

# French political parties essay sample



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## Introduction

### 1. The Political System of France

The political parties in France contribute to the political framework and development in the country. The political structure of France can be considered as a partly presidential. The political parties are representative of the different groups in the society. The political system is a structured unit composed of the leader of the state, the leader of the government and the different parties. The executive, the legislative and the judiciary comprise the major functions of the different divisions of the leadership (Blondel and Drexel 1968).

It can be considered as an interesting challenge to understand and critically undertake an analysis regarding the political development of France. This is due to the fact that the country can be considered as one of the most innovative, creative and complex society that even flourished during the early part of human history. The unique development of France does not exclude its political structure. A history of fighting against different types of wars such as political, social and aesthetics had bombarded the country and shaped its development. In this growth and development, a unique political dynamics was achieved (Theen and Wilson 2001).

The political structure of France can be considered as the identity of the people, thus, knowing the politics, the culture can be studied at the same time. Due to the important niche that politics occupy in the French society it has attracted the attention of the academe and similar groups to focus research on the dynamics of the political parties and groups in the country.

The different French political parties are divided on the basis of their functions. This trend had been developed through the course of history of the country (Ignazi and Ysmal 1998).

### 1. Purpose of Study

The study that was conducted was aimed to have a view on the roles of the different political parties in France and its importance in the political structure of the country. Being one of the most influential groups in the politics of France, the political parties are responsible for the different development in the country, may it be economics, social and cultural.

Through the course of the study, the evolutions and trends in the French politics is taken into consideration along with the molding of the type of political organization being utilized by the leaders of the state and government. Included in the study is an overview of the segregation of the duties of the different branch of the leadership within which the political parties can be considered as an important part. The main focus of the study is the classification and the duties of the political parties.

### 1. Sources used in the Study

The study includes references that discuss the structure of the French political leadership. These references serve as sources for the background information regarding the French political parties. Included in these types of references are published works and periodicals about the subject.

An in-depth discussion of the dynamics between the different groups in the French government is also an important point that is taken into consideration in the study that was conducted. The topic regarding the interactions of the <https://assignbuster.com/french-political-parties-essay-sample/>

different political parties is also deemed important in the study conducted. References that present views related to these areas in French political system are considered in the study.

## The French Political Parties

### 1. Background

The study regarding the French political parties can take diverging forms. The party systems can be studied on the basis of the functions on the political structure. The present niche deemed the importance of the inner operations and dynamics within the political party. These most significantly involves the course of actions and the decision making of the political party specifically when the members hold certain positions in the state and in the government (Lawson 1994).

As political parties to some extent conform to the needs of the people known through the elected representative of the group, the individual parties represented are in turn designated on the basis of the representatives. One of the effects that can be recognized is the tendency of the public to choose a leader on the basis of the political party that is represented. Such effect is inevitable, thus, it can be considered beneficial to be able to determine and know the political parties from the inside. This action will enable the capability determination of the political party and the representative politicians to be fairly judged and distinguished.

A study on the inner mechanism of a French political party and the dynamic interrelationships amongst the different parties can be considered essential to attain understanding of the manifestations in the political arena of France.

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## 1. The History of the French Political Parties

### 2. Early Period of the French Government

The development of the political parties in France can be traced through the political history of the country. The establishment of the political structure of the country started as early as the commencement of the French revolution in 1780's. Another important event marked the history of the present state of politics if the establishment of the First Republic. These events developed the history of political parties in France (Godfrey 1974; Theen and Wilson 2001).

The “ Revolutionary Government” then followed subsequent to the establishment of the First Republic led by Jacobins. The leadership of the said government was short-lived due to the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte that reinstated the monarchy in France and pronounces himself as the Emperor of France. Charles X is the successor of Napoleon that established and rebuilt the monarchy by instilling absolute leadership as the early part of the French history (Godfrey 1974).

In 1830, the Bourbon monarchy was ousted from power and King Louis-Philippe led the country. This Orléans monarchy also referred to as the July Monarchy or the “ Bourgeois” Monarchy was toppled in another revolution. This paved the way to the Second Republic. In the Second Republic, one of the groups that performed a significant role in the government is the Liberal Republicans. Louis Bonaparte is the next leader of the Second Republic who proclaimed himself as an emperor and halted the republican government. He brought back the empire, Second Empire. His reign was long-lived. It has

ended during the France's war with Prussia where he abandoned leadership (Godfrey 1974).

## 2. The Third Republic

Being in a crucial situation at war, the country needed a leadership, thus, the Third Republic was established. The instituted republic rule can be considered as a strong rule due to the fact that it served as then pillar for the present political structure of France. During the Third Republic, the pro-republican parties started to be established. It is also during the era wherein the political parties instigate actions and began to occupy a significant role in the French government (Theen and Wilson 2001).

Another political group parties that gained power during the era is the Radical Party. In 1899, Waldeck-Rousseau rise into power and was recognized as the prime minister. During the leadership of the prime minister, the pro-republican parties founded the “ Union of the Left”. These groups endured the Great War, prior to the establishment of the French Communist Party which is composed of the socialists (Godfrey 1974).

The union of the Radicals, the Socialists and the Communists to form the Left-Wing Parties is another highlight of the Third Republic. The leadership of the Socialist Party followed but the Prime Minister quit due to the overtaking of the Germany forces and ended the reign of the Socialists referred to as the “ Popular Front”. Due to the German forces the government moved to Vichy while leaders established different groups such as De Gaulle and the Free French Forces in London. The unified action of the independently

established political groups paved the way to the owning of freedom from the Germans, referred to as the Liberation (Godfrey 1974).

### 3. The Fourth Republic

The victory paved the way to the realization for a need to have a constitution for the country. The Republican constitution paved the way to the Fourth Republic. During the leadership of the Fourth Republic, the Algerian Revolution took place and France was segregated. The constitution was amended to increase the power of the head of state, the President. De Gaulle was the designated President (Taylor 1951).

The Fourth Republic then is still marked by the three political parties, the Socialists, the Communists and the Christian Democrats. The trend during this period is either to strengthen the established group or to adapt the established rules. The major groups that were present in this period include the political parties that were established either in the Third Republic or earlier in the political history that have survived the turmoil of the French political dynamics.

Table 1. The List of French political parties in the Fourth Republic.

Action

Démocratiqu

e et Sociale

(ADS)

Groupe des

Indépendant

s d'Outre-

Mer (IOM)

Mouvement

Démocratiqu

e de

Rénovation

Malgache

(MDRM)

Mouvement

Républicain

Populaire

(Popular

Republican

Movement)

(MRP)

Mouvement

du Triomphe

des Libertés

Démocratiqu

es (en

Algérie)/T. L.

D. A. (MTLD)

Mouvement

Unifié de la

Renaissance



Française

(MURF)

Parti des

Déshérités

Malgaches

(PADESM)

Parti

Républicain

de la Liberté

(Republican

Party of

Liberty)

( PRL)

Parti

(Progrés)

Social

Français

(PSF)

Rassemblem

ent

Démocratiqu

e Africain

(RDA)

Parti de la

Réconciliatio  
n Française  
(RF)

Rassemblem  
ent des  
Gauches  
Républicaine  
s (RGR)

Rassemblem  
ent du  
Peuple  
Français  
(French  
People’s  
Rally) (RPF)

Républicains  
Populaires  
Indépendant  
s  
(Independen  
t Popular  
Republicans)  
(RPI)

Parti  
Socialiste

(Section

Française de

l'Internation

ale Ouvrière)

(Socialist

Party) (SFIO)

Union

Démocratiqu

e des

Indépendant

s

(Independen

t Democratic

Union) (UDI)

Union

Démocratiqu

e du

Manifeste

Algérien

(UDMA)

Union

Démocratiqu

e et

Socialiste de

la Résistance

(UDSR)

Union des

Républicains

Progressiste

s (URP)

Union

Républicaine

et Résistante

(URR)

Source: (Taylor 1951)

The French political parties that survived this era were considered in the era of the Fifth Republic towards the contemporary period. The development of co-existence between the different forms of leadership and the presence of increasing number of political parties that contribute to the decision making of the nation was being developed through this era.

While the country continuously develops into having a diverse political structure, the firmness and solidity of the leadership and the political organization can be considered increasing (Taylor 1951; Theen and Wilson 2001). This is attributed to the history of lessons in terms of governance tested specifically during times of conflicts and wars. The country has experienced a variety of different forms of governance and leadership, thus, it has learned to resolve different conflicts that can arise on the basis of the past experiences.

#### 4. The Fifth Republic

In times of wherein there is a need for the amendment of the constitution, a birth of a new era takes place. During the reign of the Fourth Republic the needs of the nation are taken into consideration but due to the continuous development of the society and the increasing influence of the international community, a need for the inclusion of new policies that can be applied to the political situation of the country arise (Farrell, Holliday, and Webb 2002).

##### 4. 1. De Gaulle's View

One of the critics of the policies of the political structure of France is De Gaulle who believed in the innovations and changes needed by the government. The need for increased strength in policies in governance is pressing. The present governance of France can be considered as his endeavor. This is due to the fact that he perceived the need for a leader specifically a president to lead the nation. The responsibilities of the said leader are independent from the role of the parliamentary system (Aron 1960; Farrell, Holliday, and Webb 2002).

##### 4. 2. The Political Parties in the Fifth Republic

In contrary to the view of De Gaulle that the fragility of the political structure can lead to problems in leadership, the problems were mounted due to the increasing conflict and influence between the different political groups. Although the development of the French political parties can be traced through the history of the country, the formalization of the roles being undertaken by the country took place only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Farrell, Holliday, and Webb 2002).

In the era of the Fifth Republic, the increasing attempt to unify the different parties occurs. The centrist and leftist parties were fused to form the Socialist Party. This group does not include the Communists. The move to unify the Left had resulted to greater advantage in the election results. The segregated Right was awakened by the significant increase in the poll standing of the Left (Farrell, Holliday, and Webb 2002; Ignazi and Ysmal 1998).

The trend in the French political parties is based on the influence that can be acquired over the nation. A move on unification has led to the increased control in the French politics. Along with the increased poll results, an increase in the legislative responsibilities and influence can also be observed. The French government also exhibits unique leadership. Due to this trend, the political parties aim to sweep the poll. This can be deemed as the main reason for the unification of the Left in the earlier part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic (Ignazi and Ysmal 1998).

1. The Dynamics of the French Political Parties in the Present Era

2. The Highlights

This is due to the existence of the polarized power of the president and the prime minister with segregated duties and responsibilities. In cases wherein the two leaders are elected from the same political party or even group of French political parties, the utmost influence of the group for which the leaders are included can be attained. This can be attributed to the increased influence in the legislation aside from the executive branch of the government.

Such reign of the political parties can be compared to monarchy due to the fact, that decisions made by the leaders have a great possibility of targeting the good of the political party and not the greater good of the nation. Due to the fact that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, the cases wherein the leaders of the two divisions of the government came from the same political party, the influence that can be gained by the particular party can be corrupted.

One unprecedented occurrence on the other hand was the appointment of the two leaders from the different groups of political parties. In this case, the influence of one group holds true for the executive division of the government while the legislation is lead and undertaken by the other group. This first occurred in 1986 when Jacques Chirac was elected as the Prime Minister while the Mitterand was elected as the President. This can be referred to as the “ cohabitation” between the different French political parties (Ignazi and Ysmal 1998).

The leadership that constitutes leaders that came from different political parties can be considered to have both negative and positive effects on the development of the country. One of the negative effects that can be perceived is the occurrence of conflicts between the two divisions in the government. On the other hand, the presence of the different political groups in the government can cause balance and counterchecking can be undertaken from different groups. This will enable the government to have a directed goal toward the welfare of the nation.

Such observation was exhibited in the 1997 election wherein both French political groups were represented. This resulted to the improvements in the different aspects of the society. These are the social, economic and also the political aspects (Ignazi and Ysmal 1998). The dynamics of the French political parties can be considered as co-interactive and co-influential due to the fact that the success of another can affect the other political parties.

## 2. The Classification of Political Parties on the Basis of Functions

The French political parties can be classified on the basis of the functions that it can play in the government. One of the groups of political parties occupies and functions in relation of the territory and geographical issues of the country. These political parties have aims in lined with such objectives. Another group of French political parties is involved in the administrative processes such as the financial and technical operations. The third group functions in front of the masses. The duties included are done through public affairs and service to the people. These groups are compost of the elected leaders of the state and the government (Ignazi and Ysmal 1998; Theen and Wilson 2001).

### 1. The Development of the French Political Party System

The political parties in France can be considered as a political development in the later part of the history of the country. There are significant groups that highlighted the development of the French political party system. The pioneer political parties were established and belong in the group referred to as the left-wing group. This is the *Parti républicain radical et radical socialiste* , the Republican, Radical and Radical-Socialist Party, which is



classified as a Radical Party representative. On the other hand, a Socialist Party was developed simultaneously, the *Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière* (SFIO). This political party is referred to as the French Section of the Workers' International (Ignazi and Ysmal 1998).

Most of the French political parties developed in the Third Republic along with the right-wing groups that deemed that reorganization and cooperation is not required for success of a political party. This period led to the development of another group, the Catholic Resistance included in the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* (MRP) or the Popular and Republican Movement. On the basis of the poll success, the group succeeded to be recognized as one of the French Political Parties of the period (Ignazi and Ysmal 1998).

Charles de Gaulle, being one of the prominent political figures during the time, established his own political party. This advocacy is driven by the discontent towards the contemporary political policies. The *Rassemblement du Peuple français* (RPF) or the Rally of the French People has goals that coincide with the advocacies of de Gaulle (Ignazi and Ysmal 1998).

The advocacy of de Gaulle includes the need for developments and changes in the leadership. The need for increased strength in policies in governance is immediate. The present governance of France can be considered as in lined with his endeavor. This is due to the fact that he perceived the need for a leader specifically a president to lead the nation. The responsibilities of the said leader are independent from the role of the parliamentary system (Coley 2004; Theen and Wilson 2001). The present political structure of

France can be compared due to the fact that there are two leaders for the legislative and for the executive. In addition to this, leadership is shared with the representative political parties.

Another political party that is included in the highlight of the development of the French political system is the *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR) or Rally for the Republic. This was established and led by the Jacques Chirac, a political leader that tried presidency and this goal served to be one of the major goals of the party. The group continued the work of Charles de Gaulle and his political party during its success in occupying the presidency (Ignazi and Ysmal 1998).

Due to the continued support of the Rally for the Republic to the advocacy of Charles de Gaulle, the views of Gaulle and political party *Rassemblement du Peuple français* (RPF) become one of the foundations of the modern political structure of France which can be considered as an integration and synergy of the different methods of governance. Upon the study of the French political system and the feasibility of the structure, the pioneering concepts of Gaulle commence.

The success of the ideology of the RPR and Gaulle became inapplicable to the 1970 crisis when conflicts developed between the left-wing and the right-wing factions. The event led to the demise of the presidential position (1976) and the prime minister position (1976). This is followed by a period wherein the political parties lead the nation but the need for a unifying force led the National Assembly to appoint a leader. The Socialist Party became the winning political party (Coley 2004; Ignazi and Ysmal 1998).

The Front National is one of the significant French political parties established in the 1972. This group is included in the extreme right. The disintegration of the extreme right caused the failure of the political party to acquire a significant vote in the elections. The party gained bearing upon the participation in social and political issues such as the immigration in the country (Ignazi and Ysmal 1998).

Another party that can be considered to have a place in the political arena is the *Parti Socialiste* (PS) or the Socialist that can be perceived as an activist movement but developed to a prostate party. The advocacy of the group is to promote socialism that can be achieved by structuring a nation without classes. The goals of the party should have been for the members to commit to the group and lead by giving up the social classes from where they originated. This notion became one of the hindrances of the particular party to rise and succeed (Ignazi and Ysmal 1998).

## Analysis

### 1. The Patterns in the French Political Systems

There are different concepts that can be obtained in the study of the dynamics of the French political parties. The patterns can either be observed through the chronological considerations of the events that transpire to related events in French political history.

Primarily, the development of the parties follows a definitive pattern that is parallel to the immediate needs of the population. This is due to the fact that leadership can be determined by the perception of the people since they hold the power to vote a leader. This notion is based on the concept that the <https://assignbuster.com/french-political-parties-essay-sample/>

existence of the French political parties transpire during the era of democracy wherein people can vote and not the age of monarchy. Thus, the political parties take into consideration the primary needs of the people, although some may only strive to reach the goal of being the presidential party.

One of the observations that can be generated in the study of the French political parties through the course of history is the perceived success of the cohabitation or the coexistence on the left and right political factions during leadership. Through the achievement on the different aspect of the society such as the social, economic and political growth, the importance of cooperation and integration of different advocacy even through the risk of having conflicts can be deemed indispensable to be able to achieve the growth and development of the nation.

Another important event that exemplifies the need for unity and oneness in any organization most especially the political leadership and structure is the state of accomplishment of the right-wing extremist. Compared to the achievement of the left-wing political groups that was unified with the centrist, the left extremists experienced factions that hindered the group of the different groups. Although most of the political parties that belong to the said group may possess the capabilities and potentials to lead the nation, the division and the failure to unite weakened the group (Hardy 1994).

### 1. Insights Drawn from Research

The research presented an overview of the dynamics that occur in the political system of France with the main focus on the political parties.

Looking to the dynamics of the French political parties it can be surmised that the different groups are interconnected and interrelated to each participant in the political system. The rise to power of an organization can affect the other political parties. The failure of the French political parties can also affect other groups.

## Conclusion

### 1. Findings

Through the research that was conducted on the dynamics and history of the French political parties it can be noted that the political parties occupy an important niche in the political system that coincides with the executive and legislative division of the government. Such position can define the influence of the group. Thus, the dynamic of the political parties can affect the state of leadership and the welfare of the nation.

### 1. Value of data

The data that was gathered can present a particular view on the history and dynamics of the political system in France. The method that was undertaken in the presentation of data is an integration of the historical chronology as well as the parallelism and relationship in the transpiration and development of the events in history.

The approach that was utilized culminates to the lessons that can be learned from the events resulting from the decisions made by the leaders and representatives of the political parties.

### 1. Benefits of Study

The study presents an alternative view on the history and development of the French political party system along with interrelationship analysis between the parties that contribute to the highlights of its history and became the pillar in the political system.

### 1. Lessons that could be drawn from the Study

Through the enduring history of the French political parties, essential lessons can be etched out. One of these lessons is the cooperation and integration that can bring success to the group due to the magnification of strengths and influence of each contributing member. Another is the unity through divergence and variation that can be exemplified by the achievement of success in leadership during periods of cohabitation of the left-wing and the right-wing political factions.

### 1. Possible Research Explorations

One of the suggested areas of possible research in relation to the topic on French political system and political parties is the focus on the right-wing extremists. This can include the history, geographical influence, and the status of their success in the political arena. In relation to this, the possible reasons that can be perceived that caused the factionalism in the group.

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