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Europe and Europeanisation

13.1 Introduction

That European integration has called into question prominent features of the French model has been a cross-cutting theme of many of the preceding chapters. In the 2010s, European integration weighs heavily on the conduct of domestic French politics. In this penultimate chapter, we investigate the paradoxical nature of France's relationship to the EU, a body which appears simultaneously as a powerful constraint on domestic public policy and a source of unrivalled opportunity for contemporary French governments to exercise influence on a wider world stage (Guyomarch et al. 1996; Gueldry 2001; Drake 2004; Balme and Woll 2005; Grossman 2007). Next, we provide a historical overview of France's relationship with the EU, as informed primarily by the experience of the presidents of the Fifth Republic. Then we take stock of France's relationship with the EU in the mid-2010s by focusing on a number of key themes. Finally, we address the theme of the Europeanisation of the French polity.

13.2 France and the European Union

French statesmen were in the forefront of the process leading to the EEC with the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Underlying its supranational discourse, the EU has always been regarded as a means of enhancing French national prestige. To this extent, Europe was a French invention and served French interests as much as those of any other nation.

As surveyed briefly in Chapter 1, the principal moves towards closer European cooperation in the 1950s were of French, or Franco-German inspiration: the European Coal and Steel Community of 1951, the abortive European Army of 1954, the Treaty of Rome of 1957. The reasons underpinning moves towards closer European integration were multiple. Foremost was the need to end the ruinous European civil war that had plagued Europe for the past century and to make future wars impossible. The federalist idealism of the founding fathers coexisted alongside harsh calculations of national self-interest. European integration rested upon a reconciliation of France and Germany; cooperation between these hereditary enemies underpins the history of the EU (Cole 2001). In effect, as the

community progressed, what amounted to a bargain was struck between the two countries: France would offer political leadership while recognising Germany's economic primacy. The Treaty of Rome signed in 1957, which created the EEC, was 'essentially a compromise between German interest in market liberalisation, and French interest in support for agriculture' (Pedersen 1998: 80).

French presidents and Europe in the Fifth Republic

Since the inception of the Fifth Republic, Europe has formed part of the presidential sphere of interest. Though the governance of European issues is far more complex than this simple assertion implies, the 'history-making' decisions of French European policy have, by and large, resulted from the priorities of successive presidents, and their evaluation of whether the European balance of power would permit specific policy initiatives (Moravcsik 1991; Dyson and Featherstone 1999). In the next section, we consider briefly the evolution of French European policy since 1958 from the perspective of five French presidents.

More than any other French president, De Gaulle (1958–69) personified one of two recognisable tendencies in French European politics: that which stressed the value of cooperation between nation-states, rather than the vision of a federal United States of Europe, as espoused by the European visionaries Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman (Grosser 1988; Moravcsik 2000). De Gaulle's preferences were far removed from the avowed federalism of Europe's founders. To an ever-closer union, de Gaulle preferred a Europe of the nation-states. This might be summarised as a strong Europe with weak institutions under French leadership, a conception considered in some detail below. A strong Europe was essential, in order to counter American cultural and economic hegemony and to defend western security interests against an aggressive USSR. French leadership was a *sine qua non* for such a Europe; Germany remained a semi-sovereign state; Britain was too close to the Americans. France aspired to a leadership role at the head of a confederation of nation-states. The nation-state – with its contradictions, symbols, identities – would remain the focus of political organisation. Nation-states provided a stable bearing in the rough sea of international anarchy. It was through the nation-state that order and prosperity could be organised.

Cooperation between nation-states would enhance French influence within Europe. As president of the Fifth Republic after 1958, de Gaulle first proposed a Franco-British-American 'directorship' over the affairs of the West. Faced with Anglo-Saxon indifference, de Gaulle then advanced a Franco-German partnership, aimed at weaning Germany away from NATO, and proposing a dual leadership of a Europe which was neither Atlanticist, nor *communautaire*. The opening to Germany bore fruit in the signing of the Franco-German friendship treaty of 1963 (Cole 2001). This assertion of Franco-German friendship accurately reflected the Gaullist vision of European priorities. De Gaulle attempted to force Germany to choose between France and the United States in international forums such as NATO. This was too provocative for the West German lower chamber, the Bundestag, which insisted on adding a preamble reaffirming in strongly pro-Atlanticist terms Germany's participation in GATT and NATO (Soutou 1996). In

spite of their official friendship, in many respects the two countries held conflicting political visions. These divergences became clearer once Adenauer had left office in 1963. They centred over the role of supranational institutions, the importance of the Atlantic Alliance and the role of the United States in Europe.

De Gaulle's preference for a Europe of the nation-states contrasted with the federalism of Europe's early visionaries (Burin des Rozières 1992). In terms of the EEC's institutional structures, this meant that de Gaulle preferred an inter-governmental organisation to a supranational one. It was the duty of national leaders to preside and decide. De Gaulle's empty chair policy of 1965 testified to his determination to preserve French national interests. In conflict with its European neighbours over extending the use of majority voting for EEC decisions, France refused to attend meetings of community institutions for a six-month period. France would not be bound by decisions with which it did not agree. This stalemate was ended by the 1966 Luxembourg compromise, which gave any member state a right of veto over EC policies that it considered harmful to its vital national interests. The Luxembourg compromise represented a victory for the French government against the federalist enthusiasm of the smaller European nations. De Gaulle's intergovernmental conception of the EEC was not seriously challenged again until the mid-1980s.

De Gaulle certainly regarded himself as pro-European; indeed, he did not separate European and French national interests. Europe was to be led to independence from American hegemony under France's enlightened military and political leadership. Only France, the lone Continental European nuclear power, was strong enough to provide an alternative to American leadership. Thus, de Gaulle's decision to withdraw from NATO in 1965 was justified by the imperative of French military independence (although the general was careful not to discard the safety of the US military umbrella) (Menon 2000). Other European nations (especially Germany) were dubious of the French alternative and remained committed to NATO. De Gaulle's repeated vetoes of British entry to the EC, in 1963 and 1967, stemmed from the belief that the UK was an American Trojan Horse within Europe and that British influence would be to the detriment of French influence. In this way, a 'French' Europe was juxtaposed to an Anglo-Saxon non-Europe. De Gaulle was above all a French patriot, one for whom European identity was important as a means of enhancing the Continent's independence from the superpowers. De Gaulle's Europe was predicated upon a dominant Franco-German axis, upon French leadership within that axis and upon a distrust of Anglo-Saxon influence. These themes represented the core of the Gaullist heritage that his successors had to take on board.

President Pompidou (1969–74) accepted the main traits of the Gaullist heritage, while demonstrating more flexibility in relations with the United States and Britain (Bernard 1994). The second president of the Fifth Republic was less averse to the accession of the United Kingdom to the EEC, with British entry finally accomplished in 1973. In the early 1970s, British entry favoured French interests, for it was felt to counterbalance a reviving Germany. British entry into the EEC was only agreed once the CAP was firmly in place. Apart from the question of British entry, there was much continuity in the transition from de Gaulle to Pompidou. Both were determined to preserve French political

pre-eminence within the community, to favour common policies that were in French interests and to resist federalist developments. With respect to relations with Germany, President Pompidou lessened but did not fundamentally alter the Franco-German basis of the European community, though President Pompidou and Chancellor Schmidt did not enjoy a warm personal relationship.

As his predecessors, President Giscard d'Estaing (1974–81) regarded the European option as the best means of strengthening French influence (Simonian 1985). Tight Franco-German cooperation was again the driving force of European integration. Two decisions in particular helped revive the process of European integration. In 1974, President Giscard d'Estaing and German Chancellor Schmidt agreed to create an institutional basis for the regular summit meetings that took place between the heads of EEC member states. Henceforth, summits were to take place at least once every six months, with these meetings known as the European Council. The creation of the European Council relaunched the process of European integration on an intergovernmental basis. Major EEC policies would be decided in these six-monthly meetings between the heads of government. The Gaullist lineage was evident; heads of government, rather than supranational commissioners, would make the essential decisions. Summit agreements lay behind major EEC initiatives, such as the launching of the EMS in 1978, the enlargement negotiations, leading to the accession of Spain and Portugal in 1986; the intergovernmental conference in 1985, which resulted in the SEA and the intergovernmental conference of 1991 that produced the Maastricht Treaty.

The second principal policy based on a Franco-German initiative was the creation of the EMS in 1978 (Chang 1999). As with his predecessors, President Giscard d'Estaing promoted closer European cooperation as an alternative to economic domination by the United States. The creation of the EMS (which tied leading European currencies to narrow exchange-rate variations) was crucial in this respect since it laid the bases for future moves towards a single European currency.

His European mission gave a sense of direction to President Mitterrand's long presidential term in office (1981–95). In European policy, in symbolic and substantive terms, Mitterrand's Europe was far more integrationist than that espoused by de Gaulle. Initially preoccupied by domestic politics, Mitterrand left his personal mark on French European policy, arguably more so than any president since de Gaulle. Mitterrand could claim a major input into the two principal European decisions of the period 1981–93: (1) the launching of the process leading to the SEA of 1986, and (2) the Maastricht treaty of 1992 (Friend 1989; Cole 1994; Drake 1994). There was much continuity in European policy between Mitterrand and his predecessors. Mitterrand preferred a compact, cohesive community, based on a Franco-German directorate, rather than a broader nebulous of less cohesive nations. This explained his initial reluctance to envisage the enlargement of the community to include Spain and Portugal, as well as his later resistance to closer ties with the new democracies of eastern Europe. Both stances were later reversed, in order to placate Mitterrand's chief European ally, Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany. In the broader interests of European integration, Mitterrand proved more willing to sacrifice elements of national sovereignty than any of

his precursors had been. In the SEA of 1986, the French president accepted that majority voting should become the norm for EC decisions. In the Maastricht Treaty, further provisions for majority voting were enacted, along with some strengthening of the powers of the European parliament and the European Commission, traditionally anathema to French presidents.

Mitterrand's close cooperation with Chancellor Kohl and Commission President Jacques Delors after 1985 produced a powerful coalition in favour of a more cohesive European community. Mitterrand's preferred European community was one strong enough to survive in an increasingly interdependent age. This implied a commitment to common policies to enable Europe to exist as a political, social, economic and military entity. Mitterrand was a firm supporter of EMU, a cause the French president promoted with insistence at Maastricht. Mitterrand's conversion to EMU reflected French fiscal and monetary rectitude during 1980s; it also revealed a determination on behalf of the French president to exercise more control over European monetary policy, until then dominated by the German Bundesbank (Dyson and Featherstone 1999; Howarth 2001).

The style adopted by President Chirac (1995–2007) was in stark contrast to that of Mitterrand (Kassim 2008). At the Cannes summit of June 1995, which terminated France's presidency of the EU, Chirac publicly accused the Italian premier Lamberto Dini of engineering a competitive devaluation of the lire in order to harm French agriculture, clashed with the Dutch premier over the Netherlands' policy on drugs and criticised the Greeks for indulgence towards the Bosnian Serbs. Relations with France's allies gradually improved (especially Germany), but Chirac fought hard to defend his view of the French national interest: over the Growth and Stability Pact in 1996; during the 'Trichet affair' in 1998; over the reform of the CAP in 1999; during the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Nice in 2000. On occasion, Chirac's style appeared anachronistic, the arch defender of the grander and least sustainable aspects of French exceptionalism. At other times, however, Chirac caught the European mood, as in his sustained opposition to the war in Iraq in 2003.

In his 1995 presidential election campaign, Chirac delivered an ambiguous message, criticising the widespread belief that the strong franc policy was the indispensable corollary of closer European integration. Although Chirac had supported the Maastricht referendum of 1992, two-thirds of RPR supporters voted against the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. Torn between a sceptical electorate and the need to reassure financial markets and prevent a run on the franc, President Chirac maintained an ambiguous attitude towards European integration for the first six months of his presidential term. Any lingering doubts over France's commitment to the Maastricht Treaty were dispelled in a press conference in October 1995. President Chirac affirmed that the primary economic goal of the French government was to cut public-sector deficits in order to meet the convergence criteria to enable France to participate in the single European currency.

The victory of the plural left coalition in the 1997 parliamentary election produced a third cohabitation, this time between a Gaullist president and a Socialist-led government (Cole 2002). In the field of European policy, this third cohabitation imposed a form of co-management of EU affairs (Howarth 2002b).

The president retained an essential role on account of his treaty signing power, his function as chair of the Council of Ministers and his status as elected head of state, guaranteeing his presence in European and international summits. But the French presidency remained a fairly light infrastructure, and the government controlled the essential levers of EU management. Specifically, the French prime minister controls the *Secrétariat Général des Affaires Européennes* (SGAE, General Secretariat of European Affairs), an interministerial bureaucratic agency charged with coordinating French governmental responses to the EU (Eymeri 2002).

During the 1997–2002 cohabitation, both branches of the French executive appeared to accept the new rules of the game. French foreign minister Hubert Védrine publicly stated in December 1997 that, where European policy was concerned, he took responsibility, acting on Prime Minister Jospin's authority, with the assistance of Pierre Moscovici (the minister delegate for European affairs) and with President Chirac's agreement (Cole and Drake 2001). President Chirac reciprocated the confidence in April 1998 by affirming that there was a 'common understanding' on European affairs within cohabitation. There was, moreover, a degree of policy-based convergence between the two heads of the French executive; neither Chirac nor Jospin favoured the flights of rhetorical euro-fantasy of Mitterrand. Both men were resolute in defence of vital French interests, as over CAP reform (1999), the Seattle WTO (1999) talks, British beef (1999) or the Nice Summit (2000). In foreign policy-making, the need to present a united front in defence of prevalent national interests ensured coordinated policy-making between the two branches of the French executive.

The French rejection of the EU constitutional treaty in May 2005 (see below) produced a cooling of Franco-German relations. The arrival in power of Angela Merkel in September 2005, at the head of a grand coalition, changed the dynamics of European leadership. By December 2005, Chancellor Merkel had emerged as a powerful new European power broker. The German chancellor showed resolute leadership at the Brussels summit of December 2005, forcing a compromise between Blair and Chirac over the CAP and the British budgetary rebate.

The election of Nicolas Sarkozy as president in May 2007 ended a period of French isolation and opened the prospect of a revived Franco-German relationship. During the 2007 campaign, Sarkozy campaigned in favour of a 'mini-treaty'. Sarkozy's visit to Berlin on the same day as his swearing-in as president was designed to carry a powerful message that France was back in European business and that the Franco-German relationship was central to any future European governance. Sarkozy's success in pursuing the mini-treaty project was striking; within six months, the new treaty had been signed in Lisbon.

Sarkozy's presidency was transformed by having to respond to an unprecedented economic crisis, from the 2008 credit crunch through to the seemingly interminable sovereign debt and euro crises of 2010–12. The international turn allowed Sarkozy to reposition himself in domestic politics and to move on from the early portrayals of him as Gallic version of neo-liberal Margaret Thatcher. Using the crisis as a personal resource, Sarkozy distanced himself from US capitalism, called for new economic regulation, fiscal coordination and a more protective role for the state. France's presidency of the European Council from

July–December 2008 represented a major opportunity for its ambitious president (Dehousse and Menon 2009).

Sarkozy reacted very rapidly to the outbreak of the war in Georgia in August 2008, travelling to Moscow to meet with Medvedev and Putin and agreeing a deal that recognised Russia's 'right' to defend its borders in return for forestalling a full-scale occupation of Georgia. The French president had no mandate from council or commission but acted immediately and presented a *fait accompli*. In terms of the financial crisis, Sarkozy also acted fast. At the UN on 23 September 2008, Sarkozy took the initiative to call for a G20 summit, comprising a meeting of the twenty principal leaders from across the planet, a meeting that took place in November 2008.

By attempting to place the French presidency at the centre of crisis operations, within and beyond Europe, Sarkozy renewed with traditional French perspectives whereby French presidents should be intimately involved in shaping the key history-making decisions. Sarkozy was instrumental in defining a reinvigorated form of intergovernmental steering, first with Gordon Brown, later with Angela Merkel. In the specific context of the 2008 French presidency of the European Council, Sarkozy voiced strong criticisms of the decision-making structure of the EU treaties, arguing there was no provision for acting in a crisis. In particular, the traditional French suspicion of the Commission re-emerged in 2008 and remained for the remainder of Sarkozy's tenure.

Sarkozy's belief that only governments could act in a crisis revived Franco-German leadership claims. By November 2008, Sarkozy and Merkel were jointly calling for a relaxation of the Stability and Growth Pact rules. Three years later, Sarkozy and Merkel were admonishing Greece for proving itself incapable of respecting the terms of the euro bailout fund. While these positions were diametrically opposed, in practice public opinion was invited to draw the lesson that the Franco-German 'couple' were once again in charge of the European ship. Between 2008 and 2011, however, there was an important shift in the balance of the Franco-German relationship. As the credit crunch became a debt and (euro) currency crisis, Merkel, chancellor of the key creditor nation in the eurozone, exercised an increasingly iron grip. The euro crisis ultimately produced the 2011 Fiscal Compact that represented an almost complete victory for German positions over French ones. By 2012, the ongoing and highly unpredictable economic crisis had sapped the popularity of most incumbent governments, including that of the French. By the end of the Sarkozy period, there was a widespread belief that power within Europe had shifted eastwards and that the cherished Franco-German relationship was above all valued for the image it gave of France as a great power sharing a seat at the table rather than as an equal partner driving the substance of European governance.

François Hollande fought his 2012 presidential campaign as a compromise candidate between the various families of the French left; personally strongly pro-European and social democratic, he was deeply conscious of the need to reach out to the 'France du Non' that had captured a majority of PS voters in the 2005 referendum. His attempts to reorient the EU in a less 'liberal' direction, however, and to assert an alternative, more growth-inspired path did not amount to much. Though as candidate Hollande had insisted he would not

ratify the Treaty on Stability, Governance and Growth (TSGG), this commitment did not survive the first few months of the presidency, the TSGG being ratified by the French parliament on 11 October 2012 (Drake 2013: 138–9). A familiar path was trodden to that of his predecessor Mitterrand twenty-five years earlier: early attempts to build alliances beyond the Franco-German core to change the direction of EU policy failed to bear fruit. One contrast between the two periods lies in the relative indulgence on behalf of the European Commission that revised France's deficit and debt targets on three occasions (to insist that the country meet the Stability Pact criteria by 2014, then 2015 and finally by 2017). Hollande was helped by new allies, such as Matteo Renzi's Italy, and above all by the president of the European Central Bank (ECB), Mario Draghi, who declared in 2012 that he would do 'whatever it takes' to defend the euro and began a programme of 'quantitative easing' to keep interest rates low.

Tensions between France and Germany characterised the Hollande presidency. The regular EU summit of October 2012, for example, featured the first big clash in the three-year crisis between Germany and France, highlighting how the troubles over the single currency and sovereign debt had moved to the very heart of the EU. Hollande's key aim was to speed up the establishment of the new banking regime, conferring upon the ECB the overall regulatory authority of the Eurozone's banks and allowing ECB support for threatened banks (that might include French ones in due course); Hollande was successful in imposing European banking union upon a reluctant Germany. For her part, Chancellor Merkel was far more concerned with lobbying support for the German proposal to create a 'budget tsar', a super European commissioner with the power to intervene *ex ante* in the national budgets, a step too far for Hollande.

Towards the end of the Hollande presidency, the decline in French influence appeared more manifest than under Sarkozy. The traditionally central Franco-German relationship was undermined by dissensions on economic policy, the growing imbalances between the French and German economies, controversies over fiscal policy (the support from France and Italy for monetary easing put into place by the ECB at the height of the euro crises of 2012 and 2015) and attitudes towards the euro crisis in general and Greece in particular. Europe came back from the brink in 2015, as Hollande facilitated an agreement to the euro crisis, and GREXIT (Greek Exit) was avoided.

Then the refugee/migrant crisis appeared to sweep all before it from summer 2015 onwards, combining with terrorist attacks in France, Germany and Belgium to threaten the future of the Schengen Area. Premier Valls' public criticism of Germany's refugee policy as laxist was resented in Berlin. Two counter-arguments might be proposed to modify this representation of diminishing French influence. First, Hollande demonstrated a proactive presence in the international arena, notably in attempting to find a solution to the Ukrainian crisis by organising a 'G4' summit meeting with Merkel, Putin and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko. And the French president lost little time to present the BREXIT vote of June 2016 as a potential opportunity for extending French (economic and political) influence.

What overarching themes can we identify in French European policy from this overview of the past fifty years?

French approaches to European integration have combined an astute mix of visionary discourse and instrumental policy position-taking that has proved very effective in defending French national interests over time. France has always believed in a European finality, though there have been many contradictions in the French vision of Europe. In the next section, we identify some of the main themes associated with the traditional French discourse on European integration. Through concentrating on themes rather than periods, we might imply staticity, but this is not our intention. French attitudes to Europe are continually evolving as domestic and external circumstances change and, not least, as the EU develops itself as a polity-like regime. The salient themes we identify as the 'constants' of French approaches to European integration are:

- neo-realism and national purpose;
- the cultural attachment to European values and civilisation;
- the Franco-German relationship;
- suspicion towards an enlarged Europe; and
- the preference for a strong Europe with weak institutions.

Neo-realism and national purpose

Though its political discourse has been visionary, supranational and integrationist, the realist presupposition of Europe as an extension of French influence has been embraced more overtly than in any other European country (Parsons 2003). French governments in the Fifth Republic for long accepted the canons of classical Gaullism unquestioningly. The Gaullist paradigm that prevailed until the mid-1980s – and remains influential today – might be summarised in terms of six principal features:

1. a cultural attachment to European values and civilisation, notably as embodied by France;
2. a Europe prepared to protect its industry and agriculture;
3. the promotion of common European policies where these do not endanger French interests;
4. a marked anti-Americanism and advocacy of a more independent security and defence identity;
5. a tight community based on a Franco-German directorate, rather than a looser more nebulous grouping of nations; and
6. a preference for intergovernmental over supranational institutions.

There were many contradictions in this (Gaullist) French vision of Europe. France wanted a strong Europe with weak institutions (Le Gloannec and Hassner 1996). There was a supranational discourse stressing the primacy of politics, but a fear of

a genuinely supranational entity that might challenge the (self-appointed) role of French political leadership of the European integration project. In essence, France wanted to retain its role as a great power and to harness the resources of the community to this effect. The EC was explicitly framed in national (and European) terms, as a means whereby France could escape dependency, recover sovereignty and export its policy models to supranational institutional arena.

A cultural attachment to European values and civilisation

French governments continue to lobby hard favour for an understanding of the EU that goes beyond the Union as an 'extended free trade zone'. They have been strong advocates of a cultural attachment to European values and civilisation, especially (but not uniquely) as personified by France. This has sometimes manifested itself by anti-Americanism. During the GATT negotiations of 1993–4, for example, the French Gaullist government of Balladur (supported by the Socialist President Mitterrand) held out for protectionist measures in favour of defending French cinema, a move justified by the need to support European civilisation against Anglo-Saxon encroachment.

This European patriotism is invoked in favour of affirmative policy stances. Shared European values and interests are juxtaposed to those defended by America (and sometimes Britain). All presidents have criticised economic liberalism, in a manner that sets France at odds with partners such as Britain (and to some extent Germany). The French have traditionally advocated a Europe prepared to protect its industry and (especially) agriculture. The French have been adept at suggesting common European policies, especially when these benefit French interests. The CAP is the classic example. Other examples include the creation of the EMS in 1978, which aligned the franc against the German mark; EUREKA (the European Space programme) and other related industrial projects with beneficial spin-offs for French industry. France has been in the forefront of suggesting these policies, aimed at creating a European community capable of competing with other trading blocs, notably the United States and Japan. Defending European values requires a strong single currency, for example, that can displace the dollar on international currency markets or an active European security policy that can defend European interests independently of the Americans (Ross 2004).

A Franco-German directorate?

Franco-German reconciliation underpins the history of the EU. Even during their numerous episodes of mutual misunderstanding, French and German leaders have repeatedly expressed their belief in continuing European unification and in the decisive role that the German chancellor and the French president must perform in this process (Soutou 1996; Cole 2001; Schild 2010). Disagreement over specific policies, and even over more fundamental aspects of the European integration process (such as the finer details of monetary and political union, or foreign policy), cannot detract from this belief that Franco-German cooperation

is critical to the future of Europe. Personal relations between French and German leaders have always been important.

The Franco-German relationship works best as an informal, often invisible compact, driven by networks of officials sharing common understandings and engaged in inter-elite bargaining and policy learning (Webber 1999). French and German leaders have figured prominently as the driving force of the Franco-German relationship. Ever since 1963, it has become commonplace to refer to the Franco-German 'couple' as an axis upon which closer European integration turns, or as the 'motor' providing leadership of the European integration project (Hendricks and Morgan 2001; Krotz and Schild 2012). At times, the Franco-German relationship has seemed to be a powerful axis, with which all other European powers must negotiate.

In the 1980s (SEA) and 1990s (Maastricht Treaty), moves towards closer European political integration and cooperation were dependent upon Franco-German agreement. Metaphors of the Franco-German motor or axis are, however, partially misleading as they are ahistorical. We need a full historical appreciation of the role of the Franco-German relationship, how its internal functioning has varied over time and the extent to which it has been able to offer leadership of the European integration project.

The case for Franco-German leadership is strong, but should not go unanswered. The governance of the EU is inherently complicated and militates against the emergence of clear leadership structures such as an overarching Franco-German alliance. The metaphor of the Franco-German motor underplays the complexities of European integration. There are too many other bilateral and multilateral relationships. The Franco-German relationship can perform a powerful agenda-setting role in the right circumstances. Its leadership is most effective when it is encouraged by other states to be proactive. We note, finally, that for most of the time, French leaders have been more insistent about the need for joint Franco-German leadership of the European integration project than their German counterparts, for whom alternative coalitions are available.

Economic governance

The principal political motivation for supporting EMU at Maastricht was that France would recover influence with EMU; it would be present in those institutions making monetary policy decisions (Dyson and Featherstone 1999; Howarth 2001, 2002). From the perspective of French policy-makers, monetary union was a means of diluting German economy hegemony while tying Germany into the European economy for the benefit of its main trading partners (especially France) and reducing transaction costs for everybody.

Once the single currency decision had been imposed upon German Chancellor Kohl at Maastricht, the practical details of EMU bore the imprint of German rigour at every stage of policy implementation: from the location of the ECB in Frankfurt, to the name of the currency (the euro, rather than the ECU [European currency unit] favoured by France), to the Stability Pact accompanying its implementation. Above all, Germany was able to insist on tough convergence criteria

accompanying the implementation of the single currency. The criteria outlined in the Stability Pact include precise objectives for inflation (within 1.5 per cent of the best performing state), budget deficits (no more than 3 per cent of GDP) and public-sector borrowing (below 60 per cent of GDP).

French governments have not been alone in finding it difficult to meet these criteria. The 2003 Stability Pact crisis (when France and Germany announced their inability to bring down their budget deficits in 2004 to under 3 per cent of GNP for the third year running) highlighted the ingrained tensions between national economic performances and the institutional design of the European single currency (Clift 2006).

Since Maastricht, French governments of all complexions have argued in favour of 'economic government', a metaphor for allowing political institutions some control over the monetary decisions taken by the independent ECB. This advocacy of economic government has been steadfastly resisted by Germany, at least in the terms set out by French governments. To France's preference for 'economic government' and solidarity between members of the Eurozone, Germany has expressed its suspicion of politicians interfering in monetary policy choices, as well as its deep reluctance to accept a 'transfer union', whereby richer members of the Eurozone ought to rescue less well performing members in the name of European solidarity (Thomann 2013). These positions were well illustrated in the repeated Eurozone crises from 2010 onwards and in the 2015 Greek crisis in particular, when Hollande led a coalition of states favourable to finding a solution to allow Greece to remain within the Eurozone. They were repeated in the very different positions adopted by France (favourable) and Germany (reluctant) over the ECB's policy of 'quantitative easing' (i.e. printing money) from 2012 onwards, and its policy of supporting Europe's troubled banks.

A multi-speed rather than an enlarged Europe

France has always been suspicious of EU enlargement. This has manifested itself at each new widening of the community to include new members (1973, 1981, 1986, 1995, 2004, 2007). For France, 'widening' the community is usually felt to be incompatible with its 'deepening' and its construction as an entity capable of imposing common policies. French leaders have also believed that widening dilutes French authority within the institutions of the EU and its influence within and beyond Europe (Bickerton 2009).

France's main partner, Germany, has supported both widening and deepening. However, France has been powerless to prevent successive widenings of the EU, most notably that of 1995, which introduced Sweden, Austria and Finland to the European club, and that of 2004, which added a further twelve members (mainly from the former Communist states of central and eastern Europe). Faced with the inability to control the evolution of the EU, French leaders have called for 'enhanced cooperation' in the sphere of monetary policy, foreign and security policy, defence and home affairs. Faced with the failure to adopt the European Constitution at the Brussels summit in December 2003, for example, President Chirac called publicly for 'pioneer groups' to be formed

among the most advanced states to push ahead with integration. This call was not echoed by Germany.

A strong Europe with weak institutions?

There is an inherent tension between substantive and procedural views of Europe. In substantive terms, France has always wanted a strong Europe. A strong Europe signifies a cultural attachment to European values, the advocacy of a Europe prepared to protect its industry and agriculture, to engage in ambitious common European policies and – under progressive French leadership – to recover international prestige. In procedural terms, there has often been a gulf between the European policy ambition of French governments and the supranational institutional adaptation of the EC/EU called for by countries such as Germany (Cole 2001). Though French governments have accepted – and sometimes instigated – major shifts to a more integrated European polity, the dominant representation of European integration in France has been largely synonymous with a state-centric notion of a strong Europe, with power channelled through national institutions and delegated where appropriate to weak European institutions. This elucidates the intellectual tradition of the Fifth Republic, which, applied to Europe, has been based on the primacy of national sovereignty in opposition to doctrines of federalism. French politicians for long resisted any strengthening of the EU's supranational institutions – the European Commission and the European Parliament – and there remains deep unease with the 'foreign' concept of federalism which runs against the grain of French Republican traditions.

In spite of the federalist rhetoric of men such as Jacques Delors, French politicians initially displayed limited enthusiasm in relation to extending the powers of the EU's supranational institutions, the European Commission and the European Parliament. French presidents have traditionally preferred an intergovernmental institutional approach, which preserves their own decision-making power in relation to European policy. But they have also espoused common interventionist European policies when these have favoured French interests, and have to some extent accepted supranational extensions of the EU's authority in the broader interests of European union (as in the SEA, the Maastricht Treaty [1992], the Amsterdam Treaty [1997], the Nice Treaty [2001], the Lisbon Treaty [2009] and the TSGG [2012]). French approaches are more flexible than they often appear. The French vision of grandeur – Europe as an extension of France – would be meaningless without a stronger EU, if necessary one in which the French could occasionally be placed in a minority. France needs the EU to develop or face the consequences of a loss of international influence.

In sum, though the legacy of Gaullism remains highly influential, the debate has moved on since the paradigmatic shift of the mid-1980s. By the end of the century the mainstays of traditional French understandings in Europe had been challenged in several important respects. The most important of these were:

- German unification and its aftermath, which altered the internal equilibrium within the Franco-German alliance;

- the widening of the EU and the corresponding challenge to French policies such as CAP;
- the activism of individual policy entrepreneurs in areas of sensitive domestic concern (such as competition policy and public services); and
- an emerging paradigm which challenged many French conceptions about the role and nature of the EU.

Let us now consider how Europeanisation has had an impact upon domestic French politics.

13.4 France and Europeanisation

There is common agreement that European integration has called into question many features associated with the traditional model of French politics and policies (Gueldry 2001; Smith 2005; Kassim 2008; Meunier 2010; Drake 2011; Rozenberg 2012). This process has not been limited to France but is driving change across European countries. One of the earliest, most cited definitions of Europeanisation is that offered by Ladrech, in his article on France post-Maastricht, namely: 'Europeanization is an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making' (1994: 70).

Ladrech's definition is a top-down one, whereby the direction of change in unidirectional, from Brussels to the member states, in very general terms of politics and policy-making. Other writers have preferred more nuanced approaches to include discussion of changes that cannot be traced to the EU, the so-called inertia phenomenon (Börzel and Risse 2003). Still others conceptualise Europeanisation as the diffusion of ideas from the EU level to that of the member states (Radaelli 2003), or the emulation of best practices between nations (Cole and Drake 2000). Writers in the territorial frame evoke the strategic uses of Europeanisation by regional actors (Carter and Pasquier 2010; Lassalle 2010).

For public-policy specialists, Europeanisation is best understood in terms of a scale of change. For Graziano and Vink (2007), for example, Europeanisation must produce policy change to be validated. In their framework, policy transformation involves a change in the objectives, principles, procedures and financial instruments of a policy as a result of an EU directive; policy recalibration requires two of the above, while policy inertia signifies no variation.

It lies beyond the limits of this chapter to engage fully with these rich approaches, each of which elucidates a rather different aspect of the impact of the EU. In an earlier article, Cole and Drake (2000) identified Europeanisation as a multidimensional process, with the impact of the EU being variable according to policy sector, state tradition and the type of actor concerned. Cole and Drake (2000) understood hard Europeanisation as an independent variable, when it can be demonstrated that the EU has produced policy change in specific policy sectors. This is the case in the examples of industrial policy and public services that are considered below.

At a rather different level of analysis, Cole and Drake also identified a softer Europeanisation as a form of emulative policy transfer, to signify lesson-drawing and benchmarking between European countries. Europeanisation has also been used as a smokescreen for domestic political strategies. Dyson and Featherstone (1999) demonstrate very convincingly how an advocacy coalition of conservative economic liberals in the French Trésor and central bank officials promoted EMU in the 1980s as a means of pursuing an orthodox liberal economic policy and modernising the French economy. Finally, the European imaginary constraint made it easier to implement difficult domestic reforms. Administrative modernisers in France, Italy and elsewhere used Europe as a powerful domestic political resource for driving through change (Lequesne 1993; Radaelli 1997). Overdue reforms could be laid at the door of the EU.

In a more recent version, the author (2008) conceptualised Europeanisation in terms of a scale of change, ranging from adaptation (the strongest mechanism, whereby countries reform their public policies or reshape their institutions in order to adapt to EU laws), through adjustment (a more incremental form of change, to bring into line domestic procedures with EU requirements without fundamental overhaul), inertia (where there is no causal link between the EU and change) and resistance (the rise of Euro-sceptical parties and movements or explicit resistance to EU norms and policies) (Cole 2008). Armed with this basic framework, we now consider the impact of Europeanisation upon French institutions and actors, public policies and public opinion.

Europeanisation, institutions and actors

Two main dimensions are discussed in this section: (1) the rather narrow bureaucratic one, in relation to how France's European policy is made; and (2) the rather more profound one of how European integration has reformed existing institutions and empowered new actors.

French European policy is coordinated by the body known as the SGAE, an interministerial service formally attached to the prime minister's office (Lequesne 1993; Harmsen 1999; Eymery 2002). According to Wright, writing in 1996, the French model of strong, centralised EU coordination was rivalled only by the (pre-devolution) British and contrasted starkly with the multilayered German approach. The SGAE attempts to anticipate EU policy initiatives, to coordinate interministerial responses and to formulate common policy positions and influence the EU policy agenda. But, even in the French case, efforts at central coordination have run up against the inherent fragmentation of the EU policy-making process. Conflicts of interest can occur between the SGAE – imbued with an administrative coordinating logic – and the French permanent representation in Brussels, demanding more flexibility to adapt to a rapidly changing policy environment. Moreover, national ministries (and even more presidential advisers) are often reluctant to submit to an interministerial structure such as the SGAE. Direct relationships between ministerial and commission officials can hamper efforts at central coordination; as can deeply ingrained rivalries within the French administration and even direct relationships between commission officials and

sub-national actors (such as representatives of the regional councils and local politicians). Finally, the SGAE does not substitute itself for political decisions; the service was not obviously involved at any stage of the EMU decision, for example, though others were (in the Trésor and central bank notably) (Dyson and Featherstone 1999).

Second, the development of the EU has challenged the policy style and political capacity of existing institutional actors. The Maastricht Treaty (1992) represented an important staging post of Europeanisation in several respects. The idea of a European citizenship enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty broke the organic link between the nation and legal citizenship in the French Jacobin tradition (Ladrech 1994). The Maastricht Treaty made timid moves towards redressing the 'democratic deficit' at both French and EU levels. At the EU level, the powers of the European parliament were strengthened in important respects, a process that has continued with the Amsterdams (1997), Nice (2000) and – especially – Lisbon (2008) treaties. There have also been slow – but steady – moves to enhance the influence of parliamentary institutions over EU law and a development of parliamentary capacity to exercise oversight. The Maastricht Treaty allowed the vote of resolutions (Article 88–4), though the Constitutional Council subsequently ruled that these could not be binding on governments (Ladrech 1994). The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 adopted a protocol on the role of national parliaments, which increased their rights to be informed of forthcoming EU business. The Lisbon Treaty (2008) strengthened national parliaments considerably, giving *ex ante* and *ex post* forms of control. But European integration has not really empowered the French parliament. The National Assembly still only gives its opinion and has no binding authority. The French executive has used the 'urgency' procedure measures to push through EU legislation by decree. EU directives have been regrouped into packages and presented to parliament for block approval, or else the government has asked parliament for power to approve by ordinances (under Article 38) (Cole 2008).

Europeanisation has had a major impact upon the role and perspectives of the French higher civil service and the system of *grands corps* (Thoening 1996). Europeanisation has proved a major challenge for the corps across three separate dimensions: those of cognitive assumptions, policy styles, and patterns of interest intermediation. The cognitive world of the French higher civil service was classically one of centralised elitism and organisational self-sufficiency. There was a close relationship between conceptions of sovereignty, the unified and indivisible state, a narrowly recruited politico-administrative elite and a bureaucratic model of policy-making, in which the *grands corps* dominated. The economic U-turn of 1983, followed by the SEA (1986) and the Maastricht Treaty (1992) had a salutary effect on French civil servants (Lequesne 1996). The extent of France's economic and institutional interdependence was fully driven home by the integrationist agenda of the 1980s and early 1990s, when Europeanisation came to be regarded by economic and administrative modernisers as an opportunity to help modernise an ossified French administration, an overprotected economy and a conservative society. In 1989, even the Council of State – the most prestigious of the *grands corps* – finally gave up its resistance to the primacy of EU law.

The French system of the *grands corps* has been undermined from above (notably with the emergence of new interlocutors in the European Commission and the European Parliament) and from below (where, as a result of the decentralisation reforms of the 1980s, professional interests have improved access to sub-national actors) (Fontaine 1996). The preparations for EMU, moreover, introduced new policy actors into the fray, most notably the French central bank.

The independence of the French central bank after 1993 (and the ECB since 1999) removed executive control over instruments of monetary policy such as interest rates. Central bank independence appeared to have strengthened the role of monetary policy technocrats at the expense both of the Finance ministry, and of the traditional political leadership (Guyomarch et al. 1996).

We referred in Chapter 5 to the enhanced judicialisation of French politics. This is derived in part from the ongoing consequences of France's membership of the EU. As Europeanisation has deepened, France's legal obligations have extended into new policy areas. New institutions have come to the forefront of domestic French politics, and older institutions have been forced to re-evaluate their role.

The most important 'new' institution is the ECJ, created by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. The ECJ is the highest legal body in the EU. It has responsibility in three main areas. It can hear actions against member states brought by the Commission and other member states (the Commission against France over British beef, for example). It can review the actions of EU institutions. Member states can ask the ECJ to make rulings on aspects of EU law. Within France, the ECJ has a twofold domestic importance. It can decide for itself whether French law is compatible with EU law (*auto-saisine*), and it sets judicial standards for the courts in France. The ECJ can (and does) strike down national decisions that are in conflict with EU law. French courts have used the ECJ in two distinct ways. The courts have asked the ECJ to make rulings about the applicability of EU law in France. There were twelve such occasions in 2000 (from the regional courts of appeal, the Council of State and the Court of Cassation). The courts have also used ECJ rulings to make case law (Elgie 2003).

Europeanisation has also forced older institutions to re-evaluate their role. The Council of State ignored the principle of the supremacy of EU law for many years after signing the Treaty of Rome. According to Drake (2004), there were two consequences of this: France's elite legal establishment has had a poor training in EU law, and France's poor record of transposition of European directives took root. This position changed in a series of judgments in the late 1980s and early 1990s (the 1989 Nicolo judgment in particular). The supremacy of EU law was finally given a constitutional basis as a result of the Maastricht Treaty. In its judgment on the Maastricht Treaty, the Constitutional Council accepted that France can accept transfers of competencies to permanent international organisations. Since 1992, EU decisions are enforceable directly through the French courts.

National state traditions are inevitably weakened in the melting pot of the EU policy process. European integration has recast state administrations, introduced new spheres of EU policy intervention and created new opportunities for variable coalitions of sub-national, national and EU actors. Even more than the role of particular political institutions, a certain idea of the state and a certain policy

style have been called into question by the process of European integration. This can be demonstrated by considering the impact of European integration on specific French public policies.

Europeanisation and French public policies

Changes in EU laws and treaties have modified national traditions of policy-making and the freedom of manoeuvre of national decision-makers. The challenges posed by the evolving European policy process to traditional French policy paradigms can be demonstrated by in a direct sense in the sphere of monopoly public services and industrial policy, which we now consider.

The French notion of public service (*service public*) has traditionally gone well beyond that of universalistic welfare to include a high degree of interventionism in the industrial sphere, and the defence of monopoly utility providers such as the former gas and electricity conglomerate EDF-GDF (Bauby and Varone 2007). The process of European integration directly challenges this aspect of the French state tradition, which includes a widespread positive connotation of the state as an instrument of public service, as an agent of economic development and as a guarantor of equality between French citizens. Traditional French conceptions of public service were based on the delivery of essential services by public-sector monopolies (gas, electricity, rail, postal and telecommunication services, air transport), which benefited from protection against domestic or foreign competition, and which were recognised with a public service mission in French administrative law (Gugliemi 1994).

The implementation of EU competition policy posed a stark challenge to traditional paradigms. As it evolved during the 1980s, this model of delivering public services ran against the grain of EU competition policy. The legal basis of the European treaties is against state aids, public monopolies and assisted sectors.

In practice, however, until the mid-1980s, the Commission intervened very rarely in national practices of industrial management. This changed with the SEA. Strengthened by the tough competition regulations of the SEA, the Commission developed several mechanisms to break up monopolies, based on the model of US anti-trust legislation, backed up by independent regulators. Favoured measures included privatisation, the strict regulation of state subsidies, the opening up of specific industrial sectors to competition and the creation of independent competition agencies (Thatcher 1997). There was a strong belief that this emerging EU regulatory model was incompatible with the French public-service mission. Even determined French pressure was unable to prevent the liberalisation of the telecommunications and air-transport markets, traditionally the bastions of French state 'national champions'. At best, France was able to delay opening up the rail, energy and postal sectors to competition.

Competition policy had a spillover effect in the sphere of industrial policy. A belief in the need for an interventionist industrial policy was widely shared for much of the post-war period (see Chapter 11). The traditional *dirigiste* policy of creating national champions assumed a strong state and a high degree of

national economic sovereignty. There were obvious tensions between this model and the emergence of the EU as a regulatory arena from the mid-1980s onwards.

The post-1986 EU regulatory framework challenged the traditional French industrial model in important respects. According to Cohen (1996), offensive protectionism, technical innovation, public procurement policies, direct state aid and long-term political support underpinned traditional French industrial policy. Most of these characteristics were in breach of EU competition law.

The causality of policy change is less obvious here than in the case of public-service reform. Where the interventionist French state has ceded ground, this is only in part due to European regulation (for example, the privatisation of the *Crédit Lyonnais* bank on the orders of the European Commission). The original features of French post-war economic management (such as planning) had faded in importance long before the implementation of the SEA. If we except the brief 1981–3 interlude, French economic policy has been driven since the mid-1970s by an underlying European-wide convergence of macro-economic policy trends and objectives. The increasing weight of intra-EU trade has incited France to align its economic policies closely with those of its main trading partners, notably that of Germany.

But the new regulatory climate nonetheless posed an ongoing challenge. French governments have repeatedly clashed with the European Commission over direct state grants to industry, on the preservation of state-owned industrial monopolies, on the rules governing the national railway operator the SNCF (and the eventual liberalisation of rail transport) or in relation to core state interests such as nuclear energy (the conditions for bailing out Areva, for example). French advocacy of EU-wide industrial policies has generally fallen on deaf ears.

Europe, public opinion and political parties

During the course of the 1990s, Europe emerged as an issue that cut across traditional party lines. Each of the main parties is divided on the issue, some more than others (Belot 2013; Lebaron 2013). The PCF came out strongly against the Maastricht Treaty, as creating a Europe of central bankers and capitalists; the PCF was one of the least divided parties on this issue. The PS was deeply divided over the draft European Constitution in 2005, and remains so today in relation to the Fiscal Compact Treaty, the management of the Eurozone and Greece (Crespy 2008). In advance of the 2016 primaries, *Les Républicains* contains the full range of positions on European integration among its presidential contenders. In its time, the Gaullist RPR had been the most divided of all parties, with two-thirds of RPR deputies coming out against ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. For its part, the old UDF always contained fervent pro-Europeans within its ranks, notably among the inheritors to the Christian-democratic tradition. Alongside a Christian-democratic vision of Europe, however, the UDF also contained economic liberals in favour of a *laissez-faire* agenda, and against a single currency, as well as ultra-conservatives such as de Philippe de Villiers. Finally, while the FN was predictably against the Maastricht Treaty, with its challenge to national sovereignty, Jean-Marie Le Pen claimed to

be pro-European, in so far as European culture needed to be defended against the threat of invasion from non-European peoples. The shift of the FN to an increasingly euro-hostile position under Marine Le Pen since 2011 might legitimately be interpreted as both cause and consequence of a popular backlash against European integration.

Beyond party, the European debate has polarised French public opinion. In a referendum to approve or reject the Maastricht Treaty in September 1992, only a narrow majority of French voters (fifty-one to forty-nine) were in favour. However we interpret the result, the 1992 referendum illustrated a degree of polarisation over the issue of further European integration. Detailed analysis revealed that a majority of industrial workers, low-status clerical workers and farmers opposed the Maastricht Treaty. These were the losers – or feared losers – of the modernisation process associated with further European integration. This explained why traditionally left-inclining industrial areas – such as the Nord/Pas-de-Calais – voted against the treaty. To some extent, and in different circumstances, this social division recalled Hoffmann's appreciation of a dynamic France and a static France in the Third Republic. The strongest supporters of the treaty were among the professional middle classes, especially in heavily urbanised areas. The regions with the strongest yes votes were those which had most obviously benefited from closer European integration, but which maintained a distinctive identity within the French nation, such as Alsace and Brittany.

By 2005, Euro-scepticism had become a theme that sustained some political parties and caused deep internal divisions in others. Rozenberg (2007) identifies four distinct types of partisan resistance to enhanced European integration that have arisen in the past decade. The far-right FN has become europhobic, though this has not always been the case, and its anti-EU stance is less central to its core political message than the issues of immigration, insecurity and national identity. The second type of resistance to European integration is in the name of the defence of national sovereignty, ranging from the ultra-conservative MPF to the left-leaning *Mouvement Républicain et Citoyen*. These small but influential parties mobilise support against European integration and unregulated free trade on the basis of protecting the nation from foreign political and economic influence. The third explicitly Euro-sceptical force is the influential rural lobby, articulated in part by the hunters and fishers' movement, *Chasse, Pêche, Nature, Traditions*. The rural lobby includes a denser network of national politicians (PS and UMP) practising the *cumul des mandats* (holding multiple elected offices/positions), who advocate the defence of the French rural way of life.

Defending local traditions against the incursions of Brussels is a popular theme and can explain the reluctance of French governments to transpose EU directives that directly challenge the ruralist lobby. Fourth, anti-globalisation movements such as ATTAC, or the European social forum have adopted an explicit stance against enhanced European integration, which is taken to be synonymous with the diffusion of a neo-liberal economic philosophy (Rozenberg 2007).

The rejection of the constitutional treaty in the May 2005 referendum sent shockwaves around Europe. There was a no vote of 54.7 per cent (45.3 per cent for the yes) on a high turnout (69.4 per cent). The no vote progressed by almost 5.72 per cent of electors by comparison to 1992 (Hainsworth 2006; Sauger et al.

2007). It recruited a majority of electors in all social classes except the liberal professions. The no vote in 2005 brought together the traditional opponents of a more integrated Europe with all those who wanted to oppose the incumbent government. The mainstays of the no camp in the two referendums were the left of the left and the right of the right, with the no in 1992 and 2005 supported by the vast bulk of electors identifying with the FN, the PCF and the far left (Perrineau 2005: 239). This traditional alliance represented three-quarters of the no vote in 2005. They were joined by a small majority of PS voters, signifying a major shift since 1992, with 56 per cent of declared PS electors voting no in 2005, against only 22 per cent thirteen years earlier.

There is a convincing argument that the referendum was mainly about domestic French politics. The no vote had become a left vote (55/45 per cent) whereas it had been a right vote (67 to 33 per cent) in 1992. If the primary focus was domestic, the referendum campaign revealed deep-seated popular fears about the direction of European integration. The campaign abounded with uncertainties about the new Europe. The proposed Bolkestein services directive mobilised trade unions and anti-globalisation groups such as ATTAC in fierce opposition to the treaty. The centre of gravity of the French debate revolved around a binary opposition between 'social' Europe, presented as consistent with national traditions and an alien, liberal Europe. Defenders of the constitutional treaty were forced onto the defensive, summoned to justify their support for a 'liberal' Europe that reputedly challenged the French social model. More than ever, the 2005 campaign polarised two Frances, one in favour of European cosmopolitanism and neutral towards globalisation; another fearful of change and defensive towards the nation-state. Politically, this division cut across left and right. Sociologically, the new feature in 2005 was that sections of the middle classes joined the camp of popular and populist opposition to 'neo-liberal' Europe, if not to European integration itself (Perrineau 2005). Similar divisions can be mapped in relation to 'globalisation', firmly opposed by around 50 per cent of the French electorate (Meunier 2004; Brouard and Tiberj 2006).

13.5

Concluding remarks

The empirical cases presented above provide examples of adaptation, adjusting, inertia and resistance to change. While 'Europe' was largely a positive construction until the early 1990s, the Maastricht referendum of 1992 sharply divided popular opinion and, at a stroke, reduced the efficacy of using the European argument to justify unpopular domestic reforms or attract electoral support. Europe has a weakening capacity to act as a legitimising device to allow France's governors to modernise the country. The distaste expressed by the popular electorate for the Brussels technocrats is linked to the perception that the French social model is under attack from a neo-liberal 'Brussels', a perception strengthened by the declarations of leading French politicians.

The public policies, political agendas and governing styles of French political actors have all been modified by the processes of Europeanisation. We

have seen that, in so far as Europeanisation is a definable process with tangible consequences, neither its pace nor its direction are entirely predictable. We can understand Europeanisation in the top-down sense of being an external constraint imposing policy change. In the policy areas surveyed, this usage of Europeanisation appeared quite convincing to explain public service reform and competition policy but rather less cogent with respect to EMU (best understood as a nested bargain linked to German unification) or industrial policy, areas we surveyed in Chapter 11.

In so far as the EU is a new legal order, sitting at the apex of the hierarchy of norms, French governments have to respond to ECJ rulings. They have to amend French law, where necessary, and take account of the ECJ when drafting new laws. In the sphere of public-service reform and competition policy, as well as in relation to important aspects of French macro-economic management, 'Europeanisation' appears to go against the grain of a traditional French model of politics and policies. All French governments have to live with the consequences – unintended or otherwise – of the agenda-shaping decisions of the mid-1980s and early 1990s.

We can also understand Europeanisation in a bottom-up sense, as an extension of the domestic political project. The European level has traditionally been valued as a site for the export of French ideas, policies and personnel. Traditionally expansive French views of Europe depended upon a vision of Europe as an extension of France; hence the emphasis placed on exporting features of the French model for the benefit of others (Harmsen 1996). That the French model appears in retreat in some important respects forms part of the broader crisis of hysteresis that is now considered in the concluding chapter.

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