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Developments in French Politics 4

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Chapter 5

Social Movements and Protest Politics

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France is often depicted as the land of contention par excellence (Tilly, 1986). The presence of a strong centralized state and the weakness of secondary associations and other intermediate bodies between the state and society arguably push the French to take the streets to assert their rights and press their claims. This picture is only partly true. First, although it remains strong, the French state is no longer as centralized as it was during most of the twentieth century. Second, the number of secondary associations has increased significantly over the last 25 years (Barthélémy, 2000). Third, the French are prone to engage in protest and other unconventional events but primarily to address socio-economic issues. In contrast to many other West European countries, there have not been strong environmentalist and peace movements in France. Fourth, when it takes place protest is organized not only by social movements but also by traditional organizations like political parties and trade unions. It follows that grasping protest politics in France requires that we look at the role of parties and unions in public life and at the persistence of the class cleavage underlying them.

This chapter first lays out the state of protest politics in France. Second, it presents the influence of societal cleavages and the state on this politics, and discusses the relationship between social movements, on the one hand, and traditional organizations like parties and unions, on the other. Third, it traces the evolution of three social movements that have engaged in protests and marked French politics since the early 2000s: the movement against social exclusion, the anti-globalization movement and the immigrant movement. Finally, it concludes with some considerations on the impact of Sarkozy's presidency on social movements and protests in France.

The state of protest

The French regularly engage in extra-institutional or 'unconventional events' of a demonstrative, confrontational or violent nature. But do they do so more often than other West Europeans? At first glance, not really. Although some authors have questioned its methodology (for example Fillieule, 1997: 71–85), a comprehensive survey of protest events in France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland between 1975 and 1989 found that Germany was the most contentious of the four, with 211,000 participants in unconventional events per million inhabitants; the Netherlands followed with 198,000, then France with 178,000 and Switzerland with 156,000 (Kriesi, 1995: 22). Similarly, membership of social movement organizations (SMOs) is particularly low: during the 1980s, 19,000 persons per million inhabitants were members of an SMO in so-called 'new' social movements like the environmentalist movement, the anti-racist movement, the gay movement, and the women's movement, compared to 49,000 in Germany and 88,000 in the Netherlands (Kriesi, 1995: 45).

However, if one takes into account the strikes that took place in this same period, then France stands out as by far the most contentious country of the four. It is relevant to include strikes because, particularly in France, they often centre on political issues, rather than immediate industrial relations issues (Kriesi, 1995: 23). Between 1975 and 1989, there were 225,000 participants in strikes per million inhabitants in France, compared to 37,000 in Germany, 23,000 in the Netherlands and 2000 in Switzerland. Thus, overall there were 403,000 participants in unconventional events per million inhabitants in France, compared to 248,000 in Germany, 221,000 in the Netherlands and 158,000 in Switzerland (Kriesi, 1995: 23).

The fact that strikes make up more than half of the total participation in unconventional events in France speaks to the nature of protest politics in this country. In France, participation in so-called 'old' social movements – the labour movement, student movement, regionalist movement or farmers' movement – represents two-thirds of the total participation in social movements, as opposed to one-third in so-called 'new' social movements. In the Netherlands and Switzerland, the proportion is exactly inverted, whereas in Germany participation in 'new' social movements makes up to three-quarters of the total participation in social movements (Kriesi, 1995: 20).

What do the French do when they protest? Among the range of possible ways of engaging in protest – petitions, demonstrations, sit-ins, occupations of buildings, festivals – the French engage overwhelmingly in street demonstrations (in 41.7 per cent of cases) and 'heavy violence',

that is, 'bomb or fire attacks and other severe property damage, sabotage, physical violence against persons' (25.4 per cent of cases) (Kriesi, 1995: 50 and 268). Some authors have criticized Kriesi's coding of 'heavy violence' and pointed out that it leaves a wide gap between threats and limited property damage (what Kriesi calls 'light violence'), on the one hand, and terrorism, on the other (Fillieule, 1997: 107). Furthermore, drawing on police records in two French cities – Marseilles and Nantes – Fillieule (1997: 107) estimated that only 5 per cent of French demonstrations involved violent events. The fact, underscored by Kriesi (1995: 51), that between 1975 and 1989 74 persons died in protest events in France, compared to 59 in Germany and almost none in the Netherlands and Switzerland, could actually indicate levels of police repression rather than protesters' violence. Although there are no recent studies of the death toll of political violence in France in the 2000s, in light of the disappearance of the far-Left terrorist groups of the 1970s and early 1980s, such as Action Directe, one can contend that the use of heavy violence is less important today.

Protests and society

The morphology of French protest politics is closely intertwined with national societal cleavages. The more old cleavages are salient, the more they will absorb and frame new issues, and the more mobilization will take place along their lines. Conversely, a decline or pacification of old cleavages opens a space for new types of mobilizations that cut across traditional lines of division. Among the four old cleavages commonly identified as the most distinctive of modern Europe – centre-periphery, state-church, urban-rural and labour-capital – the labour-capital or class cleavage stands out. This is particularly the case in France, where the salience of the class cleavage leaves little room for new political identities and organizations (Kriesi, 1995).

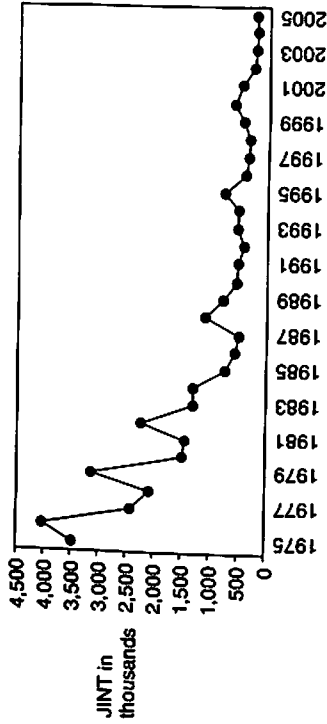
The centre-periphery was salient in the 1970s and early 1980s, when regionalist movements demanded more autonomy from the central state. However, today these movements have almost disappeared. The state-church cleavage remains important in French politics and has not been pacified, as recurrent conflicts around the status of private Catholic schools and the importance of the issue of *laïcité* in French public debates indicate. Nonetheless, today there no longer are major national organizations built along this cleavage. Except for the Popular Republican Movement (MRP) in the Fourth Republic, there has never been a strong French Christian Democratic Party, like in Italy or Germany, and organizations like the Christian Labour Youth (Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne, JOC), that trained union leaders of the French

Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC) and the French Democratic Labour Confederation (CFDT) in the past no longer enjoy a strong public presence. The state-church cleavage retains the capacity to provoke lay-religious divisions, as underlined by the massive demonstration to defend Catholic schools against the Savary Law in 1984, but such events are exceptional. Although some religious organizations, like Emmaüs and Secours Catholique, actively support the movement against social exclusion that I will present below, this movement transcends the religious subculture and the state-church cleavage.

At first glance, the alleged predominance of the class cleavage may seem exaggerated, for there has been a boom of secondary associations in France. The number of associations created annually is an indicator of people's involvement in structures that offer an alternative to parties and unions. This number went from 12,000 in 1960 to 40,000 in 1982 and 62,000 in 1992. The highest increase took place between 1982 and 1987, when the number of secondary associations created annually grew by 30 per cent compared to 20 per cent between 1977 and 1982 and 21 per cent between 1987 and 1992 (Barthélémy, 2000: 60–1). In contrast, trade unions have declined dramatically. Today, with about 8 per cent, France has the lowest union density rate – percentage of unionized workers as a share of the total workforce – among OECD countries. Similarly, the French Communist Party (PCF), which used to be the most contentious party in French politics, has lost more than half of its members since the late 1970s and obtained less than 2 per cent in the 2007 presidential election. These numbers challenge the assumption that class remains one of the core organizing principles of collective action and protest politics in France.

Despite the changes in the associational landscape, however, trade unions still play a central – perhaps the leading role – in organizing protests. For example, in the early 1990s, trade unions organized 43 per cent of all street demonstrations taking place in Paris; in contrast, other secondary associations organized only 14 per cent of these demonstrations (Fillieule, 1997: 184). Outside Paris, the gap appears even wider. In the 1980s, at the peak of the wave of secondary associations' creation outlined by Barthélémy (2000), the proportion of street demonstrations organized by trade unions in the provinces exceeded 70 per cent (Fillieule, 1997: 182–3). In spite of the rise of secondary associations and new social movements, protest politics in France is still closely intertwined with labour politics.

Nonetheless, two qualifications are in order. First, the nature of labour involvement in protest politics has changed since the late 1970s. Although trade unions still organize an overwhelming proportion of street demonstrations, the number of strikes has declined significantly (Figure 5.1). In spite of strong waves of mobilization during the 1995



Source: DARES, French government
 Note: For the 1975–95 period, the available data reflect strikes in all sectors, including public transport (i.e. SNCF, RATP, Air France). After 1995, the data no longer include public transport, a change that has deep implications for the calculation of days not worked because many strikes take place in public transport, as the autumn 2007 strikes at the SNCF and the RATP, for example, have shown

Figure 5.1 Strikes, 1975–2005 (number of individual days not worked [JINT] because of a strike in a firm)

strikes, the 2003 protests against pension reform, and the 2006 protests against the reform of the labour code (with the introduction of the *contrat de première embauche*, CPE), industrial conflict has to some extent been pacified in the private sector. Insofar as strikes made up more than half of the total participation in unconventional events in the 1970s and 1980s, this trend is likely to have an impact on the magnitude of protests. The nature of strikes is also changing, as they have declined steadily in the private sector while remaining relatively stable, or even increasing, in the public sector, particularly in transportation (see also Chapter 13 in this volume).

Second, even though the PCF has become politically marginal and traditional trade unions lost large segments of their membership in the 1980s, small radical parties and unions play an increasing role in protest politics. These organizations have taken advantage of the crisis of traditional parties and filled a void stemming from the shift to the centre of the largest trade unions. As mainstream organizations have become less confrontational, they have been outflanked on their left. Two organizations that embody this radical challenge are particularly active: the Revolutionary Communist League (Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire – LCR), and the SUD (Solidarité, Unité, Démocratie) trade union. The LCR candidate, Olivier Besancenot, obtained around 4 per cent of the vote in the 2002 and 2007 presidential elections, outpolling the candidate of the PCF. SUD has also been growing.

Although in 1998, it had only 11,000 members, which was insignificant compared to the 600,000 members of the CGT and 700,000 of the CFDT at the time, in 2000 it represented about a quarter of all postal and telecommunications workers in the public sector, where it was originally founded in 1988. The LCR and SUD have actively supported small social movement organizations related to the defence of the unemployed and immigrants without official documents (the *sans-papiers*) as well as the promotion of housing rights. In so doing, they have contributed to the consolidation of mobilization networks that underpin many protest events. They have also been instrumental in the emergence of the anti-globalization movement. Competition between these new actors and old left-wing and labour organizations contributes to the enduring salience of the class cleavage in France.

Protests and the state

While the persistence of the class cleavage in France may explain the weight of trade unions in protest politics, it does not explain why the French protest in the first place. A major factor relates to the structure of incentives and constraints – what is commonly called the ‘political opportunity structure’ in social movement studies – that shapes and channels collective action. Simply put, the more open a state is, the more social and political actors can access the policy-making process through conventional channels, hence the less likely they are to adopt confrontational strategies and protest. Conversely, a closed state like the French one lacks institutional receptivity and fosters confrontation and protest (Tarrow, 1996).

The French state tends to operate in a closed and exclusive manner. Rather than fostering cooperation among social actors, it plays them off against one another and favours polarization and repression. This is not a political–institutional environment favourable to social movements (Kriesi, 1995). Thus, France has a lower rate of movement membership than several other West European countries but, as mentioned above, a higher rate of strikes and heavy violence. The use of radical and violent tactics is directly related to the level of state closure.

The political opportunity structure is not completely stable, however; it also has a dynamic dimension. As the access to the decision-making process opens, existing alignments crumble, elites become divided and allies obtain influential positions (Tarrow, 1996). The presence of the Left – a potential influential ally – in government thus makes a difference for the tactics of social movements, for the latter assume that left-wing parties will advance reforms that they have been advocating, while simultaneously open the policy-making process. The need to engage in protest politics decreases and activists often turn instead to lobbying.

In the 1980s, when Mitterrand was President, participation in protest politics declined. The Socialist government carried out a strategy of selective opening, abandoning the environmentalist movement that was heavily invested in anti-nuclear mobilizations while supporting the anti-racist movement to thwart the rising far-Right National Front (Kriesi, 1995: 62–3). However, the main SMO of the anti-racist movement, SOS Racisme, and particularly its leaders, Harlem Désir, Fodé Syll and Malek Boutih, were co-opted by the Socialist Party. The structure of the French polity contributed to this dynamic, insofar as it implies that social actors such as trade unions and SMOs must pressure political parties to shape public policy. The structural bias in favour of politicization puts them in a situation of relative dependence vis-à-vis parties. The recent opening strategy implemented by President Sarkozy suggests that a different dynamic might be emerging. I will return to this point in the last section of this chapter.

Social movements in the 2000s

There are many social movements, and this chapter does not claim to draw an all-inclusive picture of French protest politics. For example, it leaves out the environmentalist movement for several reasons. First, whereas in the 1970s, the French environmentalist movement mobilized large numbers of people (some protest events ranged from 60,000 to 100,000 participants), today it is primarily a localized movement driven by civic associations organized at the municipal level to stop infrastructural projects like the extension of TGV lines or the construction of tunnels (Hayes, 2002). Second, even though it emerged out the mobilizations of the 1970s, the small Green Party grants only symbolic support to these mobilizations and is essentially invested in institutional politics. Third, the most vocal leaders of the environmentalist movement, like José Bové of the Peasant Confederation (CP), have tended to focus their energies on the anti-globalization campaign, which this chapter does analyse.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on three social movements that have managed to capture the public's attention and shape political debates in the 2000s: the movement against social exclusion, the anti-globalization movement and the immigrant movement.

The movement against social exclusion

The movement against social exclusion first emerged in the early 1990s as several civic associations were created by activists and unemployed workers. Three of them stood out: Right to Housing (*Droit au*

Logement – DAL), Right Ahead (*Droit Devant* – DD!!) and Acting Together against Unemployment (*Agir contre le Chômage* – AC!).

DAL was created in 1990 and organized highly publicized occupations of vacant buildings with homeless families and the support of public figures (Péchu, 2002). DD!! was created in December 1994, during an occupation organized by DAL. It brought together sympathizers of anarchism and social Catholics. DD!! aims at widening the scope of the mobilization beyond housing rights to include all types of social rights. However, its main concern has been immigrants without official papers (*sans-papiers*). AC! was founded in 1993. It does not so much mobilize the unemployed as gather activists and intellectuals against unemployment. It defined itself from the beginning as a toolbox or think tank against social exclusion (Mouchard, 2002: 325–7). Its main demand has been the reduction of working time (such as the 35-hour week) as a solution to unemployment and then, after the Socialist government of Lionel Jospin introduced this reform in the late 1990s, the promotion of a minimum universal income (Mouchard, 2002: 327). These three SMOs participated in mobilizations against economic liberalization and the privatization of public services and managed to politicize conditions of precariousness and poverty. They brought the sense of urgency of humanitarian interventions into domestic politics.

These organizations remain active today. Their actions throughout the 1990s and 2000s prepared the field for the last episode of mobilizations against social exclusion that focused on housing. In summer 2006, after the police expelled homeless people camping on the temporary beaches that the Socialist mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë, had installed along the Seine, a small group of people began to follow the Parisian homeless. Augustin Legrand, a 31-year-old actor, and his companions began to meet with some of Paris's 2000–5000 estimated homeless and recorded interviews on camera. Then, in October 2006 they founded an association called the Children of Don Quixote (CDQ) and posted the video interviews they had collected on the web. In early December, CDQ called the homeless to camp on the Place de la Concorde, one of Paris's busiest intersections and the main site of guillotining during the French Revolution. A couple of weeks later, it decided to move the camp to the Canal Saint-Martin, in the 10th district of Paris, where they stayed, with more than 100 tents, until April 2007. CDQ demands include: the opening of homeless shelters 24/7; a ban on expelling the homeless from these shelters unless they are offered alternative housing; the construction of temporary as well as subsidized, low-cost housing; the development of alternative forms of housing, such as boarding houses; and a legally enforceable right to housing (*droit au logement opposable*).

CDQ's campaign was a partial success. Although it did not obtain everything it demanded, it had a deep impact on public debates and politics. First, it innovated by using not only the traditional media but also the Internet to diffuse video interviews with the homeless and convince non-homeless Parisians to come and spend a couple of nights with them in the tents. Several well-known artists joined them and increased their visibility, while public opinion supported the entire initiative. Second, the 2007 presidential election brought strong media coverage and pressured candidates to express their concern over housing issues and make promises that their electoral programme did not originally include. Third, in early March 2007, right before the presidential election, the government of Dominique de Villepin passed a law increasing the possibility of making legal complaints in the name of the right to housing, as CDQ had demanded. Finally, CDQ's tactic of installing tent camps in the middle of Paris inspired other social movement organizations and is becoming an integral part of the French repertoire of collective action. For example, in early October 2007, DAL tried to install a tent camp along the Canal de l'Ourq, in northern Paris, and in front of the Ministry of Housing. In both cases, the attempt failed because of police intervention. DAL repeated the attempt on the rue de la Banque and this time the strategy paid off. On 14 December 2007, after more than a month of street camping, the government signed an agreement with three civic associations – DAL, the Comité des Sans-logis and the Comité Actions Logement – pledging to find housing for 1,500 persons within a year.

The evolution of the homeless issue is symptomatic of the effects of the exclusive nature of French state that I discussed above. The homeless, a completely resource-deprived social group, had to engage in protests with the help of more well-connected individuals in order to pressure a policy-making process that was otherwise closed. The presidential election provided an opportunity to draw the attention of the French elite and advance an agenda. Now that Sarkozy has been elected and has a comfortable majority in the National Assembly, this opportunity is gone. As a result, social movement organizations are even more likely to engage in unconventional rather than conventional events. For example, in December 2007 the CDQ's spokesperson Augustin Legrand announced that his association would install homeless camps in downtown Paris anew so as to denounce the government's failure to fulfil the promises that Sarkozy made during the presidential election campaign. A first camp of 250 tents in front of the cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris was dismantled by the police on 15 December 2007. However, in contrast to CDQ's campaign in winter 2007, this new campaign is unlikely to get massive media coverage insofar as no presidential and legislative elections are scheduled in

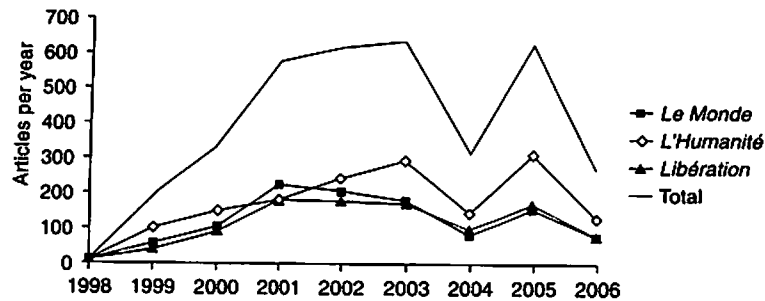
2008 (municipal elections, which took place in March 2008, generally do not get as much media coverage).

The anti-globalization movement

The anti-globalization movement (AGM) emerged in the late 1990s, in the wake of the mobilization against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) that was being negotiated at the OECD and the protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle. However, the emergence of the anti-globalization movement was foreshadowed by earlier events. For instance, in 1989, following the example of the 1988 Berlin protests against the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and taking advantage of the meeting of the G7 hosted by President Mitterrand in Versailles, a counter-summit celebrated the bicentennial of the French Revolution and denounced the debt of Third World countries and global inequalities. Similarly, in 1992, the debate over the Maastricht Treaty put at the centre of public affairs the same issues that would subsequently be the basis of the globalization debate. But the real turning point that laid the ground for the rise of the AGM in France was the series of strikes of December 1995 against RPR Prime Minister Alain Juppé's plan to reform social security (Ancelovici, 2002). Led primarily by public employees and students, the strikes paralysed the country for over three weeks. The strikes enjoyed the support of wide sectors of French society, including workers in the private sector, and eventually forced the government to withdraw most of its planned reforms.

The 1995 strikes thus extended on a global scale the themes that the movement against social exclusion had introduced previously. Afterwards an increasing number of actors began to engage in 'global framing', that is, 'the use of external symbols to orient local or national claims' (Tarrow, 2005: 60). The 1995 strikes also played the role of a 'brokering' event by bringing together and consolidating the ties between a wide range of organizations critical of the liberal turn of the Socialist Party who had not really cooperated in the past. This informal ad hoc alliance came to be called the 'Left of the Left' or the 'leftist Left' (*Gauche de la gauche* or *Gauche de gauche*) by the media and activists. Most of these organizations later participated in the emergence of the anti-globalization movement in France and also the creation of its leading social movement organization, the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens (ATTAC).

Founded in 1998 by an informal alliance of civic associations (including DAL, DD!! and AC!), trade unions (minor workers' federations of big labour confederations like the CGT and CFDT but also small radical unions like SUD), and newspapers (*Le Monde diplomatique*,



Source: *Le Monde* and *L'Humanité*, electronic archives; *Libération* data based on Biblio Branchée

Figure 5.2 Coverage of ATTAC in leading left-wing newspapers

Politis), ATTAC managed to get incredible media coverage until the mid 2000s (Figure 5.2). At the international level, it also played a key role in the creation of the World Social Forum (WSF) in 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and was also a central actor behind the 2003 European Social Forum (ESF) in Paris in November 2003. The WSF was founded to denounce the World Economic Forum, which meets annually in Davos, Switzerland, and is seen as one of the institutions of neo-liberal globalization, and to foster the cooperation of activists and social movements on a global scale. The success of the WSF subsequently led to the multiplication of regional and local social forums throughout the world.

Several distinctive features of ATTAC's individual and organizational membership should be underscored. First, intellectuals play a central role as active rather than just symbolic members. This is reflected in the willingness to popularize abstract and complex economic issues and in ATTAC's self-definition as 'a movement of popular education oriented towards action'. Second, there is a strong predominance of trade unions of the public sector, in particular teachers' and postal workers' unions. In contrast, workers in sectors directly challenged by globalization, such as the textile-apparel and the electronics industries, are completely absent. In this sense, there does not seem to be a relationship between joining ATTAC and defending specific economic interests. This social profile fits studies of participation in ESFs, the main annual meeting of opponents of globalization in Europe since 2002. During the 2002 ESF in Florence, Italy, 39.4 per cent of participants were white-collar employees while 22.1 per cent were professionals and 14.6 per cent teachers; 48.2 per cent worked in public services and 39.2 per cent in private services. Finally, 34.9 per cent had at least a few years of college education. This trend is even more accen-

tuated for the French participants: 47.6 per cent were white-collar employees and 19 per cent teachers, 53 per cent worked in public services, and 71.9 per cent had at least a few years of college education (della Porta, 2005: 13). Similarly, during the 2003 ESF in Paris, which was attended by 51,000 people, 46.1 per cent of participants worked in the public sector, as opposed to 21.6 in the private sector. Low-skilled workers (*ouvriers*) represented only 2.2 per cent of participants. Even more than in the 2002 ESF, the proportion of highly educated participants is striking: 69.2 per cent had at least a few years of college education, two-thirds of whom had a college degree (Gobille and Aysen, 2005: 107–8).

If intellectuals and trade unions are prominent within ATTAC, the political establishment is not. When ATTAC was created, not a single political party officially played a rôle, although some founder members were also members of political parties. Likewise, representatives of the entertainment sector and environmentalist organizations did not join ATTAC. The absence of environmentalist organizations clearly distinguishes the French anti-globalization movement from its counterparts in other Western countries and indicates once more the persistence of the class cleavage in France.

ATTAC is emblematic of the anti-globalization movement not only because of its emergence and social composition, but also because of its discourse. It defines globalization as the convergence of two trends: first, the restructuring of the mode of state intervention in the economy, the liberalization and opening of national markets, and the emergence of global – primarily financial – markets; second, the incorporation of an increasing share of human activities in the market. This perspective led ATTAC to frame a whole series of domestic issues as consequences of globalization and its agents. For instance, during the June 2003 protests against the reform of French pensions, it claimed that the World Bank and the European Commission were at the origin of this reform. Similarly, during the autumn 2005 riots in depressed French suburbs, it claimed that the living conditions of the rioters and thereby the riots themselves were a direct product of neo-liberalism and globalization. Finally, social classes are surprisingly absent from ATTAC's discourse. There is no reference to the labour movement and even old-fashioned 'capitalism' is barely mentioned. The new privileged actors are 'the' social movement and an active citizenry. Instead of presenting globalization as the result of a macro-structural process bringing about the hegemony of a transnational bourgeoisie or insisting on the class background of the alleged victims of globalization, the issues are framed in terms of citizenship, democracy, solidarity, global markets, financial institutions, and corporations. ATTAC praises civic engagement and claims to be defending not sector or class interests, but rather the common good and society as a

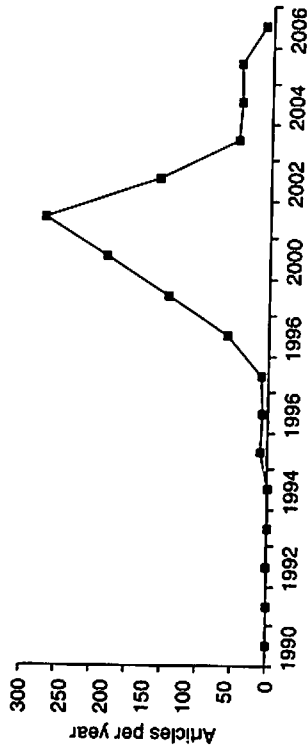
whole against market colonization understood as a process of commodification.

Although ATTAC experienced a crisis from 2005 to 2007, as competing factions struggled to control the organization (the crisis eventually ended with the departure of several leading members who created a new organization called Avenir d'ATTAC), and the level of mobilization has apparently declined, the anti-globalization movement has had a huge impact on public debates in France. The case of the Tobin Tax is emblematic of this influence. Named after the late Nobel laureate and Yale economics professor James Tobin, the Tobin Tax would create a 0.05 per cent tax on foreign exchange transactions. The idea is to discourage rapid, short-term capital flows from one country to another, which can be extremely destabilizing to governments and place them at the mercy of global investors. In addition, the Tobin Tax would generate about US\$100 billion a year in revenue that could be given to international organizations fighting against inequality and supporting public health, education and sustainable development in developing countries. The Tobin Tax remained an arcane proposition for many years and was completely absent from the French public debate until the 1995 presidential election, when the Socialist Party included it in its programme. The PS lost the election and the Tobin Tax remained in the shadows. It was only in 1998, with the creation of ATTAC (whose name first meant Association for a Tobin Tax for the Aid of Citizens), that this issue gained some public visibility and began to be widely debated (see Figure 5.3). In September 2001, 71 per cent of the French were in favour of the implementation of the Tobin Tax.

The immigrant movement

Talking about 'an' immigrant movement is a simplification. The several immigrant social movement organizations (SMOs) that have risen and fallen over the last 30 years in France do not share a coherent set of demands or agenda. Nonetheless, they all formulate their claims in the name of the immigrant population – particularly of North African descent – and focus on issues of discrimination and citizenship.

The most well-known SMO of the immigrant movement is SOS-Racisme, founded in 1984 by young leaders who quickly climbed the hierarchy of the Socialist Party. SOS-Racisme emerged out of the momentum generated by the 1983 *Marche des Beurs*, the first national mass protest organized by second-generation North African immigrants. Thanks to strong public-relations tactics and close links with the Socialist Party, SOS-Racisme became the central SMO of the immigrant movement throughout the 1980s and 1990s. All other



Source: *Le Monde* and *L'Humanité*, electronic archives; *Libération* data based on Biblio Brancheé

Figure 5.3 The rise of the Tobin Tax in leading left-wing newspapers

SMOs evolving in this movement either built on SOS-Racisme or opposed it.

The Immigration and Suburbs Movement (Mouvement de l'immigration et des banlieues, MIB) is among the opponents. It was founded in 1995 by several civic associations based in poor suburbs in the wake of instances of police abuse and riots. Insofar as the main goal of the MIB is to fight against the 'double sanction' (*double peine*) that threatens criminal immigrants (i.e. prison plus deportation), its targets are the French legal system and the police. In 1999, it followed about 2000 cases of potential deportation (Siméant, 1998: 481). The MIB has a strong social base in disenfranchised suburbs and cooperates with French rap and hip-hop icons like IAM, Assassin and Stromy Budy. This cooperative relation led to a CD against the Debré Law in 1997 – that asked French citizens hosting foreigners to report them to public authorities – and another one after the strong performance of National Front candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen in the 2002 presidential election. The MIB also favours disruptive direct action, like disturbing public meetings and TV shows as well as occupying public administration offices and political parties' headquarters. The collective identity of the MIB involves a class dimension – it stresses its social anchoring in poor suburbs – and an ethnic dimension – it presents itself as the inheritor of the Arab Workers' Movement (MTA) of the 1970s (Siméant, 1998: 482). In contrast to SOS-Racisme, whose links to the PS eventually undermined its credibility, the MIB targets both right-wing and left-wing politicians and consistently denounces the emphasis on security and repression advocated by most mainstream parties – both Left and Right – in today's French politics.

In a similar vein, the Indigenous of the Republic (Indigènes de la République) established, more than all other actors in the immigrant

movement, a direct link between the postcolonial condition and the domination experienced by immigrants in France. Founded in 2005, the organization claims that today, as during the colonial era, post-colonial immigrants are depicted, seen and treated as 'indigenous', that is, as neither French nor foreign. While presenting itself as the heir to past anti-racist, anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist mobilizations, the Indigenous of the Republic blame all political parties and trade unions for neglecting this indigenous status that afflicts immigrants. Like the MIB, it is thus suspicious of institutional politics and favours alternative venues (see Chapter 6 for a fuller discussion).

In June 2007, together with organizations active in other social movements, such as, among others, SUD, DAL, Act Up and the Motivés, the MIB and the Indigenous of the Republic organized a Social Forum of Popular Neighbourhoods (SFPN). Like the World and European Social Forums, the SFPN offered a great diversity of workshops and conferences over a several-day period. A year and a half after the autumn 2005 riots that took place in the depressed French suburbs, the SFPN claimed a direct lineage with past immigrant protests and riots and tried to draw parallels between the immigrant or postcolonial question and other larger sociopolitical issues related to education, the environment and globalization.

Another organization that has recently come to play a leading role in the immigrant movement is Neither Whores Nor Submissives (Ni Putes, ni Soumises, NPNS). NPNS was founded in 2002 by Fadela Amara after the murder of a young girl of immigrant descent. Soon after, in February and March 2003, NPNS organized a successful mobilization that involved a nationwide march of women against sexism in disenfranchised suburbs (the *Marche des femmes contre les ghettos et pour l'égalité*), receiving extensive media coverage. The march finished in Paris on 8 March for Women's Day, with 30,000 protesters. NPNS's petition obtained 65,000 signatures and in 2007, NPNS had more than 40 local committees throughout France.

NPNS focuses on the condition of immigrant women in impoverished suburbs. It denounces both the racism that immigrants face and the oppression that immigrant women experience as a result of the imposition of Muslim traditions. It demands gender equality and *laïcité* in the name of Republican ideals. Although such a message receives positive coverage in the French media and fits the Republican tradition, some critics (e.g. Marteau and Tournier, 2006) have argued that NPNS is putting forward a simplistic and dangerous picture that associates Muslims with violence and other practices that threaten the Republican order.

In contrast to the MIB, which originated in the poor suburbs, it claims to represent and favours unconventional or extra-institutional tactics, NPNS is, like SOS-Racisme, close to the PS and institutional

politics. Amara began her militant career in SOS-Racisme in the late 1980s and later joined the PS. Other leading members of NPNS, such as its Secretary General Mohamed Abdi and a spokesperson Loubna Méliane, also sit on top committees of the PS. That said, Fadela Amara personally participated in several institutional committees and boards: she cooperated with the Observatory on Parity and the Consultative National Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH); in December 2003, she testified before the Stasi Commission to denounce the growing influence of Islamist groups in poor suburbs; in 2005, she sat on the evaluation committee of the National Agency for Urban Regeneration (ANRU) and was appointed by the government to the High Authority of the Fight against Discrimination and for Equality (HALDE) (see Chapter 6 for fuller discussion of the HALDE). Most recently, in June 2007, Amara was appointed Secretary of State for Urban Policies in the government of François Fillon.

Future prospects

Historically, French social movements have been dependent on institutional actors like political parties to pressure the state and influence the policy-making process. The decline of the Communist Party and the crisis that the Socialist Party has been experiencing since the defeat of Jospin in 2002 have thus deprived social movements of resources and had a negative impact on their ability to shape public policy. The increasing mobilization capacity of the Communist Revolutionary League (LCR) will not replace these two parties, insofar as the LCR is very unlikely to ever have deputies elected to the National Assembly.

In such a context, some social movements have tried to access additional resources by building transnational coalitions. For example, since the mid-1990s the number of trans-European protest events, like the 1997 Euro marches, has increased. Similarly, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), which represents most West European trade unions, has become more vocal and participated in several counter-summits organized with social movements. Nonetheless, as Imig and Tarrow (2001) have shown, most protest events remain subordinated to, and contained by, domestic politics. The nation state continues to be one of the crucial factors shaping and channelling collective action.

In this respect, the 'opening' strategy implemented by President Sarkozy since June 2007 could potentially be fostering a new dynamic. By appointing several well-known and symbolic figures of the Left like Fadela Amara and Martin Hirsch, the former president of Emmaüs (appointed High Commissioner to Active Solidarity), Sarkozy has implicitly suggested that social movements could access the state

directly, by virtue of the status of their leaders, rather than through parties. This strategy has several consequences. First, it accentuates the personalization of protest politics and makes grass-roots and party linkages less significant. One of the symbols of this bypassing of traditional relays is Fadela Amara's decision to open a blog supposed to foster a direct debate with disenfranchised youths. Second, Sarkozy's opening strategy destabilizes the institutional Left and divides social movements. The PS has not managed to prevent some of its leaders and allies from joining the Fillon government, thereby projecting the image of a sinking ship being abandoned by its officers. Similarly, NPNS is in crisis since Amara joined the Fillon government to work under the supervision of an ultra-conservative minister, Christine Boutin, who is known for her pro-life position. In November 2007, more than 20 local committees of NPNS closed down and most of them founded a new organization called *Les Insoumis-es* on grounds that Amara implicitly supported Sarkozy's policies and that NPNS was controlled by Amara's special adviser and NPNS's Secretary General Mohamed Abdi. Third, Sarkozy's strategy also divides the Right, thereby perhaps opening a space for new ad hoc alliances between the most centrist elements of the ruling coalition and moderate social movement organizations.

Still, it remains to be seen whether Sarkozy's opening will go beyond symbols and rhetoric. Will Amara and Hirsch really have autonomy and leverage to advance their agenda? Will they get the necessary votes at the National Assembly to introduce new laws? Will the parliamentary majority stand by them when the moment to make a decision comes?

Although it is impossible to reach a conclusion at this stage, two broad themes are likely to change the nature of Sarkozy's opening: immigration and the reform of the French 'social model'. Sarkozy's tough positions on immigration and delinquency are well known. They did not prevent Amara and Hirsch from joining the Fillon government. Nonetheless, the new law introduced in October 2007 by the Minister of Immigration and National Identity, Brice Hortefeux, according to which certain potential immigrants should be submitted to DNA testing, triggered an intense debate. Amara firmly criticized this point on the grounds that it partook in political calculations, thereby implicitly suggesting that it aimed at attracting far-Right votes. Hirsch also criticized the law, not only with respect to the use of DNA testing but also because it prevented immigrants without official papers from having access to homeless shelters. Eventually, Hirsch prevailed, as Sarkozy declared that access to homeless shelters should be unconditional, whereas Amara was not able to convince the government to abandon DNA testing. Amara's position in the government was also weakened by her silence during the riots that shook Villiers-le-Bel in

late November 2007. Several leading members of the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), Sarkozy's party, criticized her reluctance to condemn the riots and support the police.

Thus, these two left-wing appointees, who embody Sarkozy's reaching hand not only to the Left but also to civil society, will be facing increasingly tough dilemmas. The choices they make and the results they obtain will be major signals to social movements. If they back down, they are likely to become the focus for social movement discontent. This could be Amara's fate. If they do not manage to advance their agenda, they will appear as potential allies for social movements that will pressure them to advance their cause. This scenario seems to emerge in Hirsch's case. In both cases, they will channel protests and shape the issues upon which social movement organizations will focus.

The second broad theme that will change the nature of Sarkozy's opening strategy is the reform of the French 'social model'. Although Sarkozy and Prime Minister Fillon stated that they would include social partners in the elaboration of reforms, trade unions are unlikely to easily support wide-ranging reforms. This will be a real test for Sarkozy. If he abides by his declared intention to open up the policy-making process and makes compromises, substantial reforms could perhaps be implemented. The way the reform of pensions was handled in early December 2007 suggests that a real opening and compromises will not come about without large mobilizations. If Sarkozy sticks with the media-oriented and Bonapartist style he developed when he was Minister of the Interior in Raffarin's government, he will probably reinforce the exclusive nature of the French state and thereby foster polarization and the use of unconventional and disruptive tactics. France will then resume its contentious pattern. Most protest will be carried out by divided trade unions through unconventional – and yet, paradoxically, traditional – protest events, while weak social movements will look for new institutional allies.

'bipolarization' which is reinforced rather than undermined by the elections held a month after its publication.

Chapter 4 Attitudes towards Europe in France

Perrineau (2005) is a useful study of the relationship between the party system and the European issue. The 2005 referendum is given its fullest treatment in Tiberj and Brouard (2006) and also Sauger et al. (2007). Hainsworth (2006) also provides a good accessible account in English. Evans (2007) investigates the European dimension in French public opinion and Drake (2005c) provides a very useful account of France's sometimes troubled relationship with the European Union.

Chapter 5 Social Movements and Protest Politics

There are not many books on social movements and protest politics in France available in English. For a historical perspective, Tilly (1986) remains the single best reference. Kriesi's book (1995) is perhaps the best comparative study of French social movements in the 1980s, even though its reliance on *Le Monde* to assess protest events has been criticized. Hayes (2002) examines environmentalist mobilizations at the local level. In French, Fillieule (1997) presents a rigorous analysis of protests and the police based on police archives rather than newspaper data. Bérout et al. (1998) provide an interesting study of the 1995 strikes. Siméant (1998) discusses the mobilization for the *sans-papiers*. Finally, Crettiez and Sommier (2002) offer a very useful and comprehensive survey of most contemporary social movements in France.

Chapter 6 Gender and Multiculturalism: the Politics of Difference at a Crossroads

For more information on the evolution of gender and politics issues across a wide range of issues under the Fifth Republic, see Jenson and Sineau (1995) and Mazur (1995, 2005). On parity and feminism, Scott (2005a) and Upinard (2007a) are core references. On immigration and anti-discrimination policies, Geddes and Guiraudon (2004) and Guiraudon (2005) are of central importance, as is Favell (1998). On citizenship, Brubaker (1992) remains a classic reference, and Duchesne (2005) makes an insightful contribution. Sabbagh (2004) and Hargreaves (2004) are good on affirmative action and anti-discrimination policy. Finally, the issue of slavery is dealt with by Vergès (2006).

Chapter 7 The Return to a Strong Presidency

Leading analyses of the concept and practice of semi-presidentialism in comparative perspective include Duverger (1986), Elgie (1999), Lijphart (1997) and Skach (2005). On the functioning of the executive under the French Fifth Republic, refer to Bell (2002), Elgie (1993), Hayward and Wright (2002) and Massot (1986). For a first-hand account of the 1958 constitutional projects drafted by Debré, under the direction of de Gaulle, see Debré (1975). With respect to the co-evolution of the executive and the party system since 1958, see Converse and Pierce (1986) and Suleiman (1986).

Chapter 8 Parliament and Political Representation

On Parliament, a good starting place is the special issue of *Pouvoirs* on 'Le parlement' (no. 91, 1999). Camby and Servent (2004) is up to date and concise. Magnette (2004) provides a good comparative overview of the renewal of legislatures in Europe. In English, Knapp (2005) provides a useful account and P. Smith (2006) is definitive on the French Senate.

Chapter 9 Checks, Balances and the New Rules of the Political Game

On the Constitutional Council, the classic studies are those of Stone (1992), Favoreu and Philip (2005) and Avril and Gicquel (2005), while Stone (2000) provides a useful comparative study. On party finance, Pujas and Rhodes (1999) provide a good comparative account. Lascoumes (1999) is an excellent study of corruption, of which Mény (1992) also provides a classic study. Knapp (1991) provides a classic account on the *cumul des mandats*, a theme revisited by A. Francois (2006) and others in a special issue of *French Politics*.

Chapter 10 Territorial Politics in France: le Calme avant la Tempête?

Loughlin (2007) provides a good pedagogic account of sub-national government and territorial politics in France. Cole (2006) and Pasquier (2004) offer detailed accounts of the French regions from a comparative European perspective. Pasquier et al. (2007) combine conceptual sophistication with some good empirical accounts of new forms of