued that moves which ignored the existence of nations put the EU in danger of collapse. He stated 'Européen je suis, européen je finirai mais trop longtemps, nous avons rêvé de cette Europe idéale et nous nous réveillons brusquement avec une autre, si acharnée à gommer une grande partie de l'Histoire européenne qu'elle a réussi à ressusciter les vieux démons nationalistes dont elle était censée interdire le retour.'⁹¹ In his view, Federalists were so enthusiastic in support of their vision that they were blind to the difficulties within the European Union, and unable to react effectively: 'A chaque crise, nous crions l'Europe! L'Europe! Comme s'il s'agissait d'une formule magique capable à elle seule de conjurer le sort.'⁹² He believed that although the Schengen agreement, sanctions against Russia, discussions over Turkish membership of Europe and European enlargement posed fundamental problems, these were being ignored.

Fillon adopted the same line as Sarkozy, arguing that 'il faut sortir de la langue de bois, arrêter de sauter sur sa chaise comme un cabri en répétant « l'Europe, l'Europe, l'Europe », comme s'il suffisait de dire « vive l'Europe » pour qu'elle vive vraiment.'⁹³ Fillon, like his

⁸⁸ Alain Juppé, 'Europe, mon amour' 22 April 2014 <<http://www.al1jup.com/europe-mon-amour/>> [Accessed 21/02/18]

⁸⁹ Leparmentier, Lemarié, 'Alain Juppé « Il faut parler de l'Europe de manière affective »'

⁹⁰ Nicolas Chapuis, Alexandre Lemarié, 'Juppé « Organiser un référendum sur l'Europe, aujourd'hui en France, serait irresponsable »' *Le Monde* 27 June 2016 <http://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2017/article/2016/06/27/juppe-organiser-un-referendum-sur-l-europe-aujourd-hui-en-france-serait-irresponsable_4958579_4854003.html> [Accessed 21/02/18]

⁹¹ Sarkozy, 'Discours de Nicolas Sarkozy à Schiltigheim'

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Fillon, 'Discours de François Fillon sur l'Europe'

Gaullist predecessors was much more attached to the nation rather than to Europe as an ideal. As he would later state during his presidential election campaign, he felt that '[n]ous ne sommes pas seulement un pays, nous sommes une nation et une civilisation.'⁹⁴ By this he meant that France had a particular history and culture which should be valued.

As this was not simply a debate over how to implement an agreed policy, but a contest between two strongly supported but conflicting ideals, argument over Europe became particularly divisive for Les Républicains. The eventual victory of Fillon would therefore not only weaken the possibility of him winning support of those from the Independent Centre parties, but would also alienate some Juppéistes, whose vision had been viscerally attacked by the Sarkozystes and the Fillonistes.

iii. Europe as a cultural area

There had historically been a disagreement between the Centre and the Right over what form a European identity might take, with the Right insisting on the recognition of national traditions, and the distinct values of individual countries, which could be threatened by further integration. Although, as we have acknowledged, the context had changed by the time of the Hollande presidency, the primary revealed that this important division existed within the Right. Sarkozy and Fillon emphasised national characteristics, while others, such as Juppé, who argued for a more open vision of Europe and its heritage, that recognised the contributions made by religions other than Christianity and by cultures from other parts of the world.

Fillon echoed de Gaulle when he explained why, in his view, a federal structure was unworkable, by referring to cultural differences between nations. He argued that '**Nous ne serons jamais un état fédéral. Nous sommes trop différents pour y parvenir. Nos histoires, nos cultures, nos langues, nos coutumes sont trop anciennes pour s'effacer devant des règles uniformes.**'⁹⁵ This was very similar to the statement of de Gaulle about how Dante, Goethe and Chateaubriand only served the European cause by representing the culture of their own nations, and which, as we have seen, was particularly provocative for the Centrists.

⁹⁴ François Fillon, 'Discours de François Fillon à Paris' 9 April 2017 <https://www.republicains.fr/actualites_discours_francois_fillon_paris_20170409> [Accessed 10/12/18]

⁹⁵ Fillon, 'Discours de François Fillon sur l'Europe' (Emphasis in original)

Sarkozy shared a similar view to Fillon and supported the importance of national cultures within Europe. As had de Gaulle, he emphasised the importance of protecting traditional identities, in the face of continued integration. He argued that:

[L'Europe] a été pensée comme devant conduire à inventer l'homme nouveau : l'homme européen. Il y a évidemment une civilisation européenne. Elle est grecque, elle est romaine, elle est chrétienne, elle est née de l'Antiquité, du Saint-Empire, de la Renaissance, des Lumières [...] Mais sur le vieux continent se sont déployés des Etats-nations avec leur histoire et leurs identités propres. Or il y a dans « l'idéologie » européenne, née du louable souci d'ensevelir définitivement les guerres du passé, le projet insensé d'effacer ces histoires et ces identités particulières. Pour conjurer le risque du nationalisme, l'idée était d'enterrer les nations et se méfier des frontières !⁹⁶

The positions of Fillon and Sarkozy were at odds with Juppé's more open vision of European identity. He talked of 'Européens, c'est-à-dire héritiers de la fusion de la culture gréco-romaine et du judéo-christianisme, fécondée au Moyen-Age par le dialogue avec la pensée et le savoir arabes, renouvelée par l'humanisme de la Renaissance et l'esprit des Lumières.'⁹⁷ By recognising that Europe was made up of a mixture of cultures, he moved away from the traditional position of the Right offered by Sarkozy and Fillon, and closer to that of the Centre.

The problems posed to Les Républicains by the debate over the nature of Europe as a cultural entity were exacerbated, as they became linked to the discussion over the wider issue of cultural insecurity, which, as we have seen, was particularly divisive for the Centre Right. As can be seen in the statements above, both Sarkozy and Fillon argued in favour of a Traditionalist view of Europe. The cultures and influences that they referred to were generally white, European and Christian, and they presented an image of European identity constructed solely by Europeans, without great outside influence. In contrast, Juppé noted the role that interaction with the Arab world had played in defining Europe. In this way, the Traditionalist and Modernist camps that we identified in chapter 2, that could be seen in debate over identity, were reproduced in the Europe axis. Once again, the Traditionalists reached out to FN voters, while the Modernists sought to attract those from the Centre.

⁹⁶ Nicolas Sarkozy, *Tout pour la France* (Paris: Plon, 2016) p.146

⁹⁷ Alain Juppé, 'L'aventure européenne n'est pas derrière nous, elle est devant nous'

We have argued above that divisions over Europe within Les Républicains are best understood as being between one vision that placed emphasis on the importance of nation states, and another that believed that further integration was required. As noted in the introduction, Leruth and Startin have proposed a model that sees three divisions on the Right: Euro-federalism, which 'favours a strong European Union with further competences transferred to the European level, thus calling for a strengthening of European integration'⁹⁸; Euro-Populism, which is 'often linked to Euroscepticism, as the European Union is often portrayed as the 'corrupt elite' acting against the sovereign state'⁹⁹; and Euro-Pragmatism, which 'can be defined as contingent support for the European Union combined with a certain reluctance towards the principles of closer integration.'¹⁰⁰ They see each of these positions as being represented by a candidate in the Primary, with Juppé adopting a Euro-Federalist approach, Sarkozy a Euro-Populist one, and Fillon a Euro-Pragmatist one. Yet, while this shows the differences between Juppé and his rivals, it overstates those between Sarkozy and Fillon. As we have seen in chapter 2, Sarkozy's harder rhetoric was often more of an electoral strategy than a reflection of the true nature of the policies he proposed. As has been argued in this chapter, Sarkozy and Fillon shared many principles and policies, and so our own analysis based on a division into two groups seems to better reflect the different visions of Europe present on the Right during the Primary.

The important differences that separated the members of the Centre Right in debate over Europe would in themselves make reconciliation difficult, once the Primary had been decided. Such a reconciliation was made even more complicated by the breakdown of the traditional Left/Right divide and the emergence of Macron, as a figure who could attract elements from the Left, the Right and the Centre with a positive vision for Europe.

Beyond Left and Right: Emmanuel Macron and Europe

As we have seen, the issue of Europe both divided elements of the Right from potential allies in the Centre, and provoked conflict within Les Républicains. However, the party might still have held together, had it not been for the emergence of an alternative represented by Macron. Had the choice been between Les Républicains, the PS, the FN and

⁹⁸ Leruth and Startin, 'Between Euro-Federalism, Euro-Pragmatism and Euro-Populism' p.155

⁹⁹ Ibid p.155

¹⁰⁰ Ibid p.155

La France Insoumise, then it would have been likely that, Penelopegate notwithstanding, Fillon would have won the presidential elections of 2017. The FN was still not accepted as a party like any other, while the PS was virtually disqualified by the failures of the Hollande government, particularly those concerning the economy. In a context where, as we have seen, there was a growing, albeit reluctant in some quarters, belief that some level of liberal economic reform would have to be implemented, it was unlikely that Mélenchon could win a majority of the votes to be elected president, particularly as he was competing with Marine Le Pen for the support of those opposed to more pro-business reform. It was the emergence of Macron in the Centre that would ensure the downfall of Fillon. This was not only because he promoted a liberal economic outlook, and an open approach to national identity and social values, but also because of his positive vision of Europe.

Support for the European project would prove to be crucial to the success of En Marche, as Macron captured the votes of many of those who had a positive attitude towards the EU. His vision on Europe exploited fracture lines within Les Républicains and also between the Right and the Centre, and allowed him to win support. He deliberately positioned himself as the pro-Europe candidate, stating:

Non, je vous rassure, personne ne parle plus d'Europe ! Et quand je regarde tous les candidats à l'élection présidentielle ou aux primaires dont on nous parle tant, il n'y a que des anti-européens, que des eurosceptiques ou des eurosceptiques mollement convertis. Nous, mes amis, nous aimons l'Europe ! Nous voulons l'Europe !¹⁰¹

As we have seen above, an Ipsos poll that examined voting habits in the first round of the election found that, for Macron voters, European issues were the third most important factor in influencing their decision.¹⁰²

Macron's position aligned with many who had supported Juppé in the primary - both those who were political representatives and sympathisers of the Centrist parties and other sympathisers of Les Républicains - dismayed by Fillon's success in becoming the candidate of the Right, and offered them an alternative way of achieving their political project.

¹⁰¹ Emmanuel Macron, 'Discours d'Emmanuel Macron à la porte de Versailles' 10 December 2016 <<https://en-marche.fr/articles/discours/meeting-macron-porte-de-versailles-discours>> [Accessed 25/02/18]

¹⁰² Ipsos Sopra Steria, *2017 élection présidentielle: 1er tour présidentiel: Comprendre le vote des Français* p.14

Macron shared their belief that in a world of superpowers, France could only compete as part of Europe. He claimed that 'L'Europe, elle est notre meilleure protection, elle est notre meilleur bouclier dans la mondialisation.'¹⁰³ In the debate over the nation state and Europe as ideals, he was particularly pro-European, stating 'L'Europe [...] notre chance, c'est notre diversité, notre unité,'¹⁰⁴ and considered sovereignty to lie at the European rather than the national level. He argued that '[p]arce que l'Europe, c'est ce qui nous rend plus forts dans ce monde ouvert, et je le dis souvent, notre vraie souveraineté sur beaucoup de sujets est européenne.'¹⁰⁵

He also shared their fears about the rise of nationalism and emphasised the need to identify as a European. He declared: 'L'Europe, elle est aussi notre identité, ce qui nous fait, notre rêve commun. Et dans ce monde de fous, je vous le redis, je repense à la fois à cette phrase de François Mitterrand, prononcée il y a une trentaine d'années, quand il disait que le nationalisme, c'est la guerre. Oui, l'Europe seule peut nous empêcher de tomber dans la barbarie, l'Europe seule peut nous empêcher de tomber dans le repli !'¹⁰⁶ Whereas some on the Right had emphasised the importance of French culture, Macron claimed 'il n'y a d'ailleurs pas une culture française, il y a une culture en France, elle est diverse, elle est multiple. Et je ne veux pas sortir du champ de cette culture; certains auteurs ou certains musiciens ou certains artistes, sous prétexte qu'ils viendraient d'ailleurs.'¹⁰⁷ In all these areas, he was able to appeal to voters in the Centre and on the Right who wanted a positive vision for Europe and who did not share Fillon's nationalistic position.

Following Juppé's defeat in the primary, when members of Les Républicains and Centrists chose to support Macron, Europe was often an important feature that motivated their decision. For example, Aurore Bergé, who had been a member of Juppé's campaign team for the primary of 2016, left Les Républicains to join En Marche, and stated that she was 'libérale, progressiste, européenne, féministe,'¹⁰⁸ highlighting the importance of Europe as part of her identity. Following the second round of the primary, some members of the

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Emmanuel Macron, 'Discours de Caen' 4 March 2017 <<https://en-marche.fr/articles/discours/meeting-macron-caen-discours>> [Accessed 01/06/18]

¹⁰⁶ Macron, 'Discours d'Emmanuel Macron à la porte de Versailles'

¹⁰⁷ Emmanuel Macron, 'Discours d'Emmanuel Macron à Lyon' 4 February 2017 <<https://en-marche.fr/articles/discours/meeting-macron-lyon-discours>> [Accessed 01/06/18]

¹⁰⁸ Myriam Levain, 'Aurore Bergé, la militante féministe qui a quitté Les Républicains pour Macron' *Cheek Magazine* 17 February 2017 <<http://cheekmagazine.fr/societe/aurore-berge-republicains-macron-feministe/>> [Accessed 07/09/17]

Jeunes UDI announced their support for Macron, citing his stance on Europe as a reason for their choice. Members of this section of the Jeunes UDI argued:

Emmanuel Macron porte une vision pour notre société. C'est l'assurance d'un quinquennat maîtrisé sans fausses promesses autour d'une Europe forte, d'un libéralisme à visage humain et de l'ouverture à la modernité du monde actuel, tant sur l'économie que sur le côté social...

L'Europe, notre ADN, est plus qu'un partenaire pour Emmanuel Macron, c'est un horizon. « Plus d'Europe » et « une meilleure Europe » est l'unique solution pour la France afin de maîtriser les flux migratoires, de lutter contre le terrorisme et les nouvelles menaces, et de protéger nos emplois contre la concurrence mondiale, rempart contre la pauvreté toujours aussi présente en France en 2016.¹⁰⁹

A similar stance was adopted by a group of UDI Sénateurs during the presidential election campaign. Among their reasons for supporting Macron, in spite of the alliance between the UDI and Les Républicains, was that:

Emmanuel Macron est le seul à affirmer clairement, et avec force, que le destin de la France est étroitement lié à celui de l'Europe. Aujourd'hui, être patriote, ce n'est pas vouloir une France repliée sur elle-même, c'est créer, à nouveau, une France forte dans une Europe forte pour parler d'égal à égal avec les Etats-Unis de M. Trump et la Russie de M. Poutine. Cette France que nous voulons doit, avec l'Allemagne, entraîner l'Union dans cette direction.¹¹⁰

The shift of voters both from the Centre and Les Républicains to Macron before the first round of the presidential elections was a key factor in his success. An Ipsos poll conducted between 19 and 22 April 2017 found that while 50% of UDI supporters stated that they would vote for Fillon in the first round of the presidential elections, a significant number pledged to back Macron, with 36% of UDI supporters choosing the leader of En Marche.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Reuters, 'Des jeunes de l'UDI rejoignent Macron' *Reuters* 28 November 2016 <<https://fr.reuters.com/article/topNews/idFRKBN13N173>> [Accessed 25/02/18]

¹¹⁰ Leila Aïchi et al. "'Pourquoi nous soutenons Macron': La tribune de 10 sénateurs centristes' *Le Journal du Dimanche* 26 March 2017 <www.lejdd.fr/Politique/Pourquoi-nous-soutenons-Macron-la-tribune-de-10-senateurs-centristes-856481> [Accessed 25/02/18]

¹¹¹ Ipsos-Sopra Steria, *1^{er} tour Sociologie des électors et profils des abstentionnistes* p.13 <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/files-fr-fr/doc_associe/ipsos-sopra-steria_sociologie-des-electorats_23-avril-2017-21h.pdf>

These votes were therefore critical in ensuring that Macron was successful and as we have seen, Europe played a significant role in determining the way some Centrists voted.

While Macron's ability to win over some members of the UDI and Les Républicains was a key factor in Fillon's defeat, his success was also determined by the ability to reach across the Left/Right divide and gain the support of those Socialist sympathisers who also wanted a deeper relationship with Europe. Macron shared with Hamon a vision of Europe as crucial in a world of superpowers, and a desire to move away from a Europe made up of nation states.

Hamon's manifesto stated 'Face aux défis que les Européens doivent relever, la solution ne peut venir [...] du retour à des États-nations divisés.'¹¹² He argued in favour of 'une puissance qui affirme ses valeurs et défend ses intérêts dans une mondialisation régulée.'¹¹³ While he disagreed with Macron over economic policy, and favoured more statist measures, those Socialists who wanted a more liberal approach on economics were also encouraged to switch to Macron because of their similar approaches to Europe. The decision by 42% of those who considered themselves to be PS sympathisers to choose Macron in the first round of the presidential elections was crucial to his success in making the run-off and then being elected president.¹¹⁴ Europe was therefore a factor that enabled Macron to transcend the traditional Right/Left divide, as well as allowing him to divide the Right.

Conclusion

Debate over France's relationship with the European Union was an important feature of the 2017 election campaign. It divided Les Républicains from within, and distanced them from traditional allies, enabling Emmanuel Macron's victory on a very pro-European platform, with support from the Centre and across the Left/Right divide.

In light of this, models of the party system that ignore the question of Europe do not accurately present the mechanics of the realignment. Martin, and Gougou and Persico¹¹⁵

¹¹² Benoît Hamon, *Mon projet pour faire battre le cœur de la France* (2017) p.31

¹¹³ Ibid p.31

¹¹⁴ Ipsos-Sopra Steria, *1^{er} tour Sociologie des électors et profils des abstentionnistes* p.13

¹¹⁵ Martin, 'Un séisme politique' p.261; Gougou, Persico, 'A new party system in the making?' p.314

fail to deal with Europe as an issue in its own right, despite its impact both in splitting members of Les Républicains and in winning support for Macron.

It is important to recognise the role played by European issues because these influenced both the electorate and also the realignment of political parties. As regards its effect on voters, Fourquet, Guilluy and Schön-Quinlivan, consider Europe as part of a broader divide between winners and losers of globalisation.¹¹⁶ This approach ignores the fact that, as we have seen in previous chapters, globalisation is made up of many elements, including economic, cultural and political phenomena. Those who may consider themselves to be winners in one area may also feel that they are disadvantaged in another. For example, many of those to whom Fillon was appealing on the Right supported increased economic liberalism, but feared the loss of French traditions and identity, and of France's voice in Europe. Issues relating to sovereignty are not tied uniquely to economic questions, but can affect both those who win and those who lose out from the current economic system, and can influence their attitude towards Europe.

Furthermore, in addition to recognising its direct effect on the electorate, we must consider the divisions that Europe caused within the French party system as this area shows how the traditional split between Left and Right, that, as we saw in chapter 1 had been weakening for some time, was further undermined during the elections of 2017. Both Grunberg and Perrineau have noted that Europe unites elements of the established parties of government on one side, and sections of the radical parties of Left and Right on the other, and this remained true during the period 2012- 2017.¹¹⁷ The new development was the emergence of En Marche in the Centre, which won much support from the Independent Centre parties, which had been expected to rally behind the candidate of Les Républicains.

The question of Europe was one which reactivated traditional ideological divisions between the Right and the Centre, and undermined potential alliances between these two groups. Both sides agreed on several key principles: that France must play an important role within the EU in order to have influence on the world stage, that Europe should represent an

¹¹⁶ Fourquet, 'Un nouveau clivage' p.265 Emmanuelle Schön-Quinlivan, "'The elephant in the room" no more' p.300; Bherer, 'Christophe Guilluy « Macron le candidat des métropoles mondialisées»'

¹¹⁷ Grunberg, 'Le nouvel espace politique européen'; Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.114

independent pole unaligned with any of the superpowers, and that it should be a cultural, as well as political community.

However, the Right and the Centre disagreed over how to achieve this goal. The Gaullist view was that only a Europe of Nation States could allow France to increase its influence, while remaining independent from the superpowers. Despite moves towards closer integration, many on the Right still looked to protect national sovereignty. This was not just because the Right approved of ensuring an important role for nation states in practical terms, but also because they saw the nation as an ideal community, to which they were emotionally attached. Finally, linked to the ideal of the nation, there was also an emphasis on the importance of national cultures.

This vision was challenged by an alternative federalist approach. For Jean Monnet, only a federation of European nations would allow France to compete in a world of superpowers. Centrists saw the European Community as an ideal, where nations would work together, pooling sovereignty in the common interest, and to which they were particularly attached. They remained wary of a Europe of nations, which they feared might lead to nationalist tensions, and, related to this, were more concerned by attempts to emphasise national cultural differences.

Despite these differences, there was still the possibility that the Right and Centre could have forged a successful alliance, as the debate over who would be the candidate of Les Républicains in the presidential elections would not be decided until 2016, and, as Perrineau has noted, the Right itself was divided over European questions.¹¹⁸ Like the independent Centre parties, Juppé believed that only a more federal approach would allow Europe to compete with other nations on the world stage, and he shared their view of the European project as an ideal. On the question of European culture, he had a much more open vision than many of his rivals, which recognised the contribution made by other civilisations outside Europe to its development. In contrast, both Fillon and Sarkozy were wary of transferring sovereignty and were keen to preserve an important role for individual countries within a Europe of nation states. Unlike those who placed their faith squarely in the European project, the Fillonistes and Sarkozystes saw the French nation as an alternative ideal. The victory of Fillon in the primary therefore not only exacerbated a split

¹¹⁸ Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.114

within the Right, but also threatened the alliance with the Centre. Many Centrists who had been happy to ally with the Right, when it seemed likely that Juppé would be the candidate, were alienated by Fillon's stance and started to look for an alternative candidate who better represented their position on Europe.

The emergence of Emmanuel Macron both crystallised and accentuated these divisions within Les Républicains and between the Right and the Centre. As a candidate who put great emphasis on the European ideal and the need for an integrated EU as a protection against globalisation and superpowers, he appealed to Centrists and Juppéistes who felt alienated by Fillon's approach. He therefore weakened Fillon, and ensured the defeat of Les Républicains.

Yet Macron could not have been successful solely by winning support from the Right. He also needed to gain votes from the Left, and his position on Europe allowed him to do this. On both the Left and the Right, his vision of the EU tempted those who were already ill at ease with part of their party's programme. While the contentious issue on the Right was identity, for the Centre Left, it was Hamon's decision to repudiate many of the Hollande government's economic policies that was the underlying factor of disagreement. Macron's opposition to nationalist measures and preference for a federal approach to Europe, increased his appeal amongst those former supporters of the PS who wanted a candidate favourable to liberal economic reforms. He was therefore able to bring voters together from across the Left/Right divide, and to defeat the established parties of government.

However, while we must recognise the contribution of issues concerning the Europe axis to the defeat of Les Républicains and the election of Macron as president in 2017, it was less important than the axes that we have studied in the two previous chapters. Without Macron's economic programme, which, for many voters, offered a better balance between liberal reform and protection than the measures proposed by other candidates, it is unlikely that he could have attracted the level of support required to win the presidency. Debate within Les Républicains over the issue of cultural insecurity, which alienated the Juppéistes, was also a crucial feature that undermined party unity, and without a divided Centre Right, it seems unlikely that Macron could have won. Europe was important in that it focused further attention on issues raised by the other two axes – national identity and social values and economics – and so giving further encouragement to those, particularly

among the Juppéistes, and in the Centre, who were disillusioned with Fillon, to support an alternative candidate.

The failure of the Right in the 2017 presidential and legislative elections was therefore in part due to the political alignment exacerbated by Macron's position on European issues, and his ability to win over voters from both the Left and the Right with a positive vision of the EU. Yet his success did not end debate, but rather amplified division in this area, which would continue, especially for Les Républicains, with the election of Laurent Wauquiez, known for being particularly critical of the EU, as leader in December 2017.

As we have seen, the three axes of our new model help to explain the internal divisions within the Centre Right during the Hollande presidency, and why it largely failed to widen its support beyond its core vote in the presidential and legislative elections of 2017. In chapter 5, we shall see how the absence of an accepted leader, following Sarkozy's resignation in May 2012, was crucial in allowing these divisions to emerge and develop, and how the three axes themselves came to play an important role in the debate over who should be the party's presidential candidate.

Chapter 5: In search of a leader: The Centre Right and its leadership crisis, 2012-2017

Introduction

We have examined how the continued weakening of the distinction between Left and Right, and the political realignment that resulted, created division within the Centre Right, making it unable to unite around a common policy on several issues. These differences were exacerbated by the absence of an accepted leader, following the defeat of Sarkozy, a problem that was not resolved until the primary was held in November 2016. In this chapter, we will explain why the question of leadership assumed such importance during the Hollande presidency.

While the figure of the president has always been central to the Fifth Republic, a greater emphasis was placed on leadership during the Hollande presidency due to the decline in allegiance to political parties and traditional ideologies. The development of the Internet, and 24-hour news media, allowing greater coverage of political events and direct interaction between the electorate and their representatives, together with the rise of more independently minded voters, all contributed to the weakening of the link between parties and the people. Many voters found it easier to identify with individual politicians than political movements.

During the Hollande presidency, the question of leadership was of particular importance for the Centre Right, which had often united behind a personality, rather than a particular project, with various political factions putting aside their differences in order to ensure electoral success. The defeat of Sarkozy in May 2012, and his resignation as party leader, left a gap at the top of the UMP. One of the reasons for the defeat and disintegration of the party was the absence of a figure able to impose a political programme before the primary of 2016, as this allowed the divisions over policy to deepen.

Drawing on ideas from Max Weber on the one hand and from John Gaffney on the other,¹ we will establish a new analytical framework, based on the two elements of 'personality'

¹ See Max Weber, 'IX. The Sociology of Charismatic Authority' in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2013) pp.245-252 p.245 and John Gaffney, *France in the Hollande presidency* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

and ‘representation’, which will explain why Fillon was able to defeat both Sarkozy and Juppé in the primary in 2016, and why he lost the 2017 presidential elections to Macron.

Fillon’s policies more closely reflected the views of the voters who participated in the primary, than did those of his rivals. He was also preferred in terms of his personality. Juppé was seen by many members of Les Républicains as weak and conciliatory, while Sarkozy was considered too provocative, and both the Mayor of Bordeaux, and the former president were tarnished by being linked to either previous or current judicial investigations.

However, during the *présidentielles*, Fillon failed to meet the expectations of the wider electorate as regards to both these elements. On the question of personality, he lost his reputation for integrity following the revelation of the Penelopegate scandal. Furthermore, his programme was seen as too radical, and not representative of a broad section of public opinion. Instead, it was Emmanuel Macron who was able to appear as a more presidential figure, as someone who seemed dynamic, and who had a programme that appealed to a broader swathe of the electorate.

Leadership: a crucial factor during the Hollande *quinquennat*

Leadership was a major issue during the Hollande presidency for different reasons. Some related to the institutions of the Fifth Republic, which put emphasis on the figure of the president, while other more recent factors concerned the decline in voters’ identification with political parties. Both of these elements ensured that parties on the Right felt that the search for a *présidentiable* was of paramount importance.

I. The institutions of the Fifth Republic

One of the reasons why leadership was crucial during the Hollande presidency was that parties needed to find a candidate capable of becoming head of state, as, since the beginning of the Fifth Republic in 1958, and particularly since the reform of 1962, the role of the president has been central in the French political system.

The legitimacy of the presidency has come not just from political parties, but also from public support for the institution. As Gaffney states, ‘[t]he presidency became instantly the most popular and influential office in the republic, and the presidential elections of 1965, 1969, 1974, 1981, 1988, 1995, 2002, 2007 and 2012 became and remain by far the most popular moments of the electoral cycle and the central political and symbolic act in the

Fifth Republic.² Abstention levels in the presidential elections and legislative elections illustrated how the presidency continued to be considered particularly important in 2017. While the abstention rate for the first round of the presidential elections was 22.23%³, that for the first round of the legislative elections was 51.30%.⁴

The role of the president had also been further reinforced in 2002 by the reduction of the presidential term from seven years to five, which brought the *présidentielles* in line with the *législatives*, coupled with the decision that the president would be elected before the parliament. This was in fact exactly what Chirac, who promoted the law, intended, and Levy and Skach note that ‘the most important reason for the quinquennat reform was [...] to bolster the power of the President.’⁵ As voters wish to give the new head of state a mandate to govern, the parliamentary elections are heavily determined by the outcome of the *présidentielles*. Any party that wants to win power must find a candidate capable of gaining the presidency, which has made the question of leadership even more decisive. This is likely to remain the case, as long as the Fifth Republic lasts as, even were a president to die in office, the successor could use the power to dissolve the Assembly, granted by the constitution in order to gain a majority to govern, thus preserving the order of presidential and parliamentary elections. In the words of Knapp and Wright, now ‘the return of cohabitation is technically possible but politically improbable,’⁶ and as the parliamentary majority is generally from the President’s party, it serves him, rather than challenging him, as had had happened during periods of cohabitation.

The institutions, and the way they have been interpreted to put emphasis on the figure of the president, has meant that leadership is of great importance in the Fifth Republic. However, the importance of the leader during the Hollande *quinquennat* was not solely due to institutional factors, but also because of the decline in the electorate’s confidence in political parties.

² Gaffney, *France in the Hollande presidency* p.38

³ Ministère de l’Intérieur, ‘Election présidentielle 2017: résultats globaux du premier tour’ 24 April 2017 <<https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Archives/Archives-elections/Election-presidentielle-2017/Election-presidentielle-2017-resultats-globaux-du-premier-tour>> [Accessed 03/02/19]

⁴ Ministère de l’Intérieur, ‘Premier tour des élections législatives: résultats globaux’ 12 June 2017 <<https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Archives/Archives-elections/Elections-legislatives-2017/Premier-tour-des-elections-legislatives-resultats-globaux>> [Accessed 03/02/19]

⁵ Jonah D. Levy and Cindy Skach, ‘The Return to a Strong Presidency’ in *Developments in French Politics 4*, Alistair Cole, Patrick Le Galès and Jonah Levy eds. pp.111-126 p.121

⁶ Knapp and Wright, *The Government and Politics of France: Fifth Edition* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006) p.63

II. The decline in allegiance to political parties

A further reason for the particular significance of leadership during the Hollande presidency was the decline of engagement between the electorate and political parties. Whereas in 1981 the PS had 214,000 members and the RPR 500,000, in 2016 these figures had fallen to 135,000 for the PS and 238,208 for Les Républicains.⁷ Parties were generally held in low esteem, with only 8% of French citizens expressing confidence in them, in the 2016 *Fractures françaises* survey.⁸ Many voters apparently gave greater attention to political figures than to political parties. This was shown in the 2017 elections, where of the four candidates who received the highest scores in the first round, three were people who had built their party around themselves: Emmanuel Macron, Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon. As Lefebvre notes, nowadays 'l'adhésion au leader prime sur l'adhésion au parti.'⁹

The explanation for the fall in standing of political parties can be attributed to three issues: the rise of new media offering alternative possibilities for political engagement, the decline in allegiance to traditional ideologies, and a general loss of confidence in politicians.

i. The rise in new media

One of the explanations for the decline in the status of political parties is the rise of new media, allowing voters to find information more easily than before, and to interact more directly with politicians. As Martin and Hanley have noted,¹⁰ this has changed the relationship between voters and parties. Martin argues that technological developments have often influenced politics, and notes that the development of radio and then television had already modified links between party leaders and voters. With these technologies, rather than having to rely on traditional networks such as party militants or trade unions to

⁷ Erwan Bruckert, 'Alain Duhamel: « Le déclin des partis est irréversible »' *Le Parisien* 23 April 2016 <www.leparisien.fr/espace-premium/actu/leur-declin-est-irreversible-23-04-2016-5738041.php> [Accessed 03/04/18]

⁸ Brice Teinturier et Vincent Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016 Vague 4: Ipsos/Sopra Stéria pour le Monde, la Fondation Jean Jaurès et Sciences Po « Programme Viepol »* p.6 <<https://www.soprasteria.com/docs/librariesprovider29/Publications-Ipsos/fractures-francaises-vague4-ipsos-soprasteria.pdf?sfvrsn=4>>

⁹ Rémi Lefebvre, 'Les primaires à droite: Processus d'adoption et transformations du jeu partisan' in *Les Primaires ouvertes en France: Adoption, codification, mobilisation* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016) pp.65-104 p.319

¹⁰ Pierre Martin, *Comprendre les évolutions électorales: La théorie des réalignements révisité* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2000) p.103; David Hanley, 'Political Leadership: from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic' in *The Presidents of the French Fifth Republic*, David Bell and John Gaffney eds. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) pp.27-43 p.35

spread their message to the people, party leaders could speak directly to the electorate.¹¹ The situation has developed further following the rise of the Internet and social media. Now not only can the public find out the positions of politicians instantly, without having to rely on intermediaries to tell them, they can also interact instantly and directly with their political representatives. Voters no longer need parties to construct their political agenda, and leaders do not need parties to establish a link with the people, or, at least not to the same degree as they had in the past.

Citizens are now able to express their political beliefs without having to go through the medium of political movements. The rise of Internet and social media has allowed voters to contact their elected representatives directly. As we will see later, the candidates in the Primary sought to respond to this, and had websites, blogs and Facebook pages to allow them to interact more directly with potential voters. Brochet notes that the opportunities these media offer in terms of allowing people to make their views known contrast with political parties, which remain hierarchical and institutionalised, at a time when faith in some traditional institutions is in decline.¹²

This direct contact means that leaders are no longer as dependent as in the past on their political parties, as was shown in the 2017 presidential elections. Emmanuel Macron founded his own political movement, En Marche, online. No subscription fee was required to join, and members could also be part of another political party. In many cases, En Marche, at least in its early days, was more like a mailing list than a traditional party. Once the website had been launched, visitors were offered a choice on the homepage between 'Je marche' or 'Je reste assis sans rien faire' and had to register to view any further content. Registration gave the party an e-mail address to which it could send political material directly, thereby ensuring that it had a line of contact with potential voters.

Internet and social media have undermined the established parties of government by giving greater opportunities for new movements to challenge them. We have seen how En Marche was founded, and the extreme parties of both Left and Right also used the possibilities offered by new technology to reach out to voters. As Brochet argues, both Le

¹¹ Ibid p.103

¹² Francis Brochet, *Démocratie smartphone: Le populisme numérique de Trump à Macron* (Paris: Editions François Bourin, 2017) p.50

Pen and Mélenchon were active on the Internet as a way of bypassing the traditional media that they considered to be biased against them.¹³

While one reason for the decline in political parties was the rise in new media, which offered a new relationship between voters and the Republic, it combined with the decline in allegiance to traditional ideologies to further weaken political parties and place more emphasis on leadership.

ii. The weakening of traditional ideologies

As we have argued in previous chapters, the weakening of allegiance to traditional ideologies, and the rise of more independently-minded voters has undermined the links that used to exist between political parties and certain sections of the electorate. Evidence for this could be seen in the first round of the 2017 presidential elections, and particularly by contrasting the results of that stage of the election with the same point in 2012.

In the first round of the 2012 *présidentielles*, 52% of all voters had struggled to decide whom to vote for, and those who changed their mind often transferred their support between candidates who were close to each other on the Left/Right divide. Among Hollande voters, 35% considered voting for Mélenchon, and 15% for Bayrou, while of those who chose Mélenchon, 31% thought of supporting Hollande, and 5% Bayrou.¹⁴ On the Centre Right, 17% of Sarkozy voters considered supporting Bayrou, and 20% Le Pen.¹⁵ In contrast, before the first round of the 2017 presidential elections, the number of voters who hesitated over whom to vote for was higher at 60%.¹⁶ Whereas in 2012, many voters had switched their support between candidates who were close to one another on the Left/Right divide, five years later, significant sections of the electorate struggled to decide between candidates who offered radically different programmes. 21% of those who voted for Mélenchon, who campaigned for greater state intervention in the economy, were tempted to vote for Macron, who argued for many liberal economic measures.¹⁷ The same percentage of Macron voters had considered supporting Mélenchon.¹⁸ Were allegiance to traditional ideologies still particularly strong, one would have expected many fewer voters

¹³ Ibid p.28

¹⁴ Ifop-Fiducial for Le Monde, Paris Match and Public Sénat, *Premier tour de l'élection présidentielle 2012: profil des électeurs et clés du scrutin: Sondage Jour de vote 22 avril 2012* p.13 <https://www.ifop.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/1848-1-study_file.pdf>

¹⁵ Ibid p.13

¹⁶ Brochet, *Démocratie smartphone* p.173

¹⁷ Brochet, *Démocratie smartphone* p.174

¹⁸ Ibid

to switch their vote between candidates promoting very different programmes. In light of the evidence, we can therefore agree with Brochet who argues: ‘l’électeur numérique choisit ses valeurs comme ses tribus sur Internet. Il picore ici et là, en fonction d’une logique qui lui est propre. Il ne cherche pas de cohérence a priori avec une idéologie ou une école de pensée – la cohérence, c’est lui-même.’¹⁹

The “pick and choose” logic identified by Brochet extended beyond questions of ideology to the question of leadership. As Schwartzberg has argued, the figure of the leader, and in particular their personal qualities have become more important in influencing voting behaviour. He characterises this change by claiming that ‘l’imagerie supplante l’idéologie.’²⁰ This could be seen in the case of Macron, who won in 2017 despite being largely unknown, and who benefitted from being seen as new, young and dynamic, without having a detailed programme.

The presidential elections of 2012 and 2017 support Schwartzberg’s argument as, in both cases, the personalities of the candidates were crucial in determining the result.

iii. The rejection of politicians

Added to the impact of the rise of new media and the decline in attachment to traditional ideologies, another factor that has reinforced the importance of leadership has been the fall in public appreciation of politicians. In the 2016 *Fractures françaises* survey (the last to be carried out before the 2017 presidential and legislative elections), only 21% of the population had a favourable view of *députés*²¹, and 72% felt that the majority of politicians were corrupt (a figure which had risen by 10 points since January 2013, and by 14 points since 2002).²² As a result, as Schwartzberg has noted, there has been an increase in focus on image.²³ Voters were likely to look favourably on politicians who seemed new and different, even if their programme was not particularly developed.

The focus on personality was already clear in 2012, when the issue of Sarkozy’s character dominated the debate. Cole, Meunier and Tiberj argue that ‘[t]he 2012 presidential

¹⁹ Ibid p.171

²⁰ Roger-Gérard Schwartzberg, *L’Etat spectacle 2: Politique, casting et médias* (Paris: Plon, 2009) p.277

²¹ Teinturier et Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016* p.6

²² For 2016 and 2013 figures, see Teinturier et Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016* p.23; for 2002 figure, see Pascal Perrineau, *Le désenchantement démocratique* (Paris: Editions de l’Aube, 2003) p.217

²³ Roger-Gérard Schwartzberg, *L’Etat spectacle 2: Politique, casting et médias* (Paris: Plon, 2009) p.7

election was in many ways an anti-Sarkozy referendum and a repudiation as much of the man as of his policies.²⁴ They add that ‘The vote was more a verdict against Sarkozy than a mandate for Hollande,’²⁵ while Gaffney argues that, ‘Hollande won in 2012 partly because no-one knew who he was.’²⁶

This focus on the personal qualities of candidates would become even more important in 2017. Among Macron and Le Pen voters ‘Il/elle incarne le renouveau’ was the most important factor in driving their vote, with 64% of those who chose the candidate of En Marche, and 65% of those who supported the leader of the FN mentioning that as a reason for having done so.²⁷ In contrast, fewer supporters of the two candidates to make the second round cited enthusiasm for their political programme as the reason for their choice. 37% of Macron supporters and 34% of those of Le Pen chose ‘Il/elle a un bon projet’ to explain their vote.²⁸ Personality was therefore key to the success of these candidates.

It is also interesting to consider the *gilets jaunes* protests, which (although they fall outside the time frame of this thesis, as the movement started in the autumn of 2018) can be seen as representing a development of the trends in political engagement that we have discussed above. Having lost confidence in parties and many politicians, and placed their faith in particular leaders in 2017, many demonstrators had been disappointed by these figures as well, and wanted more power to be placed in the hands of the electorate to decide policy.

This crisis of confidence could be seen in the fall of Macron’s approval ratings (from 66% in May 2017 to 23% in December 2018²⁹), and the failure of opposition leaders such as Marine Le Pen or Mélenchon to channel the protestors’ anger towards support for their own parties (as shown by an Ipsos poll for *Le JDD* from December 2018, which found that

²⁴ Alistair Cole, Sophie Meunier, Vincent Tiberj, ‘From Sarkozy to Hollande: The New Normal ?’ in *Developments in French Politics 5* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) pp.1-18 p.7

²⁵ Ibid p.16

²⁶ Gaffney, *France in the Hollande presidency* p.55

²⁷ Ipsos Sopra Steria, ‘2017 élection présidentielle: 1er tour présidentiel : Comprendre le vote des Français’ p.11

²⁸ Ibid p.11

²⁹ Ifop-Fiducial for Paris Match et Sud Radio, *Le tableau de bord politique: Décembre 2018* p.8 <<https://www.ifop.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Tableau-de-bord-politique-Décembre-2018.pdf>>

the scores of the Rassemblement National and La France Insoumise in the European elections would both fall by 3% if they faced competition from a *gilets jaunes* list).³⁰

As Perrineau notes, the *gilets jaunes* can be characterised as a ‘mouvement très contemporain marqué par...le rejet de la politique et la méfiance vis-à-vis de toute délégation ou représentation stable et durable.’³¹ This was demonstrated by calls from the protestors for the use of a ‘référendum d’initiative citoyenne’ to allow citizens to intervene directly in political decision making outside of election time, and a Harris-Interactive poll from January 2019 found that 80% of all French voters felt that this should be able to be used to propose legislation.³²

Further suspicion of politicians and representative institutions could be seen in demands to abolish the Senate, to reduce the number of deputies to 2 per *département* and to return the presidential term to seven years, thereby allowing the voters to pass judgement on a president’s action before the end of his mandate through voting in legislative elections.³³ While the *gilets jaunes* movement is a complex and disparate one, whose participants have many different and often conflicting demands, and struggle to unite around a single programme, it represents a further evolution in the relationship between voters, political parties and politicians, that we have analysed above, as voters looked to take more power into their own hands.

The changing dynamics of competition within parties

Another development that has increased the importance of leadership has been the change in the way traditional parties have selected their candidates for presidential elections. In the past, the party leader would normally have stood as the candidate for the presidential elections, and the second round would generally have involved a run-off between a candidate from the Centre Left and one from the Centre Right.

³⁰ Rédaction JDD, ‘SONDAGE. Une liste Gilets jaunes aux européennes affaiblirait Le Pen et Mélenchon’ *Le Journal du Dimanche* 8 December 2018 <<https://www.lejdd.fr/Politique/sondage-les-gilets-jaunes-a-12-aux-europeennes-en-cas-de-candidature-3816677>> [Accessed 10/04/19]

³¹ Pascal Perrineau, ‘Sous la crise des « gilets jaunes », quelle fracture de l’opinion ?’ *Le Figaro*, 12 December 2018 p.19

³² Olivier Bost and Eléonor Douet, ‘“Gilets jaunes”: 80% des Français favorables au RIC pour proposer une loi.’ *RTL.fr* 02/01/19 <<https://www.rtl.fr/actu/politique/gilets-jaunes-80-des-francais-favorables-au-ric-pour-proposer-une-loi-7796101142>> [Accessed 19/03/19]

³³ Julie Cloris, with Dorian Girard and Stanislas de Livonnière, ‘Gilets jaunes: cinquante nuances de revendications’ *Le Parisien* 11 December 2018 <<http://www.leparisien.fr/economie/gilets-jaunes-cinquante-nuances-de-revendications-11-12-2018-7965951.php>> [Accessed 19/03/19]

This situation has changed for two reasons. The decline in party membership has meant that the members of the established parties of government are even less representative of society as a whole than in the past. In addition, the growth in strength of radical movements such as the FN and La France Insoumise has reduced the likelihood of the established parties of government qualifying for the second round of the presidential elections. To increase their prospects of success, parties must now open discussion over the choice of candidate beyond their members to sympathisers, which can favour politicians seen as 'outsiders'.

Prior to the 2017 presidential elections, both the PS and Les Républicains organised open primaries. In both cases, candidates designated as the favourites by commentators were defeated by those given little hope of success;³⁴ Benoît Hamon for the PS and François Fillon for Les Républicains. The rejection of the more established figures showed that it is no longer the case that 'it is unlikely that [the President] would ever be in the Elysée in the first place without having become de facto if not *de jure* leader of his party.'³⁵ The decision to hold primaries was both an acceptance that political parties have declined, and, in inviting voters to choose between candidates, a factor which put further emphasis on leadership.

In light of the importance of the presidency under the Fifth Republic, and the decline of political parties and politicians, the question of what a leader should be became of greater importance in the five years running up to 2017, and we must now examine the mechanics of leadership in more detail, to understand what voters' expectations were in this area.

³⁴ For the primary of the Right and the Centre, Sarkozy and Juppé had long been considered the favourites – see, for example, Guillaume Tabard, 'La guerre Juppé-Sarkozy aura-t-elle lieu?' in *L'Etat de l'Opinion 2015* Olivier Duhamel and Edouard Lecercq eds. (Paris: Seuil, 2015) pp.127-138 and Bruno Roger-Petit, 'Duel Sarkozy-Juppé: gare aux ombres des sondages, rien n'est joué.' *Challenges* 28 October 2016 <https://www.challenges.fr/politique/le-duel-juppe-sarkozy-et-la-verite-cachee-des-sondages-rien-n-est-joue_435721> [Accessed 22/03/19] and Henri Vernet, 'Sondage: Juppé a-t-il déjà gagné la primaire à droite?' *Le Parisien* 16 October 2016 <<http://www.leparisien.fr/politique/apres-le-premier-debat-juppe-en-position-de-force-16-10-2016-6214188.php>> [Accessed 22/03/19]. For the PS primary, see Rachid Laïreche, 'Une primaire de gauche sans favori, vraiment?' *Libération* 18 December 2016 <https://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/12/18/une-primaire-de-gauche-sans-favori-vraiment_1536074> [Accessed 22/03/19] and A.Mi avec AFP, 'Primaire à gauche: l'outside Hamon a le vent en poupe' *BFMTV* 7 January 2017 <<https://www.bfmtv.com/politique/primaire-a-gauche-hamon-a-le-vent-en-poupe-a-deux-semaines-du-premier-tour-1078645.html>> [Accessed 22/03/19]

³⁵ David Hanley, 'Political Leadership: from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic' p.28

Defining leadership³⁶

In modern Western democracies there has been much debate over what characteristics a leader must possess. Weber and Hoffmann have emphasised the need for qualities that place the leader above other citizens, what they call 'charismatic leadership'³⁷ or 'heroic leadership'³⁸. Others, such as Schwartzberg, argue that, in light of new information and communications technology, politics has been reduced to a sort of talent contest, where personality dominates all.³⁹ Finally, Gaffney has outlined his own model of the characteristics of leadership in the Fifth Republic.⁴⁰ In this part of the chapter, we will discuss all of these models, and nuance them in order to establish criteria against which we can judge the three main candidates of the Primary of the Right and Centre and Macron. This will allow us to consider what factors led each of the representatives of Les Républicains to fail over questions of leadership, and why the candidate of En Marche was successful.

i. The personality of the leader in the modern French political system

In the modern political system, those who aspire to lead must demonstrate that they have particular personal qualities that make them suited to this role. This has historically been described as charisma. Yet, while this remains important, traditional analyses must be revised to make them more relevant to the present day.

Weber outlines the charismatic leader by noting that:

the 'natural' leaders – in times of psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, political distress – have been neither officeholders nor incumbents of an 'occupation' in the present sense of the word, that is, men who have acquired expert knowledge and who serve for remuneration. The natural leaders in distress

³⁶ One aspect that will not be considered in this section is gender. As this thesis is focused on the Centre Right during the Hollande presidency, it is difficult to have detailed discussions of this issue as women were underrepresented within the party in general (the UMP was fined 4 million euros a year for having failed to respect the law on *parité* for the 2012 legislative elections), and in influential positions in particular (the only female candidate in the primary, Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, came fourth, but her score of 2.6% was far behind that of Sarkozy in third place, who scored 20.7%. See La rédaction de LCI, 'Primaire à droite: les résultats du premier tour enfin connus' *LCI.fr* 23 November 2016 < <https://www.lci.fr/primaire-droite/primaire-a-droite-les-resultats-definitifs-du-premier-tour-enfin-connus-2013991.html> > [Accessed 24/03/19])

³⁷ Weber, 'IX. The Sociology of Charismatic Authority' p.245

³⁸ Hoffmann, *Decline or renewal? France since the 1930s* p.77

³⁹ Roger-Gérard Schwartzberg, *L'Etat spectacle 2: Politique, casting et médias* (Paris: Plon, 2009) p.8

⁴⁰ See Gaffney, *France in the Hollande presidency*

have been holders of specific gifts of the body and spirit; and these gifts have been believed to be supernatural, not accessible to everybody.⁴¹

Hoffmann has outlined a similar framework in a French context, talking about heroic leadership, where an outsider who has not been involved in the political system governs through the force of his own character.⁴² He argues that heroic leaders come to power ‘when change can no longer be delayed.’⁴³ Under such a figure, ‘citizens [...] are led to respond with support, but without participation.’⁴⁴ Like Weber, Hoffman sees heroic leadership as ‘connected with a cataclysmic sense of emergency and with the notion of “total” transformation.’⁴⁵ In their response to such a situation, heroic leaders, before their arrival in power, have been ‘rebels against the prevalent order of things or the prevalent ideas.’⁴⁶

These definitions of charisma are also supported by Leterre, who states:

Tel est le charisme: annoncer qu'on est capable de prendre la direction d'un pays, d'une organisation, d'une institution, par sa simple personne, et imposer cette conviction à des inconnus qui n'ont en fait aucune importance, mais qui ont toute votre attention l'espace d'une poignée de secondes.⁴⁷

There are certain elements within these analyses that are relevant to the question of leadership in the Hollande presidency, which could be seen as favouring the emergence of a charismatic figure. As we have argued above, 2017 might be seen as what Weber describes as a ‘period of political distress.’⁴⁸ Not only were there the continuing effects of the economic crisis, which neither the Sarkozy governments nor those of Hollande seemed able to mitigate, but there was also the rise of the terrorist threat within France. At the same time, the established parties of government had lost the confidence of a significant proportion of the electorate, and so the political system itself was in difficulty.

⁴¹ Weber, ‘IX. The Sociology of Charismatic Authority’ p.245

⁴² Hoffmann, *Decline or renewal? France since the 1930s* p.77

⁴³ Ibid p.77

⁴⁴ Ibid p.77

⁴⁵ Ibid p.81

⁴⁶ Ibid p.82

⁴⁷ Thierry Leterre, ‘Le charisme en politique. Thierry Leterre, professeur de science politique, chercheur au centre BMW d’études allemandes et européennes de l’université de Georgetown (Washington, Etats-Unis)’ *La Croix* 30 March 2009 <https://www.la-croix.com/Archives/2009-03-30/Le-charisme-en-politique.-Thierry-Leterre-professeur-de-science-politique-chercheur-au-centre-BMW-d-etudes-allemandes-et-europeennes-de-l-universite-de-Georgetown-Washington-Etats-Unis-_NP_-2009-03-30-342110> [Accessed 04/04/18]

⁴⁸ Weber, ‘IX. The Sociology of Charismatic Authority’ p.245

While these features suggest that charismatic leadership remains important, we must adapt traditional interpretations in order to make them relevant for the Hollande presidency.

Firstly, while the characterisation of leadership as 'heroic' could be applied to de Gaulle, who had led the Resistance during the war, and then returned to power during the Algerian War, it seems ill-suited to a peacetime context, where many of the problems that leaders must face are related to somewhat less weighty matters.

Secondly, and more importantly, it must be recognised that society has changed greatly since the periods on which both Weber and Hoffmann base their analysis. As we have seen in chapter 1, class identities have been weakened since the 1960s, and there is also much less deference towards authority. In this context, it is much more difficult for any political figure to generate and maintain a significant amount of personal support. In both the 2012 and 2017 presidential elections, outgoing presidents were rejected, and their successors were elected, as much due to a rejection of rival candidates as because of any enthusiasm for their own authority. This evolution was recognised by Macron, who stated in a speech in December 2016 'ce n'est pas un homme qui, devenu président, par des textes ou des décisions, pourra régenter tout ce qui se passe partout dans notre pays, ce n'est plus vrai. Cela n'est plus le XXI^e siècle.'⁴⁹

This vision of the relationship between the leader and society certainly contrasts with that of the heroic leader, as outlined by Hoffmann, in which citizens are to give support, but without participation in the exercise of power. Yet, despite the evolution of society, the electorate continues to hold expectations on the qualities a leader must have, which all form part of being 'presidential'. Finally, at least in the case of Macron and Fillon, it is difficult to see them as 'rebels against the prevalent order of things or the prevalent ideas.'⁵⁰ In both cases, the policies which they proposed were similar to those enacted by previous presidents, such as, for example, a desire to accentuate the more liberal approach to the French economy that had been followed under Hollande.

⁴⁹ Emmanuel Macron 'Discours d'Emmanuel Macron à la Porte de Versailles' 10 December 2016 <<https://en-marche.fr/articles/discours/meeting-macron-porte-de-versailles-discours>> [Accessed 20/03/19] It could be argued that Macron did not follow this path once elected, and that his 'jupiterian' presidency did see much power concentrated in his own hands. However, the *gilets jaunes* who protested in favour of returning more power to the people away from political institutions suggests that his reading of the situation in this 2016 speech was accurate.

⁵⁰ Hoffmann, *Decline or renewal? France since the 1930s* p.82

Despite these objections, charisma is still a useful feature for analysis of leadership in the Fifth Republic. As Weber recognised, in a system where a leader is legitimised by election, those who wish to become head of a party or head of state must show that they stand apart from their fellow men. The problems that emerge when politicians fail to demonstrate these attributes could be seen during the Hollande presidency. As we have seen, in 2012 the candidate of the Parti Socialiste was chosen rather because he was not Sarkozy, than because of any particular character traits that he possessed, and he deliberately sought to emphasise this contrast by claiming that he would be a ‘président normal.’⁵¹ Rather than claiming that he had extraordinary gifts, as Weber’s charismatic leader does, Hollande instead sought to appear representative of the ordinary voter. Yet this became a problem once in government. This was due to the challenges that the president soon faced on both the domestic and international scene. As Gaffney notes, ‘the nature of the Fifth Republic is such that these developments would almost automatically trigger a call for a less normal type of leadership style, and if it did not come from the president, he would be seen as inadequate.’⁵² That normality was ill-suited to the role of president was also clear from the actions of satirists, in whose hands Hollande’s “normalcy” would soon be transformed into hilarious mediocrity, and his persona transformed into a mediocre *and* indecisive figure.⁵³ Following his defeat in 2017, Hollande himself acknowledged that he had made a mistake in defining his presidential style as ‘normal’. He stated:

Ce concept a été formulé durant la campagne de 2012, ensuite, il a été regardé de manière critique. [...] Par rapport à la concentration des pouvoirs, au rôle qui est

⁵¹ François Soudan et Laurent de Saint Perier, ‘François Hollande: « Je serai un président normal, pas un président ordinaire»’ *Jeune Afrique* 15 August 2011

<<https://www.jeuneafrique.com/190510/politique/fran-ois-hollande-je-serai-un-pr-sident-normal-pas-un-pr-sident-ordinaire/>> [Accessed 31/01/19]

⁵² Gaffney, *France in the Hollande presidency* p.29

⁵³ Ibid p.29. For example, concerning Hollande’s “mediocrity”, in a parody of the YouTube star ‘Norman fait des vidéos’, *Les Guignols de l’Info* made a sketch called ‘Normal fait des vidéos’, in which Hollande was shown tidying his office in the Elysée Palace whilst pretending to be an airline pilot, claiming that the vacuum cleaner sounded like a jet aeroplane. He was also seen saving the plastic cutlery from take-away orders to use during official banquets. See *Les Guignols de l’Info, Normal fait des vidéos: Les Guignols de l’Info* YouTube 31 March 2014.

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbB7-jvH5Wc>> [Accessed 27/03/19]. In one of his stage performances, the impersonator Laurent Gerra presented ‘une journée du président Normal’, which included Hollande sending Manuel Valls out to buy a Euromillions ticket in order to save the French economy, and the president having a three hour siesta in the afternoon. CineMax, *Laurent Gerra – une journée du Président normal (Pierre Bellemare)* YouTube 11 November 2016

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTbUYrhEQwk>> [Accessed 24/03/19]

attendu du président de la République [...] il y a besoin d'une présidence qui se définisse comme 'normale'. Mais [...] je ne le dirais plus d'ailleurs de la même façon. Aujourd'hui je dirais humaine.⁵⁴

One factor that defines the charismatic leader is the ability to take decisive action. De Gaulle had moved rapidly in 1958 to install the Fifth Republic, and more recently, Sarkozy had pushed through many reforms in the first hundred days of his presidency. This was another feature that was lacking from the Hollande presidency. In part, this was because, as we have seen, Hollande defined himself as the antithesis of Sarkozy, who had been known as the *omniprésident*. Rather than cultivating a distance between the president and the policies of the government as his predecessors had done, Sarkozy sought to exercise control, to the point that he referred to François Fillon, his prime minister, as his 'collaborateur'. While this ensured that any mistakes made by the government rebounded on the president, when Hollande adopted the reverse approach, he was attacked for his lack of action. As Gaffney states:

"normalcy" and the slow pace of presidential action were Hollande's first demonstrative steps in rejecting Sarkozy's flamboyance, but the need to react immediately stemmed from a quite different source. Sarkozy's 'hyperactivity' from 2007 had masked the fact that 'action' had become an exigency upon rather than a choice of the presidency. The illusion was that perceptions of Sarkozy's character made him appear *over-reactive*, but swift responses and initiatives had in fact become normative.⁵⁵

In addition to the need to take decisive action, a leader must also be assertive. De Gaulle and Mitterrand, for example, had been able to ensure that their authority was respected, and the public accepted that a strong figure was required as head of state. That this remained a key part of voters' appreciation of how the role of president should be performed could be seen in surveys. Over the course of the Hollande presidency, the *Fractures françaises* surveys analysed responses to the statement 'On a besoin d'un vrai chef en France pour remettre de l'ordre', with which a majority agreed. 88% of those surveyed in 2016 felt that this was important, and it was seen as particularly relevant to

⁵⁴ Anne-Charlotte Dusseaux, 'Avec le recul, Hollande aurait préféré parler de président "humain" plutôt que de "président normal"' *Le Journal du Dimanche* 14 October 2018 <<https://www.lejdd.fr/Politique/avec-le-recul-hollande-aurait-prefere-parler-de-president-humain-plutot-que-de-president-normal-3778565>> [Accessed 31/01/19]

⁵⁵ Gaffney, *France in the Hollande presidency* p.70

supporters of Les Républicains, 99% of whom agreed with this idea. Nor was this a view that was confined to the Right, as 76% of PS voters and 56% of those of La France Insoumise also wanted a strong leader.⁵⁶

While the French public had generally expected that any president should be a decisive and assertive leader before 2012, this feeling intensified during the Hollande presidency, due to the actions of the head of state. As Gaffney has argued, Hollande appeared weak, for example, when he resisted sacking Economy Minister, Arnaud Montebourg, despite the latter's regular criticism of the government's adoption of more liberal economic policies, but did remove Delphine Batho from her position, when she complained about the lack of resources allocated to her Environment Ministry, as she did not have the support base that Montebourg possessed.⁵⁷

This view of Hollande was reinforced by his behaviour in his private life. During the campaign for the Legislative elections, Hollande's partner, Valérie Trierweiler, tweeted in favour of Olivier Falorni, who was standing against the official PS candidate and mother of Hollande's children, Ségolène Royal, to whom the president had personally pledged his support. As Gaffney notes, following this, 'Hollande's damaging caricature was that of an indecisive man who had failed to respond to the whole issue.'⁵⁸

Hollande had already been criticised during the PS Primary of 2011 by Martine Aubry, who claimed that he represented 'la Gauche molle'⁵⁹. This criticism that he was soft would reoccur during his presidency, as when an article in *Le Point* referred to him as 'Le grand méchant mou.'⁶⁰ As we have seen in the polls quoted above, Hollande's own failings in this area only served to reinforce the hopes among the electorate that his successor would be a stronger personality, and this is something that would harm Juppé during his campaign to be the candidate of the Right in the 2017 elections.

While it is important that a president should take decisive action, such action must also be effective, and therefore, as Hanley notes, competence is a crucial skill that politicians hoping to lead the country must possess.⁶¹ Again, the experience of the Hollande

⁵⁶ Teinturier et Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016* p.13

⁵⁷ Gaffney, *France in the Hollande presidency* p.149

⁵⁸ Ibid p.93

⁵⁹ Ibid p.93

⁶⁰ Daniel Salvatore Schiffer, 'Hollande, le grand méchant mou' *Le Point* 9 July 2013

<http://www.lepoint.fr/invites-du-point/daniel-salvatore-schiffer/hollande-le-grand-mechant-mou-09-07-2013-1702206_1446.php> [Accessed 05/04/18]

⁶¹ Hanley, 'Political Leadership: from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic' p.27

presidency further reinforced the desire for a political leader who displayed this trait, as the president's failure to deal with unemployment further undermined confidence in both him and his government. Although Hollande announced on 9 September 2012, that unemployment would be falling within a year, it continued to rise until the third quarter of 2015, and the government's decision to comment every month on the figures highlighted its own inability to deal with the situation. Those who hoped to be elected president in 2017 would have to give the impression that they could perform better.

Leaders are not only legitimised by their ability to successfully enact policy, but also through other criteria relating to their personality, one of which is honesty. This has become particularly important within recent years. Gaffney states that 'Trivia, scandals, and gossip and so on become integral to the president's status and the regime's stability,'⁶² while, as Bell argues, 'probity in political leaders is demanded by public opinion.'⁶³ Previous presidents had been implicated in scandals, such as Giscard d'Estaing's acceptance of diamonds from Emperor Bokassa of the Central African Republic, accusations that the RPR had created a series of fake jobs, when Chirac was Mayor of Paris, to enable public funds to be diverted to the party, and the accusation made in 1987 that some of the money gained from illicit arms deals between France and Iran had been used to fund the PS. As Cole notes, incidents such as these were exploited by opposition parties, as when Mitterrand attacked Giscard and 'l'argent facile' in the run up to the 1981 presidential elections, or in 1988, when the Right looked to profit from scandals relating to the Socialists.⁶⁴

Although political scandals have been common during the Fifth Republic, as Gaffney notes, their impact has increased with the development of digital media.⁶⁵ Under the Hollande presidency, as we have seen, there was a loss of confidence in all politicians who were generally judged to be corrupt, and in the 2016 *Fractures françaises* survey (the last to be published before the 2017 elections), 72% of all voters felt that 'La plupart des hommes et des femmes politiques sont plutôt corrompus', a figure which had risen from 62% in 2013.⁶⁶ When asked, during the 2017 presidential election campaign, what qualities they looked

⁶² Gaffney, *France in the Hollande presidency* p.12

⁶³ Bell, *Presidential power in Fifth Republic France* p.245

⁶⁴ Ibid p.245

⁶⁵ Gaffney, *France in the Hollande presidency* p.12 As we shall see later, the effect of the Penelopegate scandal on Fillon's campaign was increased by the way it dominated news coverage during the presidential election campaign

⁶⁶ Brice Teinturier et Vincent Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016* p.23

for in a presidential candidate, 65% chose honesty, which was far ahead of determination, which was the second most sought value, with 34% deeming it important.⁶⁷

This was reinforced by a number of scandals affecting both Right and Left. Sarkozy's campaign team for the 2012 presidential elections was accused of having set up a system to produce fake receipts to allow him to overspend his permitted electoral budget by 17 million euros (known as the Bygmalion scandal). While this damaged the opposition, the government was weakened when the Budget Minister, Jérôme Cahuzac, was revealed to have hidden undeclared assets in a Swiss bank account. Any candidate aiming to gain the presidency in 2017 would have to demonstrate their honesty, and the question of probity was one of the defining features of the presidential election campaign. As we shall see, like other politicians before him, Macron would position himself as a contrast to Le Pen and particularly Fillon, who were both linked to scandals, and emphasise his own probity.

The loss of confidence of the public in politicians in general was accompanied by a rise in the popularity of figures who could be considered as outsiders. As we have seen, this was one of the features observed by those such as Hoffmann who have analysed charismatic leadership. While neither Sarkozy nor Hollande managed to deal with the problem of unemployment, the popularity of more radical candidates, such as Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon rose. This phenomenon was not confined to parties on the political extremes. Among supporters of both the established parties of government, there was a rejection of those in power in favour of others who seemed untarnished by the problems that these movements were facing. As we have discussed above, this could be seen in the results of the primaries, where Fillon beat both of the favourites, Juppé and Sarkozy, to become the candidate in 2017, and when Benoît Hamon, who had strongly criticised the actions of the Hollande government, won the contest to represent the PS. As we will demonstrate later, Macron's ability to cast himself as a relative outsider was also an important factor in his success.

The relevance of the character traits that we have outlined in this section have been recognised by politicians. In the debate between Sarkozy and Hollande before the second round of the 2012 presidential elections, the outgoing president emphasised the importance of strong leadership when he stated:

⁶⁷ Ipsos Sopra-Steria, *2017 élection présidentielle: Les Français et la moralisation de la vie politique* p.4

Je pense qu'un président de la République, c'est quelqu'un, surtout avec le quinquennat, qui assume ses responsabilités, qui prend des décisions, qui est mûri par l'expérience, des crises qu'il a eu à affronter, c'est sans doute la fonction la plus difficile qu'il soit.⁶⁸

This assessment was shared by Sarkozy's rivals in the primary of the Right and Centre. In a speech at Lyon in September 2016, Juppé outlined his vision of the necessary qualities that a president should possess:

Un vrai chef, un chef digne de ce nom, c'est un président qui préside avec autorité, avec courage, avec dignité, qui fixe le cap, et qui le tient, qui donne les grandes orientations, qui prend les décisions majeures, celles qu'il aura présentées sans démagogie au cours de la campagne, et qui s'assure qu'elles seront mises en œuvre avec rapidité et efficacité.⁶⁹

Similarly, when Fillon launched his campaign for the Primary in August 2016 at Sablé-sur-Sarthe, he stated that his political role-model was de Gaulle, and outlined his vision of the role of president thus:

Le Président doit être au-dessus des débats quotidiens.
Il doit veiller à la sécurité et à la tranquillité des Français, au bon fonctionnement des institutions.
Il doit fixer le cap et les orientations et rendre au Premier ministre et au gouvernement la plénitude des fonctions que la Constitution leur a confiées.
Oui j'exercerai la fonction présidentielle comme de Gaulle voulait qu'elle le soit.
Avec dignité, avec grandeur mais aussi avec rigueur.⁷⁰

Probity was another major issue during both the Primary of the Right and Centre and the 2017 presidential election campaign. It was one emphasised by Fillon in 2016 when he argued that:

⁶⁸ Le Télégramme, *Présidentielle. Nicolas Sarkozy: sa vision de la présidence* Dailymotion <<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x16brp0>> [Accessed 25/03/19]

⁶⁹ Alain Juppé, *[DIRECT] Discours d'Alain Juppé sur l'Etat, en direct depuis Lyon* YouTube 29 September 2016 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvMjVW5SsWI>> [Accessed 20/03/19]

⁷⁰ François Fillon, '« Je veux faire pour les Français » Discours à Sablé sur Sarthe' <<http://fillon2017lacollesurloup.fr/index.php/2016/08/28/je-veux-faire-pour-les-francais-discours-de-sable-sur-sarthe/>> [Accessed 15/10/17]

Avoir une haute idée de la politique signifie que ceux qui briguent la confiance des Français doivent en être digne. Ceux qui ne respectent pas les lois de la République ne devraient pas pouvoir se présenter devant les électeurs. Il ne sert à rien de parler d'autorité quand on n'est pas soi-même irréprochable.

As we shall see later, Sarkozy and Juppé's failure to convince the electorate of the primary that they had the necessary qualities would play a key role in their defeat in November 2016, while, despite his victory in the primary, Fillon would fail to convince voters outside Les Républicains that he would make an appropriate president.

ii. Representation: the other side of political leadership

Candidates seeking to be elected president must not only prove that they have the necessary personal qualities, but must also represent a vision or a programme that reaches beyond its party base. This would prove to be a particular challenge in the presidential elections of 2017. In the past, parties would focus on rallying their own supporters in the first round before targeting a wider electorate in the second. However, as Lefebvre points out, the high scores achieved by the FN in local and European elections, and polls showing that Marine Le Pen was likely to go through to the second round, made it even more important for Les Républicains and the Parti Socialiste to find a presidential candidate capable of representing as broad a sway of public opinion as possible, (particularly in light of the events of 2002, when the proliferation of candidates on the Left had split the vote and allowed Jean-Marie Le Pen to be present in the second round of the presidential elections.)⁷¹ This meant that although a party's candidate had previously been chosen by party members, during the Hollande presidency, this process would be open to sympathisers willing to pay a small contribution and sign a document stating that they supported the values of the party in question.

This strategy failed, since rather than enabling the established parties of government to select candidates who were representative of a large proportion of the electorate, the primaries actually saw candidates chosen who were more popular inside the party than outside. This was in part because, in the case of the Primary of the Right and Centre, although the opportunity to vote was open to all, in practice it was still heavily dominated by the core electorate of Les Républicains, and did not represent the broader section of society made up of sympathisers of parties from the Right and Centre.

⁷¹ Lefebvre, 'Les primaires à droite: Processus d'adoption et transformations du jeu partisan' p.81

As Teinturier notes, 'la composition sociologique de l'électorat [de la primaire] est...très typée, très éloignée de celle du pays et même d'une bonne partie de la droite et du centre.'⁷² Although those over 65 make up 23% of the French population, they formed 46% of the electorate for the primary, while under-35s represented only 14% of the voters in the primary, despite 25% of French citizens belonging to this group. In terms of socio-economic background, blue-collar workers were 6% of voters in the primary, but 17% of the overall population, while 44% of voters in the November 2016 contest earned over 3500 euros a month in contrast to 26% of the population⁷³ By not representing the French electorate as a whole, the primary created problems for Les Républicains, rather than resolving them. The same could be seen with the PS, which chose Benoît Hamon, whose views were much more representative of those of PS members than of the general public, as was demonstrated by his score of 6% in the presidential elections.

The failure of the primary strategy was underlined by the fact that three of the four highest scoring candidates in the presidential elections did not go through a primary. In part, the votes obtained by Macron, Le Pen and Mélenchon can be explained by their ability to represent those who were alienated by the current political system, and who wanted change or to register a protest, and because they were judged to be more representative of the views of the electorate than the candidates from the established parties of government.

In this thesis, we have argued that the failure of Les Républicains to win the presidential and legislative elections of 2017, and the subsequent fracturing of the party can be explained by a failure to adapt to a realignment of the French political system. We have shown how the traditional Left/Right bipolar divide, which had long governed relationships between parties under the Fifth Republic, had already been weakened by 2012, and was further undermined during the Hollande *quinquennat*. A new arrangement came to govern relationships between parties, based on three axes of identity, economic liberalism, and Europe. Although the question of leadership was separate from these axes, it was closely tied to them. It was the absence of a widely accepted leader, able to define the political line that the party should follow, following Sarkozy's resignation in May 2012, which allowed debate concerning the axes to develop and threaten unity within the Centre Right.

⁷² Brice Teinturier, 'L'inédite (et dernière?) primaire de la droite et du centre ?' in *Le vote disruptif : Les élections présidentielle et législatives de 2012*, Pascal Perrineau ed. (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2017) pp.25-41 p.38

⁷³ Ibid p.38

These debates themselves would prove crucial in determining the choice of Fillon as candidate in the primary of 2016. Once elected as the representative of Les Républicains for the presidential elections, his hard-line, Traditionalist, stance on identity,⁷⁴ and his support for an EU which gave greater powers to nation states, alienated more Centrist-leaning party members and sympathisers, as well as supporters of the Independent Centre parties, whose votes were required for the Centre Right to be successful. His particularly liberal approach to economic policy was also important in alienating voters outside Les Républicains. Questions relating to the axes and to leadership were therefore closely entwined, and both are crucial to explaining the problems faced by the Centre Right between 2012 and 2017.

In order to explain in detail how debate over leadership came to threaten Les Républicains, having argued that leadership was becoming increasingly important by the 2017 presidential elections, and having examined the qualities that voters looked for in candidates who wished to become head of state, we will now consider how the evolution of the Centre Right can be explained by the aspects that we have discussed.

The importance of leadership for the Centre Right

Leadership was a key issue for all parties during the Hollande presidency, but particularly for the Centre Right. Part of the explanation for this lies in traditional conceptions of party politics on the Right, while other elements relate to the problems the UMP and then Les Républicains faced during the Hollande presidency.

An historical suspicion of political parties as sources of division ensured that the Centre Right often built movements around leaders rather than programmes. De Gaulle was particularly influential in this respect. He notably set out his vision of parties when he stated in an interview with Michel Droit during the 1965 presidential election campaign:

La France, c'est tout à la fois, c'est tous les Français. C'est pas la gauche, la France! C'est pas la droite, la France! Naturellement, les Français comme de tout temps, ressentent en eux des courants. [...] Prétendre faire la France avec une fraction, c'est une erreur grave, et prétendre représenter la France au nom d'une fraction, cela c'est une erreur nationale impardonnable. Vous me dites: à droite, on dit que je fais une politique de gauche au-dehors; à gauche, du reste vous le savez bien, on

⁷⁴ Here 'Traditionalist' is to be understood as outlined in Chapter 2, where we argue that there was a divide within the Centre Right between 'Traditionalists' and 'Modernists' on issues concerning national identity and social values

dit: de Gaulle, il est là pour la droite, pour les monopoles, pour je ne sais quoi. Le fait que les partisans de droite et les partisans de gauche déclarent que j'appartiens à l'autre côté, prouve précisément ce que je vous dis, c'est-à-dire que, maintenant comme toujours, je ne suis pas d'un côté, je ne suis pas de l'autre, je suis pour la France.⁷⁵

The leaders and movements on the Centre Right which succeeded de Gaulle generally continued this emphasis on unity. Sarkozy was the first leader of the Centre Right to often state openly that he was a man of the Right,⁷⁶ and the names of political organisations also showed this suspicion of parties. Unlike on the Left, the word 'parti' was avoided and instead movements preferred terms such as Rassemblement (as in Chirac's Rassemblement pour la République) or Union, as in the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire.⁷⁷

Leadership was therefore particularly important on the Right, which always tended to place emphasis on a particular figure, rather than on a programme. As Hanley recognises, 'Culturally, the Right has always been attracted by a clear model of authority, in which a leader, once duly legitimised, gives a clear political direction and is at the origin of policymaking.'⁷⁸ An example of this could be seen in the early 2000s, when several Right-wing parties came together in the UMP. Jérôme Monod, one of the key architects of this new party, recalled that Chirac had told him: 'Gengis Khan avait des tribus asiatiques nombreuses et [il] leur a adressé un jour la parole suivante, "Si individuellement chaque tribu [...] résiste à rien, si on les réunit à un serment, à ce moment-là, on ne peut pas les casser." Je veux faire la même chose avec mon ancienne majorité.'⁷⁹ Much as the tribes had

⁷⁵ Laurent de Boissieu, 'Le gaullisme est-il de droite' *Centre d'Information sur le Gaullisme* <<http://www.gaullisme.net/gaullisme-droite-gauche.html>> [06/04/18]

⁷⁶ See Fougier, who states 'Before Nicolas Sarkozy became leader of the main French right-wing party, the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), in 2004, no leader of the French right-wing like Charles de Gaulle, Georges Pompidou, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing or Jacques Chirac identified himself as purely conservative' Eddy Fougier, 'What is Sarkozysm? The Sarkozy Revolution of the French Right-Wing, *L'Europe en formation*, (2012/3) no.365, 217-228 p.220. Sarkozy himself stated: 'Quant à se dire de droite, une bonne partie de mes amis s'y refusent obstinément. J'avoue avoir du mal à comprendre cette forme de pudeur qui n'est rien d'autre qu'une façon de céder à la mode du moment. Tandis que la gauche ne cesse d'affirmer sa fierté d'exister en tant que telle, nombre de responsables de l'opposition considèrent comme quasi infamant d'être catalogués à droite, tout en s'abstenant de préciser ce qu'ils sont. Ce faisant, ils organisent les conditions de notre défaite idéologique avant même l'engagement de la bataille. Car enfin, pourquoi donc serait-il noble d'être de gauche et faudrait-il s'excuser d'être de droite ?' Nicolas Sarkozy, *Libre* (Paris: Robert Laffont/XO Editions, 2001) p.38

⁷⁷ Florence Haegel, *Les droites en fusion: Transformations de l'UMP* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2012) p.65

⁷⁸ David Hanley, 'Political Leadership: from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic' p.35

⁷⁹ Jérôme Monod, interview with the author 2 July 2015

come together around Genghis Khan, so Chirac would be the focal point for the new movement. This was also demonstrated by the name originally given to the new party, which was *L'Union pour la majorité présidentielle*.

The importance of the leader within the UMP was reinforced by the decision not to establish the *mouvements* provided for in the statutes when the party was formed, and which were supposed to ease concerns of smaller parties by demonstrating that their voices would be heard in the new, unified organisation. Whereas the PS followed a policy of allowing the existence of equivalent *motions*, many within the UMP feared that these would merely become elements of division. The absence of *mouvements* before 2012 meant that there was less internal discussion of policy, and that it was instead down to the leader to provide direction. Haegel has noted that the UMP was 'weakly institutionalized,'⁸⁰ and that there was a 'lack of any real democratic tradition within the party.'⁸¹ This was deliberate, so as to ensure that the focus remained the leader, rather than policy debate, which might create internal splits and weaken cohesion.

The problems that the focus on the leader might cause the Centre Right would not become obvious for some time, as before 2012 the question of who was the legitimate representative of the party did not arise. Whilst Chirac was president, he was the undisputed leader of the Centre Right, and in 2007, Sarkozy was unopposed when he stood to be the candidate of the UMP. As Hanley notes:

Sarkozy emerged as the front-runner because of his action in government (he spent much time in 2002-7 trying to distinguish himself from his colleagues in what became a terminally unpopular administration), and because he conquered the Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP) from the older generation of Gaullists after a decade of purposeful and energetic struggle, and left them with a *fait accompli* by the time the presidential election was due.⁸²

Sarkozy was the obvious candidate, and it seemed in the best interests of the party to rally around him.

Sarkozy himself reinforced the power of the leader within the UMP, and laid the ground for many of the problems that would confront the party from 2012. On becoming president of

⁸⁰ Florence Haegel, 'The Union for a Popular Movement after Sarkozy' in *France after 2012*, Gabriel Goodliffe and Riccardo Brizzi eds. (Oxford: Berghen Books, 2015) pp.61-73 p.63

⁸¹ Haegel, 'The Union for a Popular Movement after Sarkozy' p.71

⁸² David Hanley, 'Political Leadership : from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic' p.34

France, he did not abandon his position as party leader. The party argued that 'Puisque le président de l'UMP est aujourd'hui à l'Elysée, notre formation n'a pas besoin de désigner un nouveau président,'⁸³ and that 'moralement, le président reste Nicolas Sarkozy.'⁸⁴ The position of party leader was left open, and the party was managed by a secretary general and two deputy secretary generals. As Haegel states, 'as long as Nicolas Sarkozy was president of the republic, the party's centre of gravity was firmly located at the Elysée Palace.'⁸⁵ Furthermore, those who were appointed to key positions within the party at a national level were all Sarkozy loyalists. Although this strengthened the UMP in the short term, by preventing the emergence of rivals to the president, in the long term it weakened the party, as it ensured that there was no obvious candidate to succeed Sarkozy when he stepped down in 2012.

The failure to solve the leadership question allowed differences of policy to become particularly divisive. Following Sarkozy's resignation in May 2012, leadership elections were scheduled for November of that year. These would be between François Fillon, the prime minister between 2007 and 2012, and Jean-François Copé, who had become Secretary General of the UMP in November 2010. However, rather than deciding the issue, the elections led to a stalemate when both candidates received around 50% of the vote. Although Copé was declared the winner, it was later discovered that some of the votes of overseas territories had been ignored, and that had these been included, Fillon would have been the victor. Fillon reacted by setting up an alternative parliamentary group, the Rassemblement UMP, but a compromise was eventually found, whereby Copé would remain as party leader but every other post in the hierarchy would be held jointly between one Copéiste and one Filloniste. Rather than solving the problem of leadership, this response allowed the divisions to continue, as, without a single, recognised figure able to rally support, disputes over policy multiplied.

A strong leader had been crucial to the success of Right-wing movements in France, and the absence of such a figure posed key problems for the Centre Right between 2012 and 2017. As we will now see, the fortunes of this movement, during the Hollande presidency,

⁸³ *lefigaro.fr* avec AFP, 'L'UMP se dote d'une direction collégiale' *Le Figaro* 25/06/07 <http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2007/06/25/01002-20070625ARTWWW90608-lump_se_dote_dune_direction_collegiale.php> [Accessed 07/04/18]

⁸⁴ *Ibid*

⁸⁵ Haegel, 'The Union for a Popular Movement after Sarkozy' p.64

illustrate well the way in which the political landscape had evolved, in the manner discussed above.

The Centre Right and the decline of political parties

One of the most important decisions taken on the Centre Right was to hold an open primary in 2016 to choose a presidential candidate for the 2017 elections, which was seen as a way of resolving the quarrels that had been opened by the bitter leadership contest of November 2012.

The failure of Sarkozy to win the primary provided evidence of the decline in influence of traditional political movements, as his plan had been based on securing control of the party, to ensure that he became the obvious representative of the Centre Right in 2017. As we have seen, this was the strategy that had worked for him between 2004 and 2007, but this time the same approach would prove unsuccessful.

Sarkozy's re-election as leader provided evidence of the diminishing role of political parties. Although he received 64.5% of the vote in the 2014 UMP leadership election, his main rivals, Juppé and Fillon, had not stood against him. They knew that the real contest would be the open primary in 2016. As Sarkozy was much more popular within the UMP than amongst the electorate as a whole, they were happy to leave control of the party to the former president, believing that this would not put him in an unassailable position. In some ways, Sarkozy's success even demonstrated how he had lost part of his support on the Right. He faced opposition from two relatively unknown figures, Hervé Mariton and Bruno Le Maire. In this context, his score was disappointing, particularly as it was 20% behind that which he had achieved in 2004.

Sarkozy's victory contributed to the decline in the power of the UMP when his rivals emphasised that it would be the primary, which would be open to all and not just to party members, which would decide who would be the candidate in 2017, rather than the party hierarchy. This could be seen in an interview given to *Le Monde* in June 2015, when Juppé, who polls showed was the most popular politician in France, stated 'Nicolas Sarkozy a le parti, moi pour l'instant j'ai l'opinion.'⁸⁶ Representatives of other candidates also sought to downplay Sarkozy's success in 2014. Franck Riester, who supported Bruno Le Maire, argued that 'Détenir le parti ne permet pas à Nicolas Sarkozy de tuer le match, car la primaire

⁸⁶ Michaël Darmon, Jean-Pierre Elkabbach, Arnaud Leparmentier, 'Alain Juppé « Nicolas Sarkozy a le parti, moi j'ai l'opinion' *Le Monde* Tuesday 2 June 2015 p.13

change totalement la donne. Tous les Français pourront s'exprimer et non uniquement les militants.⁸⁷

A similar reaction could be seen when Sarkozy held a vote on changing the name of the party to Les Républicains. The Juppéiste, Benoist Apparu, argued 'La primaire ce n'est pas un congrès, c'est la rencontre d'un homme avec les Français. Que représenteront les 90 000 personnes qui ont voté pour le changement de nom face à 3 ou 4 millions de votants ?'⁸⁸ Sarkozy's rivals seemed more aware than he was that his strategy of conquering a party from within in order to become the presidential candidate was no longer suited to the current political climate, and that a new approach would be needed in order to be successful in the 2016 primary.

Although Lefebvre argues that 'la phase d'organisation et de pré-campagne des primaires conduit [...] contre toute attente, à revaloriser les fonctions partisans même si Nicolas Sarkozy se heurte à de nombreuses résistances et limites',⁸⁹ this was not in fact the case. This could be seen in several key areas. On being re-elected leader in 2014, the former president of France aimed to expand membership of the UMP from 213,000 to 500,000 by 2016. He exploited his control over the party to pass new statutes to ensure that local party heads would be elected by the militants, and charged with ensuring that more people joined. Yet this attempt to expand the membership base in order to reinforce his own position failed. As Caroline Vasnier pointed out, this was because the primary had removed one of the main incentives to join the party. She stated:

Il y a peu d'adhésion aux Républicains, on n'est pas du tout sur le scénario de 2004. Alors les gens venaient pour imposer Sarkozy, là les gens de droite sont dans l'expectative, ils attendent les primaires. Pourquoi voulez-vous qu'ils adhèrent? Ils vont pouvoir voter pour le candidat. Y'a plus de carotte pour adhérer c'est évident.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Rémi Lefebvre, 'Les primaires à droite: Processus d'adoption et transformations du jeu partisan' in *Les Primaires ouvertes en France: Adoption, codification, mobilisation* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016) pp.65-104 p.94

⁸⁸ Ibid p.94

⁸⁹ Ibid p.94

⁹⁰ Ibid p.96

Sarkozy's control over the party was of much less significance than had been expected. This was shown in the results of the primary. 4.27 million people took part⁹¹ (a figure much greater than the total membership of Les Républicains). While 46% were supporters of the party, 8% favoured the UDI and 6% MoDem, 15% were from the Left, 14% had no political allegiance and 8% supported the FN.⁹²

The primary also showed that the party had lost its power to produce and impose a particular programme. Sarkozy argued in March 2015 that all candidates in the primary would have to support a common set of measures that would be submitted to the membership for approval. He produced several surveys on various issues that were put to party members, trying to reinforce his legitimacy by demonstrating that he had their support. This initiative was opposed by both Fillon and Juppé, who were keen to make the primary a debate about policy and not just personality, and they and other potential candidates sought ways to challenge Sarkozy's consultations. When the questionnaire on immigration was produced, Juppé produced a long response on the website for his 2016 primary campaign,⁹³ where he criticised some of the proposals and, rather than encouraging his supporters to vote on them, put forward his own alternative suggestions. The lack of impact of the party in this area would also be demonstrated by the fact that the programme produced during Sarkozy's time as party leader was ignored by Fillon when he won the primary, as he argued that his victory had legitimised his own policies.

The greater focus on leadership on the Centre Right at the expense of the party could be seen in the way that Juppé, Fillon, Le Maire and Bertrand created their own micro-parties for the primary.⁹⁴ In Fillon's case, his own movement, Force Républicaine, created shortly after his defeat in the leadership elections of 2012, enabled him to rebuild his image, and present his proposals directly to the general public, by-passing the main party. At the founding meeting of Force Républicaine at the Maison de la Mutualité in Paris on 26th February 2013, he announced that the movement would bring together *députés* and other

⁹¹ Rédaction Europe1.fr avec AFP, 'Primaires de la droite: 4,27 millions de votants au 1er tour, selon les résultats définitifs' 23 November 2016 <<http://www.europe1.fr/politique/primaires-de-la-droite-427-millions-de-votants-au-1er-tour-2908940>> [Accessed 10/04/18]

⁹² ELABE, *Comprendre le vote au premier tour de la primaire de la droite et du centre: Sondage « jour du vote » ELABE pour BFMTV 20 novembre 2016* p.12

⁹³ Alain Juppé, 'Questions complexes' 17 September 2015 <<http://www.ajpourlafrance.fr/questions-complexes/>> [Accessed 17/09/15]

⁹⁴ Rémi Lefebvre, 'Les primaires à droite: Processus d'adoption et transformations du jeu partisan' in *Les Primaires ouvertes en France: Adoption, codification, mobilisation* (Rennes : Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016) pp.65-104 p.99

elected representatives, along with party militants, and have a local branch in every *département*. He stated that:

Il s'agit d'attirer tous les Français qui ne se reconnaissent pas aujourd'hui dans les structures actuelles et qui veulent contribuer à redresser leur pays, aux côtés de l'UMP et pour l'UMP. J'entends ainsi ouvrir nos capacités d'attirer d'autres citoyens qui cherchent de nouvelles raisons de s'engager. D'ici 2017 nous devons rassembler des milliers d'adhérents, de toutes professions, de toutes sensibilités, qui seront autant de relais capables de prendre leurs responsabilités pour la France.⁹⁵

Yet, while he claimed that this micro-party was there to serve the UMP, *Force Républicaine* was chiefly a vehicle to help him build support for him in view of the primary, and *L'Express* noted that '[l']ensemble est destiné à devenir son fer de lance d'ici à 2016, année de la primaire.'⁹⁶ The role of the micro-party as a support group for Fillon outside the traditional party structures became even clearer following the primary, where the money raised was not placed in the hands of a body within Les Républicains, but instead paid to Force Républicaine.

All these factors exacerbated the fragmentation of the Centre Right, as voters' loyalty to individual leadership candidates took precedence over that to the party. As Haegel notes, 'la primaire et la campagne interne qui l'accompagne met au cœur de la vie du parti l'enjeu du positionnement programmatique. Alors qu'historiquement, la production programmatique était moins centrale à droite qu'à gauche.'⁹⁷ This would become crucial both in the aftermath of the primary and during the presidential election campaign itself, when some Juppéistes would decide that they had little in common with Fillon, and so switched their support to Macron.

Having considered the ways in which the fortunes of the Centre Right demonstrated the renewed importance of personality over policy during the Hollande presidency, we must now consider the three main candidates who stood in the 2016 primary, Sarkozy, Juppé and Fillon, in order to show that their inability to meet the expectations of the electorate,

⁹⁵ François Fillon, "Nous sommes réunis pour réagir ensemble" – François Fillon à la Mutualité Dailymotion.fr, 26 February 2013 <<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xxt6z5>> [Accessed 25/03/19]

⁹⁶ L'Express avec AFP, 'UMP: à la Mutualité à Paris, François Fillon se positionne pour la primaire de 2016' *L'Express.fr* 26 February 2013 <https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/ump-a-la-mutalite-a-paris-francois-fillon-se-positionne-pour-la-primaire-en-2016_1224968.html> [Accessed 25/03/19]

⁹⁷ Florence Haegel, 'Primaire à droite: "Une réponse à la crise de l'UMP"' *Le Monde* 13 April 2015 p.13

as set out by the framework we outlined earlier, can explain the failure of Les Républicains and the success of Macron.

The importance of personality in explaining the fortunes of Les Républicains

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, one of the most important personal qualities that the public wanted in a president was an assertive character, capable of taking decisive action. This was particularly the case on the Right, where a very large majority felt that France needed 'un vrai chef pour remettre de l'ordre.'⁹⁸ Failure to meet these criteria was a key factor in explaining the defeat of both Sarkozy and Juppé in the primary, even if each was unsuccessful in responding to this criterion for different reasons.

Sarkozy's problems stemmed from the fact that he was often perceived as being not only assertive, but also aggressive and confrontational, contrary to the popular image of what a president should be. During a visit to the Salon de l'Agriculture in 2008, when a member of the public refused to shake his hand, Sarkozy responded with the words 'Casse-toi, alors, pauvre con.'⁹⁹ As his assertiveness was a key part of his appeal among certain sections of the electorate, he was unwilling to drastically modify this aspect of his persona. Gaffney notes that, even before his presidency, 'Sarkozy was not 'just' liked or disliked, but liked or disliked intensely and in equal measure,'¹⁰⁰ and this was largely the same during the Hollande presidency. On his return to politics in 2014, the former president himself recognised that this part of his personality had been influential in making him so unpopular, and insisted that he had changed. He tried to present himself as a calmer, more statesman-like figure, stating in an interview on France 2 in September 2014, 'l'âge apporte peut-être un peu moins d'énergie mais plus de sagesse, de recul.'¹⁰¹ This move was seen as unconvincing by many, and *Les Guignols de l'Info* mocked him with the slogan 'Nicolas Sarkozy a vraiment changé, il est pire qu'avant.'¹⁰² Furthermore, in order to hold onto his electorate, he continued to be provocative, and as we have seen in chapter 2, sought to be particularly uncompromising on questions of identity. In many cases, this reminded

⁹⁸ Teinturier et Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016* p.13

⁹⁹ Fabienne Cosnay, 'Sarkozy et le Salon de l'Agriculture, une histoire mouvementée' *Europe1.fr* 24 February 2012 <<http://www.europe1.fr/politique/sarkozy-et-le-salon-de-l-agriculture-une-histoire-mouvementee-962775>> [Accessed 10/04/18]

¹⁰⁰ John Gaffney, 'Leadership and style in the French Fifth Republic: Nicolas Sarkozy's presidency in historical and cultural perspective' *French Politics* (2012) Vol.10, 4, 345-363 p.350

¹⁰¹ T.L.G. 'Vidéo. « J'ai changé » ou les sempiternelles métamorphoses de Nicolas Sarkozy' *20 Minutes* 18 September 2015 <<https://www.20minutes.fr/politique/1689983-20150918-video-change-sempiternelles-metamorphoses-nicolas-sarkozy>> [Accessed 10/04/18]

¹⁰² *Les Guignols de l'Info*, Canal +, 11 February 2015, 19:50

sections of the electorate why they had disliked him in the first place. As the primary was open to all, some on the Left chose to participate in order to ensure that the former president would not be a candidate in May 2017.¹⁰³ Sarkozy's assertive and aggressive personality thus played a key role in his defeat.

The question of personality also contributed to Juppé's defeat in the primary, but for contrasting reasons. Although polls showed that he was the most popular politician in France, large sections of the Right-wing electorate saw his desire to seek moderation as a sign of weakness. His proximity to François Bayrou, the leader of MoDem, who had supported Hollande in the second round of the 2012 presidential elections, was seen as a further demonstration of this, and was seized on by his rivals. Sarkozy stated: 'Après le président de l'impuissance, je ne veux pas une alternance molle,'¹⁰⁴ while his ally, François Baroin, accused the mayor of Bordeaux of representing 'une présidence de statu quo.'¹⁰⁵

These attacks were encouraged by the strategy adopted by Juppé during the debates of the primary campaign, where his attempts to appear presidential and above the melee made it appear that he lacked the assertive qualities that many on the Right wanted. As Teinturier notes, when Juppé tried to modify his approach in the second round, and be more critical of Fillon, he did further damage to his cause, as his attacks on Fillon's 'radical' and 'brutal' programme made him appear a timid reformer in comparison.¹⁰⁶ The Right-wing electorate's search for a determined figure was therefore a key reason why Juppé was rejected.

Although Fillon was not considered a particularly charismatic and assertive figure, he benefitted from the failings of his rivals. He had never been viewed as a strong leader, and was not helped by the fact that as president Sarkozy had called him his 'collaborateur', thereby reinforcing the image of him as a follower. However, during the campaign for the primary, his image improved as he appealed to Traditionalists on identity questions, and

¹⁰³ Caroline Piquet, Tristan Quinault-Maupoil, 'Primaires à droite: ils sont de gauche et ont voté dimanche' *Le Figaro* 20 November 2016 <<http://www.lefigaro.fr/elections/presidentielles/primaires-droite/2016/11/20/35004-20161120ARTFIG00084-primaires-de-la-droite-ils-sont-de-gauche-et-ont-vote-dimanche.php>> [Accessed 10/04/19]

¹⁰⁴ Mélanie Longuet, 'Le camp Sarkozy instruit le procès en "mollesse" de Juppé' *BFMTV.com* 2 November 2016 <www.bfmtv.com/politique/le-camp-sarkozy-a-l-attaque-de-la-mollesse-de-juppe-1054785.html> [Accessed 10/04/18]

¹⁰⁵ Mélanie Longuet, 'Le camp Sarkozy instruit le procès en "mollesse" de Juppé' *BFMTV.com* 2 November 2016 <www.bfmtv.com/politique/le-camp-sarkozy-a-l-attaque-de-la-mollesse-de-juppe-1054785.html> [Accessed 10/04/18]

¹⁰⁶ Brice Teinturier, 'L'inédite (et dernière?) primaire de la droite et du centre ?' p.39

benefitted from his apparent sincerity in comparison to Sarkozy in this area. As we have seen in chapter 2, the measures that he proposed, such as those in response to the threat of terrorism, made him appear much more assertive and determined than before.

Another aspect of personality crucial to presidential performance was the question of competence, and once again this gave Fillon an advantage. Sarkozy's 'omniprésidence' had ensured that the president, rather than his prime minister, was blamed for the failings of the 2007-2012 *quinquennat*. Similarly, Juppé's image had suffered from his period as prime minister between 1995 and 1997, when his economic policies had led to widespread strikes and ended in defeat in the early election called in 1997. In contrast to the initial two favourite candidates, Fillon remained relatively untarnished from his previous time in power.

In addition to appearing more assertive and competent than his rivals, Fillon also benefitted from being considered an outsider. As we have seen, this is often an advantage in presidential elections, and its impact on Fillon was further developed by the actions of his rivals, Sarkozy and Juppé. As Teinturier states, the primary was presented in the media as a duel between the former president of France and the Mayor of Bordeaux, a perspective which they reinforced by concentrating their attacks on one another. In contrast, Fillon, who was well behind both of his main rivals in October 2016, with polls suggesting that he would only receive 10% of the vote,¹⁰⁷ avoided much attention¹⁰⁸, and benefitted from the fighting of his rivals, which led to a fall particularly in support for Alain Juppé.

Issues of personality also contain a moral element. As Gaffney and Bell have argued,¹⁰⁹ scandal has often occupied a significant place in French political life, and was also influential in the 2016 primary. Sarkozy was linked to 11 criminal investigations, while Juppé had been convicted of corruption in 2004. In contrast, Fillon's general reputation for honesty and integrity helped make up for other elements of his personality, such as his lack of assertiveness. He deliberately sought to contrast himself with his rivals, notably declaring at a meeting at Sablé sur Sarthe 'Qui imagine un seul instant le general de Gaulle

¹⁰⁷ Ilan Caro, 'Primaire à droite: François Fillon est-il déjà fichu ?' *franceinfo* 23 September 2016 <https://www.francetvinfo.fr/politique/les-republicains/primaire-de-la-droite/primaire-a-droite-francois-fillon-est-il-deja-fichu_1837071.html> [Accessed 10/04/18]

¹⁰⁸ Brice Teinturier, 'L'inédite (et dernière?) primaire de la droite et du centre ?' p.35

¹⁰⁹ Gaffney, *France in the Hollande presidency* p.12; Bell, *Presidential power in Fifth Republic France* p.245

mis en examen?',¹¹⁰ a way of implicitly comparing Sarkozy with the founder of the Fifth Republic, seen as a model of presidential conduct. This strategy succeeded during the primary, as in a survey of how participants had decided who to vote for in the first round of the primary, the second most popular reason stated by Fillon supporters was 'Il est le plus honnête', with 53% giving this as a reason for their choice.¹¹¹ The role of past and present political scandals was therefore a determining factor in Fillon's success.

Questions of personality contributed to Fillon's victory in the primary, but this was also aided by the fact that, as we have seen in previous chapters, his emphasis on traditional social attitudes and economically liberal reforms was representative of the older, wealthier electorate which formed a major section of the electorate that took part in the vote.

Fillon was therefore able to persuade voters that he had both the personal qualities and the programme required to represent Les Républicains in 2017. The question of legitimacy was also solved by the primary, as in the second round he received 66.5% of the vote to beat his rival Alain Juppé, in a contest in which over 4 million voters had taken part.¹¹² Therefore, the primary seemed to have solved the problems of leadership that the Centre Right had been facing since Sarkozy's defeat in the 2012 presidential elections.

However, the issues both of personality and representation that had played a role in Fillon's victory in the primary would re-emerge during the presidential elections, but to different effect. The first problem to arise would be that of representation as those who had participated in the November 2016 contest did not reflect the perspective of the electorate as a whole, nor even that of Centre Right sympathisers in general. This was demonstrated rapidly when, having climbed ahead of Marine Le Pen in the polls immediately after his success in the primary, Fillon soon fell back into second place when concerns emerged about his economic programme. As we have discussed in chapter 3, this was considered too radical for many sections of the electorate, and particularly those on lower incomes, who had been under-represented in the primary. The number of socially liberal voters was also much greater outside the core Centre Right electorate, and Fillon's programme was not particularly successful in appealing to these groups. Rather than

¹¹⁰ François Fillon, '« Je veux faire pour les Français » Discours à Sablé sur Sarthe'

¹¹¹ ELABE, *Comprendre le vote au premier tour de la primaire de la droite et du centre : Sondage « jour du vote » ELABE pour BFMTV 20 novembre 2016* p.23

¹¹² Le Monde, 'Primaire à droite: 4,38 millions de votants au second tour' *Le Monde* 28 November 2016

<https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2016/11/28/primaire-de-la-droite-4-38-millions-de-votants-au-second-tour_5039685_823448.html> [Accessed 24/03/19]

ensuring that the candidate of Les Républicains would appeal to a broad section of voters, as had been intended, the primary would seem to have had the opposite effect.

Fillon also failed to satisfy the wider electorate on the issue of personality, even before the emergence of the Penelopegate scandal. This could become clear immediately after the primary, as, in the words of Foucault and Chanvril-Ligneel:

François Fillon n'est jamais parvenu à susciter un vote d'adhésion sur sa personnalité au cours des mois de décembre 2016 et janvier 2017, avant même le déclenchement des affaires. Le vote pour le candidat de droite s'est donc heurté à un plafond de sympathie, empêchant le candidat de convaincre des électeurs de droite indécis jusqu'à la dernière minute. Ce même déficit d'image a par effet de ricochet affecté d'autres traits liés à la compétence, à l'empathie, à l'efficacité ou encore à la stature de président.¹¹³

These feelings were reinforced by the nature of Fillon's economic programme. As we have seen in chapter 3, this was described by Juppé as 'brutal' (a characterisation which would be adopted by rivals from other parties), and a significant portion of the electorate seemed to agree with this judgment, as was shown by his failure to win much support from those in work.¹¹⁴ Fillon's emphasis on the speed and extent of the economic change he proposed seemed to ignore the effect this might have on people's lives.

An example of this could be seen when he met employees during a visit to a care home. When they told him that they already worked 39 hours a week, and needed the current rules on the 35 hour week to allow them to rest, Fillon responded by emphasising that others would see their working hours increase, and asking 'Vous voulez que je fasse de la dette supplémentaire?'¹¹⁵ The emphasis on the need to solve France's economic problems, whatever the impact of his policies on certain sections of society, left him appearing uncaring. This could be seen even among his electorate, where only 55% of them rated their sympathy towards him at greater than or equal to 8 (on a scale of 0-10), while 11%

¹¹³ Martial Foucault, Flora Chanvril-Ligneel, 'Le vote François Fillon, autopsie d'un naufrage' in *Le vote disruptif: Les élections présidentielle et législatives de 2012*, Pascal Perrineau ed. (Paris : Presses de Sciences Po, 2017) pp.221-236 p.227

¹¹⁴ Ipsos/Sopra-Steria, *2017 élection présidentielle: 1^{er} tour: Sociologie des électors et profils des abstentionnistes* p.5 <<https://www.ipsos.com/fr-fr/1er-tour-presidentielle-2017-sociologie-de-lelectorat>>

¹¹⁵ Maxime Bourdeau, 'François Fillon choque par sa froideur face aux soignants épuisés d'une maison de retraite' *HuffPost* 23 March 2017 <https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2017/03/23/francois-fillon-choque-par-sa-froider-face-aux-soignants-epuise_a_22009377/> [Accessed 11/04/18]

gave a value of less than 5.¹¹⁶ This contrasted with Sarkozy in 2012, for whom 67% of his supporters had rated their warmth for him at 8 or above.¹¹⁷ This inability to be seen as a sympathetic character would contribute to Fillon's loss of support when he faced allegations of impropriety.

The assessment of Fillon's personality became a major reason for his defeat when his probity was questioned following the emergence of the Penelopegate scandal. On 25 January 2017, *Le Canard Enchaîné* claimed that Fillon's wife had been paid significant sums as his parliamentary assistant, despite there being little evidence that she had done much work for her husband in this role. This scandal, and further revelations over the following weeks, destroyed Fillon's reputation for honesty, which had been a key part of his appeal to voters on the Right. Whereas in the primary, 53% of those participating had seen Fillon as the most honest candidate, a survey carried out just before the 2017 presidential elections found that among the wider electorate, only 2% held this view.¹¹⁸

The collapse of Fillon's campaign also demonstrated many of the features that we have discussed above. The development of the Internet and 24-hour news channels meant that, once the scandal had been revealed, it was given great attention by the media. Piar demonstrates that Fillon dominated media coverage during the 2017 campaign, with 299 minutes of the evening news of TF1 being devoted to him, ahead of Macron, who was the subject of 121 minutes of reporting. However, much of this focus on Fillon was negative, with 174 minutes covering the Penelopegate scandal.¹¹⁹ The need to defend himself against these attacks meant that Fillon was unable to focus attention on his programme.

In the absence of major policy debates, honesty became a key issue of the campaign. This was exploited by other presidential candidates, in particular by Macron, who proposed to restore confidence in politics by promising to create 'des élites plus responsables',¹²⁰ as he argued that 'le principal danger pour la démocratie est la persistance de manquements à la probité parmi des responsables politiques, dont le comportement est indigne de la

¹¹⁶ Martial Foucault, Flora Chanvril-Ligneel, 'Le vote François Fillon, autopsie d'un naufrage' p.227

¹¹⁷ Ibid p.227

¹¹⁸ Ipsos Sopra Steria, '2017 élection présidentielle: 1er tour présidentiel: Comprendre le vote des Français' p.11

¹¹⁹ Christophe Piar 'La présidentielle vue par les JT' in *Le vote disruptif: Les élections présidentielle et législatives de 2012*, Pascal Perrineau ed. (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2017) pp.73-99 p.86

¹²⁰ En Marche, 'Le programme d'Emmanuel Macron concernant la vie politique et la vie publique' <<https://en-marche.fr/emmanuel-macron/le-programme/vie-politique-et-vie-publique>> [Accessed 31/01/19]

charge de représentant du peuple.¹²¹ He would repeat this tactic, by developing his proposed reforms in detail, on 2 March 2017, the day after Fillon had announced that he would continue his campaign, despite being summoned to appear before the judges investigating the Penelopegate scandal.

Fillon's defeat confirms how focus has shifted from political parties to personalities. During the Primary of the Right and the Centre and its aftermath, candidates defended political programmes, and their supporters' loyalty was to them personally, rather than to the Centre Right. Once Juppé had been defeated, some of his supporters felt they had no reason to vote for the candidate of Les Républicains. This development of a more mobile electorate was a key factor in explaining the success of Emmanuel Macron, who had had to create his own party, and who relied on both voters and politicians abandoning the established parties of government.

Emmanuel Macron and the leadership criteria

The decline in Fillon's fortunes gave Emmanuel Macron the opportunity to establish his own position in the presidential race, and would contribute to him receiving the largest share of the vote in the first round of the 2017 presidential elections. In part, his success can be explained by his ability to meet the criteria that we have outlined in the early part of this chapter, relating to both personality and representation.

Macron benefitted from his status as someone beyond traditional party politics. He had been appointed *Ministre de l'Economie, de l'Industrie et du Numérique* in 2014, when he was not a member of any party. He then further developed this status by deliberately positioning himself against the party system, claiming that he was neither of the Right nor of the Left, and arguing that he represented a broad category of 'Progressistes', in a new divide between 'Progressistes' and 'Conservateurs'. He presented himself as an outsider, and his success in doing so could be seen in a poll in November 2016, where 61% felt that he represented 'renewal'¹²², even when much of his programme, based on liberal economic policies and social liberalism, shared important aspects with those of many governments since the Mitterrand presidency.

¹²¹ Ibid

¹²² L'Express.fr, 'Une majorité de Français approuve la candidature de Macron selon un sondage' *L'Express* 18 November 2016 < https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/une-majorite-de-francais-approuve-la-candidature-de-macron-selon-un-sondage_1851741.html > [Accessed 11/04/18]

On the question of honesty, which, as we have shown, became a crucial factor in debate in 2017, Macron was ranked second in February 2017, with 30% judging him to be honest, compared with 33% who felt that Hamon demonstrated this quality. However, the candidate of En Marche was well ahead of Marine Le Pen (25%) and particularly Fillon (17%).¹²³

Another crucial aspect that we have defined as being part of presidential character is that of being affirmative and of taking decisive action, and Macron was successful in some of these areas, with a poll in April 2017 finding that 68% of voters felt that he was determined, although only 39% thought that he was authoritative.¹²⁴

In addition to convincing voters that he possessed the personal qualities required of a president (or at least doing so to a greater extent than his rivals), Macron also appeared to represent the views of a larger section of the electorate than did the candidates of the established parties of government. The primaries held by Les Républicains and the Parti Socialiste elected candidates who reflected the views of party militants, but who would struggle to broaden their support amongst sympathisers of other movements or undecided voters, and who were distant from a large number of voters who felt the need for liberal economic reforms and socially liberal policies. Macron was able to gain support from this group, in part by being deliberately ambiguous in his campaign. As Taguieff notes, 'ses postures variables apparaissent comme celles d'un démagogue soucieux de s'adapter aux attentes de son auditoire.'¹²⁵ This could be seen in his stance on colonialism. In *Le Point* in November 2016, he defended the French occupation of Algeria, arguing that, while he recognised that torture had taken place, the French had also contributed to the development of the country's infrastructure and wealth, and allowed the emergence of a middle class. Yet, in an interview given to Algerian television in February 2017, he stated that colonialization was a crime against humanity.¹²⁶

This approach reflected a deliberate strategy to appeal to a wide section of the electorate, and matched other features of his campaign. Delaying the launch of his programme until

¹²³ Pierre-Alain Furbury, 'Sondage: Macron le plus capable pour l'Elysée, Hamon le plus honnête' *Les Echos* < https://www.lesechos.fr/01/02/2017/lesechos.fr/0211757760946_sondage---macron-le-plus-capable-pour-l-elysee--hamon-le-plus-honnete.htm > [Accessed 11/04/18]

¹²⁴ Vincent Michelon, 'Sondage: les Français voient en Macron un candidat "déterminé" mais restent sceptiques sur sa capacité d'action' *LCI.fr* 27/04/17 <<https://www.lci.fr/elections/sondage-les-francais-voient-en-macron-un-candidat-determine-mais-restent-sceptiques-sur-sa-capacite-d-action-2050210.html>> [Accessed 11/04/18]

¹²⁵ Pierre-André Taguieff, *Macron: miracle ou mirage ?* (Paris: Editions de l'Observatoire, 2017) p.74

¹²⁶ *Ibid* p.74

early March allowed him to benefit from the decline in Fillon's popularity, without alienating potential voters with controversial measures. He also sought to maintain this appeal with the phrase 'en même temps', which became an identifying feature of his campaign, allowing him to put emphasis on reforming the country economically while maintaining some traditional protective measures. By being deliberately ambiguous, Macron was able to attract votes from supporters of both established parties of government, who would look to different features of his campaign, with those on the Left seeing him as a socially liberal candidate, while those on the Right saw him as someone willing to enact economically liberal reforms.

Although Macron did not show great evidence of all the qualities required by the public to be a suitable president, he seemed to satisfy the criteria of personality and representation to a greater extent than any of his rivals. Both Fillon and Le Pen declined in popularity because they were believed to be too radical and also because both were implicated in scandals which cast significant doubt on their integrity. On the Left, Hamon was not representative of a broad current of opinion that wanted the continuation of the liberal economic policies of the Hollande presidency, and was also not a particularly charismatic figure. Rather than being a rival for Macron, he competed with Mélenchon over who best represented those who sought greater state intervention in the economy.

Conclusion

The question of leadership has been crucial in the Fifth Republic ever since its creation in 1958. However, its importance during the Hollande presidency was reinforced by several factors. One of these was the decline in allegiance to political parties, which has meant that voters often put greater faith in a particular figure they feel represents their views, rather than in a political movement. This could be seen in the second round of the 2017 presidential elections, in which the two candidates, Macron and Le Pen, were both more important than their respective parties.

The rise of new media has allowed for easier voter engagement in politics, and citizens are now more likely to create their own political value sets, rather than to follow traditional ideologies. The failure of successive governments to deal successfully with unemployment and the increasing mediatisation of political scandals has meant that voters have increasingly lost confidence in politicians. Those who appear new to the political scene are therefore able to rally support based on their own personality, which has in many respects become even more important than their political programmes. As parties look to widen

their appeal by holding open primaries to choose their candidates for the presidential elections, this process has increased the importance of personality in politics.

Over the course of the Fifth Republic, it has become clear that voters expect a president to display certain values, that go together to form a political personality's charisma. While some of these have changed in line with a general evolution of society (the fall in deference to authority has weakened to some extent the power of what Hoffmann describes as 'heroic leadership'), others have largely remained constant. Any candidate wishing to be successful should be assertive and capable of taking decisive action, and be competent and honest.

These features were rendered all the more important in 2017 by the failure of President Hollande to live up to these expectations. As he was perceived by many to have a weak personality, and was challenged both by his political rivals from the PS and in his personal life, Hollande ensured that voters in 2017 would look in particular for a leader who would be able to take decisive measures.

In addition to possessing the required personal characteristics, a leader must also show that they are representative of a broad sway of public opinion. It was to ensure that this criterion was met that the established parties of government both decided to hold primaries to choose their candidate for the presidential election. As we have seen, this strategy backfired. The candidates who were chosen were in general more representative of the hard-core party electorate than of voters in general, which restricted their potential electorate, rather than expanding it.

While leadership was important for the majority of voters, it was crucial to both Les Républicains and its sympathisers. Historically, the Right had been wary of parties, seeing them as creating division, and politicians and their electorate had tended to unite around a leader. This remained the case in the contemporary period, when the UMP was founded as a way of gathering parties of the Centre and Centre Right around Chirac.

The importance of the role of leader was reinforced from 2004, when Sarkozy was elected head of the party. He turned it into a vehicle for his own ambitions and used his position to become the presidential candidate of the UMP in 2007. Once elected president, he maintained his control of the party, having not been replaced as party leader, and ensured that all key positions were held by his supporters. While this reinforced his position in the short term, it weakened the party in the long term as, when Sarkozy resigned following his

defeat in the 2012 presidential elections, there was no obvious candidate to replace him. The void was maintained as the 2012 party leadership elections failed to produce a decisive result. With no leader to maintain unity, splits over political questions, which we have seen in the previous chapters, became greater.

The fortunes of the UMP during the Hollande presidency further demonstrated the decline of political parties and the growth in the importance of leadership. The decision to hold a primary to choose the candidate for the 2017 elections weakened the role of the party, by giving influence to non-members and explains why, when Sarkozy regained the leadership in 2014, he was unable to establish himself as the presidential candidate. His rivals weakened both his own position and that of the party by placing emphasis on the greater legitimacy of the primary rather than pursuing a united position behind the party leader. Although Sarkozy sought to reinforce his control by seeking to increase membership and by drawing up a programme that was validated by the membership, these measures also failed as it was recognised that the primary would decide both the leader and the programme.

The primary itself demonstrated the importance of candidates fulfilling the two criteria of personality and representation. Fillon was successful in this contest because he seemed more assertive than Juppé, more competent than Sarkozy, and in particular, more honest than both of his rivals (one of whom had a criminal conviction, while the other was under investigation in a large number of political scandals). As we have seen in other chapters, Fillon's programme, based on traditional Catholic values and deep liberal economic reform, was representative of the core electorate of the Centre Right, which was the focus of the primary. He also benefitted from his status as an outsider. This meant that he was largely unscathed in the debates before the first round, where Sarkozy and Juppé focused their attacks on each other, leading to their mutual destruction.

While Fillon satisfied these criteria during the primary, he failed in both areas during the presidential election campaign. Although his policies were representative of large numbers of Les Républicains voters, his proposed economic reforms were considered too drastic by large swathes of the electorate as a whole. His position on various social issues also struggled to gain significant support beyond the Centre Right.

In terms of his personal qualities, the revelation of the Penelopegate scandal destroyed his reputation for honesty and integrity, and the way it dominated media coverage of his campaign also prevented Fillon from focusing attention on his policies.

As a result of Fillon's difficulties, Macron was able to present himself as a candidate who best fulfilled the requirements relating to personality and representation. He was seen as young, dynamic and determined, and, in a context where many voters had lost faith in politicians, benefitted from not being a member of a traditional party. In terms of representation, he took advantage of the decision by voters in the primaries on both Left and Right to choose those candidates who were more representative of the core party views to seize the Centre ground. In his presentation, he was deliberately ambiguous, delaying the publication of his programme and at times defending conflicting points of view, in order to appeal across the political divide.

The defeat of Fillon in the presidential elections ensured that the problem of leadership remained unresolved, and the party found itself once again divided, with no figure capable of providing the personality and representative qualities around whom the party could unite. Several members of Les Républicains decided to leave the party. Some put their faith in the new president from En Marche, while others left to form a new movement, Agir. The election of Laurent Wauquiez further split those who remained members of the party, and in response to his hardening of the party line, Valérie Pécresse founded her own political think tank, Libres, which was in many respects an alternative party, designed to promote her own ambitions to be a candidate in the 2022 presidential elections.

The situation appeared far more dangerous than in 2012, as many of the best known and most influential politicians on the Right stepped down from frontline politics following the 2017 presidential election. It was unclear who could replace them, and with what programme. Debate and conflict over leadership therefore continued to affect the Centre Right, and the party's future role within the Republic was uncertain.

In this thesis, we have argued that the defeat of Les Républicains in 2017 was due to a failure to respond effectively to the realignment of the French party system according to three axes of identity, economic liberalism and Europe. We have analysed the problems that these posed both to party unity, and to attempts to win support from voters other than party members. We have also seen how it was the absence of leadership that followed Sarkozy's resignation that allowed debate along the three axes to develop, and that such debate itself determined the result of the primary. However, rather than uniting the party, the choice of Fillon as presidential candidate exacerbated existing conflicts. We shall now move to the conclusion, where we shall discuss the realignment and its effect on the party, evaluate the role played by the primary and the Penelopegate scandal in Fillon's

defeat in the presidential elections, and consider what the future holds for Les
Républicains.

Conclusion

This thesis has addressed the difficulties faced by the Centre Right during the Hollande presidency due to the realignment of the party system. We contend that it was the failure of Les Républicains to adapt to the new political context, no longer dominated by questions of Left and Right, but instead by three separate thematic axes, that led to their defeat in the 2017 presidential and legislative elections, and threatened the party's future as a united movement.¹ By creating a new model to help understand the French party system, we are able to explain the issues confronting the political system as a whole, issues which were decisive in ensuring the defeat of Les Républicains in the elections of 2017, and why the party fragmented further following the victories of Macron and En Marche.

The political realignment was not due to any single event that happened during the Hollande presidency, but was caused by a series of longer-term developments, such as those identified by Pierre Martin, in 2000, in *Comprendre les évolutions électorales*. He outlines his definition of a political realignment in the following terms:

Un réalignement électoral se caractérise par un changement brutal, important, et durable des équilibres électoraux. Mais il n'y a pas que les équilibres électoraux qui sont concernés: le système partisan, le fonctionnement du système politique [...] et les relations entre l'élite politique et les électeurs le sont également.²

He adds that:

Un système partisan affaibli, où les proximités partisans des électeurs se sont relâchées, où la légitimité des élites politiques est particulièrement contestée, où la capacité d'action des responsables politiques s'est dégradée sera plus susceptible de subir un réalignement quand un ou plusieurs évènements se produiront qui heurteront le système.³

Martin's definition allows us to demonstrate that a realignment did indeed occur during the Hollande presidency, as the party system based on a division between the Left and Right fragmented, giving way to what Jakubyszyn described, following the second round of

¹ We will address the role of Penelopegate later in this chapter, where we will argue that focus on this scandal has overshadowed deeper causes for the defeat and disintegration of Les Républicains.

² Pierre Martin, *Comprendre les évolutions électorales* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2000) p.15

³ Ibid p.15

the presidential elections, as 'un paysage politique éparpillé façon puzzle.'⁴ Macron and En Marche, claiming to be neither of the Right nor of the Left,⁵ won the presidency and a majority in the National Assembly. The Centre Left and Centre Right, which had dominated the political system of the Fifth Republic, had each seen the emergence of major internal divisions, and were both eliminated in the first round of the *présidentielles*. Following the presidential elections key figures from both the PS and Les Républicains defected to the new governing party, whilst others stated that they would not systematically oppose the government. The radical parties of both Left and Right were also strengthened. Marine Le Pen had scored 33.90% in the second round of the *présidentielles*,⁶ and, in the first round, Jean-Luc Mélenchon had come fourth with 19.58% of the vote.⁷ Both the FN and La France Insoumise would increase the number of seats they held in the National Assembly during the legislative elections.

The emergence of the new system undermined both established parties of government, and was a key factor in the failure of Les Républicains to win the presidential and legislative elections of 2017. As Martin recognises, a weakened party system is liable to undergo a realignment, and analysts such as Perrineau and Sainte Marie recognise that the established arrangement had been coming under increasing strain for a long time.⁸ Although the realignment itself occurred during the Hollande presidency, the weakening of the Left/Right divide that preceded this change was a more gradual process, driven by a combination of different factors, the causes of some of which had developed over several decades, particularly from around the early 1980s. As Hayward noted, in 1985, a poll showed that 49% of French voters felt that the Left/Right divide was losing its power,⁹ and

⁴ LCI.fr 'En France "on a un paysage politique éclaté façon puzzle" selon Christophe Jakubyszyn' *LCI.fr* 9 May 2017 <<https://www.lci.fr/politique/en-france-on-a-un-paysage-politique-eclate-facon-puzzle-selon-christophe-jakubyszyn-2051509.html>> [Accessed 13/07/18]

⁵ See Nathalie Raulin, 'Macron ni de droite, ni de gauche...ni hors système' *Libération* 3 February 2017 <https://www.liberation.fr/politiques/2017/02/03/macron-ni-de-droite-ni-de-gauche-ni-hors-systeme_1546275> [Accessed 01/03/19]

⁶ Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats globaux du second tour de l'élection du Président de la République 2017' 8 May 2017 <<https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Archives/Archives-elections/Election-presidentielle-2017/Resultats-globaux-du-second-tour-de-l-election-du-President-de-la-Republique-2017>> [Accessed 01/03/19]

⁷ Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Election présidentielle 2017: résultats globaux du premier tour' 24 April 2017 <<https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Archives/Archives-elections/Election-presidentielle-2017/Election-presidentielle-2017-resultats-globaux-du-premier-tour>> [Accessed 01/03/19]

⁸ Pascal Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* (Paris: Fayard, 2012) p.67; Jérôme Sainte-Marie, *Le nouvel ordre démocratique* (Paris: Editions du Moment, 2015) p.23

⁹ Jack Hayward, 'Ideological Change: The Exhaustion of the Revolutionary Impetus' in *Developments in French Politics*, Peter A. Hall, Jack Hayward and Howard Machin eds. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994) p.30

he argued that the electorate was 'less ideologically rooted, and more volatile.'¹⁰ While there were many reasons for this, one of the most important was the lessening of the differences in the policies proposed by the Centre Left and Centre Right. Although Mitterrand had talked of a break with capitalism in 1971 and was elected in 1981 on a programme that proposed a significant expansion of the public sector, his Socialist experiment was rapidly abandoned in favour of an approach that recognised that private enterprise had an important role to play in the economy. On social issues, the Right moved closer to the Left, for example in its abandonment of support for the death penalty. The Left/Right split which had been defined by an opposition on economic and social questions was therefore weakened.

Changes in the structure of society contributed to the convergence of policy between the two main parties of government. The decline in heavy industry, and technological advances generally, reduced the size of the blue-collar working class. This development, along with the much discussed 'rise of the middle classes' between the 1960s and the 1980s,¹¹ encouraged the Socialists to adopt policies more likely to appeal to middle class voters.

One result of the focus of the Socialists on seeking greater support from the middle class was that significant sections of the working class came to feel ignored, and unrepresented by the liberal economic and social programmes promoted by both established parties of government. As Guilluy notes, this community was also relegated geographically to towns outside metropolitan centres, which were suffering from high unemployment following the fall in the number of jobs in industry¹², and, as Bouvet has argued,¹³ they also felt that politicians valued their views little. As a result, many blue-collar workers turned away from the established parties of government, and particularly towards the FN.

The possibility of a realignment of the political scene was increased by the series of crises that developed from around 2008, and which further undermined an already fragile system. The failure of both the Sarkozy and the Hollande governments to respond effectively to the economic crisis increased the loss of faith in politicians. This situation was exacerbated by a similar inability to propose solutions to the migrant crisis, following the conflict in the Middle East and the Arab Spring. In this climate, those parties from the Far

¹⁰ Ibid p.32

¹¹ See, for example, Henri Mendras (avec la collaboration de Laurence Duboys Fresney), *La Seconde Révolution française 1965-1984* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988) p.37

¹² Christophe Guilluy, *La France périphérique* (Paris: Flammarion, 2014) p.11

¹³ Laurent Bouvet, *Le sens du peuple: La gauche, la démocratie, le populisme* (Paris : Editions Gallimard, 2012) p.164

Left and Far Right which claimed to offer an alternative political approach to these issues were particularly attractive to voters.

Disillusionment with traditional parties, and the weakening of the Left/Right divide was clear at the end of the Sarkozy presidency. The FN achieved its highest ever score to date in the 2012 presidential elections, on a programme that combined statist economic policies, close to the Left, with a hard-line approach to immigration and identity, which in its desire to reduce the number of immigrants and to preserve 'traditional' French values, went further than the Centre Right.

While the Left/Right divide emerged weakened from the 2012 presidential elections, it was not yet obvious that a significant political realignment would occur. The candidates of the established parties of government received the highest scores in the first round of the *présidentielles* in 2012, and both gained around 10% more votes than their nearest challenger, the FN. In light of this, when the ability of the Hollande governments to handle these various challenges came into question, many expected that, as had been the case in the past, it would be the Centre Right which would benefit and return to power in 2017. However, the changes that the party system was undergoing, which we have sought to analyse and explain in this thesis, meant that the failure of the PS would not guarantee the success of the UMP.

One of the major factors driving the crisis in both parties of government was the decline in the electorate's faith in traditional ideologies. Whereas in the past, questions of class and background had played a major role in determining citizens' voting behaviour,¹⁴ these became less important from the 1980s, and this trend continued up to and beyond the Hollande presidency, with the electorate becoming much more independent. As Brochet has noted,¹⁵ and as we have explored in this thesis, particularly in chapters 2 and 5, rather than identifying with any particular party, voters were more inclined to pick and choose between different policies from across the political spectrum. This made voting habits much more volatile, as large sections of the electorate were less and less likely to support the established parties of government, and were also open to alternatives from either the radical fringes or the Centre.

¹⁴ See Perrineau, *Le choix de Marianne* p.67

¹⁵ Francis Brochet, *Démocratie smartphone: Le populisme numérique de Trump à Macron* (Paris: Editions François Bourin, 2017) p.171

This thesis offers a major contribution towards a new framework of analysis for contemporary French politics. Several commentators have recognised that the traditional arrangement of the party system underwent a realignment during the Hollande presidency, but there has been much debate over what has replaced it. Some, such as Fourquet and Schön-Quinlivan,¹⁶ have argued that parties and voters are now divided between the winners and losers of globalisation; between those who favour an open vision, against those who have a more closed view of society. However, this single dividing line fails to recognise that globalisation is a multifaceted phenomenon, and includes various strands, such as cultural, economic and political globalisation.

As we have seen in this thesis, particularly in chapters 2, 3 and 4, examination of the Centre Right in light of this assessment challenges the more widely-accepted analysis of the new party system outlined above. For example, Fillon supported traditional Catholic values, and an assimilationist approach to immigration, which might place him amongst those who lose out from cultural globalisation, while proposing liberal economic policies, which would place him alongside the winners of economic globalisation. As regards Europe, he supported the further development of European cooperation as did those who were considered 'winners', whilst at the same time arguing for the importance of a role for strong nation states, a principle which was shared with some of those who were classed as 'losers'. The arrangement of the party system during the Hollande presidency was therefore much more complex than analyses of 'winners' and 'losers' suggest, and this explains why the transformation posed so many difficulties for the established parties of government.

This thesis has argued that a new model of the party system is required to understand the difficulties faced by Les Républicains during the Hollande presidency, the failure of Fillon to win the 2017 presidential elections, and the broader relationship between voters, political parties and politicians. Instead of interacting according to a Left/Right axis, debate between parties became dominated by three key areas: identity, liberal economic policy, and French membership of the European Union. These divided parties and the electorate in different ways.

¹⁶ See Jérôme Fourquet, 'Un nouveau clivage: Perdants *versus* gagnants de la mondialisation', *Commentaire* (2017) Vol.2 No.158, 265-270 and Emmanuelle Schön-Quinlivan, 'The elephant in the room' no more: Europe as a structuring line of political cleavage in the 2017 presidential election' *French Politics* (2017) Vol.15 290-302 p.300

The axis concerning identity would prove to be the most divisive and damaging for Les Républicains. In this context, the concept of cultural insecurity developed by Bouvet and Guilluy,¹⁷ and the division between socially conservative Somewheres and socially liberal Anywheres, outlined by Goodhart (examining British society),¹⁸ can be used to understand the situation in France.

The issue of how cultural insecurity can help explain the problems of the Centre Right has been largely overlooked, and is an area of great importance in this thesis. A significant section of society was worried about the development of a more multicultural society, and the move towards more socially liberal policies. These fears were heightened by the migrant crisis, and the terrorist attacks carried out in France by French nationals of North African heritage, and also by the decision of the Hollande government to support the legalisation of gay marriage.

The question of how to respond to these developments split the Centre Right into two camps: the Traditionalists, who favoured assimilation and more socially conservative values, and the Modernists, who supported integration and more socially liberal policies.

In 2012, Sarkozy's decision to appeal to Traditionalists from the FN alienated Bayrou and many Modernists in the Centre, who chose to support Hollande in the second round of the presidential elections. Following the defeat of their candidate, members of the UMP were divided between those such as Raffarin who believed that Sarkozy's strategy had been responsible for the party's failure, and others such as Copé and Peltier, who felt that, had the campaign lasted a little longer, the Right would have been successful. That many within the party favoured a hard-line approach was shown by Copé's success in the 2012 UMP leadership election, where he campaigned on a platform that promised a 'droite décomplexée'.

Differences over policy hardened as they became incarnated by political figures. Allegations of cheating, and the revelation that certain votes had been overlooked, ensured that the 2012 leadership elections did not decide who should become head of the party. They did, however, have a significant, if unforeseen, effect on the future of the UMP, when Juppé was brought in to mediate between the rival factions, by relaunching his career in frontline

¹⁷ Laurent Bouvet, *L'insécurité culturelle* (Paris: Fayard, 2015) p.15; Christophe Guilluy, *Fractures françaises* (Paris: François Bourin Editeur, 2010) p.177

¹⁸ David Goodhart, *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics* (London: Hurst & Company, 2017)

politics. Juppé favoured an ‘identité heureuse’ that was more open to diversity, and was also more favourable towards socially liberal values. He therefore came to represent Modernist voters on the Right and in the Centre, while both Fillon and Sarkozy sought to capture the support of Traditionalists. In this battle, Fillon, who emphasised his traditional Catholic social values was believed to be a more authentic representative of their position than Sarkozy, whose attempts to appear the toughest on immigration and social conservative measures were often considered by voters to be more of an electoral strategy rather than an expression of his actual beliefs.

Although Traditionalists were in the minority amongst the French population as a whole, they were in the majority amongst supporters of Les Républicains. Their vote in the primary would lead to Fillon being preferred to Sarkozy in the first round, to the defeat of Juppé in the second, thereby determining the party’s position on the issue of identity.

The second axis that came to structure the party system, which we discussed in chapter 3, concerned economic liberalism. While many analysts, such as Smith, Haywood, Jennings and Waters,¹⁹ have focused on France’s historic hostility towards liberal economic measures, these became tempered during the Hollande presidency. Traditional ideological differences between both parties and voters on the Left and the Right had already been weakened in the 1980s, due to the evolution of the Parti Socialiste, as demonstrated, for example, by Mitterrand’s decision to move away from his initial approach of increasing the size of the state sector towards one which gave greater emphasis to the role of private enterprise. Such convergence would increase during the Hollande presidency. Despite Hollande’s rhetoric during the 2012 presidential election campaign about finance being his enemy,²⁰ in 2014, he announced a move towards more pro-business economic policies — a change in strategy which was confirmed in August of that year by the appointment of Emmanuel Macron as Economy Minister. Surveys showed that many voters were becoming more supportive of a liberalisation of the French economy and of the idea of reducing the

¹⁹Timothy B. Smith, *France in Crisis: Welfare, Inequality and Globalization since 1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Jack Hayward *Fragmented France: Two Centuries of Disputed Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Jeremy Jennings, ‘France and the “Anglo-Saxon” Model: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives’, *European Review* Vol. 14, No.4, (2006) 537-544; Sarah Waters, *Between Republic and Market: Globalization and Identity in Contemporary France* (London: Continuum, 2012)

²⁰ See François Hollande, ‘L’intégralité du discours de François Hollande’ *Le JDD* 22 January 2012 <<http://www.lejdd.fr/Election-presidentielle-2012/Actualite/L-integralite-du-discours-de-Francois-Hollande-au-Bourget-467953>> [Accessed 25/11/17]

size of the state,²¹ and revealed Macron, who represented this position, to be popular amongst both the Centre Left and Centre Right electorates.²²

This shift in opinion could be explained by several factors, such as the continuing economic crisis, the persistent high unemployment rate, and the difference in the performance of the French economy compared with that of Germany. Fears about liberal economic policies being part of an alien, Anglo-Saxon model, were reduced as private enterprise was seen to have a crucial role in resolving the problem of high unemployment.

Although the evolution of attitudes towards economic issues had been expected to favour Les Républicains, it would actually play a significant role in the failure of its candidate in the *présidentielles*. The fact that many voters and politicians on the Centre Right favoured radical measures was a major factor in Fillon's victory in the primary. He campaigned for a significant reduction in the size of the state and a liberalisation of the French economy, designed to make France the leading European economic power in 10 years.

However, it soon became evident that his position did not appeal to many, outside the core vote of Les Républicains, who wanted a greater balance between reform and protectionist policies. On the one hand, a significant number of FN voters, who might have been attracted to Fillon's defence of traditional Catholic values and assimilation, also supported a strong interventionist state, and so would not vote for the candidate of Les Républicains. On the other, many of those in the Centre, who wanted liberal economic reform, felt that Fillon's position was too extreme. The radical nature of programme reawakened fears of Anglo-Saxon capitalism. During the primary, Juppé would describe it as 'd'une très grande brutalité sociale'²³ – a charge which would be adopted by opposition candidates in the presidential elections. Many of those who wanted liberal reform turned to Macron, who seemed to offer policies that promoted change while preserving the protective role of the state. This enabled the leader of En Marche to present himself as the most acceptable

²¹ See Brice Teinturier et Vincent Dusseaux, *Fractures françaises 2016 Vague 4: Ipsos Sopra/Steria pour le Monde, La Fondation Jean Jaurès et Sciences Po* p.32
<<https://www.soprasteria.com/docs/librariesprovider29/Publications-Ipsos/fractures-francaises-vague4-ipsos-soprasteria.pdf?sfvrsn=4>>; Kantar Sofrès, *Les Français et l'économie* Novembre 2016 p.20
<<https://www.citeco.fr/sites/default/files/documents/Enquête%20Kantar%20Sofres%20JECO%202016.pdf>> [Accessed 19/11/18]

²² BVA, *Les Français et Emmanuel Macron* 13 April 2016 p.3
<http://www.bva.fr/fr/sondages/les_francais_et_emmanuel_macron.html>

²³ L'Express.fr, 'Ça y est, Juppé et Fillon s'écharpent par plateaux télé interposés' *L'Express* 21 November 2016 <https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/lr/pour-juppe-fillon-a-une-vision-de-la-societe-extremement-traditionaliste_1852683.html> [Accessed 02/12/17]

representative of liberal economic reform, which was the position that had been expected to be held by Les Républicains, and so fundamentally weakened the Centre Right.

The third axis that structured the French party system during the Hollande presidency concerned French attitudes towards membership of the European Union. This is largely ignored by Gougou and Persico and Martin in their analyses of the realignment of the French party system.²⁴ Others, such as Fourquet, Schön-Quinlivan and Guilluy, have seen divisions over Europe as representing differences in French attitudes towards globalisation.²⁵ Although attitudes towards the EU were not the main focus of debate during the presidential elections, they did play a role in Macron's success. His positive vision of a more federal Europe allowed him to win over voters from the Independent Centre, who had often supported the Centre Right, particularly in the second round of presidential elections.

Unlike the other two axes, that relating to Europe saw the continuation of many issues that had traditionally divided political parties. Under the Fifth Republic, the Right and Centre had seen Europe in similar terms, with three areas of particular importance: Europe as a way of maximising French influence in the world, Europe as a bloc independent from other superpowers, and Europe's significance as a cultural area. However, despite sharing similar objectives, the Right and Centre disagreed over how they might be achieved. The Right generally saw Europe as a tool to increase and project French power on the world stage through a structure based on nation states, placed emphasis on the importance of individual national interests, and defended a more white, Christian vision of the European community. In contrast, the Centre believed that a federal structure was necessary to protect French interests in a world dominated by superpowers, and it was particularly supportive of the European ideal as outlined by Jean Monnet, and was more favourable towards cultural diversity.

The question of Europe further contributed to the disintegration of the traditional divide. Divisions between Les Républicains and the Independent Centre parties mirrored

²⁴ See Florent Gougou, Simon Persico, 'A new party system in the making? The 2017 French presidential election' *French Politics* (2017) Vol 15 303-321 ; Pierre Martin, 'Un séisme politique: L'élection présidentielle de 2017', *Commentaire* (2017) Vol.2 No.158, 249-264

²⁵ See Fourquet, 'Un nouveau clivage'; Schön-Quinlivan, "'The elephant in the room" no more'; Marc-Olivier Bherer, 'Christophe Guilluy « Macron le candidat des métropoles mondialisées»' *Le Monde* 26 April 2017 <http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2017/04/26/christophe-guilluy-m-macron-est-le-candidat-des-metropoles-mondialisees_5117791_3232.html#kSTwwMi2vemASbXC.99> [Accessed 13/02/18]

differences within Les Républicains themselves, and so increased the threat to party unity. In some cases, concerns relating to the European axis overlapped with others relating to that concerning identity, yet each had a different focus. The issue of identity was about how voters saw France, and divisions within the nation, whereas that of Europe concerned the role that voters believed that France should play on the world stage, and how it should project its power.

Like those in the Centre, the Juppéistes were more supportive of a federal Europe. They believed in the European ideal and had a more open vision of Europe's cultural identity, which recognised the contributions made by cultures from other parts of the world. In contrast, Sarkozy and Fillon were keen to protect the place of the nation state, and promoted a vision of Europe that placed emphasis on its Christian heritage. In contrast to the Centrists and Juppéistes, Sarkozystes and Fillonistes saw the nation-state as an ideal community.

The victory of Fillon therefore, was not simply that of a candidate in the primary, but of a particular perspective on Europe. In the same way as in the axis of identity, many voters who had supported Juppé in the primary, and supporters and representatives of the Independent Centre parties were alienated by the position of Les Républicains, and sought an alternative means of pursuing their programme. They found this in Macron. He was an enthusiastic supporter of a federal Europe, both as a way of maximising French influence and as an ideal in itself, and also held a more open vision of Europe's cultural identity. This position enabled him to draw support from across the Left/Right divide, not only from Les Républicains sympathisers who had voted for Juppé in the 2016 primary, and from supporters of the Independent Centre parties, but also from the PS.

As well as explaining the challenges faced by Les Républicains in formulating policies that could gain widespread support, the axes must also be understood in order to explain leadership battles and their outcomes. Previously, the Centre Right had put aside differences over policy to rally behind a leader in whom they had confidence. However, the situation was different between 2012-2017, as debate over who should be the candidate of Les Républicains in the presidential elections became entwined with the three axes outlined in our new model. These played a decisive role in the selection of Fillon and defeat of Juppé in the primary. Rather than bringing the Centre Right together, Fillon's victory in 2016, and the programme he represented, reinforced division and meant that he was unable to win the presidential elections.

Leadership played a central role during the Hollande presidency, and posed problems for both of the established parties of government. The figure of president has been essential to the Fifth Republic since 1958, and this has ensured that, in order to gain power, parties must find a candidate who voters will see as a leader suitable for the whole country. In addition to the effect of the institutions, many other factors combined to increase the focus on the importance of the leader between 2012 and 2017. The decline in voters' identification with traditional ideologies and the established parties of government meant that an increasing number were willing to support candidates other than those of the PS and the Centre Right. The loss of confidence in these parties and their political representatives meant that those considered to be outsiders were viewed more favourably. The rise of new media allowed alternative parties on the extremes of the political spectrum and in the Centre to build a profile, bypass traditional media and engage with the people directly. In light of these developments, voters often felt greater allegiance to political figures than to parties.

When trying to win over voters, political leaders needed to address two important areas: personality and representation. While society has changed since the time of Max Weber, and indeed since Hoffmann was writing, so that terms such as 'charismatic' or 'heroic' leadership are less relevant,²⁶ the electorate still has expectations of the characteristics a leader should possess. These expectations were reinforced between 2012 and 2017, as Hollande's presidential style was in many ways the opposite of what people wanted. Such a figure needed to be decisive, and capable of taking the effective action needed to solve France's problems, particularly in light of the worsening economic situation in France.

The issue of leadership was of major significance for Les Républicains. Under the Fifth Republic, the Right had often come together behind a particular figure, such as de Gaulle or Chirac, rather than in support of a programme. The importance of the leader had been further increased when, during his own presidency, Sarkozy sought to reduce challenges from within his own party, by ensuring that no one was appointed to replace him as head of the UMP. While this strengthened the party in the short term, it meant that there was no obvious successor to take over the leadership once Sarkozy had been defeated in the 2012 presidential elections. The failure of the 2012 leadership contest, between Fillon and

²⁶ For definitions of 'charismatic' and 'heroic' leadership, see Max Weber, 'IX. The Sociology of Charismatic Authority' in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2012) p.245; Stanley Hoffmann, *Decline or renewal? France since the 1930s* (New York: Viking Press, 1974) p.77

Copé, to resolve this issue left a void at the top of the party and gave free rein for divisions over policy to develop.

The decision to hold a primary to designate the candidate for the 2017 presidential elections further emphasised issues of leadership, and this would be to the detriment of the party. It was recognised that only the vote in November 2016 would be decisive, and so Sarkozy's rivals did not stand against him in the 2014 leadership contest. Instead, many chose to set up their own micro-parties, which gave them greater control and freedom. This had the effect of ensuring that their supporters' loyalty was to them personally, rather than to Les Républicains. For a significant number of Juppéistes, once their candidate had been defeated, they would not feel obliged to support the winner, but instead turned to Macron.

Fillon's victory in the primary of November 2016 was due to his ability to satisfy the criteria of personality and representation better than his rivals. As we have discussed above, his programme, focusing on traditional Catholic values and a particularly liberal approach to economic policy was popular on the Right. In terms of personality, he was more assertive than Juppé, who often appeared too moderate and conciliatory in the eyes of the core Right electorate. Fillon was judged to be more competent than Sarkozy, and the most honest of the three candidates. He was also greatly assisted by the fact that the primary had always been seen as a contest to decide which of Sarkozy or Juppé would be the presidential candidate. As a result, Sarkozy and Juppé concentrated their attacks on each other, while Fillon was largely ignored, until his unexpected victory in the first round. The size of the vote in his favour (44.1%)²⁷, left little opportunity for Juppé to recover the lost ground.

While Fillon successfully responded to the issues of personality and representation in the primary, he failed to do so in the presidential elections. As regards representation, we have seen in chapter 3, key aspects of his economic programme alienated many voters, who considered it to be too extreme. On the question of identity, socially liberal voters, who represented a greater proportion of the electorate outside Les Républicains were alienated by Fillon's programme which was aimed at social conservatives. As regards personality, the Penelopegate scandal destroyed his reputation for integrity. In both cases, the elements

²⁷ La rédaction de LCI, 'Primaire de la droite: Les résultats définitifs du premier tour enfin connus' 23/11/16 < <https://www.lci.fr/primaire-droite/primaire-a-droite-les-resultats-definitifs-du-premier-tour-enfin-connus-2013991.html> > [Accessed 02/03/19]

which had been essential to his success in the primary were a major reason for his defeat in the *présidentielles*.

Fillon's failure to fulfil the key expectations of a leader was compounded by the arrival of Macron. The candidate of En Marche was better able than Fillon to convince the wider electorate that he had the necessary qualities relating to both personality and representation. He was seen as young and dynamic, and, having created his own movement, did not suffer from the unpopularity attached to the established parties of government. In terms of his programme, he was deliberately ambiguous, and occasionally defended conflicting points of view, allowing voters to make their own interpretation of his stance. He was able to appeal to voters from both Right and Left, who had been alienated by the decision of both traditional parties to choose candidates who appealed to their core support rather than to the population as a whole. This allowed Macron to seize the centre ground, and the place in the second round of the presidential elections, which it had been expected would be taken by the candidate of Les Républicains.

Les Républicains' defeat in the 2017 presidential election therefore stemmed from an inability to respond to a changing political landscape, and an inability to overcome internal divisions to unite the party behind a leader and a programme that would not only win support from the core Centre Right electorate, but also from many outside the party. Both aspects of this failure were intimately related to the reconfiguration of French politics around three axes, as we have argued throughout this thesis. Attempts to respond effectively to the problems the party faced were hindered by the realignment of the political system, and the rise in the number of voters tempted by the FN, which encouraged Fillon and Sarkozy to radicalise their programmes, and move further away from historic allies in the Centre.

Before considering what the future holds for Les Républicains, we must answer two key questions. Firstly, to what extent was the primary a factor in the defeat of Les Républicains, and secondly, what role did the Penelopegate scandal play?

The primary was designed to overcome internal quarrels over the choice of candidate for Les Républicains in the 2017 presidential elections, and to build momentum behind the party's campaign. It was influenced by the PS primary of 2011, which had generated a great deal of media attention and given impetus to the Socialists' presidential campaign. The Centre Right hoped to reproduce these results for their own campaign, and indeed, the primary appeared initially to have been a success. Fillon won comfortably, which seemingly

solved the leadership question that had troubled the party since 2012, and the party had raised 17.2 million euros. This sum covered the costs of the exercise and provided 10 million euros profit, of which 4.5 million became a campaign fund for Fillon in the 2017 *présidentielles*.

However, while the primary was initially judged to have had a positive impact on the Right, it would later play an important role in the subsequent disintegration of Les Républicains. As we have seen in chapter 5, rather than being representative of a broad swathe of society, as had been hoped, those who voted in the primary were particularly reflective of Les Républicains' core electorate. As a result, Fillon was chosen, as he best represented the views of party members, and Juppé was defeated, despite being far better placed to gain the support from outside the party needed to win the presidential elections.

This strategic problem was compounded as Fillon saw his victory as an endorsement of his policies, and feared that any attempt to adapt them in order to appeal to the broader electorate of the presidential elections would risk alienating key supporters. This meant that he fought the presidential elections on a platform that was ill-suited to winning the votes of key constituencies, such as many supporters of the Independent Centre, and those Hollande voters from 2012 who were disappointed with the PS and felt that some more moderate liberal economic reform was necessary.

The primary also damaged Les Républicains by placing emphasis on division and confrontation rather than conciliation. Several leading Juppéistes were alienated by the attacks made against their candidate during the campaign and some such as Aurore Bergé, defected to En Marche following the primary, whilst Juppé himself again withdrew from frontline politics and did not renew his party membership. The divisive nature of the primary would have further impact in 2017, when, following the revelation of Penelopegate, Juppé rejected proposals to replace Fillon as the presidential candidate. He did not feel that he could represent the more firmly right-wing electorate that had been revealed by the November 2016 vote.

Finally, the organisation and rules of the primary would prove to be a major problem for Les Républicains in the Spring of 2017, when Fillon was tarnished by scandal. The statutes made no provision as to what should happen should the winner be seriously weakened or prevented from standing, and so there was no agreed way of identifying a replacement. This enabled Fillon to maintain his position as the presidential candidate, since despite the

allegations made against him, the party feared that any move to designate a replacement would alienate large numbers of those who had paid to participate in the primary.

While it is clear that the primary did cause additional problems for the Right, in that it was a bitterly fought contest that upset a number of Juppéistes, it was Les Républicains' continuing failure to solve the problems of policy and leadership during the Hollande presidency that was the main reason they lost the 2017 presidential elections. The primary was held because the party had been unable to agree on who would make the best leader, and what programme should be presented to voters in 2017. Polls suggested that the FN was almost certain to make the second round of the *présidentielles*, ensuring that the other parties would be competing to supply the opposing candidate.

This meant it was not possible for several figures from Les Républicains to stand, so that the general electorate of the *présidentielles* could decide which candidate they preferred. In 1995, Chirac and Balladur from the RPR had both been candidates in the presidential election, however, such was the strength of the FN in 2017 that were multiple figures from the same party to stand, they would split the vote and were all likely to be eliminated. For this reason, a primary was necessary in order to ensure that only one figure from Les Républicains was present in the first round, but divisions between members were too great for the whole party to rally easily behind one representative and one programme.

Having considered the role of the primary in the defeat of Les Républicains in the presidential elections, we must now examine the effect of Penelopegate in the wider context of the crisis faced by the Centre Right. The scandal destroyed Fillon's reputation for integrity, and encouraged defections to other candidates, and to Macron in particular. Piar has demonstrated how the focus on this prevented Fillon from being able to run his campaign effectively.²⁸ In this way, it played an important role in preventing Les Républicains from returning to power in 2017.

However, focus on the scandal risks distracting attention from more important, longer-term factors. When considered in the broader context of political realignment and divisions within the electorate as a whole and within Les Républicains in particular, Penelopegate can be seen as the trigger rather than the cause of the disintegration of the party. As we have seen, there were deep divisions within the Centre Right, particularly over questions relating to identity and to France's role in the EU. We have also considered in chapter 3

²⁸ Christophe Piar, 'La présidentielle vue par les JT' in *Le vote disruptif: Les élections présidentielles et législatives de 2017*, Pascal Perrineau ed. pp.73-99 p.86

how Fillon's economic programme caused him to lose support from the wider electorate even before the scandal was reported in *Le Canard Enchaîné*.

Penelopegate and the rise of Macron gave those uncomfortable with Fillon's programme further encouragement to defect, but many who did so had already felt ill-at-ease for some time, and the scandal did not itself provoke any significant new divisions over policy. That Les Républicains disintegrated so quickly in the Spring of 2017 can be seen as further evidence that the problems that led to the party's downfall were long-term issues. Those who lost confidence in Fillon as candidate saw little point in remaining loyal to the party. While a Juppé victory in the primary would probably have seen the Centre Right return to power, it would not have ended the disagreements, but merely delayed any reckoning, perhaps until he stepped down at the end of his *quinquennat* as he had promised.

What future for Les Républicains ?

Following the defeat of Fillon in 2017, the Centre Right found itself confronted by two existential challenges. On the one hand it was facing major divisions over questions of policy, and, on the other hand, it was leaderless, in a political movement where the figure of the leader had always been crucial to maintaining party unity and ensuring success.

The problems that we have examined in this thesis, relating to divisions over policy around the three axes, and to the closely associated question of leadership, have not been resolved but have become embedded within the party.

These issues go back to the previous defeat of Sarkozy in the presidential elections of 2012. The period in opposition is often a time for a party to rebuild and allow a new set of politicians to garner support both within the party and without. However, following the Copé/Fillon fiasco, Sarkozy's return as party leader in 2014 and the struggle over who would be the candidate for the 2017 elections prevented the emergence of many new figures. The party remained identified with Sarkozy and Juppé, and then later, on Fillon, at the expense of younger candidates.

The problems that this would pose for the party would become clear when Laurent Wauquiez struggled to impose his authority following his election as president of Les Républicains in December 2017. Throughout his time as party leader, he remained unpopular among the electorate as a whole, and less popular than some of his rivals on the

Centre Right amongst those who voted for Fillon in 2017.²⁹ The difficulties he faced could be seen in polls, which showed that many voters considered the radical parties of the Rassemblement National (RN) and La France Insoumise as the real opposition to the government, rather than Les Républicains. An Ifop poll from January 2019 found that, when asked which party they thought best represented opposition to Macron, 35% of French people cited the RN, 30% La France Insoumise, and only 23% Les Républicains.³⁰ This was a long-term trend, as at no point since the 2017 presidential elections have Les Républicains been regarded as the main opposition party.³¹

As we have seen in this thesis, politicians on the Centre Right have often come together behind a leader, but Wauquiez's unpopularity and his struggle to impose himself on the national stage, prevented him from being a figure around which the party could unite. His position was further weakened because, as happened during Sarkozy's leadership of the party between 2014 and 2016, his rivals who hope to represent the Centre Right in the 2022 presidential elections adopted vehicles for building support other than the party.

When the UMP was founded in 2002, the statutes had allowed for the creation of *mouvements*, which would allow the existence of a variety of political currents within the party.³² Many within the party had opposed this move on the grounds that they would merely become a source of division. These fears would seem to have been justified, as several of Wauquiez's rivals created their own micro-parties to further their own ambitions. Valérie Pécresse has founded Libres, and Bruno Retailleau has taken over Fillon's micro-party, Force Républicaine. Once again, it is clear that in the new party system, control of the party machine is no longer the key to success. Whereas in 2002, the *mouvements* were supposed to be a way of integrating different sections of the Right and

²⁹ See Opinionway, *Le baromètre LCI de l'action politique: Décembre 2018* p.33 <<https://www.opinion-way.com/fr/component/edocman/opinionway-pour-lci-le-barometre-lci-de-l-action-politique-decembre-2018/viewdocument.html?Itemid=0>> [Accessed 27/03/19] This study found that both Valérie Pécresse and Xavier Bertrand were viewed more favourably among those who had voted for Fillon in 2017, with 68% having a positive view of Pécresse and 61% viewing Bertrand favourably, compared with 49% who were content with Wauquiez. The situation would improve slightly for the leader of Les Républicains in April 2019, when an Elabe survey showed that he was more popular than Pécresse among sympathisers of the Right, but still behind Bertrand. See ELABE, *L'Observatoire politique: Baromètre ELABE pour LES ECHOS et RADIO CLASSIQUE* 4 avril 2019 p.18

³⁰ Adrien Gaboulaud, 'Sondage Ifop: dans l'opposition, le RN plus fort que LFI' *Paris Match* 8 January 19 <<https://www.parismatch.com/Actu/Politique/Sondage-Ifop-dans-l-opposition-le-RN-plus-fort-que-LFI-1598416>> [Accessed 12/02/19]

³¹ Ibid

³² The *mouvements* would not be created until November 2012, and would last until Sarkozy's election as party leader in 2014.

Centre within a single party, the growth of micro-parties is now a sign of the fracturing of Les Républicains.

All of the features discussed above proved important in preventing Wauquiez from asserting his position as party leader, and were part of the reason he resigned following the 2019 European elections, when Les Républicains' list received only 8.48% of the vote, and came fourth behind En Marche, the Rassemblement National and Europe Ecologie Les Verts.³³ Two years after Fillon's defeat, Les Républicains are once again without a leader, and currently there is no obvious candidate who would seem capable of improving their electoral fortunes.

Les Républicains not only have a leadership problem, they also lack a common project, as the party itself is still struggling with internal divisions, particularly over identity and Europe. The splits that had emerged during the Hollande presidency caused defections from Les Républicains to Macron and the creation of a new Centre Right party, Agir, and it is probable that these will continue. Wauquiez's position on identity was judged to be too hard-line, and his approach to Europe was too Eurosceptic for many in the Centre, to be able to unite the whole of the Centre Right behind him.

An example of the tensions this provoked could be seen when Virginie Calmels resigned as vice-president of the party, citing concerns about the shift to the Right on identity, and in particular, its campaign leaflet entitled 'Pour que la France reste la France'. The differences between party members over Europe that we have analysed in this thesis have also remained a subject of disagreement within the party. In December 2018, two former Les Républicains *députés*, Thierry Mariani and Jean-Paul Garraud, announced that they were joining the Rassemblement National to stand to become MEPs, and, in March 2019, Jean-Pierre Raffarin pledged his support to En Marche for the European elections, whilst at the same time stating that he would remain a member of Les Républicains.

In addition to the internal divisions over policy, Les Républicains have been weakened by Macron's liberal economic policy. In many cases, this has been carried out by ministers who were members of Les Républicains before the 2017 elections. This poses the problem that, should Macron's economic programme be successful in reducing unemployment and promoting economic growth, he is likely to be re-elected in 2022. Should he fail, then it is

³³ Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats des élections européennes 2019' 27 mai 2019
<<https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Elections-europeennes-2019/Resultats-des-elections-europeennes-2019>> [Accessed 03/06/19]

likely that voters may turn away from liberal economic policies in favour of a more state-driven approach, in which case La France Insoumise and the Rassemblement National would benefit, rather than Les Républicains.

The European elections underlined the challenge that the party faces, as many groups that had traditionally supported the Centre Right rallied to the list of En Marche. 37% of practising Catholics chose Macron's party in the May 2019 elections, while only 12% voted for Les Républicains.³⁴ Of those who had voted for Fillon in the 2017 presidential elections, 27% gave their support to En Marche.³⁵ Without a leader or a common project, the Centre Right is struggling to maintain the support of even sections of the population that have traditionally formed the party's core electorate.

The future of Les Républicains, and the Centre Right as a whole is therefore particularly uncertain. Following the disastrous result in the European elections, Valérie Pécresse announced that she was leaving the party. She was followed by Robin Réda, a *député* for Les Républicains, Florence Portelli, mayor of Taverny and a regional councillor, and Mael de Calan, a departmental councillor. Pécresse stated in a letter to members and supporters of Les Républicains, 'nous devons refonder une droite fière de ses valeurs et bien dans son époque'³⁶, and added 'ma démarche s'inscrit naturellement au sein de l'initiative de la droite et du centre lancée par Gérard Larcher, qui va bien au-delà des partis.'³⁷ Whether she or one of the *présidentiabiles* is able to rally significant support, whether Les Républicains' fortunes improve, or whether the Centre Right as a whole now enters a long period of opposition remains to be seen, and will depend to a certain extent on factors beyond their control, such as the fortunes of Macron.

This thesis has considered the divisions within Les Républicains, and the party's failure to win the 2017 presidential elections in the light of the realignment of the French party system that occurred during the Hollande presidency. It has argued that one of the major factors driving this change was the weakening of attachments to traditional ideologies and the adoption by many voters of a more individualised approach to political activity. In order

³⁴ Bernard Gorce, 'Européennes 2019, les catholiques pratiquants ont largement rallié Macron' *La Croix* 28 May 2019 p.12

³⁵ Ifop-Fiducial for Paris Match, CNEWS and Sud Radio, *Européennes 2019: profils des électeurs et clés du scrutin* 27 May 2019 p.22 <https://www.ifop.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/116339-Rapport-JDV-COMPLET-détaillé_2019_05.27.pdf>

³⁶ Valérie Pécresse, 'Départ des Républicains: la lettre aux militants et aux sympathisants' 6 June 2019 <<https://www.soyonslibres.fr/single-post/lettre-aux-militants-et-sympathisants>> [Accessed 07/06/19]

³⁷ Ibid

to offer a more detailed examination of this political evolution as a whole, further research must be conducted into several different areas.

Firstly, while this thesis has focused on the Centre Right, the political realignment did not solely affect Les Républicains. The Parti Socialiste was also divided over issues comprised within the three axes outlined in this thesis. The result of these tensions was that the PS candidate, Benoît Hamon, only scored 6.36% of the vote in the first round of the presidential elections.³⁸ The model outlined in this thesis could therefore prove of further use in understanding the problems of the Left, and how the PS came under pressure from both En Marche and La France Insoumise.

Secondly, as we have discussed briefly in this conclusion, the problems of Les Républicains did not end with the defeat of Fillon, or even with the victory of En Marche in the *législatives*, but developed further during the Macron presidency, and merit further detailed examination, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Thirdly, the trend according to which voters have become alienated from political parties has intensified during the Macron presidency. As we have briefly discussed in chapter 5, this development could be seen in the demonstrations by the *gilets jaunes*. The protestors had no party, no widely-accepted leader, and no programme on which all members could agree. Protestors wanted to have greater influence in the legislative process through the introduction of a *référendum d'initiative populaire*, which would allow citizens to propose measures. More research is needed into this political phenomenon, and the continuing decline in allegiance to representative institutions, which continued after the end of the Hollande presidency.

Finally, the analysis could be extended to consider evolutions in other countries. The decline in attachment to traditional ideologies has not been restricted to France. In several countries in the Western world established parties of government have come under strain, and have been challenged by radical movements. Some examples of this can be in Italy with the Five Star Movement and the Lega Nord, which now control the government, or in Germany, which has seen the rise of *Alternativ für Deutschland*. The effects can also be seen within parties of government, as in America, where Donald Trump was able to become the president, despite coming from outside politics, and having to beat many key Republican figures to secure the party's nomination. It is therefore clear that this trend is

³⁸ Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Election présidentielle 2017: résultats globaux du premier tour'

affecting many different political systems, and a comparative analysis could further our understanding.

We can therefore see that the problems that the Centre Right faced during the Hollande presidency were only one part of the political realignment in France, which itself, was part of a broader trend affecting many different countries in the Western world. This seems likely to continue to reshape politics for the foreseeable future.

Appendix: The results of the 2012 and 2017 presidential and legislative elections

2012 presidential elections

First round

Candidate name	Votes received (as percentage of valid votes cast)
Eva Joly	2.31
Marine Le Pen	17.90
Nicolas Sarkozy	27.18
Jean-Luc Mélenchon	11.10
Philippe Poutou	1.15
Nathalie Arthaud	0.56
Jacques Cheminade	0.25
François Bayrou	9.13
Nicolas Dupont-Aignan	1.79
François Hollande	28.63

Abstention: 20.52%

Spoiled Ballots: 1.92%

Second round

Candidate name	Votes received (as percentage of valid votes cast)
François Hollande	51.64
Nicolas Sarkozy	48.32

Abstention: 19.65%

Spoiled Ballots: 5.82%

All results taken from Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats de l'élection présidentielle 2012'
 <[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__PR2012/\(path\)/PR2012/FE.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__PR2012/(path)/PR2012/FE.html)> [Accessed 27/02/18]

2012 legislative elections (results at the national level)

First round

Political Classification	Votes received (as percentage of valid votes cast)
Far Left	0.98
Front de Gauche	6.91
Socialiste	29.35
Radical de Gauche	1.65
Other Left	3.40
Europe-Ecologie-Les Verts	5.46
Regionalist	0.56
Ecologist	0.96
Others	0.52
Le Centre pour la France	1.77
Alliance centriste	0.60
Parti Radical	1.24
Nouveau Centre	2.20
Union pour un Mouvement Populaire	27.12
Other Right	3.51
Front National	13.60
Far Right	0.19

Abstention: 42.78%

Spoiled Ballots: 1.58%

Second round

Political Classification	Votes received (as percentage of valid votes cast)
Front de Gauche	1.08
Socialiste	40.91
Radical de Gauche	2.34
Other Left	3.08
Europe-Ecologie-Les Verts	3.60
Regionalist	0.59
Le Centre pour la France	0.49
Alliance centriste	0.53
Parti Radical	1.35
Nouveau Centre	2.47
Union pour un Mouvement Populaire	37.95
Other Right	1.81
Front National	3.66
Far Right	0.13

Abstention: 44.60%

Spoiled Ballots: 3.85%

All results taken from Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats des élections législatives 2012' <[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Legislatives/elecresult__LG2012/\(path\)/LG2012/FE.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Legislatives/elecresult__LG2012/(path)/LG2012/FE.html)> [Accessed 03/06/19]

2017 presidential elections

First round

Candidate name	Votes received (as percentage of valid votes cast)
Emmanuel Macron	24.01
Marine Le Pen	21.30
François Fillon	20.01
Jean-Luc Mélenchon	19.58
Benoît Hamon	6.36
Nicolas Dupont-Aignan	4.70
Jean Lassalle	1.21
Philippe Poutou	1.09
François Asselineau	0.92
Nathalie Arthaud	0.64
Jacques Cheminade	0.18

Abstention: 22.23%

Spoiled Ballots: 2.56%

Second round

Candidate name	Votes received (as percentage of valid votes cast)
Emmanuel Macron	66.10%
Marine Le Pen	33.90%

Abstention: 25.44%

Spoiled Ballots: 11.52%

All results taken from Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats de l'élection présidentielle de 2017'

<[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Lesresultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__presidentielle-2017/\(path\)/presidentielle-2017/FE.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Lesresultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__presidentielle-2017/(path)/presidentielle-2017/FE.html)> [Accessed 03/06/19]

2017 legislative elections (results at national level)

First round

Political classification	Votes received (as percentage of valid votes cast)
Far Left	0.77
Parti Communiste Français	2.72
La France Insoumise	11.03
Parti Socialiste	7.44
Parti Radical de Gauche	0.47
Other Left	1.60
Ecologist	4.30
Other	2.21
Regionalist	0.90
La République En Marche	28.21
MoDem	4.12
Union des Démocrates et Indépendants	3.03
Les Républicains	15.77
Other Right	2.76
Debout la France	1.17
Front National	13.20
Far Right	0.30

Abstention: 51.30%

Spoiled Ballots: 2.21%

Second round

Political classification	Votes received (as percentage of valid votes cast)
Parti Communiste Français	1.20
La France Insoumise	4.86
Parti Socialiste	5.68
Parti Radical de Gauche	0.36
Other Left	1.45
Ecologist	0.13
Other	0.55
Regionalist	0.76
La République En Marche	43.06
MoDem	6.06
Union des Démocrates et Indépendants	3.04
Les Républicains	22.23
Other Right	1.68
Debout la France	0.10
Front National	8.75
Far Right	0.10

Abstention: 57.36%

Spoiled Ballots: 9.86%

All results taken from Ministère de l'Intérieur, 'Résultats des élections législatives 2017'
<[https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Legislatives/elecresult__legislatives-2017/\(path\)/legislatives-2017//FE.html](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Legislatives/elecresult__legislatives-2017/(path)/legislatives-2017//FE.html)>
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