BALMUN'26

FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

STUDY GUIDE

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1. Letter From the Secretary-General

Esteemed Participants of BALMUN’26,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to this year’s annual session of BALMUN. It is truly an honour to host a platform where passionate minds gather to engage in a meaningful debate, diplomacy, and cooperation. BALMUN is not merely a conference; it is a created space where ideas are challenged, and perspectives are broadened.

My journey in this club began on the day that I stepped into this school. I started as a bot delegate, continued as an academic assistant, and now stand proudly as the Secretary General of this year’s annual session. Our team has been working meticulously to ensure that this MUN offers not only a rigorous academic experience but also an inspiring and memorable one. We have overcome plenty of different challenges, but all of them have made us stronger than ever to mark our target. We have poured relentless effort into this conference.

With a highly dedicated academic and organizational team, we proudly present twelve committees, including two General Assembly committees, six Special committees, and four Crisis committees. Each committee is carefully designed to encourage critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Over the course of three days, you will be able to defend your ideas, listen to opposing views, and seek compromise in the pursuit of meaningful solutions.

I hope that BALMUN'26 serves as a reminder that true leadership lies not in dominance, but in dialogue and not in certainty, but in openness to learning. As the academic and organizational team of BALMUN, we eagerly look forward to witnessing the ideas you will bring to life and the impact you will create throughout the conference.

Your Sincerely,

Kerem Kılıç
Secretary General of BALMUN’26

2. Introduction to the Committee

a. Mandate of the French National Assembly

Making the law: Members of parliament vote on legislation during legislative sessions and can propose amendments that modify the text. They may also table bills. Once a law has been passed, MPs can refer it to the Constitutional Council to check that it complies with the French Constitution; at least 60 MPs must agree to refer a matter to the court.

Controlling the government: Legislators can demand answers from the government, either orally or in writing. They also evaluate public policy and publish recommendations. The Finance Committee, in particular, monitors the use of public money. But the most powerful lever against the government remains a motion of censure, which triggers the resignation of the prime minister and the government. Such a motion must be signed by at least 1/10th of the National Assembly, that is, 58 MPs.

Working with other institutions: MPs and Senators go back and forth on the text of a bill as it makes its way between the lower house National Assembly and the Senate. But it is the National Assembly that has the last word in the event of disagreement.

b. Role of the Government vs. Parliament under the Fifth Republic

The right to initiate legislation is shared by the government and the parliament. Bills are studied by parliamentary committees, although the government does control the agenda. The government can also, at any point during the debate over a bill, call for a single vote on the whole of the bill's text. Parliamentary control over the government can be exercised. There are questions to ministers challenging various aspects of performance, but these take place infrequently and are primarily occasions for lesser debates and do not lead to effective scrutiny of the government's practices. Committee inquiries are also relatively rare. The National Assembly, however, has the right to censure the government, but, in order to avoid the excesses that occurred before 1958 (as a result of which governments often fell once or twice a year), the motion of censure is subject to considerable restrictions. Only once in the first 50 years of the Fifth Republic, in 1962, did the National Assembly pass a motion of censure, when it stalled de Gaulle's referendum for direct election of the president by universal suffrage, which ultimately met with approval. The government is also strengthened by its constitutional power to ask for a vote of confidence on its general policy or on a bill. In the latter case a bill is considered adopted unless a motion of censure has obtained an absolute majority.

c. Legislative Procedure in France

In a democracy, the law alone determines the most important rules and regulations of communal life (liberties, nationality, right of ownership, legal code, elections and so on). The law authorizes the Government to impose taxes and determine expenses: this is the purpose of the annual finance law, or budget. And finally, the law authorizes the President of the Republic to ratify treaties. Aside from limited cases in which a law may be submitted to a referendum, most laws are passed by the Parliament. Both Parliamentarians (who submit Member's Bills and the Government (which submits Government Bills) can initiate legislation. Similarly, amendments, which are proposals to modify bills submitted for discussion, can be introduced by the executive branch as well as by Members of Parliament. The Government can submit bills to either of the two assemblies, with the exception of finance bills and bills for financing the Social Security system, which must first be submitted to the National Assembly. As soon as they are submitted, the bills are printed and distributed to all the MPs. Unless a special committee is created, the bill is sent to one of the standing committees for evaluation; other interested committees may also examine the text. The committee appoints a person (called the rapporteur) who gathers all the necessary information through consultation; this person then submits a report to his or her colleagues containing an analysis of the text, along with suggestions. The committee may call for hearings to obtain additional information about a text from, for example, members of Government or outside experts and specialists in the field. The report recording the sequence of this work is published and distributed to all the MPs.

The discussion of draft bills must, in plenary sitting, be based on the text adopted in committee, with the exception of bills revising the constitution, bills for finance laws and bills for financing the Social Security system. A public discussion is held once the text has been placed on the agenda. This begins as a general discussion, with several participants: a member of the Government, the person who followed the bill in the committee (the rapporteur) along with others consulted for information, as well as the MPs who, either in the name of their group or as individuals would like to indicate their point of view. The Assembly examines the articles one by one, along with any amendments that may be attached to each. When all the articles have been examined and passed, a vote on the entire bill of law is taken. Political groups may sometimes intervene before the vote to explain a particular position. In order for a text under discussion to be definitively passed by the Parliament, the identical text must be voted by both Chambers. The text voted by one assembly is immediately sent to the other: these successive readings form the "shuttle," which can be suspended by the creation of a Joint Committee. This committee, which consists of seven MPs and seven Senators, must negotiate to obtain a joint text that covers the elements for which the two houses could not reach an agreement. If this negotiation procedure is not successful, the Government can, after both chambers have read the text, give the "final say" to the National Assembly; in other words, request that it takes a final decision. After the law

has been examined by the Constitutional Council to verify its compliance with the Constitution, if necessary, it must then be promulgated by the President of the Republic and published in the Journal Officiel.

d. Political Landscape and Party Dynamics

Historically, French political parties have been both numerous and weak, which is generally accepted as the reason governments fell frequently before the advent of the Fifth Republic in 1958. Since then there has been a degree of streamlining, although, especially among centrist groups, parties are still poorly organized and highly personalized. Indeed, there have been many ups and downs in the fortunes of the main parties since the late 1950s. In the 1960s and early '70s, Charles de Gaulle's centre-right party dominated the elections. After the election of the centrist Valéry Giscard d'Estaing to the presidency in 1974, the Gaullist party declined, while the centrists and Socialists gained in strength. From 1981 and with the election of the Socialist president François Mitterrand, the Socialist Party became dominant, its gains being made primarily at the expense of the Communists. It was the first time since 1958 that the left had taken the leadership in French politics. While the Gaullists achieved a comeback with the appointment of Édouard Balladur as prime minister in 1993 and the election of Jacques Chirac as president in 1995, the Socialists regained control of the government between 1997 and 2002, when Lionel Jospin served as prime minister. In 2002 Chirac was reelected to the presidency under the coalition banner of the Union for Presidential Majority (UMP), firmly putting down Jean-Marie Le Pen of the far-right National Front, who had surprised many with his strong showing in the first round of balloting. The UMP retained control of the presidency and the government following the 2007 election of Nicolas Sarkozy, but it was swept from office by the Socialists in 2012. François Hollande defeated the insufficent Sarkozy in the presidential race, and the Socialist bloc captured a clear majority in the National Assembly.

The French party system has continued to display instability, though less so than in the past. Because the dominance of the Gaullist party was relatively short-lived, with other groups from the centre eroding its strength, the parliamentary base of the governments of the centre-right shrank; this was especially so since the centrists remained a loose confederation of several groupings, each of which tended to adopt different tactics. The unsecured nature of political balance was underscored by recent periods of failed cooperation attempts between presidents and prime ministers of opposing parties.

Now, the French National Assembly consists of 3 major blocs; left-wing bloc (Nouveau Front Populaire*),* far right bloc *(*National Rally and allies*),* centrist & presidential bloc *(*Ensemble pour la République*)* and a minor bloc, traditional right *(*The Republicans*).* None of these blocs have the absolute majority (minimum 289 seats) in the assembly which

results in fragmentation and complication in governance. The current ruling bloc is Ensemble pour la République (mainly Renaissance) and the far-right bloc is the major opposer.

2. Historical Context of the Fifth Republic

Collapse of the Fourth Republic

After the Second World War, it soon became clear that the apparent unity forged in the Resistance was shallow and that the new political elite was sharply divided over the form of the new republic. Some urged the need for greater stability through a strong executive; others, notably the Communists, favoured concentrating power on the voters. De Gaulle stayed away from this debate, though it was obvious that he favoured a strong presidency. In January 1946 de Gaulle suddenly resigned his post as temporary president, apparently expecting that a wave of public support would bring him back to power with a mandate to impose his constitutional ideas. Instead, the public was stunned and confused, and it failed to react. The assembly promptly chose the Socialist Félix Gouin to replace him, and sent de Gaulle retired to his country estate.

On the night of October 31, 1954, barely six months after the fighting in Indochina ended, Algerian nationalists revolted. By 1958 more than a half million French soldiers had been sent to Algeria—the largest overseas expeditionary force in French history. France's determination to hold Algeria stemmed from a number of factors: the presence of almost a million European settlers, the legal fiction that Algeria was an integral part of France, and the recent discovery of oil in the southern desert. Fears that the rebellion might spread to Tunisia and Morocco led the French to make drastic concessions there; in 1956 both of these protectorates became sovereign states.

The long and brutal struggle in Algeria gravely affected the political life of the Fourth Republic and ended up destroying it. A vocal minority in France openly favoured a negotiated settlement, though no political leader dared take such an unpopular position. Right-wing activists, outraged at what they saw as the spread of defeatism, turned to conspiracy; both in Paris and in Algiers, extremist groups began to plot the replacement of the Fourth Republic by a tougher regime, headed by army officers or perhaps by General de Gaulle.

These plans had not yet matured when a cabinet crisis in April–May 1958 gave the conspirators a chance to strike. On May 13, when a new cabinet was scheduled to present its program to the National Assembly, activist groups in Algiers went into the streets in an effort to influence parliament's vote. By nightfall they were in control of the city and set up an emergency government with local army support. De Gaulle on May 15 announced that he was prepared to take power if called to do so by his fellow citizens. Two weeks of

negotiations followed, interspersed with threats of violent action by the Algiers rebels. Most of the Fourth Republic's political leaders reluctantly concluded that de Gaulle's return was the only alternative to an army coup that might lead to civil war. On June 1, therefore, the National Assembly voted de Gaulle full powers for six months, thus putting a de facto end to the Fourth Republic.

Constitutional Architecture of 1958

The architecture splits executive power between a President and a Government, but the balance is weighted toward the President.

To avoid the instability of previous Republics, the 1958 architecture strictly limits the scope of Parliament. It can only pass laws on specific matters listed in Article 34 (e.g., civil liberties, crimes, taxation). All other matters are "regulatory" and fall under the Government's direct authority. The Government has tools to force the passage of laws (like Article 49.3, where a bill is considered adopted unless the House passes a motion of censure), shifting the legislative "upper hand" to the Executive.

The architecture allows for its own evolution. Revision requires approval by both houses of Parliament, followed by either a referendum or a 3/5ths majority vote by a joint session (the "Congres") at Versailles.

Belongs to the people, exercised through representatives or via referendum (a direct link between the President and the citizens, bypassing Parliament).

Defined as an "authority" rather than a "power," with the President acting as the guarantor of its independence.

Executive–Legislative Power Dynamics

France has a semi-presidential system of government, with both a president and a prime minister. The prime minister is responsible to the French Parliament. A presidential candidate is required to obtain a nationwide majority of non-blank votes at either the first or second round of balloting, which implies that the president is somewhat supported by at least half of the voting population.

The Parliament of France, making up the legislative branch, consists of two houses: the National Assembly and the Senate; the National Assembly is the pre-eminent body.

Parliament meets for one nine-month session each year yet under special circumstances the president can call an additional session. Although parliamentary powers have diminished from those existing under the Fourth Republic, the National Assembly can still cause a government to fall if an absolute majority of the total Assembly membership votes to censure.

Semi-Presidentialism: Balance or Imbalance?

A semi-presidential system, or dual executive system, is a system in which a president exists alongside a prime minister and a cabinet, with the latter of the two being responsible to the legislature of the state. It differs from a parliamentary system in that it has an executive president independent of the legislature; and from the presidential system in that the cabinet, although named by the president, is responsible to the legislature, which may force the cabinet to resign through a motion of no confidence.

The president oversees foreign policy and defence policy and the prime minister is in charge of domestic policy and economic policy. The division of responsibilities between the prime minister and the president is not explicitly stated in the constitution.

In most semi-presidential systems, important segments of bureaucracy are taken away from the president, creating additional checks and balances where the running of the day-to-day government and its issues are separate from the head of state, and as such, problems are generally evaluated based on their own values; along with their ups and downs and not necessarily tied to who the head of state is. Having a separate head of government who needs to command the confidence of the parliament is seen as being more in tune to the political and economic development of the country. Because the head of government is elected from the parliament, there is little potential for political jams to occur, since the parliament has the power to remove the head of government if needed.

Apart from the advantages stated, the system creates a sense of confusion towards accountability, as there is no relatively clear sense of who is responsible for policy successes and failures which results in both confusion and inefficiency in the legislative process, since the capacity of votes of confidence makes the prime minister respond to the parliament.

3. Immigration Control and National Identity in the Republic

Evolution of French Immigration Policy

France's involvement in the Industrial Revolution made it an attractive destination, particularly for workers from Europe. Colonial labor grew significantly from 1918 to 1939,

playing a crucial role in France's economy and socio-cultural structure. The labor shortage, particularly after World War I, created a need for workers in France. During this period, France recruited workers from both Europe and its colonial territories. In the 1920s, to meet its development needs and facilitate the recruitment of workers who would contribute to reconstruction efforts, France signed agreements with countries such as Poland (September 3, 1919), Italy (September 30, 1919), and the Czechoslovak Republic (September 20, 1919 and March 1920) (INSEE, 2011). Due to these large waves of migration, the number of immigrants increased continuously until 1931. The decrease in the immigrant population due to the 1931 crisis and the 1932 quota was compensated for by these agreements. In 1924, various employer groups established the General Immigration Company (SGI), a type of temporary labor company aimed at providing large numbers of the necessary workforce for the benefit of their clients. After World War II, France experienced a period of rapid economic development from 1945 to 1975, known as the "Trente Glorieuses" (Thirty Glorious Years). During this period, the French government pursued immigration policies that encouraged the recruitment of foreign workers. The establishment of the National Immigration Office (ONI) in 1945 was a significant step in organizing and regulating the flow of immigrant labor to France. In the early 1950s, workers from South Africa constituted a significant portion of the foreign workforce in France. The largest group was Italian, followed by Spaniards and Portuguese.By the 1960s, the focus had shifted from economic concerns to social issues related to the integration and settlement of immigrant populations. This led to the emergence of family reunification as a significant aspect of immigration policy. The realities of immigrants' social lives made family reunification policies a necessary development. The adoption of family reunification policies contributed to the transformation of France's immigrant population from a predominantly male workforce to a more diverse community.The Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) had a profound impact on immigration in France. The war also revealed France's complex relationship with its former colonies and populations. The state had to manage the tension between acknowledging the rights of Algerian workers contributing to the economy and addressing security concerns associated with anti-colonial sentiment. As a result, policies in the 1960s and early 1970s frequently oscillated between inclusive measures aimed at integrating long-term immigrants and restrictive policies stemming from political concerns. The 1973 oil crisis marked a significant turning point in French immigration policy. A global economic recession exacerbated unemployment and economic instability in France. These challenges forced the government to reassess its approach to immigration, shifting from the open policies of the post-war era to a more restrictive stance aimed at reducing the number of foreign workers and controlling the flow of immigration. In response to the economic downturn, the French government implemented various restrictive measures, beginning with the decision to halt labor immigration in 1974. The aim was to limit the flow of foreign workers and prioritize employment opportunities for French citizens amidst economic hardship. This policy shift marked a departure from previous decades where economic growth had increased the demand for foreign labor. Although labor immigration was officially halted, certain categories of

workers, such as seasonal and highly skilled migrants, were still permitted under specific conditions. The halt to labor immigration did not immediately reduce the number of foreigners in France; instead, it encouraged many migrants who might otherwise have returned to their countries of origin to settle permanently.In the late 1980s and early 1990s, various laws were enacted to tighten immigration controls and restrict the rights of immigrants. The Pasqua Law of 1986 introduced measures to restrict family reunification, facilitate the deportation of undocumented immigrants, and tighten asylum policies. The trend toward restrictive policies continued with the Méhaignerie Law of 1993, which introduced stricter conditions for acquiring French citizenship. The law required immigrant children born in France to formally apply for citizenship upon reaching the age of majority, rather than automatically acquiring it. Between the 1970s and 1990s, immigration policy discourse shifted significantly. The securitization of immigration policy became more pronounced in the 1990s, with fears of illegal immigration, terrorism, and social unrest in immigrant communities driving public debate.Rising anti-immigrant sentiment and changing political dynamics marked a significant shift in French immigration policy. The move from labor recruitment to restriction and securitization reflected broader social and political concerns about national identity, integration, and security.In the early 2000s, France's immigration policy was based on a two-pronged approach to controlling illegal immigration and promoting the integration of legal immigrants. This included tightening border controls, combating human trafficking, and fighting against students trained to exploit undocumented immigrants.The 2008 global financial crisis fueled anti-immigrant sentiment, leading to economic instability, increased unemployment, and social tensions. In response, French authorities implemented measures aimed at protecting the domestic labor market, including limiting the number of work permits granted to non-EU citizens and tightening eligibility requirements for residence permits.The 2018 "Asylum and Migration Act" aimed to reduce the average processing time for asylum applications from 11 months to 6 months and to extend the detention period to facilitate the deportation of undocumented migrants. These reforms aimed to meet the growing public demand for tougher immigration policies while ensuring France's international compliance. The Macron government also called for a more equitable distribution of refugees across the European Union.

Republican Universalism vs. Multiculturalism

The French government's policy of hiring foreign workers, implemented since the Fifth Republic, has had positive effects on the economy, but its impact on social dynamics remains a subject of debate.The economic hardships of the 1970s and 1980s, coupled with rising unemployment, fueled anti-immigrant sentiment in France. The far-right National Front (now the National Union), led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, capitalized on this sentiment by linking immigration to social problems such as crime and unemployment, and to the erosion of French cultural identity. The party's rhetoric resonated, influenced public opinion, and put pressure on mainstream political parties to adopt stricter immigration policies.Currently, the

public, having become accustomed to the refugees who make up the vast majority of the population, is divided in opinion. Some support them on grounds of human rights, while others oppose them due to economic and security concerns.

Secularism (Laïcité) and Social Cohesion

Laïcité relies on the division between private life, where adherents believe religion belongs, and the public sphere, in which each individual should appear as a simple citizen who is equal to all other citizens, not putting the emphasis on any ethnic, religious, or other particularities.

This is meant to both protect the government from any possible interference from religious organizations and to protect the religious organization from political quarrels and controversies.

Secularism first took shape in France during the French Revolution: the abolition of the Ancien Régime in August 1789 was accompanied by the end of ecclesiastical privileges, the reaffirmation of universal principles, including freedom of conscience, and the limitation of religious freedoms expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

In the 19th century, secularization laws gradually freed the State from its historical ties with the Catholic Church and created new political and social norms based on the principle of republican universalism. This process, part of a broader movement associated with modernity, entrusted the sovereign populace with the redefinition of political and social foundations—such as legislative power, civil rites, and the evolution of law and morality—independently of any religious dogma.

To support this principle and reduce Catholic resistance to it, the Third Republic nationalized education and healthcare activities that had not previously been handled by the state. This revolutionized the organization of hospitals and the school system. For the latter, the Jules Ferry laws secularized education, which had been public and compulsory since 1833. This period was marked by an educational war between the Republic and the Church. The Republic expelled the Jesuits from France, followed by all other teaching congregations in 1903. In 1904, it prohibited religious from teaching, a ban that was only lifted in 1940 by the Vichy regime. Passed in 1905, the law separating Church and State, which marked the culmination of an assertive secularization process, nationalized Church property for a second time, and prohibited the State from subsidizing any religious denomination.

Since Bonaparte's Civil Code, which defined divorce for the first time, the State has legislated and used secularism to devise new rules of law for the family and the individual.

With the French Constitution of 1958, secularism became the foundation of the republican pact, guaranteeing national uniformity.

Under the terms of the Declaration of 1789, which forms part of today's constitutional bloc, religious freedom is limited by the public order defined by law. Movements that do not adhere to this public order are typically classified as sects. Such movements can be entirely banned under the About-Picard law. However, despite this legislation, there is no consensus on the legal criteria for condemning an entire movement, aside from the crimes or misdemeanors committed by its members.

France takes action to return to secularism due to the intensification of social tensions in France today. The prevalence of Islamic terror and the spread of Islamophobia in society have led France to seek to reinforce republican values to glue French society. France has made it clear that it aims to reinforce French society's cohesiveness by sticking to French secularism and republican values and combating religious fanaticism.

The reasons for this movement can be examined under several main headings. France has become a destination for refugees seeking asylum from Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. In the early stages of the European migration crisis, France experienced a high number of terrorist incidents. The influx of migrants seeking asylum in France in 2015 was incompatible with French cultural ideas and lifestyle, leading to a series of conflicts and a more radical refugee sentiment at the time. In 2015, 36 terrorist acts occurred in France, with the Paris attacks in November being the deadliest and causing the most injuries. The number of terrorist incidents in France decreased after adapting to the situation, from 2017 to 2020. However, terrorist attacks continued in France in 2020; these attacks included the beheading of a teacher, a horrific act of barbarity. Because Islam is the most common religion among asylum seekers, the enormous number of migrants threatens France's national security. Islamist extremism and Muslim assimilation have become an urgent concern for French society. To combat the spread of extremist terrorist attacks and Islamophobia, France aims to counter the growth of Islamist radicalism by promoting France's secular principles, thereby supporting the social integration of French Muslim refugees, and taking necessary measures with the European Union to deal with the refugee crisis.

Border Security and EU Obligations

The Entry and Residence of Foreigners Act (CESEDA) is the body responsible for visas and asylum applications, as well as setting rules for deportation. Border security in France is based on the 1958 French Constitution. Due to France's membership in the Schengen Agreement, there are no border controls with EU countries. Border police (police aux frontieres), who oversee border security in the field, are responsible for border monitoring and control together with the EU agency Frontex.

Asylum Law and Humanitarian Responsibilities

French asylum law regulates the process of seeking refuge in France for people suffering from war and similar situations. Under this law, asylum applications are reviewed with the assistance of the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA), which determines whether applicants qualify for refugee status. During this process, victims have the right to remain in France. If an asylum application is rejected, further court decisions and appeals are handled by the National Court of Asylum (CNDA). This legal framework established by France ensures control over immigration.

Economic Impacts of Immigration

Economically, immigration fills labor shortages, particularly in industries requiring specific skills or manual labor. This influx of workers helps sustain productivity and competitiveness, supporting France's overall economic development. However, the economic impact of immigration is not without challenges. Proponents of immigration restriction have argued that undocumented immigrants in particular are a net drain, especially on state and local budgets, which bear a large portion of the costs such as education and health-care costs for a larger population. Issues such as wage suppression in certain sectors and integration barriers can arise. Addressing these challenges requires thoughtful policies that promote inclusivity, skills development, and equitable opportunities for all residents. According to a UNHCR report, 42 % of recognized refugees in France found employment within one year of getting legal status. Four years later, about 63 % were employed. This shows increasing economic contribution over time.

Public Opinion and Political Polarization

Attitudes to immigration in France, as in most European countries, are highly stable and are in fact becoming slightly more favourable. France has relatively negative attitudes to immigration when compared with other western European countries. However, the French

see immigration as a relatively unimportant issue affecting their country, considerably less so than other western European electorates. The recent uptick in perceived importance of immigration in almost all western European countries has been far less pronounced in France. The French see cultural assimilation as more important when deciding who should be allowed to immigrate than economic self-sufficiency, relative to other western European states. Attitudes to immigration can be powerfully predicted by fundamental psychological traits, with individuals displaying openness and excitability more drawn towards pro-immigration positions and those displaying conscientiousness and concern over safety more drawn towards anti-immigration positions. Attitudes to immigration are also powerfully predicted by broader political attitudes, such as left-right self-placement, desire for egalitarianism and desire for a strong government to secure safety. Also, individuals who are more sceptical of the motives of politicians tend to be more opposed to immigration. Individuals living in more diverse regions and who have more ethnically diverse friends tend to hold more pro-immigration positions. With the above variables, we can explain around 40 per cent of variation in attitudes to immigration. Surprisingly, with the above variables taken into account, we find no direct effect of university education, parental education, nationalism, cultural supremacism, interest in politics or having lived abroad on attitudes to immigration. Attitudes to immigration in France, it seems, are the result of deep-lying psychological differences within the electorate and are unlikely to be easily changed by exposure to new information or political campaigns.

National Identity: Legal Concept or Political Tool?

In 1958, the French Constitution defined its state under the attributes of indivisibility, democracy, and secularism, and with these values, citizens are measured not by their ethnicity, culture, or religion, but by their commitment to republican values. To protect the integrity of this inclusive republic, France implemented various immigration controls for many years.

Now, the debates continue, fueled by the government and opposition parties advocating two opposing ideas in French politics. The immigrant-friendly ideas of Renaissance, the central liberal party in the country's government, are as in 3.3. Various sources have described the party as being centrist, center-right, or big tent. Historically, back in 2019, the party was also labeled by some sources as centre-left. Macron described the party in 2016 as being a progressive party of both the left and the right. In 2017, observers and political commentators have described the party as being culturally liberal, as well as socially liberal and economically liberal in ideology. The party has also been described as using anti-establishment, populist strategies and rhetoric, with discourse comparable to the Third Way as adopted by the Labor Party in the UK during its New Labor phase.The party has been described as supporting some policies close to centre-right classical liberalism.

The National Front, known as Rassemblement National (RN) since 2018, is a far-right nationalist political party in France that was founded in 1972. It emerged from a coalition of various neo-fascist movements that sought to promote extreme nationalist policies, including strong opposition to immigration and communism.

The conflicts and disagreements between the two sides intensify regarding the immigration issue. As a result of these conflicts, national identity ceases to be a constitutional principle and becomes a political tool used to divide voters.

Government Reform Proposals and Legislative Challenges

With the deepening of globalization and regional integration, the trend of international migration is also changing synchronously. France has experienced four waves of immigration in its history, which have had a huge impact on the country and given rise to numerous immigration issues. Since the 1970s, France has been formulating immigration related laws and regulations, actively addressing immigration challenges, and continuously reforming and improving them dynamically.

The immigration reforms proposed by the government primarily focus on strengthening deportation policies, increasing border controls, and speeding up asylum procedures. They also aim to support integration through easier access to language learning and employment.Recent reforms, aided by European Union commitments, aim to address security concerns. However, while left-wing parties advocate for more inclusive and humane policies, right-wing parties advocate for tighter controls. Their friction and disagreements are causing disagreements in parliament. Immigration, already a sensitive issue for French politics, is made more difficult to implement through regulations and reforms coming from public opinion and the European Union.

Institutional Tensions in Passing Immigration Legislation

The president and prime minister frequently suggests changes to improve border security, expedite the asylum process, or redefine integration policies. However, these proposals could be blocked or amended by the Senate and National Assembly, particularly if the ruling party does not have a stable majority. Political polarization makes arguments more heated because right-wing parties place a higher priority on national security and sovereignty, while left-wing parties typically highlight human rights and humanitarian protections. The Constitutional Council's authority to invalidate clauses that go against fundamental values like equality before the law or the right to asylum leads to additional conflicts. Furthermore, France has to abide by EU laws, such as those pertaining to migration and asylum, which may limit purely national strategies.

4. Mechanisms for Resolving Legislative Deadlock

4.1 Confidence Motions

The Prime Minister may, after deliberation by the Council of Ministers, make the passing of a Finance Bill or Social Security Financing Bill an issue of a vote of confidence before the National Assembly. In that event, the Bill shall be considered passed unless a resolution of no-confidence, tabled within the subsequent twenty-four hours, is carried as provided for in the foregoing paragraph. In addition, the Prime Minister may use the said procedure for one other Government or Private Members' Bill per session.

4.2 Accelerated Legislative Procedures

Simplified examination procedure for bills that have broad political agreement (for example, the ratification of an international treaty), a simplified examination procedure may be adopted for the plenary debate. Where this is the case:

There is no general discussion of the Bill or speeches on articles.

Members only vote on articles for which amendments have been proposed.

If no amendments are put forward, the entire Bill is immediately put to the vote.

There are restrictions on who can make speeches on the Bill.

Under the blocked vote procedure, the government can require the House considering a Bill to proceed to a single vote on all or part of the text under debate, retaining only the amendments proposed or accepted by the government (article 44 al.3, Constitution). This means that votes on individual articles and amendments not supported by the government can be suppressed ("blocked"), although they may still be debated in the House. The government can choose when to adopt this procedure. It can also determine the text subject to the single vote, which may be the whole Bill or one or more specified articles.

4.3 Executive Responsibility in Law Adoption

The President of the Republic is the head of state.

They ensure compliance with the Constitution and, through their arbitration, ensure the proper functioning of public authorities and the continuity of the French state.

The President is elected every five years by direct popular vote.

The role of the President is defined in articles 5 to 19 of the Constitution.

The President has a direct impact on the political life of the country and plays a significant role in foreign and domestic affairs. Unlike in some countries, it is not a purely ceremonial position.

The President of the Republic shall appoint the Prime Minister. He shall terminate the appointment of the Prime Minister when the latter tenders the resignation of the Government. On the recommendation of the Prime Minister, he shall appoint the other members of the Government and terminate their appointments.

The President of the Republic shall preside over the Council of Ministers.

The President of the Republic may, after consulting the Prime Minister and the Presidents of the Houses of Parliament, declare the National Assembly dissolved.

A general election shall take place no fewer than twenty days and no more than forty days after the dissolution. The National Assembly shall sit as of right on the second Thursday following its election. Should this sitting fall outside the period prescribed for the ordinary session, a session shall be convened by right for a fifteen-day period. No further dissolution shall take place within a year following said election.

Where the institutions of the Republic, the independence of the Nation, the integrity of its territory or the fulfilment of its international commitments are under serious and immediate threat, and where the proper functioning of the constitutional public authorities is interrupted, the President of the Republic shall take measures required by these circumstances, after formally consulting the Prime Minister, the Presidents of the Houses of Parliament and the Constitutional Council.

He shall address the Nation and inform it of such measures.

The measures shall be designed to provide the constitutional public authorities as swiftly as possible, with the means to carry out their duties. The Constitutional Council shall be consulted with regard to such measures.

Parliament shall sit as of right.

The National Assembly shall not be dissolved during the exercise of such emergency powers.

After thirty days of the exercise of such emergency powers, the matter may be referred to the Constitutional Council by the President of the National Assembly, the President of the Senate, sixty Members of the National Assembly or sixty Senators, so as to decide if the conditions laid down in paragraph one still apply. It shall make its decision by public announcement as soon as possible. It shall, as of right, carry out such an examination and shall make its decision in the same manner after sixty days of the exercise of emergency powers or at any moment thereafter.

4.4 Constitutional Instruments Available to the Government

The government determines and conducts state policy. Members of the government cannot simultaneously hold any parliamentary office.

The Prime Minister exercises legislative and regulatory powers to:

- Introduce Bills into Parliament (article 39, Constitution).
- Countersign instruments of the President, subject to certain exceptions (article 19, Constitution).
- Refer disagreements between the government and Parliament to the Constitutional Council for adjudication (article 41, Constitution).
- Make regulations that do not fall within the scope of statute law. This right may be delegated to other members of the executive.

The government may ask Parliament for authorisation to enact delegated legislation, which is subject to subsequent Parliamentary approval

5. Executive Authority and Parliamentary Oversight in the Fifth Republic

5.1 Government Accountability to the Assembly

The French parliament is bicameral, consisting of the Senate and the National Assembly. The National Assembly is elected by general vote for a five-year term. Currently (according to electoral law) it comprises 577 deputies elected from single-seat constituencies by a two-round majority system.

The Senate is directly elected by electoral boards comprising over one hundred thousand members from different levels of administration and local government for each region

(county). The electoral system consists of assemblies with three or more seats, while assemblies with one or two seats are based on a concentration system. Regions are divided into two classes, so all senators are ultimately elected every three years for a six-year term.

The National Assembly is far more powerful than the Senate. When a disagreement arises between the two chambers, the government convenes a conciliation committee composed of members from both chambers. If one chamber rejects the committee's conciliation, or if no conciliation is reached, the government can refer its final decision to the National Assembly. The government holds significant power over the legislative process and is quite dominant over parliament. These powers include determining when debate on a government bill will end and which projects will be considered. It can also convert a finance or social security funding bill into a trust bill, which is considered passed by the National Assembly as long as the government is not removed from office by a vote of no confidence. Furthermore, if parliament fails to decide on a finance bill or a social security funding bill within 70 or 50 days respectively, the government has the power to pass such bills by trust.

5.2 The Vote of No Confidence

The National Assembly, believing that the legitimacy of the current Government is undermined and is no longer functional or does not represent the people of France, can submit a motion of no confidence. 1/10 of the total number of Deputies must sign the motion of no confidence. The motion must be submitted to the President of the Assembly in writing, including the reasoning. A simple majority is required for the introduction and the debate on the motion of no confidence. A speakers' list of in favour and against will be established, and speeches from Deputies shall be heard in alternating order. A motion to move on with the voting can be given at any time the floor is open. The motion of no confidence requires an absolute majority (⅔). If the voting is successful, the Prime Minister and its cabinet must resign. Following the resignations, the President of the Republic can either assign a new Prime Minister or call for elections.

5.3 Constitutional Tools Strengthening the Executive

In relation to making new laws, the President has powers to:

Promulgate laws and require Parliament to reopen debate on a law that has been presented for promulgation for the first time.

Sign delegated legislation and regulations(a form of delegated legislation and Regulation).

Submit certain Bills to a referendum or refer a law or a Treaty to the Constitutional Council (Conseil constitutionnel) for consideration.

5.4 Political Consequences of Executive-Led Law Adoption

In the Council of Presidents, the President appoints the Prime Minister, who in turn nominates other ministers for appointment by the President. The Prime Minister and the cabinet can only be dismissed by the National Assembly and are collectively accountable to that assembly. Since the majority of the National Assembly is usually held by the President's party or its elected members, the President and the Prime Minister are generally from the same political party. However, sometimes the National Assembly has been controlled by a party opposed to the Presidency, leading to the President and Prime Minister being from different parties running together. This is called joint rule. There have been three periods of joint rule totaling nine years. While the President has independent authority in setting foreign policy, all domestic policy decisions taken by the President must be approved by the Prime Minister. Cabinet ministers set policy and present it to the new libertarians. In practice, the President has considerable power over a cabinet of the same political views, including the power to dismiss the cabinet; however, this influence is much less in joint rule situations. The President has the power to dissolve the National Assembly and call new elections, but can only do so at most once a year. The President does not have veto power over legislation, but can return a bill to Parliament for reconsideration; if reconsidered, the bill must be proclaimed as law. The President is removed from office (impeachment) by Parliament, acting as the Supreme Court, for "an office manifestly incompatible with the continuation of his office." This process is initiated by one chamber, the other decides by secret ballot, and a two-thirds majority is required for impeachment. Upon the request of the Prime Minister or his two chambers, the President can call for binding referendums on many issues. In practice, presidents have been able to participate in referendum cycles without such a request, as the results of the Constitutional Council are considered valid because the principle of popular vote continues.The French parliament is bicameral, consisting of the Senate and the National Assembly. The National Assembly is elected by general vote for a five-year term. Currently, it comprises 577 deputies elected from single-seat constituencies using a two-round majority system: If no candidate receives a majority of the votes in the first round, any candidate receiving at least 12.5% of the registered votes can proceed to a second round, with the candidate with the most votes winning. To be eligible to run for office, one must be a citizen, at least 18 years old, eligible to vote, not have been convicted of a crime or barred from candidacy by a court, and have a bank account.

The Senate is indirectly elected by electoral boards formed for each region (district), comprising over one hundred thousand members from various levels of local government. The electoral system is based on proportional representation in regions with three or more seats, and on majority representation in regions with one or two seats. The constituencies are

divided into two classes, so that half of all senators are elected every three years for a six-year term. Initially, senators served nine-year terms, but this was reduced to six years in 2004.

The National Assembly is far more powerful than the Senate. When there is disagreement between the two chambers, the government convenes a reconciliation committee composed of representatives from both chambers. If one chamber rejects the committee's reconciliation proposal, or if no reconciliation is reached, the government can refer the final decision to the National Assembly. The government has significant powers over the legislative process and largely dominates parliament; these powers include determining when debate on a government bill ends and which amendments can be considered. It can also turn a finance or social security funding bill into a vote of no confidence; this bill is considered to have passed the National Assembly unless the government is removed from office by a vote of no confidence. Furthermore, if parliament fails to decide on a finance bill or a social security funding bill within 70 or 50 days, respectively, the government has the power to pass such legislation by decree. Parliamentary autonomy is also limited, as each chamber is not permitted to form more than eight committees.

France has several final courts, each with its own jurisdiction. The Court of Cassation examines appeals in criminal and civil cases; the Council of State examines administrative appeals; and a court of jurisdiction decides in the following cases:

5.5 Democratic Legitimacy and Public Reaction

Democratic legitimacy refers to the validity of governance systems based on the principles of representation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness, and deliberation, ensuring that all member states and relevant non-state actors are inclusively represented in decision-making processes. France implemented numerous reforms during the process of adopting a constitutional monarchy. The most important of these was the constitutional amendment that allowed the people to elect their own president through votes. These reforms not only placed France among developed countries but also put an end to democratic debates and irregularities within the country.

While some in the public welcomed and supported these reforms, others argued that parliament did not adequately reflect the voice of the people. Protests also supported by opposition parties, have taken place in Paris and other central cities regarding these issues.

5.6 Comparative Perspectives in European Democracies

Unlike the parliamentary systems used in leading European countries, France has a system with a strong presidential profile and government. France grants the president more effective authority in foreign policy and potential crisis situations, meaning the president can make

independent decisions in such circumstances. However, the situation is different in Germany and the United Kingdom.

6. Key Political Actors and Factions

6.1 Presidential Coalition

This group follows a center policy around president Macron's party Renaissance. The major group in the coalition is Ensemble pour la Republique (EPR) with 92 deputies. EPR has supported the government's bills 18 times out of 19. Les Democrates (DEM) with 36 members also follows a center policy in the assembly and is the biggest supporter of the government (voting in favor of all the 19 bills presented). The third group supporting the coalition is Libertes, Independants, Outre-mer et Territoires (LIOT) with 22 members. Even though some other groups are classified non-center on the political spectrum, the government receives votes in favor of the bill from those groups from time to time when bills are presented. The presidential center group, including unregistered deputies, does not enjoy an absolute majority in the assembly which results in the government operating as a minority administration, thus relying on support from other blocs to pass laws.

The former statements of President Macron indicate that the presidential bloc stands closer to the far-right bloc thus following an anti-immigrationist and pro-nationalist policy.

6.2 Left-Wing Coalition (NFP)

The left-wing coalition currently has the relative majority in the French National Assembly. It consists of deputies that are members or related to 4 political groups and some unregistered deputies who support the coalition in the assembly context by coordinating with the broader coalition. The group with the most seats is La France insoumise (LFI) with 71 registered deputies. Socialistes et apparentes (SOC) which follows a centre-left policy and is historically one of France's major parties, is a key partner in the coalition and contributes a substantial number of deputies. The third party that forms the coalition is Ecologistes et Social (ECOS). The last partner of the coalition is Gauche Democrate et Republicaine (GDR). Although this group is smaller in seat count; they play a distinct role on the left while being closely linked to the French Communist tradition.

NFP follows a pro-immigration policy opposing center-right and far-right groups. It follows an anti-nationalist policy and even stresses the importance of foreigners to the domestic economy.

6.3 Right-Wing Opposition

The traditional right-wing coalition is mainly formed by Droite Republicaine, a center-right group with 49 members and Horizons & Independents which is also a center-right group with 34 members. Even though they officially refuse to join Macron's presidential coalition to "protect their brand" they refuse to overthrow the government to prevent chaos or a far-left takeover. Their most important factor is, although little in figures, their votes since without the center-right's support, the already unstable government would be unable to pass any legislation without using the controversial Article 49.3.

6.4 Far-Right Bloc

The far-right is the "total opposer" of the government in the National Assembly. It is formed by 2 major groups: Rassemblement National (RN) which has the superiority in seat numbers when it comes to single group numbers and Union des Droites pour la Republique (UDR), a breakaway faction of the traditional conservative party (LR). The presence of UDR allows the coalition to claim that they are a broad "Union of the Right" rather than a single party opposer. The far-right bloc has the "motion of censure" threat which is the most effective advantage of the opposing coalitions over the government. It firmly opposes immigration, advocating significant cuts to legal immigration, supports the protection of "French identity" and stricter control of illegal immigration.

The far-right bloc defines nationalism as a "defense" against French assimilation. The coalition uses the concept of *laïcité* to oppose what they term "Islamist ideology," which they view as a direct threat to French republican values.

6.5 Independent Deputies

These deputies are not registered or related to any political groups in the National Assembly and yet participate in votings just like any other deputy. There are currently 10 independent deputies out of 577.

7. Key Terms and Constitutional Concepts

National Assembly: A National Assembly is a legislative body that typically serves as a key component of a nation's government, responsible for enacting, amending and repealing laws. It can exist as a single-house assemby or as a part of a bicameral legislature, which includes two separate chambers. The primary function of a National Assembly is to represent national interests rather than regional concerns, setting it apart from state or regional lesgislatures. The concept of representative democracy, where citizens elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf, is foundational to the structure of a National Assembly. This model has

historical roots dating back to the Roman Republic and has become prevalent globally, with many countries adopting similar systems.

Executive: person/people who have responsibility for management and decision-making in institutions.

Legislation:It encompasses the lawmaking process and all the laws that emerge.

Immigration: The action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country

8. Recommended Readings & Constitutional Documents

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