

Chapter 5: France



THE BASICS

France

Size	547,030 sq. km (more than two times the size of the U.K.)
Climate	Mild, but much warmer along the Mediterranean coast
Population	59 million
GNP per capita	\$31,100
Currency	1.29€ = US\$1
Ethnic composition	Over 90% white, but with substantial minorities of African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Caribbean origins
Religion	90% Catholics, with small minorities of Protestants, Jews, Muslims, and atheists
Capital	Paris
Form of government	Fifth Republic (1958)
Head of state	President Nicolas Sarkozy (2007)
Head of government	Prime Minister François Fillon (2007)

France is Not a Contradiction in Terms

- Stability since '58
- prosperity and economic power
- experienced leadership

Thinking about France

- Key Questions
 - Why did the establishment of stable democracy take so long?
 - How did deGaulle's changes to the country's institutions and social, political, and economic processes contribute to the creation of an effective democratic state?
 - What is the impact of the influential elite whose roots lie in the bureaucracy?
 - Why has the French economy proven more resistant to reform over the past 10 to 15 years than the British?

Thinking about France

- The Basics
 - France is a large European country
 - Until recently, it has had a relatively homogeneous population
 - 90% Roman Catholic (most unobservant) and 8% Muslim
 - Paris dominates France
 - An affluent country
 - Leading economic and technological power

The Evolution of the French State: Centuries of Turmoil

- Transformation and Division
 - 15th century centralization
 - Revolution
 - reinforced centralization
 - created secular state
 - broad franchise under democratic regimes
 - Human rights tradition
 - Industrial revolution
 - fragmented political opinion (many parties)
 - fragmented economy (no unified economic right wing)

TABLE 5.1 French Regimes since 1789

YEAR	REGIME
Until 1792	Bourbon Monarchy
1792–1804	First Republic
1804–15	First Empire
1815–30	Bourbon Restoration
1830–48	July Monarchy
1848–51	Second Republic
1851–70	Second Empire
1875–1940	Third Republic
1940–44	Vichy Regime
1944–46	Liberation Government
1946–58	Fourth Republic
1958–	Fifth Republic

The Evolution of the French State: Centuries of Turmoil

- Traditional republican politics: A vicious circle
 - Six major ideological groups
 - Coalition governments necessitated by lack of majority party
 - Social conservatism of political center limited innovation
 - Limited legitimacy and exaggerated alienation

FIGURE 5.1 Traditional Republican Politics in France

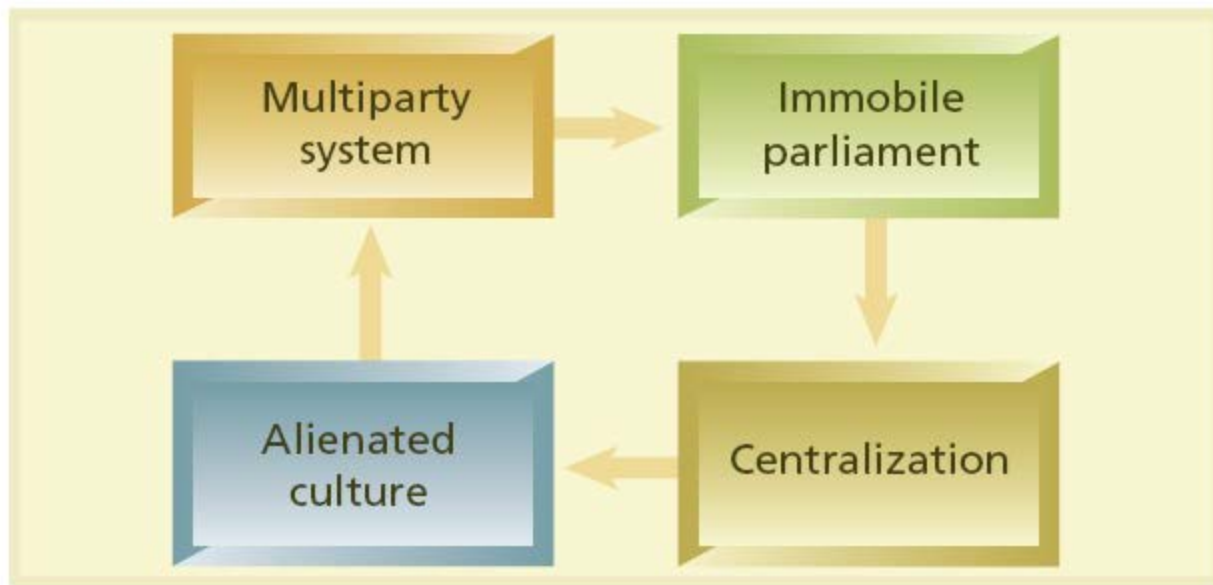


TABLE 5.2 Seats in the French Chamber of Deputies, 1951

PARTY	SEATS
PCF	101
SFIO	106
MRP	88
Radicals	76
UDSR	23
IOM	17
Independents and Peasants	95
Gaullists	120

The Evolution of the French State: Centuries of Turmoil

- From the Fourth to the Fifth Republic
 - Discredited Third Republic became model for Fourth after WWII
 - Ineffective government could not respond to post-war economic, social, and political change
 - Attempted coup from army and settlers in Algeria brought regime to an end

TABLE 5.3 Key Events in French Politics since 1958

YEAR	EVENT
1958	Creation of the Fifth Republic
1961	End of Algerian War
1962	Referendum on direct election of president First parliamentary majority elected
1965	De Gaulle reelected
1968	“Events” of May and June
1969	De Gaulle’s resignation
1970	De Gaulle’s death
1973–74	OPEC oil embargo
1981	Mitterrand and Socialists elected
1986	First period of cohabitation
1988	Mitterrand reelected
1993	Second period of cohabitation
1995	Chirac elected
1997	Socialists’ return to power
2002	First scheduled simultaneous election of parliament and president
2007	Election of Sarkozy

French Political Culture: From Alienation to Consensus

- Taming political protest
 - Events of May 1968
 - turning point in legitimizing Fifth Republic
 - deGaulle's call for new elections ended crisis
 - Neo-Socialists and Neo-Gaullists
 - electoral success of Socialists in '81 legitimized opposition
 - transition to Socialist-led government legitimized regime

TABLE 5.4 Support for the Fifth Republic

Question: "The Constitution of the Fifth Republic went into effect in 1958. If you had to render a judgment on how its institutions have functioned since then, would you say that they have functioned well or not functioned well?"

YEAR	NOT FUNCTIONED	
	FUNCTIONED WELL	WELL
1978	56%	27%
1983	57	25
1992	61	32
2000	71	21

Note: Nonresponses excluded.

Source: Adapted from Olivier Duhamel, "Confiance institutionnelle et défiance politique: la démocratie française," in *L'état de l'opinion 2001*, ed. Olivier Duhamel and Philippe Méchet. (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2001), 75.

French Political Culture: From Alienation to Consensus

- New divisions
 - Race
 - unassimilated immigrant communities still alienated
 - violent protests in Parisian suburbs
 - activity of National Front and other anti-immigrant groups
 - The EU
 - referenda on EU issues display French ambivalence toward further integration
 - same groups who feel threatened by immigrants oppose integration with Europe

Political Participation

- Renewing the party system with catch-all parties
 - The right
 - Gaullists (under varying party names)
 - commitment to legacy of deGaulle
 - organized around a single leader
 - slowest of European center-right parties to adopt policies of market capitalism
 - UDF – fading vestige of old rivalries

TABLE 5.5 Parliamentary Elections, 1958–2002: Major Parties Only

YEAR	PCF		PS ^a		CENTER ^b		GAULLISTS ^c AND ALLIES		NATIONAL FRONT	
	VOTES ^d	SEATS	VOTES	SEATS	VOTES	SEATS	VOTES	SEATS	VOTES	SEATS
1958	19.1%	10	15.5%	47	41.0%	215	17.6%	212	–	–
1962	21.8	41	12.5	66	26.5	84	36.4	269	–	–
1967	22.5	73	19.0	121	12.6	41	37.7	242	–	–
1968	20.0	34	16.5	49	10.3	33	43.7	354	–	–
1973	21.2	73	20.4	101	12.4	31	34.5	261	–	–
1978	20.5	86	24.7	117	–	–	43.9	274	–	–
1981	16.2	44	37.6	281	–	–	40.0	150	–	–
1986	9.7	35	31.85	210	–	–	42.0	274	9.9%	35
1988	11.3	27	35.9	276	–	–	37.7	258	9.8	1
1993	9.2	23	20.3	70	–	–	39.5	460	12.4	0
1997	9.9	37	28.6	282	–	–	39.5	257	15.1	1
2002	4.8	21	24.1	140	–	–	38.5	386	11.3	0

^aSFIO before 1971. Includes parties allied with the Socialists, usually the left wing of the radicals.

^bIncludes MRP, Moderates, Radicals not allied with the SFIO, and other centrists not part of the Gaullist coalition.

^cIncludes both the Gaullist Party and, after the 1962 election, Giscard's Party, both of which kept changing their name from election to election.

^dFirst-ballot vote only.

TABLE 5.6 Presidential Elections, 1965–2002: Major Candidates Only (in percentages)

YEAR	COMMUNISTS ^a	SOCIALISTS ^b	CENTER ^c	GISCARDIEN ^d	GAULLIST ^e	NATIONAL FRONT ^f
1965						
First ballot	–	32.2	15.8	–	43.7	–
Second ballot	–	45.5	–	–	54.5	–
1969						
First ballot	21.5	5.1	23.4	–	43.8	–
Second ballot	–	–	42.4	–	57.6	–
1974						
First ballot	–	43.2	–	32.6	15.1	–
Second ballot	–	49.2	–	50.8	–	–
1981						
First ballot	15.3	25.8	–	28.3	17.9	–
Second ballot	–	51.8	–	48.2	–	–
1988						
First ballot	6.7	34.1	–	16.5	19.9	14.4
Second ballot	–	54.0	–	–	45.9	–
1995						
First ballot	8.5	23.5	–	19.0 ^g	20.8	15.2
Second ballot	–	47.4	–	–	52.6	–
2002						
First ballot	3.4	16.2	–	6.8	19.9	17.8
Second ballot	–	–	–	–	82.2	17.8

^aJacques Duclos in 1969, Georges Marchais in 1981, André Lajoinie in 1988, and Robert Hue in 1995 and 2002.

^bFrançois Mitterrand at all elections except 1969, when it was Gaston Defferre, and Lionel Jospin in 1995 and 2002.

^cJean Lecanuet in 1965, Alain Poher in 1969.

^dValéry Giscard d'Estaing in 1974 and 1981, Raymond Barre in 1988.

^eCharles de Gaulle in 1965, Georges Pompidou in 1969, Jacques Chaban-Delmas in 1974, and Jacques Chirac in 1981 through 2002.

^fJean-Marie Le Pen.

^gRaymond Balladur was actually a second Gaullist candidate.

Political Participation

- Renewing the party system with catch-all parties
 - The left
 - PS
 - Mitterand the force behind Socialist change and success
 - success in cohabitation government sign of party's and party system's maturity
 - party in need of another renewal
 - PCF
 - product of the depression and Resistance
 - held on to traditional communist policy positions in modernizing economy
 - since PS reformation, PCF has declined

Political Participation

- Renewing the party system with catch-all parties
 - The National Front
 - Anti-democratic, super-nationalistic party of far right
 - Rides anti-immigrant fears to some electoral success

Political Participation

- Renewing the party system with catch-all parties
 - Minor parties
 - Greens
 - Far left
 - Rarely win 10% of popular vote

Political Participation

- Why these changes happened: The French electoral system
 - Proportional representation of the past
 - The two-ballot system and single-member districts

Political Participation

- Parity: A victory for feminism?
 - Constitutional amendment requires parties to run equal numbers of male and female candidates in proportional elections
 - Most important elections are not proportional
 - Only 19% of National Assembly is female

Political Participation

- Interest groups
 - Grassroots groups are small and rarely coordinated
 - Unions still active and influential
 - Business interests promoted more through informal, personal relationships

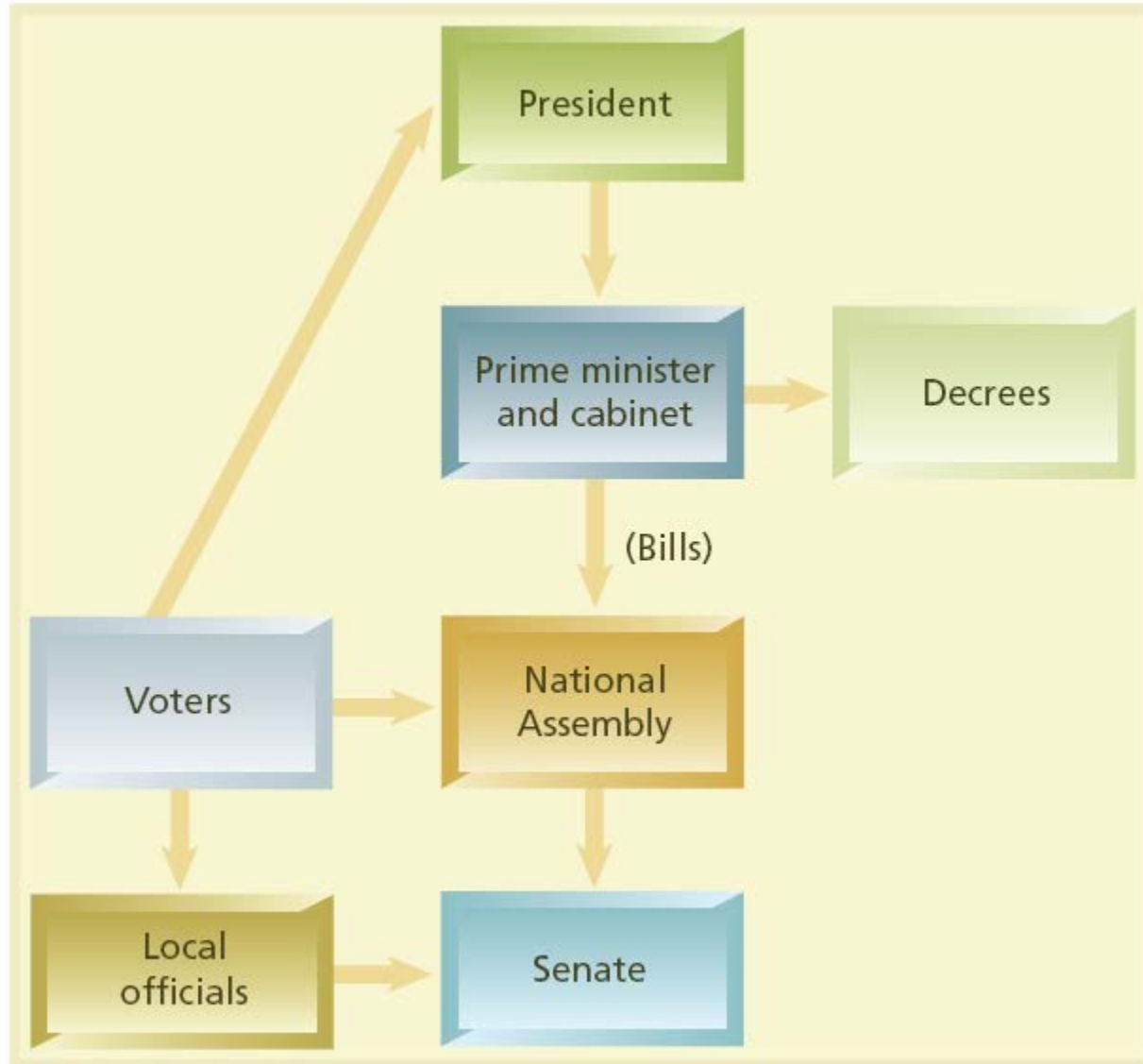
The French State

- A New constitution for a new state
 - strong president with emergency powers, elected by a majority
 - strong government and weakened legislature
 - top bureaucrats recruited for cabinet posts
 - cohabitation threatened gridlock, but pragmatic politicians agreed on a workable system

TABLE 5.7 French Presidents and Prime Ministers since 1958

YEAR TOOK OFFICE	PRESIDENT	PRIME MINISTER
1959	Charles de Gaulle	Michel Debré
1962		Georges Pompidou
1968		Maurice Couve de Murville
1969	Georges Pompidou	Jacques Chaban-Delmas
1972	Valéry Giscard d'Estaing	Pierre Messmer
1974		Jacques Chirac
1976		Raymond Barre
1981	François Mitterrand	Pierre Mauroy
1984		Laurent Fabius
1986		Jacques Chirac
1988		Michel Rocard
1991		Edith Cresson
1992		Pierre Bérégovoy
1993		Edouard Balladur
1995	Jacques Chirac	Alain Juppé
1997		Lionel Jospin
2002		Jean-Pierre Raffarin
2007	Nicolas Sarkozy	Dominique de Villepin
		François Fillon

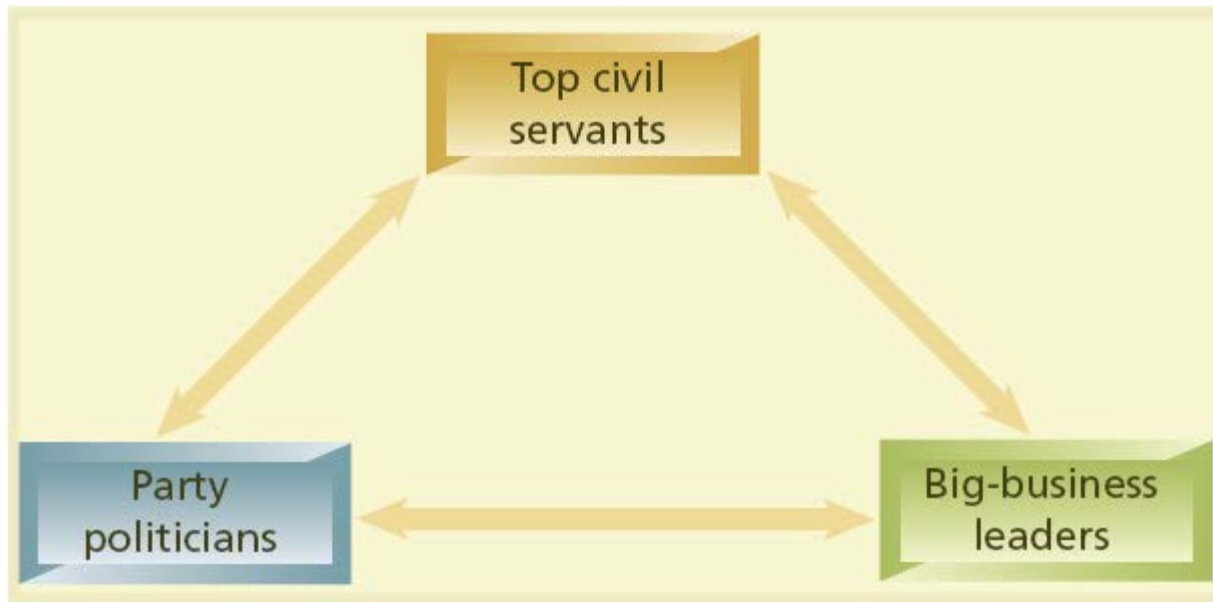
FIGURE 5.2 The Legislative Process in France



The French State

- The integrated elite
 - bureaucrats politically powerful
 - former bureaucrats lead parties and large corporations
 - ENA links them all together

FIGURE 5.3 The Iron Triangle



The French State

- Local government in a unitary system
 - prefects who supervised local bodies for Interior Ministry
 - *tutelle* – oversight of local decisions by French government
 - some decentralization under Socialist governments

The French State

- The courts
 - large appellate judicial system
 - no judicial review
 - Constitutional Council reviews constitutionality of bills before they become law

The French State

- The changing role of the state
 - power of civil society has grown
 - cohabitation, the absence of proposals for dramatic change, and scandal have reduced the power of the presidency
 - global and European forces impinge on policy making

Public policy: The Pursuit of Grandeur

- Economic policy
 - *Les Trentes Glorieuses*
 - rapid growth under government direction between WWII and 1973
 - consolidation of corporations
 - improved standard of living

Public policy: The Pursuit of Grandeur

- Economic policy
 - Decline
 - OPEC embargo stalled economic growth
 - industrial collapses
 - attempted restructuring ran into economic roadblocks

TABLE 5.8 The French Economy in Decline (in percentages)

YEAR	UNEMPLOYMENT	GROWTH IN GDP
1979	5.9	3.2
1981	7.4	1.2
1983	8.3	1.7
1986	10.4	2.5
1988	10.0	4.5
1993	11.7	2.9
1995	11.7	2.0
1998	11.5	0.3
2001	12.2	0.3
2006	9.5	2.2

Source: Adapted from David Cameron, "Economic Policy in the Era of the EMS," in *Remaking the Hexagon*, ed. Gregory Flynn (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), 145, and *Economist*, 10 Feb. 1999, 134. 2001 and 2006 various online sources.

Public policy: The Pursuit of Grandeur

- Economic policy
 - From Nationalization to Privatization
 - Socialist nationalizations abandoned in face of recession
 - restructuring based on privatizations begun in mid-'80s, continues
 - global and technological forces have reduced power of government

Public policy: The Pursuit of Grandeur

- The politics of headscarves
 - France guarantees individual rights to everyone
 - secular government, centralization and egalitarian ideals remain
 - religious symbols not allowed in public schools (including headscarves for Muslim girls)

Public policy: The Pursuit of Grandeur

- Foreign policy
 - deGaulle's post-WWII goal to restore French prominence in world politics
 - since OPEC embargo, policy has been more aligned with other European powers
 - Iraq: objection to U.S. methods

TABLE 5.9 France and the Global Economy

YEAR	EXPORTS AS PERCENTAGE OF GDP	IMPORTS AS PERCENTAGE OF GDP
1962	12	11
1974	20	22
1980	22	23
1992	23	22
1999	26	24
2002	27	25
2004	26	26

Source: Data from 1962-1992 from David Cameron, "Economic Policy in the Era for the EMS," in *Remaking the Hexagon*, ed. Gregory Flynn (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1995), 121; data for 1999 from www.worldbank.org, accessed 20 July 2001; data for 2002 www.undp.org, accessed 15 November 2004; data for 2004 also from www.undp.org, accessed 8 July 2007.

Feedback

- Parisian dominated press and broadcast media
- Government influence on media has declined since privatization
- Access to European and global cable and satellite providers reduces influence of French media
- Conclusion: In Sarkoland

TABLE 5.10 The Presidential Election, 2007

CANDIDATE	PARTY	FIRST BALLOT (%)	SECOND BALLOT (%)
Sarkozy, Nicolas	UPM	31.2	53.1
Royal, Ségolène	PS	25.9	46.9
Bayrou, François	UDF	18.6	
Le Pen, Jean-Marie	National Front	10.4	
Others		15.0	

TABLE 5.11 The Legislative Election, 2007

PARTY	FIRST BALLOT VOTE IN PERCENT	SEATS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
UMP and Allies	45.58	345
PS and allies	35.55	227
UDF/MoDem	7.61	3
National Front	4.29	0
Others	6.97	2

Learning Objectives

After mastering the concepts presented in this chapter, you will be able to:

- Gain detailed knowledge of the history of the political system, economic development and statehood formation of France.
- Recognize the importance of French Revolution of 1789 on the formation of republican form of governance in France.
- Understand the concept of 'dual executive' governance while analyzing the development of French political system.
- Define civic culture and civil society and assess the importance of both in French political system.
- Discuss the impact of the history and magnitude of mass and student protests on the development of political culture in contemporary France.

Learning Objectives

After mastering the concepts presented in this chapter, you will be able to:

- Recognize the position of French voters on the European Union development and further France's integration into the EU.
- Define the formation and the role of France's National Assembly.
- Describe French executive branch of government.
- Recognize the specification of French electoral system. Comparatively analyze the electoral system in France while using few other countries for your comparison.
- Understand the impact of privatization on economic and political development of the French state.
- Forecast challenges and expected changes in France's political system, economic development and political culture in light of the Nicolas Sarkozy's political victory.