

PEKKA E. J. VÄISÄNEN

Beyond Ideologies?

Risk Society in Emmanuel Macron's Reformist Politics

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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*Politics is
too serious a matter
to be left to the politicians.*

Charles de Gaulle

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I started a dissertation on Emmanuel Macron in March 2018. Four years later the world and my own life are in a very different position. As I am writing these lines, Russia is a real threat to European peace and stability, a pandemic is raging uncontrollably, and Finnish politicians are wondering whether to go to NATO or not. At the same time our public and political life has reached the level where the politicians' knowledge of even our recent history is weak or even nonexistent. Superficiality dominates and intelligence lacks in our political debate.

Today the most important thing to me is why I am interested in France is the French people's insatiable way to respect their intellectual heritage and debate in public. As we all know the Enlightenment, and the whole 18th century was full of bright ideas and great French philosophers. Even today political philosophy is highly considered in French public life, and all politicians who want to reach the Presidency are expected to know how to debate and justify their opinions against their competitor.

This all reflects their intellectual history. At this point I have to point out regarding Emmanuel Macron: the more I focused on Macron's political thinking, and visions the more I was convinced that the President of the Republic was a very talented, cultured and quick-witted political leader despite the several contradictions Macron has. There were several occasions when I was truly amazed by Macron's ability to debate and discuss for instance with the scholars about the details in economics or history. I became quite soon convinced that this political leader truly is worthy of dissertation.

When I look back on my own personal life during the last four years there were several long lasting friendships which ended and caused unfortunate consequences for me. As friendships crumbled and disappeared new ones were also born. I am very thankful for them. In the midst of all adversity, my research became extremely important to myself, and I decided to follow the old wisdom *Nulla dies sine linea*: not a day without a line. The intellectual effort, the observation of the world and French politics kept my life in balance. Simultaneously I was able to analyse my own history and life which ultimately reached even a philosophical level. Somehow I found myself reflecting on life in general in a context where a huge amount of the

questions exist without any relevant answers. There are things known and unknown and between them are the Doors, once said Jim Morrison.

Because I did most of the research without funding I could not afford to idle. The research work itself is an independent and very demanding job where delusional steps cannot be avoided. Because I am prone to speed blindness, the role of the supervisors became important. My heartfelt thanks go to the University of Tampere and especially to University Lecturer Mikko Lahtinen and Professor Tapio Raunio. Your vision, encouragement and professionalism were invaluable help to me. I also want to thank the pre-examiners of my dissertation: Professor Helen Drake and Docent Mikko Jakonen. Your feedback was profound, extremely useful, and instructive.

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Thank you Petri.

In Ullanlinna, Helsinki January 26 2022

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tutkimuskohteena Emmanuel Macron on mielenkiintoinen ja jopa historiallinen hahmo. Macron oli valituksi tullessaan Ranskan nuorin johtaja Napoleon Bonaparten jälkeen. Macron oli niin ikään kokematon ja lähes tuntematon poliitikko, joka oli asettunut ensimmäistä kertaa ehdolle ylipäättänsä missään vaaleissa ja joka valittiin ensimmäisenä kansanliikkeen ehdokkaana Ranskan viidennen tasavallan kahdeksanneksi presidentiksi. Macronin vaalivoittojen jälkeen Ranskan vanhat mahtipuolueet tasavaltalaiset ja sosialistit olivat menettäneet täydellisesti asemansa maan tosiasiallisina hallitsijoina. Lyhyesti sanottuna: Macron toteutti täydellisen demokraattisen vallankaappauksen, jollaista kukaan ei ollut kyennyt ennakoimaan vielä vuotta aikaisemmin. Tässä lyhyesti faktat, jotka innoittivat minua tekemään väitöstutkimuksen Macronista liittyen nimenomaan hänen politiikkaansa ja poliittiseen ajatteluunsa. Varsinaisesta vaalitutkimuksesta ei siis ole kysymys, koska minua kiinnosti päästä kiinni eniten Macronin politiikan ja arvomaailman ydinkysymyksiin.

Väitöskirjani nimen otsikko Ideologioiden tuolla puolen? perustui useisiin ristiriitaisiin näkemyksiin, jotka olivat ympäröivät presidenttiä koko hänen verraten lyhyen poliittisen uransa ajan. Äärivasemmisto ja äärioikeisto näkivät Macronin ehdokkaana ja poliitikkona, joka edusti uusliberalismia ja hallitsematonta globalisaatiota, jossa suuryritysten ja EU:n edut olivat etusijalla Ranskan kansallisten etujen sijaan. Macronia on myös kuvailtu populismiin taipuvaiseksi ideologialtaan ohueksi poliitikoksi, jonka kritiikki vanhojen poliittisten puolueiden ja poliitikkojen edustamaa elitismia kohtaan ei ollut uskottavaa. Maltillinen oikeisto puolestaan kommentoi Macronia vuoden 2017 vaalien aikana presidentti Francois Hollanden epäonnistuneen hallinnon jatkeena ja edustajana. Keltaliiviliikkeen mielenosoituksissa Macronia syytettiin myös rikkaiden presidentiksi, joka oli unohtanut tavallisten ranskalaisten arkipäivän ongelmat tarjoten avokätisiä verohelpotuksia jo ennestään varakkaille kansalaisille ja yrityksille.

Koska ristiriitoja oli huomattavan paljon jo pelkästään Macronin vastustajien suunnalta, oli aiheellista pohtia voiko Emmanuel Macronia arvioida perinteisellä oikeisto–vasemmisto ulottuvuudella vai pitäisikö häntä sen sijaan lähestyä kokonaan uudella tavalla? Tämä on toinen syy, miksi nimesin tutkimukseni ensimmäiseksi

sanoiksi jo mainitun Ideologioiden tuolla puolen. Edellä mainittujen väitteiden ja näkemysten perusteella lähtökohtani oli pohtia Macronin politiikkaa ja ajattelua perinteisen ja dogmaattisen tavan sijaan tavalla, joka edustaisi myös Macronin henkilökohtaisia näkemyksiä ja lausuntoja ideologioiden ja politiikan suhteesta. Tässä kohtaa löysin Macronin ajattelussa yhtymäkohdan politiikan teoreetikon Michael Freedenin ajatteluun ideologioista, liberalismista ja niiden merkityksestä nykyisessä maailmassa ja politiikassa.

Edellä mainittuihin seikkoihin perustuen, oli luonnollista, että lähestyisin Macronin politiikkaa pääosin retorisen analyysin avulla. Retorinen analyysi oli luonnollinen valinta myös sen vuoksi, koska suurin osa tutkimusaineistosta oli Macronin kampanjan aikana ja valituksi tulemisen jälkeen pitämiä puheita ja muita julkisia kannanottoja. Toinen tärkeä syy menetelmäni takana oli luonnollisesti itse ranskalainen poliittinen kulttuuri ja historia. Ranskassa politiikassa on aina korostunut poliitikon ja varsinkin presidentin kyky esiintyä ja käyttää erilaisia retorisia keinoja vakuuttaessaan kansalaiset vaalien aikana, mutta myös vaalien jälkeen. Edellä mainitut taidot ovat olleet myös poliittisen menestyksen ja uskottavuuden perusedellytys.

Tutkimuksen kaksi tärkeintä teoriaa ovat saksalaisen politiikantutkijan ja sosiologin Ulrich Beckin luoma riskiyhteiskunta, jota seuraa Anthony Giddensin luoma kolmannen tien poliittinen teoria. Beckin globaali näkemys oli, että vanhat perinteiset instituutiot (kirkko, poliittiset puolueet, perhe, ammatit) ja niiden asema ovat rapautuneet, mikä on lisännyt epävarmuutta esimerkiksi työmarkkinoille ja kansalaisten henkilökohtaiseen elämään liittyen. Beckin teorian mukaan vakituisten työpaikkojen määrä vähentyy edelleen ja erilaiset määräaikaiset ja epätyypilliset työsuhteet yleistyvät tulevaisuudessa entistä enemmän ja vastuu menestymisestä tai menestymättömyydestä on aina selätetty kuitenkin aina yksilölle itselleen. Toinen tärkeä ilmiö liittyy globalisaation ja riskiyhteiskunnan väliseen suhteeseen, jossa päätökset mm. paikallisten työpaikkojen säilymisestä voidaan tehdä tuhansien kilometrien päässä itse tarkasteltavasta maasta. Riski-yhteiskunnan myötä globaaliksi ilmiöksi on tullut myös edelleen kasvanut riski ajautua työttömyyteen, ja tämä koskee myös useita akateemisia ammattajeja.

Kolmannen tien politiikan teoria oli luonnollinen valinta tutkimukselleni, koska Macronin poliittinen ajattelu perustui kolmeen kolmannen tien keskeiseen pilariin, joissa työ, yrittäjyys ja henkilökohtainen vastuu olivat politiikan lähtökohtia yhdessä markkina myönteisen ajattelun kanssa. Macron siis haastoi myös perinteisen ranskalaisen etatistisen eli valtiovetoisen talousajattelun, jossa pro-business-ajattelu hallitsi taloutta ja talousympäristöä ja jossa usein valtio-omisteiset yritykset olivat

nauttineet usein valtion avokätisestä tuesta ja asemasta suhteessa pienempiin toimijoihin. Macronin mukaan säännöt tulisi olla kaikille samat ja tämä koski myös digitaalisia jättiläisiä (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple), joiden verovälttelyyn presidentti Macron on halunnut puuttua kovalla kädellä.

Edellä mainittujen yksityiskohtien perusteella Macronin politiikka lähestyi Britannian entisen pääministerin Tony Blairin (1997–2007) politiikkaa, jossa kolmannen tien politiikan teoria muodosti keskeisen New Labourin ja Blairin poliittisen ja ideologisen sisällön. Macron halusi myös puuttua ranskalaisen yhteiskunnan ruohonjuuritason epäkohtiin, jotka ovat aiheuttaneet paljon negatiivisia seurauksia viimeisen kolmen vuosikymmenen aikana. Viimeksi mainittuun kuuluu pitkäaikaistyöttömyys, köyhyys ja yhteiskunnallinen syrjäytyminen. Tarkemmin sanottuna ruohonjuuritason ongelmiin puuttuminen tarkoitti sitä, että Ranskan hallitus ja Macronin hallinto olivat valmiita tekemään suuria investointeja peruskoulutukseen ja alueille, jotka olivat kärsineet eniten mm. heikosta opetuksesta ja tuetun opetuksen vähydestä. Tasavallan presidentti kyseenalaisti myös Ranskan korkeakoulujen nykytilan ja tulokset. Macron oli huolissaan opintojensa keskeyttäneistä opiskelijoista ja hän näki myös, että Ranskassa oli vanhoja elitistisiä instituutioita, kuten ENA (National School of Administration), jotka eivät palvelleet maan etua tulevaisuudessa.

Macronin ajattelussa oli myös useita yhtymäkohtia Ranskan myöhäiseen valistukseen ja erityisesti filosofien ja poliitikkojen Francois Guizot'n ja Benjamin Constantin ajatuksiin, joihin Macronin ajattelua peilasin. Macronin, Guizot'n ja Constantin ajatukset koskivat erityisesti työn, koulutuksen ja ammatin roolia yhteiskunnallisen edistyksen takaajana. Myös poliitikkojen rooli eräänlaisena roolimallina kansalaisten edessä yhdisti niin Macronia, kuin Constantia ja Guizot'a toisiinsa. Macron nosti esiin kampanjansa aikana useasti Ranskan poliittisen järjestelmän ongelmat, jossa poliitikot käyttivät hyväkseen järjestelmän porsaanreikiä ajaessaan omia ja intressipiiriensä etuja. Viime vuosituhannen ajattelijoista nostan esiin Ranskan liberaalien kärkinimen Raymond Aronin ja Macronin mentorin Paul Ricœurin. Aronia, Ricœurin ja Macronia yhdisti kiinnostavalla tavalla kriittisyys ideologiota kohtaan ja totuuden ensisijaisuus politiikan keskeisenä hyveenä.

ABSTRACT

As an object of research Emmanuel Macron makes an interesting, and even a historic figure. The youngest leader of France since Napoleon Bonaparte, he was an inexperienced and almost unknown politician, when elected as the President of the Republic from neither of the two traditional parties. Emmanuel Macron was a political actor and a candidate of a new unknown political movement, which he founded alone only about a year before the Presidential elections.

The name of my dissertation *Beyond Ideologies? Risk Society in Emmanuel Macron's Reformist Politics* is based on the several contradictory views that have surrounded Macron since the very beginning of Macron's career. The far left and the far right saw Macron as a candidate and politician who represented neoliberalism, and uncontrolled globalisation, in which the interests of big business and interests of the EU had priority instead of the French national interests. Macron has also been described as a politician with a thin ideology prone to populism, whose critique of the elitism represented by the old political parties and politicians was not credible. The moderate right, in turn, commented on Macron during the 2017 election as an extension and representative of President François Hollande's administration. During protests of the Yellow Vest movement, Macron was also accused of being the President of the rich, who had forgotten the everyday problems of ordinary French people and offered generous tax reliefs to the already wealthy citizens and companies. These were the main reasons behind my motivation to study Macron.

Given all this controversy it was relevant to ask: is it even possible to evaluate Macron in terms of classical French ideologies or should his politics be approached in a whole new way? That is the second reason why I have named my research first: *Beyond Ideologies*. Starting point was to reflect on Macron's politics and thinking without resorting to the traditional and dogmatic approaches, in a way which would also represent his personal views and his statements about the relationship between ideologies and politics.

Related to the previous it was relevant that I would approach Macron's politics using mainly rhetorical analysis as most of the research material consisted of the speeches and other public declarations Macron made during his campaign, and after he entered into the office in May 2017. The second important reason behind my

method was of course the French political culture itself that has always emphasised the politician's ability to use various rhetorical skills and speak well in public debate. The skills have formed a precondition to one's political success and credibility.

Two of the most important theories of the research are the risk society created by the German scholar Ulrich Beck and the third way political theory created by Anthony Giddens. Beck's global view was that the fragmentation and lower status of the old institutions (church political parties, family professions) have increased insecurity in the job market and in citizens' lives as the share of permanent jobs has decreased. At the same time the risk of unemployment has increased, and this concerns even academic professions. Third way theory was a natural choice as Macron was for example keen on using public money and investments on basic education and various internships programmes. Education policies were directed especially at suburban areas where the societal challenges were the most difficult.

Macron's politics resembled the former Prime Minister of UK Tony Blair's politics where the third way politics was a leading political doctrine. Macron was also keen to intervene into various grass root grievances of French society which have caused a lot of negative consequences during the last three decades such as long term unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. In addition to the French government and Macron's administration making huge investments in basic education. The President of the Republic also questioned the current status and the current results of French higher education. Macron was concerned of the dropout figures and saw also that there existed old elitist institutions, such as ENA (National School of Administration) that did not serve country's interest.

As my research continued it became clear quite soon that Macron's values and the goals he presented for France differed from his predecessors, and there were elements France had not actually faced during the political history of the Fifth Republic. Macron's political thinking was based on three pillars where work, entrepreneurship, and personal responsibility were the starting points together with pro-market thinking. Macron challenged also the traditional French statism thinking where the role of state dominated economic activity.

One of the negative features was distorted competition with state-owned companies that had governmental support behind them. Specifically, this meant that these companies were able to receive cheap loans and other financial support guaranteed by the government. Macron wanted to create the same rules policy for all in domestic markets and this applied also to the European level. According to Macron GAFA (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple) companies' tax evasion should be finished.

Finally, I included several confluences from the late French Enlightenment where ideas of the philosophers François Guizot and Benjamin Constant ideas influence Macron's thinking. These ideas concerned especially the role of work, education and politicians role models in front of the citizens. A precondition to the fair and civilised society was openness and accountability. One of the typical problems in France has been how the politicians and political parties have used various loopholes in the political system as they have financed their campaigns.

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1 INTRODUCTION

As an object of research Emmanuel Macron makes an interesting, and even a historic figure. The youngest leader of France since Napoleon Bonaparte, he was an inexperienced and almost unknown politician, a first-time candidate in any elections, and a candidate who became the President of the Republic from neither of the two traditional parties: the Socialist Party or the moderate right. Finally, Emmanuel Macron was a political actor and a candidate of the unknown political movement, which he founded alone only about a year before the elections. I will briefly outline the facts that inspired me to focus on Macron.

Macron's meteoric rise surprised the whole world. He challenged the rigid French political system and the political elite traditionally dominated by three political parties, moderate right known now as the Republican Party, Socialist Party, and the National Rally, in a way no one could have anticipated. Before the elections, there was hardly anyone outside the LREM (La Republique En Marche!) party who would consider Macron a potential candidate for the second round, and there were even fewer of those who believed in Macron's potential to win the race. However, the focus of this research is not to find explanations for the revolutionary victory, but to examine the fundamental questions concerning Macron and Macronism: who Emmanuel Macron as a politician and a leader is, and, in what sense has Macron proved himself to be a true reformer I have formulated two research questions which I will discuss in more detail in the sections.

The research questions are:

1. What are the core tenets of Macron's thinking regarding work, education and economics?
2. What kind of reformist Macron in French politics ultimately is?

As I started to study Macron's politics, career, and the values he represents, I soon noticed how much there were, and still are, speculations and accusations about Macron's position in a political scale. Macron's opponents accuse him, among other things, of being too market-driven and promoting neo-liberal values, prioritising the

interests of business and enterprises. Macron has also been described as a typical technocrat because of his background as a former student of an elite school ENA and further there has been also a lot of critics concerning Macron's European Union (EU) politics which clash with France's national interests. There were also accusations of the valence and technocratic populism Macron represented, as he spoke frequently against the ruling elite and the old political system, presenting himself as the only real alternative to the latter. (France 2 2017, 1.16-1.35, Martin 2017, 1-2, Ross 2018, 1-3, Steta 2017, 60-62, Perrineau 2019.)

The above-mentioned elements and questions have formed the frame of my research. The following sections will discuss in more detail how the research will unfold. I will describe more specifically my research approach, the theoretical choices I have made, and the research material I have analysed. Because the role of the President of the Republic has always been strong during the Fifth Republic it was necessary to give a brief overview of the political history since 1958 when Charles de Gaulle and Michel Debré founded the current Constitution and the era of the Fifth Republic started. The penultimate section of the introduction will explore the profile of the typical Macron voters, and I will also briefly compare them with the supporters of Marine Le Pen, Macron's main opponent. The final section will outline the structure of the research.

1.1 The Research Design and the Significance of the Research

In this research, I have adopted an interdisciplinary approach when analysing Macron's politics. I have combined theories of political sciences, sociology, economics, political history, general history, and classical philosophy. I will discuss several sociological phenomena, such as unemployment and poverty, drawing from Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (2005), who have studied the impact of increasing unemployment on social coherence, which has been under threat everywhere in western world (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2005, 80). I will explore how this phenomenon, and its various negative consequences, have manifested themselves specifically in France during the last thirty years. The situation has become increasingly difficult as the country's public debt has risen together with the rising expenses of the welfare state burdened by massive unemployment and pension payments. According to Giddens (1998), low unemployment and securing social coherence were especially important targets to the classical welfare state model everywhere in Europe after the Second World War (Giddens 1998, 7).

In addition to the above mentioned, I will give a brief account on how the social and health expenses have increased in France since the early 1970s. According to Rosanvallon (1992) and OECD (1988), in 1970 the social and health expenses equated to 35 % of the GDP, but in 1980 the already 41.7 %, and in 1988 44.3 %. The high expenses stem from the highest unemployment rates in the EU. Macron targets his policy initiatives also to the massive societal problem of France; the country has had especially the last thirty years. Because the role of the President of the Republic has always been strong during the Fifth Republic it was necessary to give a brief overview of the political history since 1958 when Charles de Gaulle and Michel Debré founded the current Constitution and the era of the Fifth Republic started. The penultimate section of the introduction will explore the profile of the typical Macron voters, and I will also briefly compare them with the supporters of Marine Le Pen, Macron's main opponent. The final section will outline the structure of the research.

Macron's political agenda focuses simultaneously on several problems in the economy and the grievances over social coherence. In the past, traditional French politicians and leaders have struggled to formulate economic policies that would

serve national interests in a broader context. If we accept that low unemployment, social coherence, and Government budget surplus, for example, are matters of public interest, we can conclude that these matters have not been realised in a way as the public has expected or assumed. This is an interesting part of Macron's politics: despite his desire to focus on the economy and despite his challenges and failure, Macron as a president has genuinely tried to shift the detrimental development of the society to the new, better, and more coherent direction. I will discuss Macron's attempts to improve the situation of the poorest in society, attempts in which huge investments in compulsory education have played a central role. These proposals concern the economics, social security, and education.

Secondly, I will present my own analysis on how Macron's politics have been received in public, for instance concerning questions of achieving truth and enhancing social coherence. These are among Macron's most significant political ambitions. I will also note that in the economy, Macron has repeatedly demanded the same-rules-to-all policy, which more specifically means pro-market thinking or ideology. In practice, this means that there is an open market-driven environment where the companies operate. The state companies' special status with their privileges will end. I will analyse these features of the French economy more specifically in chapter 4. (Marketic 2017, 1-3, France 2 2017, 1.16-1.35, Le Monde 2019, Askenazy 2018)

1.2 Philosophical and Theoretical Framework of the Study

I have chosen to approach Macron's politics or Macronism in the following three ways. First, although Macron's politics have been often described in a liberal context, I have noticed that people who use the word "liberal" do not always define the term. Michael Freedon (2004, 2020, 2014) described liberalism as an "culture artefact, consciously intended to be adopted by large social groups" but also as an elite doctrine that served best the well-educated citizens who were able to use the ideas and values whose origins were traced in the era of the Enlightenment. Freedon also emphasised that it was possible to see liberalism as a noble vision that contains a set of guiding principles which will act on behalf of the good life of every citizen. (Freedon 2004, 22, Freedon 2020, Freedon 2014, 5)

The key notes of liberalism were liberty, individualism, progress, and rationality. Liberal thinkers avoided slogans that were belligerent or solemn as reaching for truth was one of the most fundamental premises of all human activity and a particularly the important goal for fair and good politics (Hobson 1909, 91, Guizot 2002, 226-227). Hobhouse (1911) saw liberalism as an "idea of release with a specific complexion, a movement of liberation, a clearance of obstruction for the flow of free, vital, spontaneous activity". The development will cause and later lead to a situation where the work of conscious or unconscious co-operation between the citizens (Hobhouse 1911, 47). Ultimately, achieving happiness and a good life was an essential value and target for almost every liberal philosopher. John Stuart Mill (2010) captured the idea in the throughout doctrine of utilitarianism which emphasised the deeds and its consequences which were either good or bad increasing and thus decreasing the happiness (Mill 2010, 31). As I discuss in more detail the basic values of liberalism, I will draw attention to the similarities of the values and premises among Anglo-Saxon and French liberal philosophers. François Guizot, a leading French philosopher of the Doctrinaires on whose scholarship I heavily rely on this research, was a great admirer of English political culture.

The core group of the Doctrinaires consisted of six intellectuals François Guizot, Pierre Royer-Collard, Charles de Rémusat, Prosper de Barante, Victor de Broglie, and Hercule de Serre who participated keenly in the political and social discussion in France after Napoleon era and the congress of Vienna from 1815 until the mid1850s (Craiuu 2003, 2). Among the Doctrinaires school I will focus on François Guizot's philosophy, and outside the Doctrinaires school I will study Benjamin Constant's thinking and philosophical premises because they were among the most significant and leading persons of the era. The reason why Guizot and Constant have an

important role in my research is based on the reason how their interest and approach in society and politics emphasised justice, equality, and truth. Secondly, education formed the most important pillar for the brighter future of France and all these values were also very important to Macron. Guizot and Constant implemented politics as the fair exercise of political power and they were keen on developing the society in which the work, ownership and entrepreneurship had an important role as they had in Macron's politics as well.

The other scholars I have brought up are Paul Ricœur, Raymond Aron and very shortly Friedrich Hegel. Ricœur and Aron saw as most important value of the politician the searching of the truth as the role of the ideologies was a secondary issue. Like Hegel, Macron, too, was keen to study the role of work and the professional identity of individuals as the most fundamental value for the nation and society. Beyond classical theory, I draw from the theories of risk society and modernization. I focus on individualization and how personal responsibilities and rights have figured in Macron's politics. Beck (1992) saw the risk society as a "systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself" as the modernization is based on the technological revolution which has influenced work and everyday life (Beck 1992, 21).

In addition to the previous, it is also relevant to notice how technological development influences our societal characteristics, our way of life, our national culture and many other features including politics, political repression, and participation (Beck 1992, 50). Beck (2018, 2008) crystallises the development in the following way: "the processes of individualization deprive class distinctions of their social identity. Social groups lose their distinctive traits, both in terms of their self-understanding and in relation to other groups" (Beck 2018, Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 39). The reason why I chose the risk society as a theoretical context of the research was affiliated to the idea that it might expose, but also to set the limits where Macron's economic thinking will move in relation to the market freedom, and the regulation, and how Macron's politics will react to the increasing insecurity concerning for instance the labour market, and the future of the work, as the latter forms one of the most important premises to Macron's politics together with the education. After the risk society I will do a review of third way politics, and how Tony Blair and his special advisor Anthony Giddens represented it from the late 1990s to 2007. Tony Blair is an interesting reference pair to Macron and Macron's politics because there have been certain similarities between them as we will note, and this comparison will help us to position Macron's politics to the broader European political context.

When we are discussing the risk society and the labour markets and work and their future more broadly in France, it is relevant to notice how France has had several decades of one of the most rigid labour legislations in Europe. The premise of Macron's reforms was: do we still have to protect the citizens from work, and protect the jobs which were in danger to fade away because of globalisation or technological evolution, or do we promote and encourage them to apply and change their career in a flexible way? (Macron 2017b 11-12, 2017h, 74-75). In any case, the labour legislation, and the labour market is considerably different than its competitors. Working conditions were and are still in some respects based on more than on the famous Code de Travail, (after the reforms still 3148 pages in 2020) more than 3000 pages body of laws which contain hundreds of pages of orders and regulations about how to govern firings, how to regulate the health security among other things (Code de Travail 2020). Altogether, it was quite clear what was Macron's most important job immediately after his inauguration: reforming the labour market and legislation. I will discuss these phenomena and the results more precisely in my research analysis.

The third phenomenon of the research concerned the economy and pro-market approach that Macron presented during and after the Presidential elections. This is an interesting case because there have been several politicians in Europe and the United States, who have been assumed to implement free market or pro-market politics, but the reality has been surprisingly different. In many ways, the pro-market ideology as a premise of the economic policy has been connected to the labour market and the environment where the companies operate, and especially to what are the rules of the game between the actors who are in the same field. I will do the comparison between the pro-market ideology and the pro-business approach, and how Macron's politics has been positioned in the previous context and more broadly in the free markets in France.

1.3 The Research Material and the Research Method

As a method of the research, I decided to use qualitative content analysis and rhetorical analysis. The reasons why I ended up using these methods were based on the chosen research material that covered mainly Macron's speeches, interviews, and several other declarations. More specifically, the primary empirical material of this research contains snatches of the second round of election debate with Marine Le Pen, 15 campaign speeches that covered the period from December 2016 when the

election campaign began until the inauguration of May 2017, and 10 other speeches and other statements, and other public appearances and several newspaper interviews. As I studied the campaign speeches, I became convinced that it would be necessary to focus also on the speeches and other public appearances after Macron had assumed office. This assumption reflected the changed societal and political atmosphere in France, forcing Macron to respond to people's distress after the rise of the Yellow Vest movement and several terror attacks on French soil. After the terror attacks and other violent incidents, it was clear that Macron, having taken office, would pay sustained attention to the questions of multiculturalism and the state authority in today's France. This material covered the period from the spring 2017 until the end of 2020. Another significant primary source was Macron's book *Revolution* (2017) which was published just before the elections and in which he described his values, targets, and ideas for the nation's future. These themes were frequently connected to work, education and economy, and the present global technological change that deeply influences and will continue to influence France and Europe. Finally, the empirical material covered the election programmes of 2017. My focus was specifically on Macron's economic thinking where the role of work had a key role.

The second reason why I chose the rhetorical analysis and qualitative content analysis was based on Skinner's (2001) and Wittgenstein's (1958) views that emphasised the politician's ability to talk, to perform, and to use their own language in effective way which formed also on pre-condition to their potential success. Skinner and Marttila (2016) emphasise that oral skills of the leaders and politicians, including various rhetorical tricks, are the trademark and essence of all successful politicians. In fact, at their very best, these skills form a base for the politician to act "as a skillful and effective ideologist who is also able to create something new". More specifically Skinner and Wittgenstein have said, "words are also deeds and the speech is also action". The ability to speak and to perform is one of the most important tools and skills of a politician (Skinner 2001, 4, Wittgenstein 1958, 146, Marttila 2016, 15).

But what are, specifically, the tricks and actions that Skinner and Marttila refer to? Basically, the point is that a politician can present even a "questionable action acceptable, brave and honest" in the eyes of the voters. At the same time, it is important to convince the citizens that all the other alternatives, as presented by the rival parties and politicians, are useless, dangerous, aggressive, and even pathetic. This kind of policy making was known as TINA (There Is No Alternative) during the era of the Prime Margaret Thatcher (Queiros 2016). I will return to the

phenomenon several times in this research as I will discuss how Macron has faced certain obstacles and protests and why there have been so many misunderstandings between him and the French people. According to Skinner and Marttila, it is important that the researcher can understand” through rhetorical tricks by becoming acquainted with the principles and goals of political actors and their rationality in relation to the rhetoric used” (Skinner 2002, 96, 98-99, Marttila 2016, 144). The natural consequence is that the study of politics or political history is also the study of the words used and the actions made (Skinner 2001, 4, Wittgenstein 1958, 146, Marttila 2016, 15, Palonen 1998, 144).

The third reason why I decided to use qualitative content and rhetorical analysis was based on French political culture that reflects all the previous mentioned claims and features. In the case of France, politicians and Presidential candidates have always been expected to come across as charismatic personalities and brilliant speakers who, with their dazzling use of words, exhibit substance, knowledge, and capacity to inspire the crowd. These skills have been a default of all candidates running for the President of the Republic; examples include Jean Jaures, Jacques Chirac, Jean-Marie Le Pen and Nicolas Sarkozy. Based on this, it was evident that my research material should mainly consist of Macron’s campaign speeches, interviews, and declarations before and after he took office in 2017 as I mentioned earlier. Because the speeches were often long and very meandering, it was of course important and relevant to focus on certain themes that came up in them and which supported and clarified most accurately Macron’s approach to politics and his values, ideas, and policy targets. Naturally, the order of preference was based on Macron’s own sense of priorities during the campaign (work, education, economy). This order also steered my work and created the frame for the whole study and its research task and research questions.

The third and important target and dimension of Macron’s politics was his desire to develop the French economy to the pro-market direction, and in general to a direction where the free market politics, fair competition and the same rules to all participants doctrine exist. This element and vision in French society makes a significant difference to Macron’s predecessors who were keen on implementing pro-business thinking, where the basic idea was briefly to keep the jobs alive by securing the big companies’ interests to operate and employ in domestic markets. Regarding the third target, I will also briefly bring up Macron’s common European vision for deeper cooperation concerning the threats of artificial intelligence and the future security arrangements of the EU. When we are approaching Macronism we will see later how Macron has taken and still takes distance from the traditional

French apprehensiveness about the free-market and capitalism. This does not mean that Macron's attitude towards capitalism and free markets would be toothless; Macron will initiate several political measures at domestic and international levels, suggesting how free markets could function more effectively. The former Prime Minister of France (1991) Michel Rocard described the phenomenon already in 1991 as a problem of legitimacy, in which "any legitimacy other than that of the market is dangerously weakened". Moreover, this ethic of responsibility for the future does not stop at the threshold of the market, but it is also valid at the very heart of the economic sphere where too often the concern for the long term is sacrificed in the short term. (Macron 2017,52, Macron 2017h, 74-75, Rocard 1991.)

During his campaign Macron described himself as "a candidate of work" emphasising several times how unemployment were the main reasons for the several societal grievances of the country (Macron 2016, 5, Macron 2017a, 9). The second major element of Macron's politics is a desire to promote better and up-to-date education to heal the society and accelerate social mobility. Macron especially wanted to invest in primary education and programmes for pupils with special needs. He also wanted to address the grievances of higher education where his line of fire was especially the famous elite school and power stronghold ENA whose former student Macron himself was. The President of the Republic saw that the current ENA did not serve the current needs of the nation (INSEE 2016, Rossi 2018, 1, Rosanvallon 2015, 90, François 2011, 22-23, Macron 2019c).

The next section will open existing scholarship on Macron and how there still exist several very different views on where the President of the Republic belongs in political scale. This disagreement on Macron's politics combines both several scholars, and Macron's main opponents in politics.

1.4 Existing Scholarship on Macron and French Liberalism

After narrowing down where the focus of my research will be I decided to exclude certain political issues to the extent possible. Before the presidential elections, it was a well-known fact, at least in France, that Macron represented pro-EU values and supported deeper integration, including new permanent institutions (Macron 2015, 127-128). Based on the well-known fact I decided to study Macron's EU politics only in a limited context and excluded from my research Macron's foreign policy and his stance on the climate crisis and environmental issues in general. Hence, I decided to focus more on the questions that were contradictory. Related to the

delimitation of the research, I wanted to explore the arguments that Macron is a valence populist refusing to be on the right or the left where the fight against the strong partisanship formed a starting point to the whole politics. The slogan of not being on the left nor the right (*ni gauche, ni droite*) was introduced first by Jean-Marie Le Pen) who used it during his presidential campaigns in 1995 and 2002 (Perrineau 1997, 84).

The second accusation of populism had to do with Macron's image as an elitist technocrat populist whose politics were focused on hard economic values and who was not able to understand the everyday lives and problems of the people. These accusations came up frequently especially during the Yellow Vest riots. I will discuss this criticism of Macron's politics later in the study (Zulianello 2020, 329, Perottino & Guasty 2020, 546). As I thought about the other critical choices frequently connected to Macron's politics, I chose as my third approach Macron's relation to the neo-liberal politics and their connection to the risk society. Related to the other critics, I mention at this point contradictions in Macron's performances towards the truth in politics and in the nation's history, which are even more glaring as Macron has wanted to present himself as a politician with a genuine desire to act on behalf of the truth and reconciliation.

Sophie Pedder's (2018) ideas on Macron and Macronism will also open a critical, or even sarcastic view on the philosophy of the President of the Republic. Pedder raises the critical detail on Macron's contradictory thinking as the President of the Republic has a temptation to please as many citizens as it is in general possible. As an example, Pedder mentions how Macron wants to reduce the public spending, but at the same time Macron is keen to create huge public investments which reflects the old spirit of well-known Statism. This chosen policy has raised a lot of questions even among Macron's supporters ever since Macron started his campaign for the President of the Republic. As I have used rhetorical analysis as a research method, I would already here point out a detail concerning Macron's way to express his ideas. Pedder explains how Macron used the French word *en meme temps* at the same time several times in his speeches that finally ended up to a YouTube hit. More specifically, Pedder wants to tell us how keen Macron was to act as a politician and as a Presidential candidate who tried to avoid the conflicts with potential voters. (Pedder 2018, 145-146, Cole 2019, 89-90.)

Alistair Cole's (2019) work gave an interesting and large view on Macron's politics and leadership. Cole approached the President of the Republic by comparing him to the former Prime Minister of UK Tony Blair as I did also, the approach that I will point out this more specific later in this introduction. Cole also pointed out the

several failures concerning Macron's leadership, as the President of the Republic faced the allegations of being arrogant and "out of touch" of the civil society and the normal life of the ordinary citizens. Cole also brings up how contradictory Macron's politics has been among his opponents. As a former Prime Minister and Presidential candidate François Fillon saw Macron as representative of the failed Hollande's administration, the other two Presidential candidates: Jean Luc Melonchon and Marine le Pen described Macron as a politician and Presidential candidate who drove the interests of international finance. The last contradictory claim Cole brings up is a view from a French scholar Richard Gilles who accomplishes Macron's reputation claiming that Macron belongs to the traditional Orléanist Right that emphasises economic and political liberalisation. In a historical sense that I will later open more specific is interesting detail that the first liberal President of the Republic Valéry Giscard D'Estaing was also possible to see in a context of the Orléanist tradition, due to Giscard's liberal views that were descending from Bonapartism and the conservative right (Cole 2019, 79. 11-12, Slama 2006, 60-63.)

As I discuss in general level the role of the President of the Republic in French politics Cole emphasises also how there exist "several paradoxes of the Presidency" including how the presidency has been represented since Charles de Gaulle's era. According to Cole, presidentialism is possible to see as a context or form of the "extreme personalisation of the regime". More specifically the role of the President of the Republic emphasises the personalisation and the individual style of the whole institution. Despite the last-mentioned features, it is clear that all the incumbent Presidents of the Republic act and will act in a context "that is partially written in advance, a set of roles, rituals, predetermined acts and standards against which individual incumbents are judged". (Cole 2019, 19-21.) The long shadow of General de Gaulle has always influenced all incumbent Presidents of the Republic and I will return several times to this phenomenon later in this research.

As a last example of the earlier research, I would like to mention a work by journalist Brice Couturier's (2019) work. Couturier draws the picture of the President of the Republic in a way where all Macron's moves and choices in his life have been very calculated and weighted, one of the most relevant examples by Couturier is his find of Macron's politics where the citizen has one's rights but also one's responsibilities for one's nation's and society's success. Couturier also emphasises Ricœur's role as Macron's important background in mandarin, and an inspiration to make a career in politics. I will later return to Ricœur's influence on Macron

concerning for instance the role of history and truth in politics and in science. (Couturier 2019, 113, 89, 95.)

As I started to collect the research material and literature I found Auriel Craiutu (2003) great work that opened fundamental way how the liberalism was born in France after Napoleon's era, and how the Doctrinaires and especially François Guizot, but also Benjamin Constant outlined their vision for the modern French Society. This piece of work was important because it guided me later to the primary material and to study the original texts of François Guizot and Benjamin Constant among others. Craiutu's book is also one of the very few modern works which have focused on to discuss how political philosophy and economic thinking including the questions around the ownership and value of work, developed in France during Bourbon Restoration (1815-1830) and July Monarchy (1830-1848).

The next section will discuss the background of the Fifth Republic, and the special characteristics of its politics and leadership. I will describe the main reasons behind the so-called republican monarchy which started when the Fifth Republic was founded in 1958. I will explain why the role of the President of the Republic is so central in France and why there are always great expectations for each new president, who exercise considerable power and influence over the politics and the direction of the nation.

1.5 The Republican Monarchy Has a Royalist History

After founding the Fifth Republic of France in October 1958, General Charles de Gaulle and Michel Debré designed a political system and the Constitution which guaranteed a strong and central role for the President of the Republic reflecting the country's royalist and imperial history. Contrary to other European countries where the role of the President has become almost entirely ceremonial the power of the president of France has remained virtually unchanged since the beginning of the Fifth Republic. To understand why this happened in France, I need a brief overview of modern political history of France. First, I must study what happened during the short period after the Second World War known as the Fourth Republic (1946-1958), but also, in general, how the political leadership, whether a President, King, or an Emperor, has been seen in a historical sense in France, and in French political culture. (Gaffney 2010, 6-8.)

These phenomena around political leadership and political culture will be analysed in more detail throughout the study, but I will make here a brief reference

to it. General de Gaulle and Michelle Debré's premise for the new Constitution was to prevent the chaos that was prevalent during the Fourth Republic when Governments came and went, and the country went through a period of recurrent and intensifying domestic grievances in politics despite the economic boom in Europe. According to de Gaulle (1971), all the prime ministers of the Fourth Republic, seventeen in total, lacked vision and leadership, and the parties were reluctant to make decisions, promote reforms or run the country in a responsible way. De Gaulle remarks that, for instance, wage increases were not based on improved productivity, but they were financed for all practical purposes by the state treasury which in turn was financed by the Marshall Plan and other loans from Washington, D.C. (De Gaulle 1971, 14.)

The grievances in French politics during the Fourth Republic were due to the weak political institutions (De Gaulle 1971, 13-14). The Constitution itself served the interests of the parties which were heightened as the election system was changed in a proportional and, at the same time, the role and the power of the President of the Republic was very limited, without most of the rights the Constitution of 1958 offered to one (de Gaulle 1971, 13-14). De Gaulle was concerned about the greedy desire of the political parties to concentrate all possible benefits to themselves, ignoring the needs of the people and the nation and hijacking power from its citizens (De Gaulle 1971, 13-14). De Gaulle's criticism of the selfish party politics was not a new phenomenon in France, as Constant (1815,1872) had presented the same criticism a century earlier. (De Gaulle 1971, 13-14, Raynaud 2017b, 14-15, De Gaulle 1971, 13-14, Conseil Constitutionnel 2020a, Conseil Constitutionnel 2020b, Conseil Constitutionnel 2020, h, Couturier 2017, 16, De Gaulle 1971, 11-13, Aron 1965, 1443, Constant 1815, 15-16, Constant 1872, 10.) De Gaulle's concern will also feature in Macron's speeches that are analysed later in the study, as Macron makes a distinction between himself and the former Presidents of the Republic.

As I discuss in more detail the reasons behind the new constitution, I also must pay attention to the changes in France's international status. During the 1950s, France was forced to face its colonial past in a new way. Former colonies, for instance Algeria, had chosen to carry out politics with the objective of gaining independence from France. These policy changes soon led to bloody battles between France and the Algerian forces, and the situation still worsened as the politicians were not able to solve the problem. One of the bloodiest wars in the history of France began in 1954 and lasted until 1962, when the Evian peace agreement was signed by the French Government and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (De Gaulle 1971, 89, 342-343). It is important to remember the deep social

and moral crisis that took place in France during the war and its postmortem. These continue to be extremely difficult issues to many French people and especially to French leaders, as I will discuss later.” *La sale guerre*”, the dirty war, was what the French called the Algerian war. In the end, the war paralyzed the entire political life in France, and in May 1958, the crisis culminated as France found itself without a government.

There was a real threat of a military coup until de Gaulle was called back to duty, and he assumed control of the army after setting clear pre-conditions for his return. In practice, this meant that de Gaulle had considerable influence on the new Constitution together with Michel Debré, his collaborator and the forthcoming Prime Minister. De Gaulle’s vision – Gaullism -- was not only to restore the authority of the state and its institutions among citizens, but also to restore the appreciation of France abroad. De Gaulle also emphasised the importance for France to be free of American influence, including NATO. De Gaulle was also convinced that one of the priorities in the future would be to maintain a strong army, including nuclear weapons, which France acquired later. (Perrineau 1997, 17, Gaffney 2010, 21-22, De Gaulle 1971, 26-29, 181, 33, François 2011, 3-4.)

Nevertheless, de Gaulle and Debré succeeded in what they had set out to do, and the result was the current Constitution, which was overwhelmingly approved in a 1958 referendum. Maurice Duverger (1980), a well-known French sociologist and political scientist, later coined the term semi-presidential system when describing the Constitution (De Gaulle 1971, 35). Concurrently with the beginning of Gaullism and de Gaulle’s presidency, France also witnessed the era of republican monarchism, which gained increasing power and momentum after the change in the Constitution in 1962 (Raynaud 2017b, 56-57, Cole 2019, 19). Under Article 7 of the Constitution, the President of the Republic is elected in a direct two-round election, which stresses the significance of the relation between citizens and the president (Raynaud 2017b, 57, Le Conseil Constitutionnel 2020, article 16, De Gaulle 1971, 11-12, De Gaulle 1964, Cole 2019, 17-18). According to Duverger, a country can be defined as semi-presidential if “The President of the Republic is elected by universal suffrage, he possesses quite considerable powers; he has opposite him, however, a Prime Minister and ministers who possess executive and Governmental power and can stay in office only if the parliament does not show its opposition to them” (Duverger 1980, 166).

The French Constitution yields several important rights to the President of the Republic, regarding, for instance, the nomination policy and the command relationships to certain important institutions. More specifically, the President of the Republic nominates the Prime Minister and three members of the Constitutional

Council and has the right to dismantle the Parliament after consultation with the Prime Minister. The President of the Republic is also the Supreme Commander of the army and chairs the higher councils and committees of National Defence. We can also note that, during the last five years, the President of the Republic has reacted and used one of his most important prerogatives by declaring the state of emergency when the domestic crisis was at its very worst in 2015-2016, following several terrorist attacks in France. The President of the Republic also confirms the ministers of the cabinet by the proposals of the Prime Minister and negotiates and ratifies the treaties. (La Constitution 1958, article 8, article 9, article 12, article 15, article 16, article 8, article 52).

All the above-mentioned presidential powers are important, as I try to understand how central an institution the President of the Republic is in France. Arguably, even more important, and interesting is to explore how the power works in politics, especially in cases when the President and the Prime Minister come from the same party. In practice, this means that the chosen Prime Minister will implement the will of the President. According to the Constitution, "the Government's task is to conduct the politics of the nation". Duverger emphasises that when the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic have come from the same party all presidents have used their power also indirectly, by demanding absolute obedience from their prime ministers. (Assemblée Nationale 2020, Duverger 1980, 172, Conseil Constitutionnel 2020, article 20, François 2011, 63-64, Cole 2019, 17-19.)

All presidents of the Republic have been the real leaders of the country whose outlines in politics have had a significant influence on how the Governments have acted. As René Capitant has said, "the role of the Prime Minister is like a Chief of staff of the President of the Republic". In the case of Macron, the Government and his chosen Prime Ministers have implemented Macron's election programme, since Macron took the office, based also on the absolute majority in the Parliament which, however, ended in 2020 after some of the Members of the Parliament from the En Marche party formed their own parliamentary group. (Assemblée Nationale 2020, Duverger 1980, 172, Conseil Constitutionnel 2020, article 20, François 2011, 63-64).

It is also important to note that during the history of the Fifth Republic there have only been three times, when the country has found itself in a situation the French call "cohabitation", meaning that the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic are from different parties. This situation is exceptional, because the two-stage General Elections take place six weeks after the Presidential Elections have been held, and, typically, the party from which the President has been elected will also win the General Elections (vie-publique.fr, 2020). In the case of cohabitation,

the position of the Prime Minister is stronger than that of the President, because the Prime Minister has a majority in the Parliament. Given the status and powers associated with the institution of the President, the person elected faces great expectations from the voters. The expectations are not only for a strong, determined leadership but also for a charismatic and cultured individual in charge of the country. Emmanuel Macron's predecessor François Hollande did not seek re-election, because the voters' expectations had not been met and his approval rates were among the lowest of incumbent Presidents.

The next section will briefly discuss how and why recent political trends in France have been so different from those in Germany and the UK, especially when it comes to successful economic and social reforms. In the early 2000s, the socialist Chancellor of Germany, Gerhard Schröder, was able to reform the labour markets and economy in a way profoundly shaped Macron's thinking and his campaign for the President of the Republic. These comparisons are important to explore because especially the UK's former Prime Minister Tony Blair makes for an insightful comparison with Macron.

1.6 The Different Paths of France and its Neighbours

As I have already pointed out, the problems of economic and social reform have been a constant political challenge in France during the past decades. In fact, these problems started already in the mid-1970s after Les Trente Glorieuses ended and economic growth slowed down due to the oil crisis and the Yom Kippur War, a short conflict between Israel and Egypt and Syria in 1973. As I mentioned previously, starting since the mid-1970s, if not earlier, the persistent problems in France have included low economic growth (especially compared to the other OECD countries) and persistently high levels of unemployment, historically one of the highest among the OECD countries, and impacting people under 25 and immigrants. One of the most serious consequences of the high unemployment rate has been the wide-spread social exclusion, the rising number of people who have not been able to find their place in society. At the same time, there have been several prolonged problems associated with labour markets and social reforms. These problems have concerned all Governments and all presidents since the mid-1970s regardless of their party affiliation. (TF2 2017, 5.56-6.10, Macron 2017, ca6, Le 1 hebdo 2016,5, Macron 2017, c2-3, Wiewiorka 2012, 27)

In the meanwhile, Germany went through a period of extensive social and labour reforms which culminated in 2005 by Gerhard Schröder. Consequently, the German economy started to flourish again, and the former “sick man of Europe” was back on track (Odendahl, 2017). In short, the Hartz reforms were designed to improve employment services, which were guaranteed and created by the public sector, activating the unemployed which meant a fundamental reform on their social benefits and in general improving the employment demand by deregulating the labour market” (Jakobi, Kluve 2006, 3).

Before the Hartz reforms, Germany’s economic growth had been non-existent for four years in a row, its fiscal deficit was above the EU’s Stability and Growth Pact and public debt was rising. According to Jakobi, Kluve (2006), “from 1991-2003 GDP grew only 18 % which is half of the UK (35 %) or The Netherlands (34 %) during that period”. Therefore, the economy and labour markets had not been able to create new jobs, and Germany was a country of high unemployment (Jakobi, Kluve 2006, 3). Even though research evidence on the macroeconomic effectiveness of the Hartz reforms is controversial, it is important to note that the unemployment rate started to decline firmly in 2005, and this trend has not stopped, even during the Great Recession, which started in the Fall of 2008 (Hertweck, Sigrist 2013,1).

However, for the purposes of this dissertation, it is more relevant to analyse what happened in the UK in the late 1990s, after Tony Blair took office and the New Labour remained in power for the next ten years. When I discuss the above-mentioned task, it is important to keep in mind that the British labour market was deregulated already in the 1980s when Margaret Thatcher crushed the power of the trade unions, removed the system of collective agreements through legislation and privatised key national industries. Privatisation was one of the most important policies Thatcher introduced, and the New Labour continued it from 1997 onward. (Brown 2011, 4). Blair’s Government did not re-nationalize businesses, and the trade unions never reached the status and power they had lost under Thatcher (Blair 1997, 3). According to Blair, New Labour politicians understood that the ever-expanding state machine, centralised corporatist labour market policy, and the growth and restoration of the trade union movement would not be a solution to future problems; self-interested union policies, which had left the country’s needs secondary, had come to its end (Brown 2011, 4, Blair 1997, 3). Macron’s task was fundamentally more difficult than Blair’s, because before him, there had been no politicians or leaders in France who would have succeeded in carrying out genuine labour market reforms. I will discuss these themes several times later in the research. The next section will briefly explain who the voters were, who in the end got Macron elected,

what was a typical Macron voter like, compared to, for example, the voters of Marine Le Pen, his opponent in the second round of the elections.

1.7 Who Voted for Macron?

The 2017 elections were in many ways exceptional in the history of France, and it is important to find out and discuss who were the voters who in the end decided to give their support to Emmanuel Macron. IPSOS (2017), a well-known and respected research institute in France, conducted two separate research about the background of the voters in the 2017 Presidential Elections. Studying the results of the first round of the elections gives a more reliable profile of Macron's supporters than studying the voter profiles on the second round when the voters could only choose between two candidates. (IPSOS 2017.)

Macron gained 23.99 % of the votes cast in the first round of elections, and, according to an IPSOS survey, his voters came from different demographics. Macron won more than 20 % of votes in all age groups over 25 years old. The highest ratings were in the age group 25-34 (28 %) and, surprisingly, in the oldest group of the voters: the age groups 60-69 (26 %) and the over 70 (27 %). Studying further the profile of a typical Macron voter reveals significant differences compared to the voters of other candidates, especially Marine Le Pen. When asked a question concerning "the future of the young generation", 35 % of Macron's voters believed that life will be better in the future, while only 15 % of the voters of Marine Le Pen believed in a better future for the young generation. Macron was also very popular among the executives, one in three (33 %) of whom voted for him. Furthermore, one fourth of the middle-management professionals (26 %) and retired citizens (26 %) voted for him in the first round. Macron's popularity was also steady among the employees in the public and private sectors. One in four employees both in public (23 %) and private sectors (25 %) gave their votes to Macron, and the numbers were similar (24 %) among the voters who were sole proprietors. (IPSOS 2017, 11, 6.)

As I study how the educational background has divided among Macron's voters compared to his second tour opponent Marine Le Pen, I will notice a big difference between the voters. In general, Macron's voters were more educated which will emerge, for instance, in comparison of the lowest educational levels: 30 % of Le Pen's voters were the citizens whose educational background was limited to only primary education, whereas in case of Macron the same figure was 19 %. The difference was even larger as I studied how many of the voters had achieved the

master's or bachelor's degree from the university level. For Macron's supporters the numbers were 30 % and 26 %, whereas Le Pen's voters had remarkably lower figures: only 9 % of voters had a master's degree and 15 % of voters had a bachelor's degree from the university. In the last three decades, National Rally (the former Front National) has been the most favourite party among the working-class voters. This emerged also in the Presidential Election, as 37 % of the working-class voters voted for Le Pen compared to Macron's 16 % popularity among the working-class voters. (IPSOS 2017, 8, Perrineau 2017, 54-55.)

Since Macron started to implement his election programme, he has been accused of favouring the wealthiest part of the citizens. Macron has been frequently called as a "President of the rich" but especially during the Yellow Vest movement's riots and demonstrations. In some way, this critics or point of view is correct because IPSOS research points out how Macron obtained the highest ratings among the wealthy voters, as 25 % of the Macron's voters announced to earn 2000-3000 €/month and further the popularity became even stronger in income groups of more than 3000 €, as 32 % of Macron's voters announced to earn more than 3000 € a month. The last number reflects well the overall situation of the wealthiest party as 32 % of Macron's voters announced that they have a good economic situation in their daily life. Compared to Marine Le Pen's figures, the two candidates were in a remarkable way different. According to IPSOS, 61 % of Le Pen's supporters announced to earn 2000 € a month or less, whereas. only 32 % of the voters of Macron announced to earn 2000 € a month or less. (IPSOS 2017, 9.)

To summarise, I can notice that while Macron's popularity was quite strong in all voter segments, there was a surprising peak among the retired. The well-educated, whose income was at least at a reasonable level and who were content with their professional life, were also typical Macron voters. The difference between Le Pen's voters is clear and follows the traditional, and by now a historical pattern, of Le Pen's most loyal support base still consisting of the less educated and working class voters.

1.8 The Structure of the Dissertation

The first chapter covers the historical background of the study and focuses on how the state thinking in France has developed since the early Enlightenment and the French Revolution of 1789, and, especially, how French liberalism influenced the society and politics after the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte. I will discuss the importance of the rising middle-class as a support base for rulers and politicians. I

draw comparisons between two old monarchies, France, and Great Britain, explaining why their political cultures have developed in such pronouncedly different directions. My aim is to explain to the reader the essence of French political thinking: why is France so French? Understanding this national essence is important because it will also reveal the present challenges and grievances in the society. After the discussion of the early and mid-19th century, I will discuss the importance of the Third Republic in the history of France, and why there are still today so many critical, significant, and even surprising elements and influences which can be traced to the time of the Third Republic.

Given that the era of the Fourth Republic was short, I will focus principally on the current era, the Fifth Republic, and its special features such as the rise of statism. Furthermore, I will discuss the main elements of the risk society and how it has been positioned in the context of neo-liberalism and neo-liberal thinking. After the risk society, I will review the third way politics, especially as conducted by Blair and the New Labour during Blair's premiership in 1997-2007. Great Britain is relevant as a point of reference also because both France and Great Britain had significant roles within the EU. Both countries have certain similarities in their national essence concerning their roles in international politics: they maintain a strong and modern army, they are the only countries in Europe that have a permanent membership in the UN Security Council, and their economies are almost equal in size. London and Paris are still the two largest cities in Europe and host several international and highly influential European schools of economics and companies. (Askenazy 2018)

Towards the end of the second chapter, I will discuss the possible influence of Paul Ricœur and Raymond Aron on Macron's political values and the ways in which he approaches questions of society and politics. Ricœur's role behind Macron's intellectual development has been a topic of public discussion, but I will point out specific instances in which his influence has manifested in Macron's leadership and policy. Raymond Aron was one of the most respected post-war journalists and scholars in France and known for his criticism towards modern political ideologies and party politics in general. I will study how his views have possibly appeared in Macron's thinking. The third part of the dissertation will analyse in more detail Emmanuel Macron's personal background and the key people behind his rise to the top of French politics and society.

I will note that Macron's skills and talents were discovered very early by his professors and political advisers, and that these talents soon led Macron on an interesting professional trajectory from public administration to the private sector and then to politics. After Macron's biography, I will provide an in-depth analysis of

the research material consisting of Macron's speeches, interviews and statements, both during his election campaign and also after he had assumed office. The empirical analysis begins with a reflection of work which, together with education, formed the foundation of Macron's campaign and policy platforms. The education policies Macron has carried out are closely connected on issues such as fighting against poverty; as a candidate and a president, Macron has stressed the importance of eliminating the root causes of poverty, too often the poor level of education.

After the discussion on work and education, I will analyse the research material on the economy and Macron's economic values in general, and how Macron's pro-market thinking differed from the traditional approach of French politicians. The fourth chapter will finalise my discussion on the inconsistencies in Macron's relation to French history. I will introduce the views of his most vocal critics who, for example, accuse him of unwillingness or inability to face and understand the regrets of normal people. The final chapter will provide the conclusions of the research. I will present my interpretation of Macron's politics: where I argue he should be positioned in French politics, where I would trace his political mindset, and how I would assess his influence on French politics. When assessing his influence, it is important to keep in mind that his presidency has taken place during exceptional circumstances. By exceptional circumstances I refer not only to the Covid-19 crisis but also to recent terrorist attacks in France and the Yellow Vest movement and its challenge to the social order and Macron's position as the President of the Republic.

2 THE HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This chapter will focus on the historical framework of the study, which means that I will review the three most significant themes and theories of the study. As already mentioned in the introduction, I will begin this chapter by exploring French liberalism which draws from the era of the late Enlightenment. I will especially highlight the famous philosophical group the Doctrinaires who were the trendsetters of liberal political thinking in France from 1815 until the late 1860s. In the case of France, liberalism has always been a very complicated ideology, to an extent even an enigmatic and mysterious one, and has remained a source of fascination among Anglophone scholars. According to Craiutu, this is due to the complex heritage of the French Revolution in 1789 and its internal contradictions. This chapter will introduce several explanations for why the French liberals advocated the policy choices, which were very unorthodox and unconventional compared to Anglo-Saxon politics and policy choices they made. (Craiutu, 2003, 7.)

My special attention will be on the values they represented and the new political ideas which they introduced. As I mentioned in the introduction, it is important to pay attention to how Guizot and Constant contextualise the social and political ideas of the Doctrinaires, especially their ideas on education, work, private ownership and amassing of individual wealth. In short, Guizot and Constant emphasised the values which were, and still are, well recognized middle-class values. This premise of Guizot and Constant is relevant also for the purposes of this research. In my introduction I mentioned that Macron received strong support from the wealthy and successful voters who typically attached themselves to middle class and middle-class values. After making this connection, I felt that it would be not only interesting but also essential to study more specifically the link between Guizot, Constant and Macron and highlight the elements that reveal the possible historical roots of Macronism. Secondly, to Guizot and Constant, it was important to create a sustainable connection between politics, political system, administration and citizens. Constant and Guizot basically represented the virtues that were relevant to Macron as well. In the introduction I explained that Macron was keen to reform the old political culture, in which efforts restoring accountability and increasing transparency have played an important role.

In this section I will especially highlight Guizot's values concerning questions of justice, equality and truth which, according to him, are the real foundation of politics and the ideal of society. Secondly, I will discuss Guizot's views on the political institutions and the distribution of power and give an overview of Guizot's criticism of for example Montesquieu's theory of separation of powers and Rousseau's views on sovereignty. Regarding Constant, I will outline his critical views on sovereignty of the people and the questions surrounding it. I will also study how Constant approached and classified classical rights and modern liberties of the citizens. The *Doctrinaires* and Guizot are significant philosophers also because their ideas and writings shape the thinking of Alexis de Tocqueville, one of the most influential philosophers of the 19th century (Craiu 2003, 62). Tocqueville expressed his admiration for Guizot's skills and ability to outline the framework of an ideal society and valued him as a highly original and versatile political actor (Craiu 2003, 62). Despite this respect and admiration, Guizot and Tocqueville had disagreed on some of the basic questions of the politics and power, such as the kind of authority that would be ideal in a modern society and the role of aristocracy in the future (Jaume 2013, 1, Jaume 2006, 1-2).

The second important theory for this research is the risk society theory developed by Ulrich Beck in the mid-1980s. In social theory risk society is significant and because it concerns and occurs in nearly all in western democracies and it has had a profound negative impact on the values and standing of the various institutions (work, family, church, trade unions, political parties, representative institutions, religion) which together have contributed to the success and social balance and decreased tensions after the Second World War. In fact, risk society is a consequence of neoliberalism, the influence of which has constantly challenged states and the above-mentioned traditional institutions while creating a sense of insecurity in entire societies (Beck 1992, 12). According to Beck, "The tendency is towards the emergence of individualised forms and conditions of existence, which compel people –for the sake of their own material survival– to make themselves the centre of their own planning and conduct life in fact one has to choose and change's one's social identity as well as take risks of doing so." Beck remarks that this phenomenon has transpired alongside trends and choices of the individuals themselves, so it is not relevant to accuse only single politicians or trends of politics or big business and their influence on current politics. We are living in an individualised world where we have a great desire to express ourselves as individuals and regularly stand out from the crowd. (Beck 1992, 88, Beck 2002, 40-41, Baumann 2000, 135, Deuze 2013, 6.)

As I have pointed out, the western democracies have experienced several new phenomena and faced new challenges which have tested our capacity to solve them. Many of these challenges have been particularly serious in France. Unemployment has been a difficult problem to solve everywhere in Europe and especially in France; traditional family and traditional family values now co-exist with, for example, same sex marriage and various open relationships which has presented fundamental challenges to the church; and trade union and political party memberships have been in a sharp decline everywhere in Europe since the early 1970s. According to Kantola and Vesa (2013), this development started already after the Second World War and has accelerated together with new breakthroughs in information technology (Kantola 2014, 154, 155, Kantola, Vesa 2013, 295-308).

Finally, this section will study third way political theory and third way politics which was created by Anthony Giddens in the mid-1990s and put into practice first in the UK by the Prime Minister Tony Blair. Giddens argued in the early and mid-1990s that it would be essential to adopt a new approach to politics instead of the traditional confrontation between free markets and state which had dominated the political landscape and debates during the entire era of the Conservative hegemony in the UK. Third way theory and politics emphasised work and individual efforts, including an individual's will to take responsibility for one's life. To Giddens, the role of the state should be active, in the right context. Hence Giddens used the term "social investment state" the role of which would be important, for instance, in education and training, areas that were not a priority for Conservative Governments. To Giddens, education and training formed a natural base for the success of an individual and the society. The third way politics can be seen as New Labour's answer to the existing societal grievances in the UK where the Conservative party had failed to eliminate poverty and unemployment. (Giddens 1998, 109, Giddens 1994, 190-191.)

The next section will open up more specific François Guizot's and Benjamin Constant's ideas on politics and how they outlined the ideal of the society where the role of education had a significant role.

2.1 Guizot and Constant lead the Liberal Movement

According to Winock (2017), liberalism in France reached its culmination during the years between 1815-1848, the period also known as the Restoration. After the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte and the Congress of Vienna, the old monarchies returned to

power throughout Europe. In the case of France, this meant the return of the Bourbon dynasty. The French liberals were divided into various schools of thought, but two of the most significant philosophers at the time were Constant and Guizot. During the turbulent years of the Bourbon Restoration and the July Monarchy of 1830-1848, Constant represented left-wing liberalism whereas Guizot was positioned at the centre of the political scale. Constant's political views changed often, and his contemporaries thought he was a weathervane. In fact, Constant supported all the regimes in power during his political career: the Directorate, the Consulate, the First French Empire and finally the Bourbon Monarchy. Despite this, it is important to pay attention to Constant's fundamental values to which he was deeply committed. Constant was convinced that the regime should always be constitutional and liberal based on the values and principles of liberty. At the same time, however, it was necessary to see the connection between the present political and social demands and personal freedom. This meant that all the questions concerning the various forms of liberty and liberalism were constantly shifting towards new forms and perspectives. This was preferable to rigid ideological approaches, the case, for instance, during the decades of the Cold War. (Winock 2017, 899-900.)

Craiutu remarks how the Doctrinaires gave an important input to the development of the institutional framework of representative Government during the turbulent era. More specifically this means to the modern citizens self-evident ways to resolve political problems by the negotiations which were often missed in the current French society. Further the Doctrinaires' political tradition has a dimension to the way we think about the nature of politics today and further how they make us think about the complexes between liberalism, democracy and parliamentarism. In summary the Doctrinaires give us a possibility also to understand the difference between failure or success in politics. Craiutu emphasises how unpopular during their era the Doctrinaires were because of the features of their image connected to centrist model of politics, which proved that they were not able to extinguish the demand for extremes that often have a typical element of French political life, and further how some of their reforms were contradictional as for instance the questions around voting which will study more precisely on next chapter. Craiutu brings up in a detail the lacking mentions concerning the Doctrinaires and François Guizot in various classical encyclopaedias of political science including for instance prestigious Cambridge Series, which has found a place to the many minor figures of politics and history like Andrey Gromyko and George Gallup. So, it is no wonder that their theories have not been taught for instance in

survey courses in modern political theory at the Anglo-American universities. (Craiuu 2003, 3-4, Pedder 2018, 150-151.)

Why and how this strange neglecting or even hostile attitude and phenomenon against The Doctrinaires has happened, Craiuu shows a few reasons. First in political sciences there has always been a strong Hegelian undercurrent, and effect and respect of success which has created a premise on how to evaluate or rank significance of certain politicians or philosophers. I have to remember how the Doctrinaires were quite unsuccessful in their political career, so they were not considered any remarkable consider of scholars¹. Second, the whole historical era when The Doctrinaires acted has been irrelevant or at least less interesting comparing for instance previous period the Enlightenment. Craiuu claims that the whole era has been seen as a period when the whole political scope became narrower than for instance it was during the Enlightenment. One of the most relevant issues was that the whole period was not able to produce any significant work, which would have been a historical value except of course Alexis De Tocqueville's famous work: *Democracy in America*. (Craiuu 2003, 4-5.)

When I talk about liberalism's basic values and premises there has always been an interest towards the individual citizen's needs and rights. So it is clear that since the beginning the whole concept of citizenship and citizenship has been widely politicised and especially today the whole issue has created deep cleavages in different countries. To the Doctrinaires, the rights of individual citizens were not self-evident, and there were some forms of individualism that they questioned and even rejected. The most significant question or policy goal to Guizot and the other Doctrinaires was: how to stop the Revolution and how to create a solid administration based on the stable principles and values? To Guizot the revolution itself was just an instrument to accelerate historical change:" the trend toward social uniformity and the equality of conditions and created a new type of society that could no longer be governed with the aid of the institutions and principles of the Old Regime" (Craiuu 2003, 108, Guizot 1821, 8, 119-120). Guizot believed that the trend toward social change was inexorable and that this change revolved around the demands for social uniformity and equality of conditions (Craiuu 2003, 108, Guizot 1821, 8, 119-120).

As I study more specifically the French social model in the mid-19th century, I have to keep in mind that France was an old aristocratic society with a rigid social

¹ This element of political success and its effect on academic appreciation was not considered by Max Weber during the 1920's. Weber became a remarkable scholar instead of his successful career in politics.

hierarchy and virtually no mobility between the classes (Craiuu 2003, 108, Guizot 1821, 8, 119-120). Guizot argued that the benefits of true democracy would be represented in an entirely different social model in which the various individual influences spread throughout society, and a huge number of people benefited from it, living in similar circumstances, and sharing the same values. Guizot also described how the society could be developed towards a new, better, and more coherent one. It was inevitable that aristocracy would lose their power and status as new political ideas would spread throughout the society and would claim the power from old families. The main point was that the new political ideas would be stronger than the old families who held the power. The next phase would be the reaction of the people, who want to be governed by the same rules for everybody. Finally, the people would live in an empire of democracy in circumstances that would create incentives to learn more of the advantages of democracy and how to use it and benefit from it. (Craiuu 2003, 108, Guizot 1984, 102, 106, 110-112, 144-145, 166-169.)

To Guizot it was clear that governing and solving the problems of the civil society will not be based on violence but on the nation's elite and masses having a similar educational foundation, which would create social coherence among people. Guizot was a strong advocate of a primary school system and was responsible for Guizot law of 1833 which established primary education in France, organised by municipalities and supervised by special inspectors who represented the Government. Guizot expressed his vision for education with: "(N)o sectarian or party spirit in your school. The teacher must rise above the fleeting quarrels which agitate society". School would become an instrument for the new kind of social order and help create more coherence among the citizens of France. (Guizot 1838, 17, Winock 2017, 903-904, Craiuu 2003, 37, Guizot 2002, 10.)

According to Constant and Rosset (2012), the education and school system had two significant tasks. Firstly, all education was to be seen as an instrument to dispatch and maintain the acquired, rationally useful information and knowledge of the previous generations to the current generation. The premise was connected to the jurisdiction of the Governments whose task was the conservation and growth of all acquired knowledge and making sure it was possible for the citizens to enjoy it. Secondly, Constant saw education to create an environment in which it was possible to control people's opinions and societal debates in general (Constant, Rosset, 2012, 323). I can therefore note that public education has been connected to political power since its early years when the idea was first introduced and was a topic of public debate.

Next Constant and Rosset discuss personal freedom where he refers to Condorcet's views on personal freedom and especially the situations when it was lacking. People who were merely obeying law were seen just as instruments of political power and were comparable to machines. Constant emphasised the importance of the role and action of authority. Throughout administration there was a real possibility to influence education because the Government actions were without real opposition. According to Constant and Rosset, people were critical, and they were easily guided against authority. They were aware of their rights and independence and this development would influence the education of their children. Constant and Rosset argued that if the Government would intervene with education, it would mean that the Government gave itself the right to direct the education policy. This would lead to a situation in which the Government should maintain and enhance the various forms of educational doctrines. This, then, would also mean that the Government would be dedicated to serve itself and, more specifically, that the Government would always favour the most loyal actors. (Constant, Rosset 2012, 324, 330-331.)

2.2 Guizot: The Man of the Middle-Class

Together with primary education, the Doctrinaires were keen to advance academic research and develop archives and other national document collections. The special interest was on the teaching of national history. The Doctrinaires understood that history would be the right instrument helping the people identify themselves and separate their nation from other nations. History was also considered a useful instrument for the authorities, whose task it was to legitimise their acts to the citizens on the knowledge of the social facts. The first volume of the General Facts of France was published as early as in 1832, and the national statistics institution, *Statistique générale de la France* (General Statistics of France), was founded the following year with the mandate to collect and maintain records of research, statistics and monographies that would help state authorities and civil servants in their work. (Winock 2017, 904.)

The Doctrinaires challenged the idea of popular sovereignty, the Government created by and subject to the will of the people, although it was a popular point of view at the time² (Winock 2017, 904). According to Craiutu, it is a well-known fact

² According to the Constitution: The principle of the Fifth Republic is: Government of the people, by the people and for the people (The Constitution of the Fifth Republic 1958, article 3).

that Constant did not enhance a theory of the sovereignty of reason to its full-scale form and advocated for individual rights as an effective means of limiting sovereignty (Craiutu 2003, 147). However, Constant and Guizot agreed on how to limit sovereignty. The right way was to use public opinion, publicity, and wise distribution of powers (Craiutu 2003, 147). According to Valensire (1990), Guizot was connected to the questions of law and sovereignty, which were never linked to the individuals or an organ but to reason, justice, and truth (Valensire 1990, 407). However, perhaps the most important contribution of the Doctrinaires was that they challenged the old policy premise in which all political power came from God whose will was represented on earth by the monarch. According to the Doctrinaires, “no-one has the monopoly to sovereignty because the reason, the truth and the justice resides nowhere complete and infallible”. (Winock 2017, 904.)

According to the Doctrinaires, human capacity was defined as an ability to act according to the reason. At the same time the Doctrinaires outlined the new political elite (*nouvelle aristocratie*) and they distinguished the civil society and the political society of themselves and more specific this meant that they recognized the principle of democracy and value of the equality but it was connected just to the civil society. But instead, the political rights of citizens were limited and they mainly belonged to the new political aristocracy or elite which would be founded. Guizot was convinced that understanding the aristocracy was a precondition towards understanding and analysing democracy and its threats to it. (Winock 2017, 904-905, *Revue de Paris* 1838, 65, Jaume 2006, 2.)

But how did the Doctrinaires want to define this new political and intellectual elite? First criterion was that the individual citizen should own something to be considered part of the elite. This criterion was significant because the Doctrinaires did not see any opposition between the fortune and the intelligence. Moreover, the Doctrinaires advocated universal and open middle-class, which would be formed at the heart of the state. According to Guizot, all citizens should try to reach the middle-class through work and savings. In a speech in the Parliament, Guizot declared he supported the citizens’ efforts to pursue wealth. (Sprang R-L, 2015, 269, Allier J. 1976, 27-45, Craiutu 2002,15-16.)

In the discussion of the most fundamental ideas of 19th century liberalism in France ideas on liberalism in 19th century France, certain threads emerge regularly, most importantly strong developing faith and belief in the individual and individual effort and private ownership. At this point, it is also relevant to also pay attention to socialism which started to emerge and influence thinking in France around the mid-19th century, for example regarding demands for the termination of the private

ownership and establishment of *La République sociale* Guizot and the other Doctrinaires strongly opposed these ideas and demands. According to Guizot, socialism was odious, unrealistic, and even perverse (Guizot 1838 27-28).

Guizot was also convinced that a modern and truly civilised society could not function without a prosperous social order which was connected to developed intellectual and moral life. Social order and especially civil order were the foundation of French society. Next to support the society were the family, the property in all its kinds, capital and salary, and work in all its forms, both intellectual and manual work, and collective and individual work. Guizot stressed the importance of the unity of laws and the equality of rights. Guizot and the Doctrinaires were very pragmatic politicians and scholars, which partly explains the scepticism of their contemporaries. This scepticism was raised from their will to be on the middle of the political scale. They were seen in a difficult position where they were neither too radical nor too conservative. However, Guizot was convinced that society evolves in stages in an inevitable way. The rising third estate, the bourgeoisie has a significant role in the development which will lead, in the long run, narrowing of social disparities and inequality (Guizot 1838, 17, Craiutu 2003, 64). Astute politician, Guizot was aware of the challenges in the way of progress. Guizot was convinced that social progress will mould societies more complex and extensive which will influence social relations, social power, and happiness (Guizot 1838, 17, Craiutu 2003, 63, Guizot 1997). Aiming for progress was important, and it covered both social and moral questions. The whole civilization was an inseparable part of this process (Guizot 1838, 17, 31, 32 Craiutu 2003, 45, 63, Guizot 1997, 16).

Guizot and other Doctrinaires were correct in recognizing the impact of the rising middle class on future progress of mankind. This was possible because the middle class embodied universal principles of the new constitutional order. More specifically, this idea was connected to the need for a compromise between the principles of the revolution and the national continuity which was symbolised by the monarchy. At the same time, the significance of the relationship between the middle class and the monarchy was clear to the Doctrinaires. There was a mutual need, and especially the monarchy's status and future were based on middle-class support. Guizot also highlighted the significance of various institutions, such as warfare, Government, religious creeds, philosophical ideas, and sciences, in the development of the (external) social life and the formation of the unity of the European civilization (Winock 2017, 903, Craiutu 2003, 41, Craiutu 2013, 64, Guizot 1997, 13). In short, Guizot's ideal citizen was an individual of the middle class who has the wealth and activity and who will later become an elector, after having met those criteria above

mentioned (Winock 2017, 917). One of Guizot's best-known speeches in the parliament discussed this issue: "enlighten yourself, get rich yourself, improve the moral and martial condition of our France: these are the real innovations." (Sprang R-L, 2015, 269, Allier J, 1976, 27-45, Allier J, 1976. 36, Le Moniteur 1843, Craitu 2003, 41.) The next section will explore in more detail how Guizot saw the goal of the politics and the mission of the Government. I also briefly discuss the differences between Guizot's philosophy and Montesquieu's classical thinking concerning the above-mentioned themes of the politics that were of interest to both. Montesquieu's legacy in the field of political research is unmissable, and I consider it significant to study, even if briefly, the differences between these two scholars.

2.2.1 Guizot's Political Ideas

Guizot's main target of criticism was Montesquieu's theory of separation of powers. Guizot was convinced that Montesquieu's approach was both superficial and false and did not deal with the real principles, tendencies, and values of how to govern and use political power. Montesquieu had outlined the necessity of separating the legislative, executive judiciary power to prevent the risk of the nation drifting to despotism, and he was convinced that without the separation of powers it would be impossible to guarantee personal freedom and liberty. According to Guizot, Montesquieu's discussion on sovereignty, democracy, and the roles of the individual and the aristocracy was insufficient because Montesquieu stressed the external characteristics of the power. (Guizot 2002, 48-49, Montesquieu, 1995, 112.)

In his well-known works *Des conspirations et de la justice politique et De la peine de mort en matière politique* (1984) and *The History of the Origins of Representative Government in Europe* (2002) Guizot studied other fundamental questions of politics, such as sovereignty and the status of the representative Governments in Europe. Guizot for example discusses the functions of the Government and defines his ideals for politics (Guizot 1984, 17). Among several commentaries on the issue, Guizot explained that the Government operated on two levels: it has the responsibility to preserve social order and social justice and to conduct the state affairs, but the state also represents the interests and values of the state itself (Guizot 1984, 141). The use of power returns to the institutions, the task of which is to force the power to act only according to the wishes or approval of the state. At the same time, Guizot reminds us that the state protects the people against the risks of illegal

actors who promote their selfish interests against the common will (Guizot 1984, 141).

One of Guizot's premises connects to the moral questions around justice and especially how the moral order should be linked to political order. Guizot was deeply concerned that citizens were not equal before the law, and he analysed in detail the consequences of this phenomenon and its influence on society. According to Guizot, the imperfect legislation defects morality and fragments the authority of the state and Government when the responsibility to punish and prevent illegal acts is transmitted to the church instead of the state or the Government. The various social perils will become a real danger when they are out of the scope of criminal laws and when other powers than the courts are called to provide remedies other than convictions and punishments. (Guizot 1984, 17-18.)

Guizot defined a good Government as an institution which could prevent not only bad things but also eliminate all grievances that might cause bad consequences to the society, such as disorder. This was related, for instance, to the political ideas and passions which give birth to disorder; these elements gave the Government its mission and were simultaneously the first and most important obligation for the leaders of the nation. Guizot was also conscious of and concerned about the nature of democracy and its influence on politics, arguing further that if the nature of democracy was imperative, instead of conciliatory, it would expose the true nature of the Government. The politics would thus become a theatre and its stage would be the whole society. However, Guizot was convinced of the superiority of democracy and wanted to study the reasons behind this development. (Guizot 1849, 9.)

However, it is still important to remember the turbulent era of France and Europe when we are discussing and analysing Guizot's philosophical points of view and the various questions of truth, justice and sovereignty in politics which were and formed the foundation of Guizot's philosophy. In Guizot's philosophy there was a special place for the questions around sovereignty and he challenged the traditional ways to approach it. Guizot divided his theories of sovereignty into two categories: "one seeks for it and places it in some one of the real forces which exist upon the earth, no matter whether it be the people, the monarch, or the chief men of the people. The other maintains that sovereignty as a right can exist nowhere upon earth, ought to be attributed to no power, for no earthly power can fully know and constantly desire truth, reason and justice". According to Guizot, the first category finds absolute power. To Guizot it is irrelevant whether the force is religious, monarchist or a populist leader of the ordinary people. (Guizot 2002, 226-227.)

The second category's premise is to reject the whole idea that there might be an actor who could have a position or status of sovereignty. This is connected to the idea that real sovereignty is based on constant desire for truth, reason, and justice. To Guizot it was clear that because of the nature of truth, reason, and justice, they actually reject absolute power in all cases. Guizot's conclusion is that it is impossible to say that either of these two forms of sovereignty has a clear hegemony over the other or that one of the theories is more correct than the other. Both of these theories have their strengths and weaknesses, and they are right on a certain extent. Guizot's interest in truth and justice can also be observed in his relationship to representative democracy and especially in institutions around it. Guizot was convinced of the benefits of the representative system which forced the citizens to seek truth and justice. But how were these targets to be reached? First of all, it could happen in a traditional European way, that is, through free social debate would force the current ruling powers to seek a common truth. Secondly, Guizot emphasised publicity that exposed these powers under the eyes of the citizens, due to freedom of the press. This encouraged the citizens themselves to seek the truth and to tell it to the actors who represent or hold the power in society. (Guizot 2002, 226-227.)

But where will all the above-mentioned developments, including the true theory of sovereignty, lead? Guizot argued that the necessary consequence of his theory of real sovereignty was that all actual power was responsible. He further described a situation in which there was no actor with sovereignty, it forced all the actors to prove that they had a real purpose to seek truth and "have taken it for their rule, and must legitimise their title by their acts, under penalty of being taxed with illegitimacy". This question concerning the responsibility of power is remarkable to Guizot. According to him, the representative system and the responsibility of power are interconnected, and the representative system is the only system "which makes it one of its fundamental conditions". (Guizot 2002, 227.)

Guizot also discusses how the nature of politics has changed; the politics is no longer good and true, and the worst-case scenario occurs when the actual truth and justice and especially the legal institutions become politicised. The problem arises and concerns the nature of legality when the judiciary is more closely and intimately related to the society. When legal issues have been politicised, they will be called upon to leave their legitimate sphere to serve politics and political issues in cases when the Government is not able to act. This phenomenon has always led to bad politics, despotism and, in the end, to revolutions. Guizot was convinced that the politics of the Government and especially the failure of it are directly linked to the present social situation, whether good or bad. (Guizot 1984, 21-22.)

The problem is not limited to concern only the Government but it has a connection to the executive level as well. Guizot claimed how the uncertainty and obscurity of the administration towards the general interests of the country create a situation where the citizens disconnect themselves from it and isolate themselves in private interest. However, Guizot saw that there might also be various positive elements when the above-mentioned negative development happens. The citizens become more active when they understand that the legitimacy that they should have was unclear or even questioned, or that the Government is not able to guarantee their security. In changing the situation, they take every opportunity to maintain their disapproval in elections, in petitions and in other forms of social or citizens' activities. Guizot outlined further how the number of unsatisfied citizens will increase all the time and how the most active citizens become the representatives of the unsatisfied ones whose interests have been crushed by the Government and the executive administration. The task of the representatives will be to abuse the denunciations and publish all the wrongs and misdemeanours and thus they become the centre of these scattered dispositions that they collect and express. (Guizot 1984,6, 29.)

When doing so the representatives naturally take on an attitude of mistrust and even hostility towards the political power, inclining at the same time to suspicious and cynical behaviour (Guizot 1984,6, 29). Guizot described these activists as being permanent adversaries of the current political power and the people who represent it (Guizot 1984,6, 29). Their habits, acts, and words are an integral part of their personality, which is surrounded by wrath and antagonism (Guizot 1984,6, 29). Guizot's prophecy was that finally every new Government's origin was established and positioned on the ruins of the previous Government (Guizot 1984,6, 29). When I discuss Guizot's prophetic prediction of the revolution I notice that he supports or at least understands the citizen's participation and sees the result as a natural consequence of bad leadership and failing administration (Guizot 1984, 27, Winock 2017, 903). It is possible to argue that Guizot promoted the idea of Revolution because of their legacy, principles, and values rather than revolutionary acts themselves (Winock 2017, 903). I Have to remember how Guizot was keen on researching and finding the justice and truth and when doing this he was convinced that representative institutions were the best way to find and maintain them (Winock 2017, 903).

I would next like to discuss Guizot's and other Doctrinaires' ideas on happiness, one of the main topics of study and a source of unceasing passion for philosophers. For example, according to Finkielkraut (2013), the famous French philosophers

Jean-Paul Rabau Saint-Etienne and Boissy d'Anglas represented the late 18th century politics of transparency and advocated politics whose goal was to increase the happiness of the citizens. The environment in which they acted was profoundly different from. Like so many other philosophers of the time, they were acting under the Law of Suspect that was a law empowered local revolutionary committees to arrest "those who by their conduct, relations or language spoken or written, have shown themselves partisans of tyranny or federalism and enemies of liberty" (Britannica 2021). Rabau Saint-Etienne and Boissy wanted to create a more equal society and advocate for equality and freedom but faced despotism. Finkielkraut remarks that the emergence of political romanticism was shaped by controversial ideas around equality, and he sees political romanticism as an attempt to offer an alternative to the subjectivity of Enlightenment (Finkielkraut 2013, 84-86).

As I mentioned in the introduction, Guizot and the Doctrinaires considered happiness one of the most significant goals of humans. Realisation of political freedoms was not a final destination for the society or for the individual citizen, and therefore political freedoms were a premise or a way to guarantee personal rights, personal freedom and personal independence. All the last-mentioned elements were essential in order for people to reach their most important goal: happiness. (Winock, 2017, 900.) When I discuss the traditional core values of liberalism, I can notice several ideas and goals which emerge time after time, for example in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of liberalism or the liberalism represented by Guizot and the Doctrinaires. According to Guizot, all people had an equal right to seek happiness, and in this he agrees with John Stuart Mill, who also wrote of the right to individual happiness a few decades later, in the 1860s. (Winock 2017, 900, Guizot 1849, 23.)

Guizot defined happiness as an enjoyment without any other limit than the need and the ability of all the existing or possible goods in this world, either natural and primitive goods that the world contains or goods gradually created by the intelligence and the work of man. Most of these goods, the most essential and the most fruitful, have become the exclusive pleasure of certain men, certain families, and certain classes. As for the size of the Government, Guizot is convinced that the best results will be achieved by a government which is as small as possible. Nevertheless. Guizot sees a connection between the well-organised society and the citizens' hopes: the society guarantees the citizens' opportunities to find the right and contented place in a society (Guizot 1849, 6). According to Guizot, all the above-mentioned stages of development will remove evil from society, and when that happens, wars will end as all human capacity will equally contribute for the common good (Guizot 1849, 6-7.) Guizot uses vivid language in describing social development and its progress. This

is particularly pronounced, for instance, when he refers to the social battle between good and evil, or when he describes what the frequency and amount of various conspirations of the society can tell us about the present social and political situation (Guizot 1849, 6, Guizot 1984, 27).

The next section will focus on Benjamin Constant's ideas on social coherence and justice. Constant emphasised freedom, and public and private morality and he saw that they had a wide impact on how social coherence ultimately will exist in an ideal society.

2.2.2 Constant Emphasises the Social Coherence

In his famous work *Principes de politique applicables à tous les gouvernements représentatifs* (1815) (translation *Principles of Politics Applicable to All Governments* 1980) Benjamin Constant (defined widely his views on the current political and social questions. More specifically, the themes he discussed were related to questions of justice, especially fair use of power, freedom, and sovereignty. All of these are significant themes and values that will be studied in this chapter in more detail. But to begin with, in his work, Constant discusses social authority and sovereignty and what, according to him, these have been based on. As I conduct a more in-depth study of Constant's political ideas, I can note several interesting approaches. Constant, who has been described as a "champion of individual liberty, and as an advocate of limited sovereignty", was also an admirer of modern commercial society and the Constitution of France (1815). According to Constant, the premise of the Constitution was right and relevant in recognizing the principle of the sovereignty of the people and the supremacy of the general will over any other will. However, Constant did not deny the existing social and political problems concerning individual freedom and liberties. Constant argued that French domestic institutions had performed inadequately their task of accomplishing the Constitution. (Constant 1815, 13, 286, Brint 1985, 324.)

Constant notes the problems related to the previous constitutions of France, and that although they also guaranteed individual liberty, there was ample evidence of incessant violations of individual liberty and other forms of liberty, such as the freedom of the press. A century later Raymond Aron (2010) criticised the traditions of the French Revolutions and argued that in many ways, they were more a myth than a genuinely new social phenomenon. According to Aron, the ideal of social equality was understood in France through revolutions, after which it ended in legal

texts in all Europe. Aron notes the weakness of the rulers and regimes after the fall of Napoleon era and the return of the Bourbon Restoration. The nobles returned to power which further weakened the foundation of the civil society. The aristocracy continued to enjoy many privileges for a century, fuelling resentment and instability. The basic rights of the citizens were under threat; illegal arrests were real problems in France compared, for instance, to Great Britain where such things never happened. (Aron 2010, 27.)

As Constant paid attention to the existing negative phenomena, he felt that it would be necessary to enhance freedom by developing various safeguarding mechanisms, such as independent institutions, to employ the oppressed in favour of the means of defence which for instance the written law possesses and guarantees. This freedom and the above-mentioned elements were significant and in fact the goal of all human association which was based on public and private morality. It is important to note that Constant approached the basic elements of the modern society where freedom, and public and private morality had a wide impact on the society. A significant concern was connected also to arbitrariness. As a social and political phenomenon arbitrariness is fatal because it would weaken and even destroy morality among citizens. Moreover, when there is no morality without security, there are no gentle affections without the certainty that objects of these affections are sheltered under the rule of their innocence. (Constant 1815, 286-287.)

As I continue to study the kind of importance social coherence and the lack of it have for certain nations and societies, I will note phenomena which in fact are still very topical. According to Constant, it was obvious that the whole societal situation would worsen when social coherence was in danger and the arbitrariness was threatening individual citizens. In the meanwhile, the whole society was suffering and losing its credibility in the eyes of many citizens. More specifically, Constant argued that arbitrariness was a powerful weapon to destroy and spoil the security and all progress of the society. This would include the foundation of the wealth which is often connected to the commercial activity of the society which benefits the people and the nation itself. (Constant 1815, 287, 289-290)

What about Constant's ideas on authority and the laws? What was his stance on those perpetually difficult political questions, especially in France? First, Constant was keen to emphasise the meaning of laws and how important it was for a nation to be devoid of the problems concerning authority and leadership. I can argue that they are, and they formed a premise to politics and power. If this does not occur, they give a false signal to our citizens and they are allowed to demand other laws, which means that our legitimate authority and leadership will be questioned. Like I

have already mentioned, Constant was convinced that the premise of social authority was connected to and based on the general will. The general will be to exercise on the individuals an unlimited authority Constant argued that the above-mentioned principles were unconditional, but he had nevertheless seen that there had been various intentions and interests, which had obscured importance. (Constant 1815, 13).

Like Guizot before him, Constant was also keen to discuss the questions of legal authority, fair exercise of power and justice. Constant was conscious of the consequences in a situation in which the legal Government would begin to use arbitrary power, the nature of which he described as being ultimately vague and boundless. Constant questioned it and commented on the great contradiction in the legal Government using illegal acts against its own political adversaries when securing its interest. According to Constant, if a stable Government gives itself a permission to use arbitrary and arbitrary power, it then represents the purpose and function of the arbitrary which means that the existence of the arbitrariness has a connection to Government's policy and policy actions. As I mentioned earlier, Constant wanted to find out why there is a temptation to use legal authority in the wrong way, for instance against the adversaries who threaten our property, our freedom and, in general, our way of life. Moreover, why was there a temptation to punish the political actors who are conspiring against our constitution and, at the same time, the state, and its institutions? If this occurs, it is relevant to ask on what our protection is based. (Constant 1815, 13, 290-291.)

It is interesting that the answer was to be found in fear and, more specifically, fear which is based on the hypothetical possibility that an oppressive power would take over our legal administration and its institutions. According to Constant, we are afraid of seeing an oppressive power substituted for a legal organisation. But if the authority itself exercises this oppressive power, what advantage does it retain? The arbitrary measures of a consolidated Government are always less numerous than those of the factions which have yet to establish their power, but this advantage is lost by reason of arbitrariness. It means that once the arbitrary power has been admitted and recognized it will be so convenient to use it that no-one can use other forms of power. Constant argues that when presented first as an extreme resource in infinitely rare and limited circumstances, the arbitrary becomes the solution for all problems and even a daily practice. (Constant 1815, 290-291.)

At the same time, Constant argues that anarchy and despotism are illegitimate because they dispose of the guarantee and reintroduce uncontrolled or even a wild state. Liberty in itself was too Constant the right to do all that the laws could defend,

but not so much that there would be no liberty yet. Here Constant agrees with Montesquieu and distances himself from Rousseau's idea using the same voice as Guizot; this will be studied later in this chapter. Constant argued that Rousseau's theory had a direct link to despotism because it invoked liberty and freedom in a wrong way and was only capable of furnishing the arms and pretexts for all genres of despotism. According to Constant, giving the executive or authority power to the trustee, whose position is usually vague and who is closely connected to the leader, will be the first step to the disorder and misrule. Constant offers as an example a contradictory situation in which we want the courts, judges and jurors to be able to act independently but at the same time there might be a threat against them, and they could be arbitrarily arrested based on reasons which cannot withstand daylight. This means that political power and legal power exist without connection to the ministerial authority. (Constant 1815, Brint 1985, 324-325, Constant 1815, 293-294.)

Constant further argues that the abstract recognition of the sovereignty of the people will not lead to a situation where the individual freedom will increase automatically, and if the citizens attribute to this sovereignty a margin that it should not have, freedom may be lost despite this principle or even by this principle. The change Constant and the Doctrinaires represented was to advance politics that made a clear distinction to the "party men politics". Constant was at the same time critical towards contemporary party politics and noted that whatever good intentions they may have, they are always unwilling to limit sovereignty. They look upon themselves as their presumptive heirs and spares. They control one or another class of leaders, but at the same time allow them to organise in their own way authority. (Constant 1815, 15-16, Constant 1872, 10, Couturier 2017, 16.)

Like already indicated in the chapter title, Constant was concerned about the consequences of the unlimited sovereignty of the people, and he argued that when we have established a situation in which the unlimited sovereignty exists, we have created and thrown at a random human society a degree of power that is too great by itself and that is evil, in the few hands that we place it. Give it to one or too many, you will find it equally bad. You will attack the depositories of this power or the leaders and, depending on the circumstances, you will accuse one after the other: monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, mixed Governments, and representative systems. Constant also argued that the ideal of sovereignty and class consciousness, or belonging to a certain class, were elements which were not compatible. According to Constant it was clear that no individual, no fraction, no partial association can be arrogant towards sovereignty, if it has been delegated to someone. Constant further noted that there was a point "where the independence and individual independence

and existence begin and the jurisdiction of this sovereignty stops”, and he argued that this claim also applied to commercial life. (Constant 1815, 15-17.) The next section will study in more detail Constant’s ideas concerning work and ownership and how they had an interesting connection also to the corruption and political rights of the citizens.

2.2.3 Constant’s Core Tenets: Work and Ownership

To Constant, ownership was a high priority and a precondition for political rights, and the key to ownership was work. This, Constant argued, would guarantee social order and a well-functioning society. Constant also held interesting views on corruption and how it could be prevented. He argued that without ownership there would be an inseparable link between corruption and political rights. Constant referred to the interest of the non-proprietors that arose when they became aware of, for instance, their political rights and possibilities to influence politics. In all countries with representative assemblies, it is essential that these assemblies - whatever their organisation might be -be composed of proprietors. Constant discussed the connection between the capable man and the nation in the following way: “An individual with a brilliant merit can captivate the crowd, but the bodies need to conciliate the confidence to have interests in accordance with their duties. A nation always presumes that reunited men are guided by their interests. One believes, one is sure that the love of order, justice and conservations will have the majority among the landowners. They are therefore not useful only because of the qualities peculiar to them, but because of the qualities which have been attributed to them.” (Constant 1815, 108)

Constant (1988) made men capable of exercising political rights, because it established and preserved ties among individuals, ties that protected their interests and taught them how altruism and self-interest could be combined. Property sets people on guard against the imprudent sacrifice of the happiness and tranquillity of others by including sacrificing their own well-being and forcing them to calculate for themselves. It forces them to descend from the heights of chimerical theories and impracticable extravagances by re-establishing between them and the other members of the association numerous relations and common interests. Constant saw the connection between the commercial activity and its influence on the rising personal independence of the citizens. This is based on the nature of commercial activities which supplies their needs excluding simultaneously all the external interventions.

Constant claims that most of the interventions by the Governments have been adverse and even embarrassing to the nation and its citizens. Briefly this means that the collective power's meddling with private business or speculation has caused more harm to the actors who have been involved with them than the widely real benefit. According to Constant: "every time Governments offer to do our business for us, they do it worse than we would and at greater cost". (Constant 1819, 5, 11-12, Constant 1988, 212, Craiutu 2003, 131, Winock 2017, 900.)

It is important to notice how the commercialised society works with its two dimensions: on the other hand, one of its consequences is the reality which seems to be more oppressive than it used to be earlier in the history. Why is this happening? The reason is based on the phenomenon where our speculations are more different than before and because of this arbitrary power must adapt itself to reach them. However, the commercial society has a clear influence on how the arbitrary power finally works. Constant remarks that commerce and commercial society makes it easier to elude and this happens because arbitrary power "changes the nature of the property, making it almost impossible to seize". The key word by Constant is circulation and more specifically a new-quality circulation. In the modern world it is a common phenomenon that the property can be circulated, and it has a connection to its commercial or market value concerning for instance selling and buying real estate. Simultaneously circulation forms an invisible wall against abuse of the social or political power which might have an interest to deprive it of. (Constant 1819, 11-12.)

Constant was convinced that at its very best the influence of commerce is not only limited to emancipating the people, but it has also a great impact on state authorities. More specifically, the power of money and the commercial activity together created a dependence ratio which extended to the state authorities. Constant notes that during antiquity, the credit was as weak as an individual's position. The real power was concentrated on politics. During the modern era, the situation changed, and this meant a new phenomenon: the status and significance of the individual citizen would improve at the expense of politics, the status of which had decreased compared to its significance during antiquity. In addition to exploring the influence of commerce on society, Constant was interested in how the nature of wealth had changed. Wealth was now more tangible, and it was within reach of everyone. Constant remarks that people typically try to elude power by deceiving it because they see power as a threat, but at the same time the wealth was a reward. If you wanted to amass wealth, you had to be keen to serve it, which was not possible without use of power. Constant's conclusion is that, based on the above-mentioned

phenomena, political existence is less important to the citizens who are doing well in their lives. Commercial life has influenced international relations, and the world has become smaller. More specifically, this means that habits and skills have become nearly identical in different nations. Head of the states can be enemies, but the people are almost compatriots. (Constant 1819, 12.)

As a last point concerning ownership and the benefits it creates, Constant argues ownership as a concept and as an instrument has proved its value because it allows for various possibilities to enhance the common good among citizens. According to Constant, property is only a limited convention, but this does not mean that property's significance would be less important or less inviolable. Without ownership and property an individual existence is stationary, brutal, and even savage. Constant further remarks that property deeply influences the division of labour. If someone abolished property and ownership, the division of labour would perish therefore. The contemporary point of view represented by Constant emphasised the individuals' rights to make decisions and govern their economic environment. Ancient philosophers equated normal labour work to slavery, as personal freedom was considered to belong only to philosophers and artists. Moreover, participating and devoting oneself to the service of popular government was considered relevant. (Constant 1814, 220-221, Winock 2017, 900.)

As I study in more detail Constant's influence on the development of liberalism, I will note that he was able to introduce liberal ideas in contemporary French society in new ways. According to Meuwly (2017), liberalism was no longer limited to only concern individual liberty or personal freedom but was also considered a serious political doctrine of the Government. Unlike anarchists, who believed in a self-governed society without any Government restraints, Constant was convinced that society had a fundamental need for various institutions which were able to guarantee the basic rights of the citizens, such as political and economic liberties. Constant also believed that public power was essential to prevent the unwanted intrusions to citizens' personal sphere. However, the above-mentioned situation would not emerge without problems and difficult questions concerning individual sovereignty and the tasks of the state. According to Meuwly, this happened when an individual's goal was to deploy his opportunities in full scale of sovereignty while the interests and the tasks of the state concerning the individual citizen were markedly different. Meuwly continues that the liberal thinking has a deep connection to the Constitution with its enormous task of securing the rights of the citizens. It is also important to keep in mind that the task of the Constitution to distinguish between the private and the public cannot take place without the action of the parliament. This is a

pronouncedly different approach from Rousseau's abstract theory. (Meuwly 2017, 1-2.)

But how did Constant view the often-complicated relationship between the state and the individual citizen? Meuwly argues that "neither liberalism nor Constant's thought can be exhausted in an almost mechanical distance between the individual and the state". Constant does not evade the crucial question of equality; he pays attention to it as he does to the question of freedom. However, Constant argued that the "equality before the law however remains the end of human evolution driven by an inextinguishable propensity for progress". According to Meuwly, we must remember that Constant was always critical towards all forms of absolutism while also was concerned about how to secure freedom when absolute power was not a realistic option to govern. Because of this fundamental problem, Constant was ready to accept some useful abuse if the result was worth it. He was convinced that liberal politicians should approach politics pragmatically and not to forget their hunger for power. Meuwly also comments on the new policy elements which all liberal politicians should accept, and how these policy elements were possible to integrate into the conduct of business. The question of the role of the state would have to be settled on a case-by-case basis. (Meuwly 2017, 2.)

The next chapter will start with a brief overview of political and social development of the Third Republic's (1870-1940). During that time, France finally became industrialised, and the society faced new challenges and values as the social sciences and science in general took power from the church. At the same time, a new term, solidarity, appeared in political discourse alongside liberty, as the new political and social phenomenon of socialism entered public debate. This chapter will also shed light on the French labour movement's difficult relationship with the Socialist Party. These difficulties continue to set France apart from Germany and the Scandinavian countries, where the Social Democrats have always had close ties to trade unions: in France, the communists and the PCF party (Party communist français) had a strong and radical influence on the unions. Even today, the CGT union's policy and image are reminiscent of the revolutionary past and the Marxist confrontation between the labour and proletariat and the capital and bourgeoisie.

2.3 Third Republic's Heritage

After the collapse of Napoleon III's reign, and the lost war against united Germany (1870-1871) France drifted to internal chaos which led to a birth of revolutionary

Government known also as Paris Commune which governed Paris a couple of months from March 18, 1871, to May 28. According to Winock the Commune was based on being a counterweight to the current patriotism the bourgeoisie represented which had failed and betrayed the nation and its citizens. Gould (1991) brings up more specifically the current internal chaos: French army shot 25,000 Parisians, and there were large arrests as about 40.000 citizens were arrested, and 23 citizens were executed by the military courts and thousands of citizens were imprisoned or deported to the penitentiary settlements back to the seas. (Winock 2017, 150, 448, Gould 1991, 718, Bainville 1942, 435-436.)

After the short era of Commune of Paris, the Third Republic continued and lasted sixty-five years until the summer 1940 as German occupation and Vichy governance started, and hence the Third Republic was in fact the longest constitutional regime in French history. The influence and impact of the Third Republic was not just limited to concern the stability of the regime, but it also contained several phenomena which were interesting and remarkable in intellectual context, and which influence still affects in current French society. Dobuzinskis (2008) saw that liberty as a value formed a premise for all intellectuals and the political leaders of the Third Republic. As an example of the previously mentioned the Prime Minister Jules Simon declared: “Man is created free; he must keep and develop his liberty” as Jules Barni a famous scholar defined liberty as “the first principle of republican Government”. (Winock 2017, 340, Dobuzinskis 208, 291.)

As I discuss more the basic elements and values of the Third Republic Winock adds that the premise or ideology of the Third Republic was based on the equal education, secularism, the religion of progress and patriotism where the societal main driver was the motivation to seek the compromise. In a certain way the patriotism became a new religion which actually reminded an anxious and reasoned cult which influenced to the civic education and up-bringing of the children. It was important also that the Republic should represent values which will create and give to the nation and the country itself the common soul where the class confrontation or civil battles does not exist as they used to be since the Great Revolution in 1789. More specifically, this means that it was essential to put an end to the threat of the social civil war where the new kind of collaboration between entrepreneurs and workers was an essential element. The special attention was intended for the schools whose main target was to unify the nation after the fall of the previous Old Regime and by the rise of the proletariat revolutionary. (Winock 2017, 549-550, 565, Legrand 1961, 1.)

According to Winock, the founders of the Third Republic were represented by the patriotic flame, where the education system and army formed a significant foundation to the whole nation. The founding fathers of the Third Republic were convinced that education should be free and mandatory to all citizens. In this sense, they in fact continued the tradition that François Guizot had started several decades earlier. Illiteracy was considered a social grievance and was not allowed to exist in the Third Republic. In addition to education, the Third Republic wanted to mobilise science as an instrument promoting national unity and replace God and the Catholic church with science. The main goal was to reach a new national consensus by reason and science. This was the motivation behind the separation of church and state, a lengthy political process which was eventually completed in 1905. Secularism became a leading doctrine of the Third Republic, and it remained a fundamental tenet of the subsequent French Governments. The principle of secularism is firmly established in the Constitution of the Fifth Republic. (Winock 2017, 550, la Conseil Constitutionnel 2021a.)

Dobuzinskis argues that the normal or, rather, the traditional approach to the development of the French republican tradition still focuses on the study of Rousseau and his followers. This focus has led many to ignore the deep processes of transformation which started during the Third Republic and the significance of which has only recently been recognized by a new generation of scholars. This is an important correction. France took intentional steps forward in the field and practice of social policy as the ideology of “solidarism” spread and became a nationwide phenomenon. According to Dobuzinskis, the current republicanism of the Fifth Republic is based on a combination of the late 19th century and early 20th century liberalisation and “sociologification”. Scholars at that time wanted to reconcile republicanism with liberalism, and the emerging theories and methodologies of sociology played a significant role in this process. The result of several famous sociologists’ contribution to the existing political discourse was that the idea of solidarity became well-accepted among the public. In fact, it formed an ideological movement which created a new social order for the Third Republic and the whole country, which was once again under threat of disorder, this time because of the rise of organised Marxism. Dobuzinskis recognizes the contributions of Emile Durkheim as the father of French sociology, but pays particular attention to Alfred Fouillée, the father of French solidarist philosophy that enhanced and developed the role of solidarity as a new social and political trend in France. (Dobuzinskis 2008, 287-288, 299, Winock 2017, 586, Hayward 2008, 19-20)

As discussed earlier, Rousseau's idea of society was based on the voluntary social contract between the citizens and the leaders. "Sovereignty," Rousseau wrote, "cannot be represented for the same reason that it cannot be alienated. It consists essentially in the general will, and the will cannot be represented. The will is either itself or something else; no middle ground is possible. The deputies of the people, therefore, neither are nor can be its representatives; they are nothing else but its commissaries. They cannot conclude anything definitively." (Rousseau 1978 [1762], 198, Urbinati, Warren 2008, 391.)

Instead, the modern society was a network of strong interdependence between the citizens and covered moral issues, politics, and various socioeconomic relations. However, it was significant to remember that the nature of these relations was not always equal to all citizens, as there were situations outside the rule of law or the control of democratic institutions for one reason or another. It was possible that the weak citizens would suffer, and the stronger ones succeed at their expense, especially in cases concerning the labour market. But what were, more specifically, Fouillée's views on the new modern French society of the late 19th and the early 20th centuries? According to Fouillée, the society was a "contractual organism" or a system which was born and was based on the individuals' decisions that were free "from structural constraints", and therefore solidarity was possible to achieve on a voluntary basis or by the public policy in which legislation had an important role. However, it was also possible that the intertwined and complex society on its own would steer development into the direction where solidarity between the citizens could take place. (Dobuzinskis 2008, 299.)

Concerning the education system the founding fathers of the Third Republic were convinced how education should be free and mandatory to all citizens so they actually continued the tradition in this sense, which François Guizot started several decades ago as I have pointed out earlier. Illiteracy was seen as a social grievance which was not allowed to exist in the Third Republic. In addition to education the Third Republic wanted to replace God and church by science which was a main instrument to unify the nation in a way the catholic church had failed. The main target was to establish the new national consensus by reason and science. Hence probably the most remarkable decision of the politicians was to separate the church and the state which finally happened in 1905, as secularism became a leading doctrine of the Third Republic which still has a remarkable role in the Fifth Republic including the Constitution where the secularism has strictly written. (Winock 2017, 550, la Conseil Constitutionnel 2021a)

Dobuzinskis sees how the normal or rather the traditional approach of the development of the French republican tradition still focuses on to study how Rousseau and his followers saw the phenomenon ignoring simultaneously the deep transformation process which already started during the Third Republic and whose significance has just recently been recognized by the several scholars. This is an important attention because France took expressly remarkable steps forward in social policy as the ideology “solidarism” spread and embodied nationwide phenomenon. Dobuzinskis claims how the current republicanism of the Fifth Republic is based on the late 19th century and early 2000th century’s combinations of the liberalisation and the “sociology fiction” were the scholars from the beginning of the Third Republic to early 20th century wanted to reconcile together the republicanism with liberalism where the new emerging science the sociology and sociological theories and research had a significant role to play. (Dobuzinskis 2008, 287-288.)

The consequence of the famous sociologists’ contributions to the current political discussion was that solidarity became and reached the greater acceptance among the citizens which raised an ideological movement created a new social order to the Third Republic and to the whole country which in fact was once again under the threat of disorder, because of the rising and organised Marxism. Dobuzinskis emphasises especially the output of Emile Durkheim as a father of French sociology, but especially Alfred Fouillée’s who in fact was a father of a French solidarist philosophy which enhanced and developed the role of solidarity as a new social and political phenomenon in France. (Dobuzinskis 2008, 287-288, 299, Winock 2017, 586.)

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One of Fouillée's most interesting and, for the purposes of this study, most relevant, arguments was the interconnectedness of social equality, solidarity and economics and economic values. Fouillée's discussion on these topics was reflected in Macron's ideas and thinking. It is interesting that Fouillée disregarded the values of modern economics, criticising them for failing to pay sufficient attention to psychological, moral, and institutional issues as citizens were driven only by their self-interest and wanted to maximise utility. However, at the same time, Fouillée disregarded the socialist illusions for the blind belief in the removal of all injustices by "collectivist solutions" which were mainly based on and driven by market failures. (Dobuzinskis 2008, 299.)

According to Fouillée, therefore, the role of sociology was evident as a possibility to diagnose imbalances that needed to be redressed. Fouillée argued that in modern society there were many harms, threats and grievances which needed to be repaired as they were rooted in the unequal relations of power. "Reparative justice" was an instrument to alleviate the problems. More specifically, individual citizens had the right and the Government had the obligation to compensate for the harms which could be traced to the unfair and systematic mechanisms of the power. Dobuzinskis argues that Fouillée's sociological paradigm had a base in liberal republicanism in two ways: Fouillée anticipated John Rawl's vision on liberty and liberal values as "the solidarity was subordinated to liberty", and challenged the Marxist socialism which he criticised for "confusing the occasional dysfunctions of a system based on private property with the principles of that system". (Dobuzinskis 2018, 299-300.)

The societal development and politicians' growing realisation of the new societal challenges everywhere in Europe led to the emergence of the early stages of the welfare state model. The new social insurance system was first created by Otto von Bismarck in the united Germany, then in Great Britain and, finally, also in France, where the first form of social insurance was introduced in 1898 to cover for accidents

and occupational diseases. Rosanvallon (1995, 1992) and Giddens emphasised the solidarity of the welfare state: the whole idea of the welfare state is historically based on using income redistribution to deal with the risks in the lives of the citizens. More specifically, risks and uncertainties are often associated with unemployment, disability, illness, and ageing. Central to risk management is the compulsory insurance system, in the financing of which every citizen participates in one way or another. In a historical sense, the modern welfare state ideology was based on William Beveridge's (1942) ideas of the five "giant evils": want, disease, squalor, ignorance and idleness. (Winock 2017, 161, Rosanvallon 1992, 22, 1995, 17, 26, Rosanvallon 2011, 234-235, Giddens 1994, 138, Beveridge 1942.)

Left-wing politics gained considerable momentum in France in the late 19th century, and much of this momentum centred around the journalist and politician Jean Jaurés. Despite the increasing popularity of the left, the movement was also fragmented, and the several different fragments were unable to work together for the final goal of a society without class. Briefly: while Germany, Austria and the Scandinavian countries achieved to form societies with marked input from the Social Democrats, France in many ways failed to achieve the same. Winock argues that traditional social democracy was based on the unity of the working class and labour movement from where the movement's influence spread to all levels of life. More precisely, this meant that trade unions, sport clubs, press and various tourism and leisure clubs and associations had a close connection with one another. In France, this has not happened to the extent it has in the above-mentioned countries. (Winock 2017, 630-631, 640-641.)

The reason behind the failure of the political development of French trade unions was the lack of leadership and the late establishment of the Socialist Party (1969). The labour movement in France was in fact forced to choose other means than negotiation to advance their interests and had to rely on strikes. This diffused labour movement often reacted spontaneously and was hostile to partisan and electoral politics. The movement favoured the revolutionary syndicalist doctrine that led to the establishment of the CGT (Confédération générale du travail) in 1895 which remained outside partisan politics. Against this confused background, the idea of socialism was advanced only slowly and painfully, as there were too many fighting camps. To politically organise the movement, Jules Guesde, Jean Jaurés, Jean Allemane and others founded in 1905 the SFIO (Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière), the French Section of the Worker's International. The CGT's 1906 Declaration of Amiens, which sealed the separation of the syndicalist and political movements. According to Dubief & Colin (1969), the unions' syndicalistic goal for

the whole society was the “increase of the well-being of the workers by the realisation of immediate improvements, such as the reduction of the working hours, the increase of the wages, etc.” However, we have to keep in mind that these goals were only one side of the work of trade unionism. It is also significant to note the value of integral emancipation which in practice meant to challenge the existing capitalist system through general strikes and other forms of protests. The final target to achieve was a new kind of “production and distribution group” which would be based on the new social reorganisation. (Winock 2017, 640-641, 697, Dubief & Colin 630-631, marxist.org,2021, Ross 2017, 2-3)

As I continue our study of the societal development of the Third Republic and the role of the trade unions, I should also pay attention to the PCF (Parti communiste français), the French Communist Party, which played a significant role in these developments until the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. The rise of the PCF reflected the rapid industrial and urban growth in the country, especially in the region of Île-de-France, the concentration of a car, chemical, textile and metals industries. One of the consequences of the industrial development was the emergence of the famous “red belt” (la ceinture rouge), communes of industry workers around Paris where the PCF, after a slow start, gained exceptional popularity in the 1920s and which retained it until the 1980s. (Fourcaut 1986, 45-46.)

Winock charts the step-by-step spread of the PCF from small working-class towns to the industrial suburbs. As the power and influence of the PCF increased, they eventually reached the majority in the CGT union which at the time had a reputation of radicalism. Behind the Communist myth of the 1920s was in fact the rising consciousness of the workers’ geographical unity as the suburbs were built close to the industrial areas. The PCF offered a sense of unity for people who suffered from the lack of strong group allegiances and traditions. The absence of a professional elite provided fertile soil for the growth of the Communist political tradition. (Winock 2017, 643, Fourcaut 1986, 46)

More specifically, the Communists’ ideas were based more on the solidarity between them than the real class struggle, as the focus of the PCF was on improving the social environment which was not only unpleasant but also unhealthy. According to Winock, the PCF’s activity eliminated the SFISO’s possibility to direct and develop its culture towards moderate social democracy. More specifically, this meant that the PCF was able to maintain its hegemony and influence at all possible levels (Winock 2017, 643). This concerned sociological elements but especially how socialism was seen in theoretical context and as a political doctrine (Winock 2017, 643.) The increase in the PCF’s popularity happened at the expense of the SFIO,

whose influence decreased (Winock 2017, 643). Winock describes the SFIO as a party of the civil servants and middle managers rather than the party or the movement of the workers (Winock 2017, 643, Fourcaut 1986, 46).

As I summarise the influence of the Third Republic's influence in present-day France. its domestic politics and political culture, I can observe several interesting things. Since the early days of the Third Republic, there was a distinct belief in social progress, equality and, especially, social solidarity, which all together influenced the first steps of the French welfare state model in which the national health service and education held great significance for politicians and voters alike. The values of the welfare state have since been essential to French politics and are, at least in theory, shared by all citizens. An overview of the parties and the historical development since the Third Republic was born reveals that the French political parties and trade unions have tended to engage in internal disputes. This is reflected in the fractured political landscape of modern-day France. There are currently only seven far-left political parties: Lutte Ouvrière (Workers Struggle), LCR (the Revolutionary Communist League), Parti de Gauche (PG), Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste (NPA), La France Insoumise (Unsubmissive France), and the already mentioned PCF (about France 2021, Hayward 2008, 34-35).

As a political phenomenon PCF has kept until today its close connection with the CGT union. Philippe Martinez, the current leader of the CGT, was in fact a party member until 2002 when he resigned from the PCF after a conflict with the party leader Robert Huez (Les Echos 2015). Despite occasional disputes, the PCF and the CGT always join forces for organised protests and strikes in France. The PCF still holds 16 seats in the current French Parliament. However, it is important to note that despite the strong public image, especially abroad, during the protests which traditionally have paralyzed the whole country, the French trade unions are weak compared, for instance. to the Scandinavian countries and Germany. According to worker-participation.eu (2021), in 2016 only 10,8 % of the employees in France were union members (worker-participation 2021).

The next chapter will explore in more detail how the risk society and various phenomena around it have emerged and formed during the last thirty years. I will also study Zygmunt Bauman's ideas on the post-modern world and the risk society, especially the questions around work and individualization. Bauman's theory of liquid modernity reflects Beck's ideas and will provide an interesting addition to this discussion. The next chapter will discuss the risk society, especially in the context of globalisation and neoliberalism, and how they have been affected by world politics and the present world order, according to Beck and Giddens. This is important for

the purposes of my analysis because I will return to discuss the several global threats which Beck has traced to neoliberalism and the politicians who have represented this ideology or political doctrine. I will analyse certain examples and propose that there are contradictions in Beck's thinking. These will emerge again later as I present the research analysis and the conclusion. Neoliberalism as a political ideology is also important to discuss, because of its connection to Macron who has been frequently accused of following the doctrine.

2.4 Individualised Risk Society

To begin with, it is important to give an exact definition of the concept of the risk society. In this chapter I will analyse risk society and Beck's ideas about the social and political environment in which the risk society has developed to the level where it is now. Because of the multifaceted nature of the theory of risk society, which extends to various social, environmental, cultural, and political dimensions, I have focused on individualization, labour markets, and other questions around work, the parts of the theory that are most relevant for my dissertation. In a short interview, Beck (2018) traced the development of the present society from the nation-state society, the purpose of which was to produce and distribute wealth and goods. According to Beck, the risk society in which we now live, operates as a distributor of evils. This means that former progress has become evil and the grievances we experience now are the side effects of former progress. These side effects include mad cow disease of the 1990's and the current climate change. (Beck 2018, 00:45-1:28.)

Were he alive today, Beck would likely add in his list the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic? It is possible to see these side effects as negative consequences of globalizations, which is closely linked to the risk society. Giddens defined globalisation as a summary of the various political and economic phenomena that significantly influence remarkably complicated production processes which in turn impact our daily life (Giddens 1998, 33). One of the most important of the visible changes concerns the role of the expanded global financial markets with real-time transactions, more precisely, time and space have lost their former meaning, and all transformations or the "distant events whether economic or not, affect us more directly and immediately than ever before" (Giddens 1998, 31). Regarding these processes, Giddens wrote at length about the communication revolution in which information technology has played the most significant role: and it has intertwined

in globalisation also impacts nation-states and their status in world politics (Giddens 1998, 31). While Beck's first definition of the risk society remains relevant, I rely in my research analysis more on his second formulation. Beck (1992) defined the risk society as "a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization" (Beck 1992, 21). More precisely, Beck argued that the risks, hazards, and insecurities were integral for modernity itself, which started as time and space began to lose their significance (Bauman 2000, 8, Kearnes 2008, 1, Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 48, Beck 1999, Giddens 1998). Beck challenged the previous belief that the external risks and threats were controllable, for instance, by science and technological innovations. The reality, according to Beck, was different: they were part of the problem (Kearnes 2008, 1). This will be discussed again later in this research where I will analyse the kinds of challenges that have emerged with the design of artificial intelligence and the competition it fuels.

Beck & Beck-Gernsheim's (2008) third dimension of the risk society concerns the question of individualization. Beck argues that it is important to consider that individualization is assumed as a social condition which is not based on a voluntary consent of the individual (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 4). According to Beck & Beck-Gernsheim it has been a great paradox that people are condemned to individualization, which means that one has been forced to manage themselves and one's self-narrative, but individualization also extends to the networks and circumstances of people around them (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 4). The present assumption is also that people have been always expected to adapt to the changing conditions of the labour market, system of education and the demands of the welfare state (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 166). Beck summarises individualization as a process that is not limited to various permissions or rights, but also regularly places expectations of active contribution on the individual (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 4).

The rapid technological progress and innovations have profoundly changed the risk society of the modern era. One of the most visible consequences has been the ever-accelerating pace towards an individualised society of employees (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 37-39). Given this process, the change in the structures of the labour market is evident and irrevocable (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 37-39). Paradoxically, the existence of trade unions and other institutions that were an integral part of the system supporting the employees, is now endangered (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 37-39). At this point it is worthwhile to pause to consider the interconnectedness of work and individualization. How are the two intertwined and why is work so important to us? Moreover, how has the role of work changed in the

postmodern era? All these questions matter, because – as Bauman (2002) has argued – the context and phenomena around work have changed. First, work in general matters: employment and unemployment are important phenomena of the risk society. They were central themes in Macron’s politics and policy programmes during the elections and continued as such since he took office.

However, Bauman argues that work was previously seen in a context of the collective effort in which every individual had one’s own part to play for the common good. This meant that working was normal and being out of work was abnormal. Typically, the last-mentioned views have been linked to Les Trente Glorieuses (1945-1973), the post-war decades of unprecedented economic growth. During this time, France developed its welfare state model, employment rate was high, and everyone’s work contribution was genuinely needed. According to Bauman (2002) “life has come to mean work” (Bauman 2002, 137, Deuze 2007, 1). Bauman and Deuze argue that this had also wide-ranging positive consequences as it led to the situation in which work and profession defined citizens’ place and rank in society and increased people’s sense of security (Bauman 2002, 137, Deuze 2007, 1).

However, there will be certain essential pre-conditions that have to be met for these new opportunities to materialise (Beck, Beck & Gernsheim 2008, 39). Beck & Beck-Gernsheim refers to the structural changes in the labour market, namely increasing flexibility to terms of work and labour, including new regulations on working hours. The new reality has inherent contradictions which are difficult for most people to solve. On the one hand there are well-justified reasons to increase the flexibility of the labour markets, but on the other hand the risk of having a permanent job has become completely the difficult task the person oneself should solve (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 39, Deuze 2007, 1). In this respect, supply and demand do not meet.

2.4.1 Institutions Are Under a Threat

All the previous arguments are supported by Ursell (2005) who also discusses the worldwide evidence on the drop in the number of permanent employees and that has coincided with the increased casualization of employees. According to Ursell, one of the main grievances is the increasing difficulty to integrate into the labour markets as the average salaries and terms of work have continued to deteriorate (Ursell 2005, 805-825, Deuze 2007 1-2). These grievances have spread to all sectors of work, and there actually exists job insecurity which is nearly a worldwide

phenomenon. The point is clear: securing employment has less and less to do with the worker's own contribution. As an example, this was the case in Kaipola in Finland, where the local UPM paper mill will be closed, even though the factory has been productive, and the company has yielded profit to its shareholders (UPM 2020).

As the case example of the UPM reveals, the future of work will be increasingly dependent on international trade and international agreements, and the ebbs and flows of the global economy in general (Deuze 2007, 2). We have already seen the great number of grievances and threats that are side-effects of globalisation, as well as the insecurity and unpredictability it has brought to local economies (Deuze 2007, 2). The latest threat is the global Covid-19 pandemic. Even though there have been other smaller pandemics in the last 15-20 years, Covid-19 has been exceptionally serious with its well-known negative impact on the global economy. Another difficult and persistent threat that can be examined in the context of the risk society is Islamic extremism. Terror attacks in two consecutive years resulted in a significant decrease in tourism to France, especially Paris, which in turn had a negative impact on the French economy. (World Travel and Tourism 2018).

Deuze argues that as the number of employment relationships has been in overall decline, the relationships have become temporary in nature (Deuze 2007, 2). With globalisation, production and workforce have become decentralised around the world, which has also made the production processes long and fragmented, albeit automated (Deuze 2007, 2). The situation becomes increasingly difficult as most Governments and employers worldwide have retreated from "the collectively negotiated regulations" which have been replaced by other arrangements, such as subcontracting and outsourcing (Deuze 2007, 1). This is a natural consequence of the development because there is relatively little left to negotiate. Beck & Beck-Gernsheim concludes that we are in the middle of full-blown technological and social revolutions, which will influence individualization and, eventually, our lifestyles. According to Beck & Beck-Gernsheim and Deuze, we have arrived in a situation where individualization has become the dominant phenomenon of our era. Individualization will eliminate classes and traditional class identities, and previously strong and distinctive social groups will lose their special characteristics. Group identities will fade away, and social mobility will completely lose its significance, as there will no longer exist different classes among which people could mobilise themselves to move on. (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 39.)

Discussion on individualization should include Peyrefitte (1998) and, earlier, François Guizot, notion of confidence. Guizot and Peyrefitte argued that confidence as a value forms the foundation for all social life and activity which culminate in

politics and the way power is exercised over other people. Bauman refers to Peyrefitte's retrospective study on the coercive development of capitalist society. This development represented continuity and predictability and existed simultaneously with confidence which was divided into three parts, "confidence in oneself, in others, and in institutions". All these types of confidence used to be tightly interconnected and had an existential purpose, because the destruction of one would inevitably result in the destruction of the others, too. In summary, Beck & Beck-Gernsheim argues that individualization has already replaced traditional institutions. Class, social status, gender roles, family and neighbourhood are all fading away. The result is the world where the individuals face demands the substance of which they can neither control nor influence. (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 2, 4 Peyrefitte 1998, 514-516, Bauman 2000, 166.)

Finally, in this section I briefly bring up Thompson (1980) and Beck's arguments about present-day capitalism and its relation to the social classes. According to Thompson and Beck, we have drifted to an era where class consciousness has lost its meaning due to the emerging individualization. More precisely, this means that "individualization transforms class struggle" to a situation which preceded the situation as they were born and formed. The idea was that class struggles as a phenomenon preceded actual classes and class consciousness. In other words, struggles and conflicts still exist today, but without class and class consciousness, because individualization has torn apart the traditional class culture. Finally, we have arrived in a situation in which the number of various conflicts has increased, and they have become more radical in nature. Therefore, social inequalities have become radicalised, as well. (Beck 2007b, 686, Thompson 1980, 268.)

2.4.2 Risk Society Has Polarised the Labour Markets

It is significant to note that individualization as a social phenomenon cuts through the whole society: "the labour markets, the work in general, the welfare state and institutions people are tied into a network of regulations, conditions, provisos" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 2). According to Beck, the various rights and entitlements that are derived from the public policy of the welfare state are created to principally serve the goals of the individuals rather than, for instance, families. Typically, the rights and entitlements are connected, or, in some cases, they even pre-suppose employment or, to be more specific, the individual in question is preferably working. Work, in turn, often education. Work and education are regularly intertwined with

mobility and an ability to take risks and tolerate uncertainty. Beck's conclusion is that "the people are invited to constitute themselves as individuals: to plan, understand and design themselves as individuals". (Giddens 1998, 36-37, Beck 1998, 2-3, Beck 2001, 28.)

Giddens was also concerned about social cohesion and how it as a phenomenon will develop during the era of globalisation and the new individualism. Giddens was convinced that people had a need to create new ways to improve social solidarity and social cohesion. According to Giddens, it was both self-evident and inevitable that in the future, social solidarity and social cohesion would not be achieved by appealing to tradition or by top-down action, in which the state would have the leading role. The premise was that all citizens should be aware of their own roles and responsibilities to act and make the right decisions concerning their everyday lives because these decisions could lead to wider societal repercussions. In summary: it was relevant to establish a new connection or balance between the grass-roots level and collective responsibilities. (Giddens 1998, 36-37.) These ideas were an integral part of Giddens' third way theory which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

However, it would be an exaggeration to say that all progress in the relations and changes between individualization, the risk society and the labour markets would have been based only on productional issues. I must keep in mind also the broader context of individualization in which the significantly improved level of education has played an important role as people's autonomy and emancipation have also developed. According to Deuze, globalisation influences the ongoing individualization of society also because it disintegrates the above-mentioned traditional institutes. Behind the progress, there is people's considerable self-awareness: they are aware of their value, and this has led to the progress of individualization. Deuze also notes that the awareness of one's ability to work and create added value to one's employer has influenced the rising personal wishes and demands concerning working schedules and other personal benefits. Flexible working hours, for example, are often possible due to technological advancement. It is not unusual for an employee to determine one's work schedule within a time frame set by the employer. (Deuze 2007, 4.)

Work is therefore considered an instrument. It has become a strategic game for employees who are prepared to set their own short-term objectives to serve their individual short-term plans. Attali (1996) and Bauman describe the world of work as a series of episodes in which the human effort and possibility to influence the future are uncertain. This casts a shadow over the whole human life. Briefly: there is a

significant departure from the past because work itself has lost its societal dimension and is no longer an essential part of the broader societal culture. According to Attali, the newborn world is a treacherous and confusing labyrinth and an unfair place for most people; it is “the opaque place where the layout of the roads may not obey any law”. (Bauman 2000, 138-139, Attali 1996, 19, 60, 23.)

Attali and Bauman argue that the new capitalist economy has supported and empowered the educated, talented, and often young people who are able to create the new rules of the game, played in a society with volatile values. The post-modern environment is completely transformed: the massive factories with their rigid labour regimes have been replaced by specialised knowledge and flexibility. People’s world view and general attitude to life is geared to the fulfilment of immediate desires, reflecting the emerging egoism and hedonism. Bauman describes the profoundly changed nature of work with the term “tinkering”. Before the postmodern era, there was a “universally shared mission” with an even deeper vocational dimension. Today, according to Bauman, these elements have disappeared also in an eschatological context. Work has lost its status and is no longer seen “in the galaxy of values” as it was during heavy capitalism and solid modernity. (Bauman 2000, 139, 153, Attali 1996, 79, 80, 109.)

But how should the value of work be assessed now that it has lost so many of its essential and positive core elements? According to Bauman, work has gained a new status and a connection to the life-activities and aesthetic preferences of the individual; today, work should offer enjoyable experiences to the one who performs it. The possible consequences to the nation, country or the future generations are irrelevant, as are consequences to the one’s close circle. In today’s world, people live in the middle of a volatility of identities. Bauman and Touraine saw the present state of society as a space in which there is no longer needed to define a citizen as a social being based on, for example, social institutions or some universalistic principles which would steer and determine one’s actions or behaviour. All elements that form identities are found within the individual. (Bauman 2000, 139, 153, Touraine 1998, 177.)

Beck & Beck-Gernsheim describes the changed life of the individuals as changed biographies. We used to have a normal biography, and its various threads were observed within traditional institutions. Beck sees that the family, the village, or the local community made an essential association to the individual. These associations made it possible for the individual to lean on the “rules of social estates or classes”. Today the situation is different because most of the institutions have been replaced by the individuals themselves because institutions have ceased to exist. Beck & Beck-

Gernsheim argues that these institutions and the traditional biography have been replaced by several new biographies which together describe the current world. According to Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, we have elective biographies, reflexive biographies, and do-it yourself biographies. However, it is important to note that this change has not taken place because of the choice of the individual. In today's world, the individual has been forced to act in all these different contexts. (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 3-4).

I have so far discussed technological progress and individualization behind the rise of the risk society, and it is now relevant to ask whether there is more behind this phenomenon? More specifically, it is important to study the role of neoliberalism behind the risk society because neoliberalism is frequently named as a reason for various problems in society. It is also relevant to discuss why exactly most European countries and western democracies have become to risk societies and the role of neoliberalism has been so significant in this process. As I start to discuss the policy making behind the risk society, it is important to define and examine the concept of neoliberalism and how Beck and Giddens, in particular, defined it. Giddens viewed Thatcherism and neoliberalism in the same context and even as synonyms. The premise of policymaking was minimal Government and market fundamentalism or free market thinking, combined with suspicious or even hostile attitudes against the state. Privatisations, entrepreneurship, and strong economic individualism were highly ranked values. According to Giddens, the supporters of neoliberalism considered all the good which society was able to create because of capitalism and the competitive market system which guaranteed economic efficiency. Thatcher herself put great emphasis also on self-help linked to the idea of economic individualism, traditional family and family values, work, and diligence. (Giddens 1998, 8-9, Giddens 1994, 33-34, Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 21, Sorbonne 2016)

Beck & Beck-Gernsheim is convinced that neoliberal globalisation has taken a dominant role in all intellectual life in politics. The neoliberal values have become a crucial force in normative and political terms. More specifically, this means that neoliberalism promotes the values that represent the commitment to command of the world market that give enormous benefits to all participants. The riches will be renewed time after time and, eventually, wealth will spread everywhere in the world to the benefit of every nation and all people. According to Beck, this has been a revolutionary vision in its promise of creating an environment for the goal of eliminating all hierarchies of power and division of labour and replacing them by a form of corporate realpolitik. (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 77.)

According to Beck neoliberal politics were not limited to certain political principles whose purpose was to guarantee economic success or egotism. Instead one of the great promises of neoliberalism was the idea of global politics that would guarantee distributive justice. Beck argues that neoliberal politics have in fact formed a “quasi-global party” that has been able to influence several domestic parties everywhere in the world by promising to promote politics with common global values instead of the interests of business. However, Beck also argues that these promises have been unsubstantiated as they have promised to release millions of people out of poverty, leading to a world of equal societies rather than a winner-takes-all economy. (Beck 2005, 77.)

Since the 1980s neoliberalism has been the dominant politics of choice for politicians and ruling class everywhere in western democracies. At the beginning of this chapter, I discussed Beck’s argument of the clear connection between neoliberalism, big business, and the emergence of the risk society. Beck & Beck-Gernsheim also argues that neo-liberal politicians worldwide have advanced market-oriented politics with the purpose of dismantling the welfare state, the nation state, and many other institutions, such as trade unions. (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 79-80.)

According to Beck, the neoliberal ideology has become a transnational ideology with the focus on solving several global concerns of the global markets and other economic issues by connecting them to the broadest possible political level, from national levels, including domestic parties, to both intra-national and transnational levels. This is a massive project in which all the powerful economies of the western democracies –the UK, USA, Brazil, and many others – have participated. Beck argues that politicians in all these countries, from the social democrats to the conservatives, have shared the same policy goal to target the niches of global society. All the above mentioned countries can create new markets (“market making states”) as they have capacity to stimulate innovations and generate wealth where they operate. According to Beck, neoliberalism represents the seductive type of power. There is the promise of cosmopolitan wealth that will empower transnational institutions, actors, and organisations. (Giddens 1998, 33, Beck 2005, 79-80.)

However, politics are on their way to a negative phase because they will be of secondary importance, and even redundant, while the main goal is “global market modernization or bust” (Beck 2005, 80). Beck draws attention to the “trap of the neoliberal understanding of politics which does not imply the end of the politics but that the frame of the politics is mainly based on hard economic values” (Beck 2005, 80). Beck’s other argument about neoliberalism is based on the view “of concerns

globalisation's dimension to believe in the world without frontiers and especially the free movement of capital" (Beck 2005, 80). As I summarise the above-mentioned ideas and arguments, I will notice how these elements will intertwine in the concept of risk society. The next section will study how Beck has seen the connection between capitalism, freedom and social coherence or, rather, the difficulties to achieve freedom and social coherence

2.4.3 The Capitalism, Freedom and Social Coherence

Beck shows how financial instabilities and economic crises have extended to the national and domestic levels, and caused several difficult problems, such as unemployment (Beck 2005, 80). As nations' possibilities to influence the grievances have narrowed, the grievances have turned into long-term problems (Beck 2005, 80). However, Beck did not define precisely the obstacles that narrowed the possibilities to intervene. One of the obstacles (in the Eurozone) might be the lack of the capacity to influence the economy through monetary policy after the introduction of the Euro. This element eliminated the possibility to devalue currency during economic depressions which usually acted as a backup valve and helped for instance the export industry to recover in the foreign markets.

Although Beck listed an impressive number of threats, I will next provide some further examples which are important for my research, and which I will discuss again in my research material analysis. Beck was concerned about how both wealth and poverty will increase soon in the globalised world. According to Beck's theory, poverty and inequality have increased "within and between societies", and this has also increased the possibility of more radicalised conflicts, as I already mentioned. Beck noted also that the mobility and flexibility of companies and huge corporations to adapt and move their direction from one place to another according to demand, has increased the challenges to collect the needed tax revenue from them, which might lead to significant budget deficits in certain areas or in countries. This in turn would compromise countries' ability to organise the services provided by the welfare state. (Beck 2005, 80-81, Beck 2008, 1-2.)

Briefly: Beck was concerned about the increasing global divergences caused by the tensions between freedom and capitalism, and democracy and the market. According to Beck, deregulation, liberalisation, and privatisation created an opening for "self-refuting prophecies of a rosy neo-liberal future" where global interests of big corporations with states and political parties paved the way to agreement and

even a consensus about the “minimum amount of standardisation, regulation in a global political context”. Beck’s conclusion was that the local infrastructure, decent education and affordable health care, public sphere, legitimacy and security were under threat. Beck saw also that there has been a clear parallel between the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl and the local financial crisis. First, all of these crises have started at the local level (in Asia, in Argentina or in the US) but their influence has become a global threat as middle-class citizens’ jobs and their entire lives have suddenly been under pressure. (Beck 2005, 81, Beck 2008, 1-2)

But how would Beck himself have solved these problems, given his sustained criticism against neoliberalism and its hegemony? There are many possibilities, but I will only focus on a few. Beck wanted to change the goals of state strategies and restore the value of politics. In practice, this means that Beck wanted to make a clear difference between the politics and the business because their interests were not reconcilable. Beck emphasised that politics should have a monopoly in making collective decisions concerning citizens and the state affairs because they had a democratic legitimation to do so, and they had also a monopoly of legal institutions. Beck wanted to show to the whole world, not just to the global business, that fundamental consent of citizens and a peaceful society cannot be bought. Beck’s preferred strategy was based on the idea that “nothing can be achieved without politics”, a criticism targeted against neoliberalism and the values it represented. (Beck 2005, 29, 170.)

Giddens compared the juxtaposition of welfare state and neoliberal politicians to capitalism and the early 20th century revolutionary left. Many of the neoliberal politicians were ready to dismantle the welfare state model and replace it with the market-driven model. Giddens remarks that the neoliberal politicians failed to see the bigger context where the idea of the welfare state was based on the “maximising economic progress, and therefore overall wealth, by allowing markets to work their miracles” instead of the image of the old welfare state which distributed extravagant social benefits. (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 165-166, Giddens 1998, 13-14, 11-12)

According to Giddens, it was typical that neoliberal politicians were hostile toward the big and centralised Government based on classical scepticism towards the state; Margaret Thatcher, for example, took these ideas as Prime Minister. The neoliberal discussions about the role of the state were usually connected to the questions around civil society which was seen as a solution to alleviate societal grievances. Giddens argued that neoliberal politicians firmly believed in the power, virtues and mechanisms of civil society that would produce a self-generating

mechanism of social solidarity, something that was thought to belong to the welfare state and its institutions. (Giddens 1998, 11-12, Green 1993, 8.)

Giddens showed how neoliberal politicians emphasised the importance of value for civil and social orders. The criticism of the welfare state was based on the claim that it represented the values that would lead to the fragmentation of civil order. This claim was based on the idea of markets which will always operate and flourish on individual initiative; the precondition for this was social and civil order which therefore also always happened. The only necessary context was the legal framework which in practice means that all regulation should be limited to as little as possible. Giddens also saw that in neoliberal thinking, there is a connection between market forces and traditional institutions. This can be especially observed in the ways in which the unfettered market freedom confirmed the traditional family and the nation, and how the traditional family was an essential guarantor of social order. National integrity and patriotism were priorities for all neoliberal politicians, but interestingly, increased social inequality, for example, was not considered a threat to it. (Giddens 1998, 12, 14, Giddens 1994, 34, Gray 1997, 212.)

According to Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, the result of the rise of neoliberalism has been devastating for the individual citizen, but also for the whole society. Social exclusion emerged as a problem in all western societies, and the success in the market determined the existence or the non-existence of the individual as the “adaptability became the highest goal of character formation as the political concept of society fades or disappears”. The society that emerged is thus more or less depoliticized. Beck & Beck-Gernsheim blamed neoliberal politics of market fundamentalism and, in fact, democratic illiteracy: markets and justice very rarely face each other in a way that would direct their attention to the common good. It was clear that social-welfare rights and democracy were essential, or the current economic model would not even exist. Classes, class consciousness, and the institutions people traditionally attached themselves to have faded away or, at the very least, their status and value has diminished. People born into a traditional society were surrounded by an estate and a religion which together guided their values and choices. In modern society all this has changed, and everything depends on the individual’s own activity and effort. The situation becomes more challenging as resources are limited and competition is hard. One must be prepared to fight for one’s place in society day after day. (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 2-3, 165-166.)

Almost all of us live in a world that offers a wide range of options (at least to the well-educated), and the direct consequence of this is the need to have the necessary information and skills to choose between the different available options. Keywords

today to the modern people who want to reach success are “adjustment, coordination and integration”. Modern people cannot remain in their place even for a while and even if their situation is satisfactory to them. Instead, it is expected that one must plan for the long term and be able to adapt to the next possible change. You have to “organise yourself, improvise, set goals, recognize the obstacles, accept defeats’ and, finally, attempt new starts (Beck 2001, 28-29, Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2008, 4). Being an individual means today: “having no one to blame for one’s own misery and seeking the causes of one’s defeats nowhere except in one’s own indolence and sloth and looking for no other remedies than trying harder and harder still” as Bauman said (Bauman 2000, 31-32).

It is possible to connect these arguments to the life-long learning and the uncertainty of the risk society in which the individual is nearly forced to train, educate or improve oneself without certainty of good or even average results, such as a decent job. Bauman argues that we are living in the era of the great transformation that concerns the whole society, the labour market and work in general. (Bauman 2000, 58). But how have identities formed in the current era, when the basic elements, such as a decent job with a decent salary, are not self-evident for most people? Bauman argued that we have entered a world where our identity is no longer a given but is now a task. Actors are responsible for performing their tasks, and they are also responsible for the resulting profits and losses (Bauman 2000, 31-32). To the individual actor this phenomenon is quite ruthless. Bauman argued that privatisation of the impulse means compulsive self-critique born of perpetual self-disaffection (Bauman 2000, 31-32).

According to Giddens, the new individualism as a phenomenon is separate from the traditional welfare state model and is strongly geared to globalisation. The new individualism with its various influences and moral discussions seeks a new kind of social cohesion that is not based on a traditional top-down model appealing to tradition or the state (Giddens 1998, 37). Giddens emphasises how the new individualism sees our actions and choices in a wider moral context: “we need more actively to accept responsibilities for the consequences of what we do and the lifestyle habits we adopt” (Giddens 1998, 37). The next section studies how the Third Way theory was born in the mid 1990’s by Anthony Giddens as a counterweight to neo-liberal politics and policymaking. I also present critics and problems that have been connected to the theory.

2.5 The Third Way and Its Critics

If the current era seems to be quite unpredictable, there was something similar in the air also in the late 1990s with the approach of the new millennium. Giddens wrote in 1998 that he was concerned about the present situation in which the only people who were optimistic seemed to be those who were interested and believed in technological progress and the many innovations around it. Politicians seemed to be helpless and powerless, lacking leadership and ability to solve the rising global problems. Public debate and conversation seemed to be parochial and confined to daily questions and problems. Inspirational conversation that would offer new visions, possibilities, solutions, or options to politics was lacking, and the debates were dominated with questions around “declining moral standards, growing divisions between the rich and poor, stresses of the welfare state”. (Giddens 1998, 2.)

In February 1998, the US hosted a major policy summit in Washington, D.C. attended by leaders from several European countries and the most important partners of the US. The idea of the conference was to find the new 21st century solutions to the long-lasting global problems and outline the new world order that would provide a framework to a new policy the centre-left Governments could advance globally. Giddens referred to Blair’s speech where the Prime Minister described how the world had drifted to the situation where the old left resisted the whole idea of finding common will and creating common global politics, as the new right, for its part, had not demonstrated any interest in managing the challenges of the future. The common will to all participants was that they were aware of the current situation in which the “pre-existing ideologies have lost their resonance”, and it was therefore essential to create something new with the understanding that the “reform of state and Government should be a basic orienting principle of third way politics”. The goal was to deepen democracy and spread it abroad as widely as possible. (Giddens 1998,1-2, 69.)

Giddens notes that most leftist scholars, such as Galbraith, considered the existing market system, more specifically capitalism, as the main reason behind increasing poverty. The second consequence of present-day capitalism has been a development of the underclasses and low social mobility especially in the United States, but the phenomena are undeniable also in French society, something I will discuss later in more detail. The problem Galbraith points out is difficult to solve because the post-modern society and the free market economy in fact needs the poor working-class people to work. In summary, the grievances breed crime, family

breakdowns, and other social exclusion. All these social problems are serious but probably the most serious one has been the nonexistent social mobility which prevents assimilation of the underclass to the society; this is especially the case for minorities. (Giddens 1994, 145, 153)

Here, it is necessary to discuss whether there are other reasons behind the poor development? Giddens claims that many leftist scholars are convinced of the connection between the problems of the institutions of the welfare state and poverty. More specifically, the root cause is the inherent inability of the welfare state model to answer to increasing demands of the spread of poverty. Furthermore, the road to increase the benefits of the current welfare state has become almost impossible. Already now most people think that the welfare state has become too expensive, and there is a growing revolt among the taxpayers who oppose further tax increase. It is impossible to expand services for the ever-growing number of people. However, Giddens also notes that the right wing sees the increasing poverty and underclasses as the consequences of people excluding themselves from the labour market and instead opting to use welfare state benefits. This has led to their increasing dependency of the welfare state services and the life that is based on social benefits will lead to social exclusion. (Giddens 1994, 145, 153.)

In summary, Giddens was convinced that the traditional welfare state model based on redistribution of wealth and progressive taxation has not truly succeeded anywhere in eliminating poverty. Giddens remarks that "this is true both within the welfare state of the industrialised countries and between the rich and impoverished nations of the world". The point is that many other social grievances are typically rooted in unemployment and low social mobility. However, it was also clear that the neoliberal model represented by Thatcher and the Conservative party in the UK had failed as well. The consequence of these failures has been the increasing income disparity between the poor and the rich. Giddens' positive welfare state model recognizes problems with social benefits because they create moral hazard: the higher the subsidies, the greater the dependency on them, and therefore further social benefits and social care are not self-evident. (Giddens 1994, 153, Lindbeck 1995, 11, Giddens 1994, 156-157, 190-19, Giddens 1998, 115.)

Based on the previously described background, Giddens's third way theory offers an alternative approach to politics and societal grievances than the older ideas of social democracy or neoliberalism. According to Giddens, work, and individual efforts, including individual will to take responsibility for one's life, were the basic elements behind the success of the individual and the society, and these ideas became the driving forces of the so-called workfare society or welfare-to-work society.

Giddens emphasised the role of the positive welfare state and the social investment state which formed a fundamental part of the third way politics. To Giddens, the role of the state should be active, but in the right way and in the right context. The social investment state would focus especially on education and education programmes (Giddens 1998, 109). To Giddens, it was clear that the improved knowledge and skills would also improve and deepen democracy and people's faith in politics. (Giddens 2000, 163, Giddens 1998, 109.)

Giddens' ideas of third way politics and his keenness to advance equality of opportunities have also faced criticism. According to Mouffe, (2016b) Giddens So-called life politics neglect to consider the interests of the state and make the state as a secondary actor. Mouffe also criticised Giddens' generative policy that sets the parameters for life decisions and allows people to enhance their goals themselves. As I see, Mouffe was against the current bottom flow trend which existed in most western democracies and emphasised people's individual needs and desires, as Bauman and Beck & Beck-Gernsheim also remarked earlier. As I continue our discussion on the problems of third way politics, I will see how the above-mentioned values which emphasised individualism also reflect the change in politics more broadly, even in a universalistic and rationalist framework. Mouffe argues that these consensus politics are far removed from the original premise of the politics, in which conflicts have traditionally played an essential role and how one of the most serious problems of the current "radical centre" is their approach to politics which denies the existence of traditional cleavages and the existence of the left and right, an idea that is based on the modern era where these divisions have lost their substance and significance. More specifically, the third way politics have influenced the true essence of politics as the conflicts and differences between parties have faded away. (Mouffe 1999, 1, 7, Mouffe 2016, 7.)

According to Mouffe, the development and impact of third way politics has also led to the changed public sphere as the pluralistic public sphere no longer exists. Mouffe (2016) has described the above-mentioned politics and political phenomenon also with the term the illusion of consensus (*l'illusion du consensus*). According to Mouffe, this has been a consequence of the end of the Cold War when the alliance of Western democracies prevailed over the Soviet bloc and old collective identities lost their significance and meaning when the world without enemies became the new reality. This phenomenon had an impact also on domestic politics: the old conflicts between the parties and their members disappeared and were replaced by consensus politics. Mouffe continues her criticism and argues that political debate has lost its targets and visions. This is in fact a negative consequence

of the discussion that only aims to please everyone. The problem is that the third way politics have succeeded in reducing and even erasing the conflicts that have been a productive force in all political life in western democracies. The assumption that politics and its previously mentioned premises would somehow be "radical" are completely wrong interpretations. According to Mouffe, the politics of radical centrism that the New Labour promoted, did not meet the expectations of increasing democracy. The problem with all third way theorists is their illusion of the politics and a world view in which an adversary does not exist, and the main goal of politics is to avoid potential conflicts of interest. (Mouffe 1999, 1, 7, Mouffe 2016, 7.) Mouffe 2016, 119-120.)

In the traditional social democracy with all its variants, capitalism is seen in a critical context and as a source of all grievances concerning the questions around inequality and instability. Mouffe claims that the third way politics is part of these problems as it is not able to solve the conflicts between "the forces of the world market and the various problems of exclusion to ecological risk –which it claims to tackle". In addition to the previously mentioned, one of the main problems of third way politics is its limited and superficial vision of economy, where the focus has largely been on the questions of ownership and production. The chosen policies emphasise flexibility, education, and training as a key to a fair and better working life: conflicts at work will decrease, and this will lead to a better society as the dialogue between all actors will increase and develop towards a better direction. (Mouffe 2016 120-121.)

Based on the described background Giddens's third way theory approached the politics and societal grievances differently as they were the old social democracy or the neoliberals. Giddens saw how the work and individual efforts including individual will to take responsibility of his life, were the basic elements of the individual and society success and these ideas led later to drive the so-called workfare society or welfare to work society. Giddens stressed a positive welfare state and the social investment state which was a fundamental part of the third way politics. To Giddens the role of the state should be active, but in a right way and in a right context. Social investment state would focus especially on education and education programmes because as Giddens summarised: "investment in education is an imperative of Government today" (Giddens 1998, 109). However, this policy is not completely trouble-free and for example Rosanvallon points out a few problems in this regard. Rosanvallon goes so far as to suggest that equality of opportunities is a paradox which indeed equates in the consecration of the inequality of position. In this sense, it contributes to and validates the theory of justice as the theory of

legitimate inequalities. (Giddens 1998, 109, Giddens 2000, 163, Mouffe 2016b, 118, Rosanvallon 2011, 351.)

In addition to the previously mentioned one of the biggest problems of the third way politics is its limited and superficial vision in economics where its focus was mainly on the questions around the ownership and production. The chosen politics claims and emphasises the flexibility, education, and training as a key to a fair and better working life as the conflicts at work will decrease which will further lead also to the better society as the dialogue between all actors will increase and develop to the better direction. To Mouffe it was clear that with the policy of the third way, the New Labour had renounced its traditional left-wing identity where the starting point of the politics had been to drive and fight for equality. Simultaneously the new leadership of the New Labour approached in a new way the whole concept and value of the equality and they rejected to use the language which concerned for instance the redistribution as the term was replaced by using inclusion and exclusion. Mouffe sees further how New Labour was aware of the new social phenomenon: the rising and constantly expanding middle class as there were only a small minority that were a part of the very rich people and on the other hand there was the same development concerning the poorest part of the citizens that were constantly decreasing. The consequence of this societal change or the new social structure was that it created the demand for New Labour to move from the left to the centre. Based on this development it is easy to understand what kind of was the new political doctrine of the New labour; briefly Mouffe defines it how the leadership of the party was convinced that “the modern society is no longer structured by the unequal power relations”. At the same time the New Labour refused to study, what would be the policy tools if the new approach, which was focused on only to concern the questions around the inclusion and exclusion, will not work in an expected way? (Mouffe 2016, 120-121, 130-131.)

However, the Labour Party tried to present itself as a political movement that advanced more equal and fairer policies than the Conservatives had done during their era in power. Hall & O’Shea (2013) remarks that “until its autumn 2013 conference there was no sign of a break with the neoliberal framing of debates”. The fairness was seen in a context of a quasi-market relation where the starting points were personal effort and hard work. The result was fairness as the traditional collectivism was removed to side lines. According to Hall & O’Shea, New Labour was rather confused by the straw polls which had suggested that voters wanted further cuts to various social benefits, even below the inflation rate. It soon became clear that the New Labour in fact had a kind of moral panic, supported also by media

that positioned themselves against the unemployed who were not, for one reason or another, able to find work or achieve the expected results in their professional lives and therefore were forced to live on social benefits. Hall & O'Shea argue that the political debate in the UK at the time revolved around the idea that took "for granted that the market relation is central (you can only have what you pay for), the deficit is the problem, and cutting public expenditure is the only solution; and, within this, cutting welfare benefits is the priority". The result was that there was very little public debate about policy alternatives. (Hall & O'Shea 2013, 15-16.)

The New Labour was not keen to go against the public opinion and endanger their popularity among their supporters. As an example of the New Labour's commitment to continue the Conservative neoliberal policy, Hall & O'Shea referred to Ed Miliband's 2013 speech about social security reform. Instead of offering a strong criticism of the Conservatives and their neoliberal principles, Miliband "began by stressing how little money there will be to spend, and saying that he'd handle it with 'decent values at the heart of the system' (but only very loosely indicating what these are - 'One Nation' values of greater fairness and co-operation and inclusiveness rather than conflict), before going on to work through the policy areas, arguing for his alternatives". According to Hall & O'Shea, Miliband's speech did not question in any way the UK austerity programme, which is still one of the most important policy goals of neoliberal parties and politicians. (Hall & O'Shea 2013, 15-16, 22, labour 2013, 1-2)

When discussing Hall & O'Shea's starting points in more detail, it is interesting to note what, according to them, was most politicians' focus and what were their ultimate policy goals. In short, Hall & O'Shea argue that the focus was and still is on gaining approval for their policies, and this becomes particularly pronounced when there are difficult reforms on the agenda. We will notice this also with Macron who has tried to mobilise support for his policies and reforms. This phenomenon has concerned especially the neoliberal politicians who like to assert that the values they present "are endorsed by hard-working families up and down the country". According to neoliberal politicians, their policy is always "common sense, practical, reasonable and moderate because the values they advance represent the popular thinking". (Hall & O'Shea 2013, 22.)

It is important to define "common sense" here. According to Hall & O'Shea, common sense is a form of "everyday thinking" which offers us frameworks of meaning with which to make sense of the world. Common sense is linked to knowledge, and popular and easily available knowledge without theoretical discussions is often based on simplistic and superficial arguments. The key features

of common-sense thinking are also pragmatism and empiricism – having at the same time a close connection to and reflection on the realities of daily life and prioritising the needs of the common people. One of the most important features of common sense is that it concerns all citizens “regardless of class, status, income or wealth”, and the used language is also easy to understand or vernacular in nature. (Hall & O’Shea 2013, 8-9.)

As we discuss common sense as a theme or an approach to politics, it is important to mention Antonio Gramsci, an Italian political philosopher, and his ideas concerning the subject. Gramsci argued that common sense was “not critical and coherent but disjointed and episodic” and, interestingly, that common sense does have “a logic and a history”. According to Gramsci, it is possible to see common sense as an answer to the problems that have a close relevance to everyday life. Common sense is an approach rather than studying the events and traditions of the past seeking to solve the current problems and challenges using the old methods if possible. Last but not least, Gramsci emphasised that common sense should not be thought of as static, but it is continually “transforming itself” (Hall & O’Shea 2013, 9-10, Gramsci 1972). The following three sections will examine the third way politics in more detail, including how it became a core tenet of New Labour politics and Tony Blair’s political and societal thinking. I will pay special attention to the themes of work, education, and the equality of opportunities. I will also present more criticism relating to the theory.

2.5.1 Third Way – The Core Tenet of the New Labour

When Tony Blair took office as the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in 1997, he was aware that, among other tasks, he needed to reform his own party. Blair wrote in his biography that he knew Labour’s past and that many voters were alienated from the party not only because of its policies but also because of the public image of some key leaders. According to Blair, one of the political cornerstones and principles of credibility of New Labour was to restore confidence and create new connections with future voters. Blair wanted the party and its members to act, behave, and speak like ordinary voters and it was especially important for Blair that potential voters could relate to Labour party activists. Blair argues that the intra-party course of development had already begun before Labour’s 18 years in opposition. The old party had lost touch with the electorate over the previous decades. During this time, the party had become, according to Blair, more a cult than a credible

political movement and an alternative to the Conservatives. It was therefore essential that the party had to change so that supporters of Conservatives could see themselves voting for New Labour. (Blair 2010, 85-90.)

In opting for third way politics, New Labour wanted to emphasise its fundamental difference from the Conservatives. A key point of criticism was that the Conservatives had uncritically embraced neoliberal economic thinking and market conditionality. Thatcher's supporters had been blind in their search for pro-market solutions for the provision of public services. At the same time, the party had been guilty of advancing self-centred social thinking which left little room for communality and caring for others. Blair discussed several mistakes of the past, adding that social peace and defence policy, focus areas of the Conservatives and right-wing parties in general, had been too long of secondary importance in the old Labour policy. According to the reformers, the old Labour had been too lax in crime prevention and addressing other anti-social behaviour. These had become major concerns for potential voters. Already while in the shadow cabinet, Blair made it clear that once in power, the Labour Party would act very differently concerning questions of social disorder and crime. The Labour would be tough on crime and proactive in addressing the causes of crime. They would not accept any kind of anti-social behaviour and pursue stricter laws and harsher sentencing with the goal of guaranteeing social peace. (Blair 1997, Blair 1999, New Statesman 1993, 1-7, Driver & Martell 2000, 2-3, Giddens 1998 8, 66.)

As I discuss the questions around equality, I will notice the most significant difference between New Labour reformists and the old labour party and its Keynesian wing. The last-mentioned part of the party was focused on advancing politics in which state-centred thinking extended to both economic and social policy. The old way uncritically favoured the state and various corporatist structures in its pursuit of a mixed economy. The premise of the policy focused, to an excessive extent, on equalising income and progressive taxation and social benefits were in the centre of politics. Blair and the other reformists argued that it would be essential for the future well-being and prosperity of the nation to design and implement policies that would help people succeed and achieve their individual goals without the obstacles of poor education, poverty, health problems and other welfare-related deficiencies. The New Labour wanted to promote individual activity, responsibility, and a fair society where everyone would have opportunities to succeed. The best way to reach these targets was through education which became one of New Labour's focus areas and a major part of Blair's thinking more broadly. However, even though the investments of the state had a significant role in meeting these targets, this did

not mean that the Government would be given a *carte blanc*. Public finances and their responsible management, including the fair taxation, was and would continue to be a priority to Blair and the New Labour and to Giddens. (Blair 1997, Blair 1996, Blair 2010, 90, Driver & Martell 2000, 2-3, Giddens 1998, 7-8, 69-70, New Labour 1997.)

Another notable difference from the past Labour politicians was Giddens and Blair's views about the role of the state, markets, and businesses. However, it is possible to see in the 1997 New Labour manifesto also traces of the famous British pragmatism: some of the reforms of the previous Government had turned out well, and those would not be reversed. More controversially, this thinking was also applied to trade unions: according to New Labour, there was no turning back to the era before Thatcher's reforms. New Labour and Blair wanted to promote businesses and secure success but not – unlike the Conservatives – at the expense of the environment. Giddens has several times called attention to the fact that neoliberals' regimes have had low ecological consciousness. The third way politics would rectify the situation by making environmental policy one of their focus areas. (Giddens 1998, 8, New Labour 1997.)

Giddens' philosophical premise for the third way theory was based on the re-evaluation of the state and deepening and widening democracy". The successful state reform formed a foundation which dictated how politics and policymaking would be formulated. One of the most important visions is the partnership between the public and private sectors and the third sectors and enhancing the values of social investment states and civil society. Restoring the value of an active civil society was a necessary part of the third way of thinking, and this would lead to changes in the role of the Government. In summary, the third way, according to Giddens, would follow its own, distinctive path: "to go beyond those on the right who say the Government is the enemy, and those on the left who say the Government is the answer". (Giddens 1998, 69-70, New Labour 1997.)

At this point, I need to explore why civil society is so important to many scholars. I have already touched on this question with French philosophers, but I should also discuss Giddens' views. As Giddens has remarked, the political left has traditionally linked the civilised society to the welfare state (Giddens 1994, 134-135). With the help of the services provided by the welfare state, it is also possible for the sick and deprived citizens to live a satisfying life (Giddens 1994, 134-135). Giddens argues that tackling poverty, unemployment, and various diseases through public authority is not the only obligation of the state, but that the state has a much broader and deeper role to play (Giddens 1994, 134-135). Giddens' view is that societal problems

are an integral part of the process of state formation (Giddens 1994, 134-135). The process of the birth of the state is not limited to the activities of the state itself, but the process of birth involves various conflicts and struggles between different organisations, interest groups and actors of the state (Giddens 1994, 134-135). As I noticed earlier, Gun and Guizot made similar remarks by emphasising the importance of institutionalised conflicts to the development of Great Britain; conversely, the lack of such conflicts during the 19th century has influenced the political life and culture of France. In summary, the civil society at its very best will deepen democracy and improve and enhance the citizens' participation in politics.

Although Giddens and Blair firmly believed in the strong state this did not mean that they would not have been aware of the risks traditionally linked to the state. Quite the opposite: Giddens knew that there was a possibility that state institutions would lose their standing among citizens if they became oversized and services and benefits they distributed no longer met the needs of people. Giddens admits that neoliberal thinkers have been right concerning the last-mentioned problem. It was clear that: "only a welfare state system that benefits most of the population will generate a common morality of citizens". (Giddens 1998, 104, New Labour 1997.)

Blair also wanted to put an end to the Government's policy of over-centralizations and add more accountability to the whole political system. In these efforts, the partnership with the third sector played a significant role. The New Labour and Blair promoted the "decentralisation and the elimination of excessive Government secrecy. The plan was to establish study support centres for pupils with special educational needs. Giddens's vision was that the Government would arrange and offer the training programmes for local people, thereby influencing local communities in a fresh new way. Giddens also considered it important to rethink the Government's role as a financier. The public sector would arrange capital and other financial aid to companies and support local business environments which would improve the standing of private corporations. In practice this meant that the Government would step aside and give space more for civil society and the third sector that were also able "to foster community renewal and development". (Giddens 1998, 104, 84, New Labour 1997.)

However, despite the re-evaluation of the role of the state, the third way was based on the idea of one-nation politics. Giddens' argument was that the cosmopolitan nation and cosmopolitan values, or cosmopolitan pluralism, could support social progress and social inclusion because their transnational dimension would extend to the various forms of the transnational systems of governance. Giddens discussed this in the context of global threats. Third way politics extended

to seek solutions for the problems of globalisation and scientific and technological change. Giddens was concerned about how I can “recreate our solidarity, and how to react to ecological problems”, because the progress would not be endless. At some point, it would slow down, and therefore it would be important that the progress would not be based solely on economic values. (Giddens 1998, 67, 69.)

As I study Giddens’ ideas in a broader context, I can notice that Giddens and the New Labour were keen to expand and extend their views to concern issues that have traditionally been seen as a weakness of left-wing parties. Giddens remarked that in general it is very important to all centre-left parties to challenge the political right on their traditional strengths such as economic competence, fiscal discipline and defence, law and order and other security questions. All of these have been a historic focus of the right-wing parties, whereas the left has been content to deal with issues such as education, welfare, health, and poverty. (Giddens 2000, 164.)

It is important to notice that Giddens recognizes the limits of the markets and makes a distinction to laissez-faire philosophy and neoliberalism. According to Giddens, “without external controls, markets have no restraining mechanisms, there is nothing in market exchange that limits what might be marketed. In addition, ethical standards, or standards of taste, have to be brought from outside from a public ethics, guaranteed in law”. This is also the case with education and, in general, with questions concerning the human capital. Giddens notes that it is not possible to think that markets could manage human capital the way Governments and public sector do. According to Giddens, market economies have several consequences which need to be controlled outside of it. An example of these consequences are accidents with serious environmental implications and a possible compensation claim to the private actor. (Giddens 1998, 36.)

In summary, politics returned to the creation and implementation of the concept of opportunity and freedom so that everyone could be as good and successful in their lives as possible. Opportunity and individual success were restored and often traceable to education, which at the same time became one of the main priorities of the Blair administration. and the Blair administration implemented several fundamental reforms, e.g., the university system, teacher training, and the promotion of lifelong learning. (Giddens 1998, 67.) The next section will study how the third way politics, the free markets and capitalism faced each other in Blair’s and Giddens’ ideas and politics. At this point I will return to one of the most fundamental questions of the political sciences: the role of the state and what kind of it would be the ideal situation between the markets, the state, the governance and the civil society.

2.5.2 No Rights Without Responsibilities

The Government's responsibilities to its citizens were diverse and task of the field wide, despite the new approach the third way offered. However, there was always a basic task which did not change, and this was actually one of the state's basic tasks: the protection of the most vulnerable citizens and seeking equality, which was based on the questions around the equality of opportunities. More precisely there was against each other the old form of social democracy, and the third way's approach which differed based on how they reacted on the grievances, and frequently the exclusion where the most vulnerable citizens had drifted. The difference between the models saw in their relations concerning the social benefits. They were against the unconditional benefits the old left drove, and the individual obligations and responsibility wanted and represented by the third way theory. (Giddens 1998,7, 16, 47-48.)

Now I have ended to the concept of a positive welfare state model which Giddens however likes to describe more in the case of welfare society model whose ideological premise is very different. Giddens saw that the welfare society will extend beyond the nation: "above it and below it". The point is that the relationship between the power represented by the Government and the individual will change, because of "the development of self" which is based on the expanding individual responsibility as the individual and ones need to pursue for instance the happiness, has become the most important factor. Giddens continues how "positive welfare would replace each of Beveridge's negative's elements as; evil, indifference, touch, inaction, diseases with positive; in place of want; autonomy; not disease but active health; instead of ignorance, education, as continuing part of life, rather than Squalor, well-being; and in place of idleness, initiative" (Giddens 1998, 115, 128).

As I go forward Giddens claimed how there was a clear connection between the high unemployment and the generous social benefits. It was also clear how unemployment was based mainly on the weak or even poor education and how all these mentioned phenomena will lead ultimately to social exclusion. The worst things happen as the benefit dependency will become an expected behaviour. There is a lot of evidence that there exists also the increased tendency to apply more social assistance, and there will be more absence because the health problems will follow the social problems and exclusion. (Giddens 1998, 122.)

Giddens was also aware how the welfare state and its services have become too complicated to govern and understand at least at a citizen's level. There were a lot of various benefits which included a lot of even perverse features and consequences

which eliminated the individual progress. Secondly it has been clear how much the welfare systems have limited personal freedom and the freedom of choice as they have tried to protect the citizens. As I earlier mentioned, Giddens saw that it was essential to reform the social security systems in a way that it will eliminate the moral hazards and income traps. The whole system should push people forward in a way that encourages the citizens to take the risks in their lives. (Giddens 1998, 122-123, 113-114)

We have already noticed how individualism has expanded to every walk of life and it has been seen frequently as a negative context. However, there might also be some possibilities to see some positive dimension as well. Giddens actually sees how expanded individualism would offer a natural step to all individuals to add their personal effort, for instance seeking new work in case of unemployment. Basically, the question was connected also to the basic question of personal freedom, but also the social equality which Giddens and Blair saw in a new way than the old left. Meaning of equality to Giddens was focusing instead of distribution of income on distribution of possibilities and cultivating human capital which will be needed to secure meritocratic society's cohesion. These Giddens' mentioned elements concerning education have a connection to emancipatory politics so politics of life chances. Politics is ultimately about enhancing autonomy of action which will give freedom from the shackles of the past for instance in case unemployment. Giddens emphasised education, and how one of the most important goals to all Governments is to promote the active development of human capital through its core role in the education system. (Giddens 1994, 90, Giddens 1998, 109-110, Giddens 1998, 65, Giddens 1998, 47-48.)

Base on the last-mentioned remarks it was no wonder that Giddens and Blair wanted to advance politics where the unconditional benefits were finished, and their aim was also to decrease the number of these people and if they were subsidies and without the work or the place to study, they were obliged to participate to work seeking, work trials and training. In practice: the rights and duties had to be estimated in a new context especially as the person was hit by unemployment. Basically Blair's and Giddens' target was simple and important: to bring people back to the labour market as soon as possible and prevent the social exclusion which I have seen a couple of times. Secondly Giddens and Blair wanted to seek competitiveness and they were keen to generate the wealth to the individual which was based on decent work which was frequently based on the decent education. However, it was necessary to keep in mind that these qualities are not developed "if individuals are abandoned to sink or swim in an economic whirlpool" and there was a need to support them.

(Giddens 1998, 47-48, 10, 99, Giddens 2002, 17, 47-48, Giddens 1998, 65, Magone 2011, 102.)

So, the solution was to add education at all levels, and at this point the role of the Government and public sector were vital because they would take a lead in investing in education and other areas surrounding it (Giddens 1998, 99). According to Giddens, state's and Government's role as an intervened actor is important and central because state and the public sector were the best operators to arrange the education to all if they had the resources they were needed (Giddens 1998, 47-48). Giddens was also keen on emphasising how the education was not limited just to concern the citizens who were in normal wage work, but he was also convinced how the individual progress by the education was connected to the entrepreneurial culture and for its evolution as well. Finally Giddens and Blair were convinced already in late 1990s about how important in the future will lifelong learning or lifelong education be based on the consequences of creative destruction and technological progress which will destroy and create jobs, but also create new opportunities. (Giddens 1998, 99, New Labour 1997.)

In summary, which will appear many times later in this research, politics returned to the creation and implementation of the concept of opportunity and freedom so that everyone could be as good and successful in their lives as possible. Opportunity and individual success were restored and often traceable to education, which at the same time became one of the main priorities of the Blair administration. and the Blair administration implemented several fundamental reforms, e.g., the university system, teacher training, and the promotion of lifelong learning. (Giddens 1998, 67.)

The next section will study how the third way politics, the free markets and capitalism faced each other in Blair's and Giddens' ideas and politics. At this point I will return to one of the most fundamental questions of the political sciences: the role of the state and what kind of it would be the ideal situation between the markets, the state, the governance and the civil society.

2.5.3 Get Comfortably with Markets

According to Giddens, the rigidness in the labour market was not the main reason for the difficult problem of unemployment, but the main reason was the generous social benefits. While Giddens argued that flexibility in the labour market was necessary for job creation, he also maintained that flexibility does not exclude high welfare protection. Giddens emphasised the role of entrepreneurship in job creation.

Entrepreneurship promotes technological progress and provides people with opportunities “for self-employment in times of transition”. (Giddens 1998, 124.)

Giddens also stressed flexibility in the labour market is closely linked with effective welfare policy and protection. These are often seen as phenomena that are irreconcilable. According to Giddens, it is impossible to achieve high employment including job creation without “reasonable level of flexibility in the labour market”. Further, Giddens claims that flexible labour markets are a vital element of the policy framework of successful states (Giddens 2004, 5 Giddens 2005, 9). According to Giddens, “countries which have most effectively developed a New European Social Model, have active labour market policies”. Giddens cites Scandinavian countries that have been able to reform their welfare states over the years. (Giddens 2004, 5). Briefly, Giddens argues that it is impossible to maintain a successful welfare state if it is denied its fundamental need to reform itself (Giddens 2004, 5, Giddens 2002, 15).

Giddens also saw how important for the future of the left it would be “to get comfortable with markets, with the role of business in the creation of wealth and the fact that private capital is essential for social investment”. Giddens also admits that an effective and successful free market economy can generate more wealth and prosperity than any competing economic system. Free markets are able to produce and provide information and signals for traders and consumers based on successful market exchange, which is not possible, for instance, in the command economies. In addition, Giddens emphasised the importance of the interconnected relation between the free markets, democracy, free media and the rule of law. Their influence extends to the success of civil society in all western societies and is an organic part of it. (Giddens, 1998, 125, Giddens 1999, 34-36)

The questions around markets and market regulation have always been a cleavage among scholars and political parties. There are still some scholars and politicians who firmly believe in the market self-regulation instead of political guidance. However, Giddens and Blair remarked that New Labour understood that markets are often imperfect and there are regular market failures, which means that the Government’s role is essential in making sure the economy gets back on track. If markets are left without any external regulation and Government control, they will produce too much uncertainty and speculation, which in many cases will lead to social inequality as well. Giddens wants an active Government to reduce social inequality and provide resources that will allow individuals to cope with those that remain. (Giddens 2002, 36.)

Giddens was also aware that “markets often tend to monopolise a situation in which their key advantages for the public, lying in their competitive nature and consumer choice that follows from it, are lost and Government’s intervention is necessary to counteract this tendency”. This example has recently emerged in the controversial cases of GAFAs (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple) companies and their status of monopoly including aggressive tax planning and even tax avoidance. These are significant cases in which the western values and global politics have clashed with each other, and I will discuss them in more detail later in the research. To Giddens, it was important to bear in mind that the success of markets has been always connected to versatility of public goods, which they are not able to provide. According to Giddens, “people need protection when things go wrong, but also the material and moral capabilities to move through major periods of transition in their lives”. These include a framework of law and core goods, such as education, welfare, defence, and health services. Giddens remarks that neoliberalism, including belief in trickle-down effects and minimal welfare state, is not able to provide these protective services to the citizens. Functional markets and market economy are dependent on social and ethical framework – which they themselves cannot provide. which was a significant value also to Acemoglu & Robinson as I earlier brought up. (Giddens 2002, 35, 1998, 100.)

It is important to note, as Rosanvallon and others have argued, that the current welfare state model has been under pressure since the 1990s. Several new challenges have emerged during the last decades, often connected to the problems of citizenship and an unstable economy. One-nation conservative politics has been challenged by immigration and global refugee crises. Rosanvallon claimed that the progress of solidarity can go hand in hand with the more differentiated distinction of an interior and an exterior, the political space of citizenship, which is indeed determined and rigid while the economic space and variables are flexible. (Rosanvallon 1995, 49-50, 69-72.)

Rosanvallon’s argument, more specifically, is based on the problem concerning the very concept of citizenship (Rosanvallon 1995, 70-71). According to Giddens, “the citizenship rights and welfare programmes were mainly established as states sought to engage their populations and hold their support, a phenomenon that continued through the Cold War period”. (Rosanvallon 1995, 70-71, Giddens, 1999, 33, Giddens 2002, 35.) The whole concept of citizenship has been questioned and it has become politicised especially by the extreme right in France. Who is the real French and what are the values that define it are questions frequently put on the

political agenda since the National Rally started to increase its popularity in the mid-1980s (Nabli & Wiewiorka 2016, 8-9)?

Here, it is important to briefly discuss the bigger historical context of the progress of western democracies since the Second World War. According to Raymond Aron (1965), it is important to keep in mind that alongside the welfare state emerged a political economy, in which national and international institutions and various economic regulatory systems played a key role. According to Aron, the rapid economic growth, good employment situation, rising living standards and free trade unionisation of the Western European states took place under administrations that implemented a reformed market economy, in which regulatory regimes and state-led closed economics had a central role. The above-mentioned policy choices, which involved ever-expanding welfare state services, shed a light on the message of the Soviet Union to European workers, although in France and Italy, for example, the position of Communist parties remained surprisingly strong. It has become clear that all these elements and success are not possible to achieve without a strong and effective state: no corruption but the rule of law, and open, accountable, and reliable political institutions. According to Giddens, in this context the most important concept to understand is public interest, meaning, in general, an interest that all political parties share as a common value while making a difference to competitors and their own definition of it shared by social democrats. (Acemoglu & Robinson 2012, Giddens 2002, 35, Aron 1965, 1526.)

As I summarise this part of the theory, it is important to highlight certain features concerning the following chapters. First: Giddens and Blair were keen to promote a social model that was fundamentally different from the model of the Conservatives and the Prime Minister Thatcher. The society needed to reconcile, and this was not possible without the guidance of the state and the Government. However, the guidance that Giddens and Blair had in mind was very different from that of the previous leadership of Labour. The state and the Government had the role of an enabler by creating opportunities and second chances to everyone. The reforms, for instance in education, went through the whole society: from apprenticeships to university, without overruling the decisions of the previous Government if the results had been positive, as was the case concerning the status and position of the trade unions.

More specifically, workfare society aimed at changing the whole social model in the UK by pursuing the new model of competitive society. The fundamental ideological issues of Blair's third way policy were the role of the state and the individual's role within state, and above all, the idea of the equality of opportunity

The latter measures were often related to the improvement of the individual's skills and employability, for example through training, education, work trials and apprenticeships, and in policies that made higher education more accessible for everyone, regardless of wealth or family background. (New Labour 1997)

Individual effort and the idea of no rights without responsibilities, together with deregulation of labour markets are the values and policy elements that are often linked to neoliberalism. However, these elements are also central to Giddens's third way theory according to which the Government creates an active civil society. This means, for instance, equal opportunities to all citizens and fighting against social inequality by extending equal social security to all citizens. In summary, according to Giddens, a fundamental difference between the third way politics and neoliberalism was how each approached the question of equality. Giddens notes that during Thatcher's premiership, for example, her administration ignored all questions connected to education, social justice, or equality of opportunities. Further, while the neoliberals consider the state an enemy, to Giddens and Blair, the state is an important partner, a so-called social investment state; the Government is neither the answer to all problems, nor the enemy. (Giddens 1998, 8, 70)

When discussing the core elements of the welfare state and the premise of the third way, I have noticed how, according to Beck, these elements are intertwined. Among traditional parties, there is a Europe-wide consensus on the big outlines of the politics: supporting human capital and the active welfare state model in which the citizens; integration into the labour market is a priority (Beck 2007b, 685). I will examine this interesting argument later in the study by analysing how the situation has developed in France and how Macron has reacted to it.

In the next section, I will discuss the foundations of Emmanuel Macron's political thinking and the people who have influenced him in academia and in politics. I will focus on Paul Ricœur and Raymond Aron's thinking and scholarship. In the next section, I will briefly discuss how Ricœur saw the basic elements of reconciliation -- forgetting, forgiveness, apology, guilt, and memory -- and why reconciliation in the institutionalised context was not his preferred way to heal societal wounds. Among the politicians, I will examine the legacy of the former Prime Minister Michel Rocard and his influence on Macron.

The next section will also examine Ricœur and Rocard's vision of an ideal society and their views on the contemporary challenges of French society. I will pay particular attention to how Ricœur and Rocard saw the role of the free markets. In many cases, the forms of distribution have been considered one of the most important tasks of the welfare state and, consequently, the whole idea of the welfare

state and welfare state ideology have been frequently understood only in the narrow economic sense. This means that visible interest has been largely focused on economics and, more precisely, on the system that distributes goods and commodities. Given this, Ricœur and Rocard wanted to detach their thinking from the conflict between capitalism and socialism, the traditional source of tension in France. Instead of the useless comparisons and conflicts, Ricœur is keen to discuss the welfare state model and society from his markedly different point of view. (Rocard & Ricœur 1991, 5-6, Pedder 2018, 148.)

Although according to Foessel (2017), it would be better to evaluate Macron's politics without relying on Ricœur's philosophy, I consider Ricœur's thinking important and even essential for my research. While it is true that Ricœur's theoretical discussions on the institutions and politics of memory are only elements and philosophical paradigms, and therefore not transferable to any political programme as such, they nevertheless support my research task of identifying the essence of Macron's ideological nature and, so to speak, get inside Macron's head. I maintain that I have to approach Ricœur's philosophical position in a reflexive way. (Foessel, Dosse 2017.)

2.6 Ricœur and Aron Questions the Ideologies

To Ricœur and too many of the most celebrated philosophers in history, the priority of politics and science was the search for truth. It was therefore understandable that Ricœur was suspicious of ideologies which reached their worst form in totalitarian regimes. The ideologically driven loaded politics inevitably blur the truth and distort reality, and quite often the consequences of the ideologically-driven politics are not compatible with one another. According to Darrigrand (2017), Ricœur was concerned about the totalitarian regimes and over-emphasized ideologies, dogmas, which posed a real threat to science and research, the only valid measures to seek the truth. (Darrigrand 2017, 25, Fottorino 2017, 23-26, Monteil 3:20-3:30, Pedder 2018, 149.)

Basically, Ricœur was one of those philosophers who did not accept the traditional set up about the subjects of violence and evil in politics unlike, for instance, Carl Schmitt did in the late 1920s and the early 1930s. The difference between Ricœur and Schmitt's thinking stemmed from Schmitt's belief that the emergence of political identity of the people requires the group's ability to form a political entity, and this involves identifying a common enemy and excluding it from

the group's emerging political identity. What matters is who decides who the enemy is because that person becomes a political leader and an authority of the respective movement or group. (Fottorino 2017, 21, Schmitt 1963, 26, 50.)

As I reflect more on Ricœur's approach to politics and history, I will note how far the Ricœurian way and Schmitt's philosophy is from each other. According to Ricœur, the questions around national identities and history were always in motion and spoke frequently about the narrative identities in transformation according to the vagaries of what Ricœur calls "narrative identity", which were always exposed to otherness and to the changes of time. The questions of identities will emerge later in this research when I examine statism and multiculturalism. Because Ricœur approached politics in the context of reconciliation rather than traditional antagonism, it is important to examine the concept of the reconciliation next. To Ricœur history, oblivion, forgiveness, and the reconciliation formed essential philosophical starting points which in turn were related to action, ethics and remembrance. For the purposes of my research and Macron's thinking, the most interesting parts of Ricœur's philosophy are linked to reconciliation as an approach in politics and to the questions around identities in politics and societal life. (Schmitt 1963, 26, 39, Doesse 2017, 1.)

However, as I discuss the essence of conflicts, I can remember that Guizot praised the English tradition of institutionalised conflicts. Based on the last attention it was clear that Ricœur saw all procedures in social debate as an important context. To Ricœur it was essential that all conflicts in politics and society were open because openness was a foundational value to the whole democracy as a regime, and further that all procedures in politics and decision-making should be generally accepted. However, here Ricœur brings up a significant question: but accepted after what? He does not give a straight answer to the other side of the question. (Ricœur 1991, 14-15).

As I have pointed earlier, most countries in Europe have experienced several historical events which have proved very difficult to solve. Most of these cases have been linked to wars and other international crises and the question of how to forgive the old enemy. Tontti (2015) notes that Ricœur used the term "le pardon difficile" referring to the difficult process of forgiveness for historical injustices. As I notice, the theme of forgiveness Ricœur pursuits also approaches the concepts of repentance and grace which originate from religious philosophy, especially from Christianity. Ricœur described the situation in which there was certain symmetry between the apology and the forgiveness, and they could be seen in a similar context as we frequently see promise and releasing the promise. More specifically, both

previously mentioned, apology and forgiveness and promise and releasing promise, had their horizontal levels. However, it was clear that the background of the apology and the forgiveness was an “asymmetrical and vertical relationship which was based on the height of forgiveness and the depth of the guilt”. Etienne’s (2001) and Tontti’s views on forgiving are interesting. According to them, Ricœur’s notion of forgetting represents itself first as an enemy of the memory. It has two dimensions or features: on the one hand it has a connection to the collective memory, but on the other hand it simultaneously has a functional relation to history, as forgiveness has a natural dimension on the guilt and the reconciliation with the past. (Tontti 2015, Etienne 2001, 244-245, Ricœur 2000, 630-642, Ricœur 2000 17:00-25:00,)

Tontti remarks that one of the premises of forgiving was its optional nature. Ricœur was convinced that there can be no obligation to forgive, just as there can be no obligation to forget. What were the reasons and arguments behind Ricœur’s apprehension towards institutionalised forgiveness? Briefly, Ricœur argued that if we establish forgiveness at the institutional level, it will be inevitable that we drift to a situation in which the institutionalised forgiveness leads to manipulated and politicised truth. Special interests will get mixed together, and the original goal will become blurred or even completely fade so that there can be no policy of forgiveness although it would be possible to identify the injustices of the past. (Tontti 2015, Etienne 2001, 244-245, Ricœur 2000, 630-642.)

This notion of Ricœur’s is still relevant in the context of French history. The questions of forgiving and pursuing the truth will be discussed several times in the empirical chapter when I analyse Macron’s relation to France’s recent history. I will provide several examples of historical events and the processes of reconciliation that have gained considerable attention abroad. A good example of this concerns the injustices that took place during the Algerian War of Independence and the slow process of the post-war reconciliation. (Tontti 2015, Etienne 2001, 244-245, Ricœur 2000, 630-642.)

As I will later discuss in more detail, French scholars and French political culture in general have been well-known for their scepticism towards free markets and capitalism. Ricœur and especially the former Prime Minister Michel Rocard approached this dilemma without the traditional confrontation and Rocard emphasised several other elements that were created, distributed, and served by the various institutions and markets. More specifically, the society is based on a vast network of the institutions which generate goods such as health, education, security, national identity, or citizenship. The consequence of this progress has been that “we

are no longer a representation of the market society polarised by the market goods alone". (Foessel & Dutent 2017, 1, Rocard & Ricœur 1991, 5-6.)

Ricœur notes that it is often difficult to define which actor (for instance a private company) or a public institution has, in the end, produced or distributed the goods and services that all citizens use. The outcome is the result of co-operation between many actors, and it is pointless to highlight the role of only one or, for example, pit the free markets and the state against each other. Ultimately, Ricœur argues that his approach will lead to more accurate reflection on how social justice has been realised and how and by whom it is represented. Rocard was keenly aware of the accumulated grievances in French society. In his last interview, given a few weeks before his death in 2016, Rocard strongly criticised the French political culture which, during the last 40 years, had been based on blind demonization of the free markets and capitalism, and contrasted this superficial French ideology with Germany where the economy and the whole society had made impressive progress. It is interesting that Rocard saw how the current French society was still based on the Jacobinistic top-down administration where the central administration dictated lower levels of the governance. (Rocard & Ricœur 1991, 5-6, Foessel & Dutent 2017, 1, Le Point 2016, 23.)

Like history has repeatedly shown, there have been certain contradictions in the relations between French intellectuals and the state and state authority as evidenced especially in times of social reforms that have resulted in massive protests participated, if not led, by intellectuals. Like history has repeatedly shown, there have been certain contradictions in the relations between French intellectuals and the state and state authority as evidenced especially in times of social reforms that have resulted in massive protests participated, if not led, by intellectuals. Rocard remarked in an interview in 1991 that he had always been surprised how French intellectuals had an almost romantic connection to violence and disorder against authorities. Ricœur shared Rocard's opinion and complained that the whole political culture and in fact the entire French society views conflicts in an archaic way which makes it unfit for negotiation and arbitration. According to Rocard, there has always existed a seduction of violence which has been dangerously exercised in intellectuals' cynical catholic attitude against money. Money has been considered dirty and antiromantic and, according to Rocard, "instead of opening up conflicts over the distribution of money we place it in alibis that allow all kinds of enthusiasm: the class struggle and the fight against imperialism." Rocard argued that these fights were irrelevant compared to the real societal and political problems which had been without

solutions for a very long time. Rocard mentioned social security reform, health expenses and the relations between the market and media. (Rocard 1991, 14-15.)

I can note the similarities between Ricœur and Raymond Aron's political philosophy. It is interesting that Aron saw (1983) politics ultimately as an issue where it was basically unnecessary to pursue the perfect society or the perfect model, but instead reflect upon the difficult choices and decisions faced in the impure world by those who held the power. Like Ricœur, Aron stressed how important to politicians it is to accept the imperfections of politics. Aron saw that it would be essential to foster hope among citizens when determining the role of ideologies. However, the danger was in the details. Aron was convinced that there was always a great danger to drift into a situation in which, once stirred, an ideology becomes a dogma. Such a situation affected all social actors, whether religious, such as Jewish, or political, such as Marxists. They shared a vision that revolved around some sort of a messianic future. (Missika & Wolton 2004, 446)

Aron wrote how "to tackle political challenges effectively, one must first accept the logical contradictions of liberal democracy and imperfections of politics." (Aron 1965, 59, Missika & Wolton 2004, 259-263.) For Aron, the politics were never a choice between absolute good and absolute evil, but between what was preferable over what was detestable. It is also good to pay attention to the much-discussed party politics, also criticised by Ricœur, Constant and others. Aron described party politics where several interests simultaneously shaped public discussion and the party members' agendas, a particular framework that could best defend the party's interests (Aron 1965, 1450, Jennings 201, 505).

Aron's (2010) best-known work, *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (*L'Opium des intellectuels*), published for the first time in 1955. The book challenged the widespread cultural and intellectual 1950s Marxism 1950scriticized the politics and the existence of the Soviet Union. Aron's particular focus, however, was on the different myths in France's political history and political thinking. According to Aron, French people have a propensity to suspend reforms, and, in many cases, the society has returned to where it started (Aron 2010, 27). Aron calls this a French myth (Aron 2010, 27). There is still considerable evidence today of the French myth. Typically, there has been much talk of the need for reforms before the elections, and people have voted for political change, but when politicians have started to implement the promised reforms, people have organised large demonstrations to oppose the reforms. I will return to these phenomena in the empirical part of the research.

Blind belief in ideologies does not work in uncertain situations, because ideologies form a certain vision of the world. They function like religions and, as I

mentioned earlier, they do not represent the truth. Aron wrote about the death of ideologies in his work *L'Opium des intellectuels*. Aron admired and was influenced by Max Weber, remarking that he had finally found in the legacy of the 1930s a scholar who represented the values it was easy for him to accept. According to Aron, he shared Weber's conviction that political acts and decision-making should be based on historical precedents and the truth. Learning from the past and pursuing the truth was a duty of all political actors. (Aron 2010, 30, 315-334.)

I have discussed earlier Benjamin Constant's criticism against the party politics of his time and, a century after Constant, Aron (1965) also viewed party politics in the same critical context, arguing that there existed an inevitable competition between and inside party organisations which was based on the changed nature of the modern societies compared to the situation before the modern era. The status and power of party organisations with their stakeholders and interest groups have extended widely in society because there has been no counterforce that would regulate their interest in power. (Aron 1965, 1443.)

Aron was also concerned about the centralization of both economic and political power in the hands of a few, and this was a problem of all political and economic systems in the world. Aron argued that an oligarchical tendency where a small group of people held power existed nearly everywhere in the world, and he could not understand the unsubstantiated promises of the French politicians during the late 1970s and the early 1980s. His criticism was targeted especially to the Socialist Party and their plans for massive reforms built on unrealistic economic expectations. The Socialist Party sold the citizens the idea that better income and higher standard of living could be achieved by working less. More precisely, the Socialist Party and Mitterrand wanted to reduce the legal work limit to 35 hours per week. Working less did not mean that income would drop because all salaries were raised including minimum salaries and paid vacations. One of Mitterrand's main campaign promises in 1981 was to hire 200.000 new civil servants to work in public administration and to nationalise the 11 multinational French companies. (Aron 1965, 1443, Aron 2004, 452-457, Mitterrand 1981)

Aron considered Mitterrand's programme not only ideological, but also demagogic and provocative, referring, for example, to the inefficient wealth tax in France. The wealth tax and the strict taxation and income redistribution in general were seen as a well-functioning measure which enhanced social equality and the possibilities of people in the lowest income bracket to improve their lives. Progressive wealth tax was part of Mitterrand's 1981 election programme. It was implemented in 1982 but abolished in 1986 after weak results, and then re-

introduced in 1988 in Mitterrand's second term. (Aron 1965, 1443, Aron 2004, 452-456, Mitterrand 1981, *legifrance* 2021a, *legifrance* 2021b.)

It is interesting to study Aron's conclusion where he analyses the situation in France in the beginning of the 1980s. According to Aron, the phenomenon of the patronising state that Alexis de Tocqueville had warned about already in 1840, was a present threat in 1980s France. Aron referred to Tocqueville's argument concerning the relationship between the individual citizen and the state and how the progress will lead to a situation in which the individual is increasingly reluctant to assume responsibility of his or her life, relying instead on Government support. Patronising power renders individual decision-making less and less important, reducing the individual to a secondary role. In the next phase, individual decision-making loses its meaning and substance alienating individuals from the larger society. Tocqueville concluded his critique concerning societal life: "the whole societal life will end as we end up in a situation where the state takes over the whole of society and societal life and begins to regulate its operation with extreme precision and piety and with simple guidance. As a result, all the original and personal drift dies and withers away because nothing new is born anymore". (Tocqueville 2006, 671, Aron 2004, 459.)

2.7 Review of the Chapter

This chapter opened with a historical overview of the late Enlightenment, focusing on the French liberal tradition and the works of Benjamin Constant and François Guizot. I also drew from Friedrich Hegel's ideas. I found the discussions on the value of work for the individual's self-understanding especially useful—how work facilitates a sense of belonging, how the dynamics of ownership shape the meaning of labour, and how modern moral questions infiltrated into labour markets. I then analysed the theory of the risk society and its impact on the evolution of Macron's political thinking. According to Beck and Bauman, neoliberal politics, and values, driven by the interests of numerous global companies, dominate political life, trumping the interests of ordinary citizens. Beck also discussed how globalisation has shaped labour markets and how permanent employment will decrease as temporary and part-time jobs will become more common. Beck saw how neoliberal politics, coupled with ascendent individualization, fragmented traditional institutions—family, political parties, trade unions, and religion.

After the risk society, I focused on Anthony Giddens' third way political theory as embodied by Prime Minister of the UK Tony Blair and the New Labour party.

The key dynamic there was the relationships among the individuals, the state, and the market. More precisely, the theory emphasised the rights and obligations of the individual, while the role of the state was limited to guarantee fairness, transparency, and unhindered competition in free markets. As I extended my analysis into the 20th century, I focused on the ideas of Raymond Aron and Paul Ricœur who emphasised reconciliation, truth, and trust over rigid ideological boundaries and lines of division. I analysed Aron and Ricoer's critique of ideologies which they saw as incompatible with the truth while being in the same context as Guizot and Constant were during their time. However, as I summarise Ricœur and Aron's thinking, I can see that there was a pronounced difference. As Schlegel and Foessel noted, there was a particular political philosophy to which Ricœur attached himself, but ultimately this tells us nothing, because there were no practical policy proposals that could win elections. To understand Ricœur and his thinking, it is necessary to remember that his philosophical position is essentially reflexive (Foessel 2017, 1). However, as I studied Aron's thinking, I noticed that Aron was engaged with day-to-day politics, criticising the current Socialist Party and Mitterrand's politics, while adhering to clear philosophical tenets. (Foessel, 2017, 1). The next chapter will study Macron's life in more detail. I will briefly describe how the talented and hard-working student received special attention at the University of Nanterre where he met Paul Ricœur, and how Macron finally found himself at the ENA. It was clear that his career had a special momentum, carrying him to the very top of French politics.

3 EMMANUEL MACRON'S ROAD TO THE PRESIDENCY

Emmanuel Macron was born in December 1977 in the city of Amiens, a city in northern France. Both of Macron's parents were successful hospital doctors whose two of three children became doctors as well (Fulda 2017, 23, 32). In his youth, instead of becoming a politician, Macron had an idea to become a novelist and at the same time he was keen on studying philosophy and history. It's a well-known detail that Macron had a deep and significant relation to his grandmother, who was a teacher and took an important part in his education and upbringing (Macron 2017h,7). According to Macron it was his grandmother who encouraged him to work and study literature, history, drama, geography, and classical music among many other things when with his parents' conversations were focused on more philosophical and contemporary literature with debates and discussions of a medical nature and research lasting hours (Macron 2017h7-8,11). Despite his parents' bourgeois and wealthy social status, Macron's family was leftist, and they voted for instance in the 1981 Presidential elections François Mitterrand for President and took part actively in the 1968 student-led political mobilisation in Paris (Fulda 2017, 21, 23, 30-31).

Macron has said that he was lucky and had a great privilege to live and learn in family circumstances with highly committed schoolteachers, who all fed him and his fundamental need to learn all the previous mentioned areas (Macron 2015h 7-8). Lucky or not Macron emphasises how important it was to have a real passion to develop himself without any kind of imposing of his parents. Macron describes how his childhood was "a happy life of reading and writing" and how he just lived "through the text and words" (Macron 2017h, 7-8. After Macron had graduated from high school, he decided to continue his studies at the university level. Macron claims that one of the most remarkable moments for his future career was the moment when he started his university studies in Paris at the Nanterre University, and when he met the already analysed famous philosopher Paul Ricœur (Macron 2017h, 13-14). A bit later Macron became Ricœur's assistant and he described how Ricœur's critical demand and obsession with the real world and trust in other people affected him during the years he was serving Ricœur (Macron 2017h, 13-14, Monteil 2018,

0:00-2:00). During this time, Macron developed a strong sense of individual social justice that inspired him not only to study, read and understand but also act to bring about concrete political and societal change, and it was actually Ricœur who pushed Macron to politics, even though Ricœur never went into politics himself. (Macron 2017,15, Couturier 2017, 89-15, Fottorino 2017, 36-37 Macron 2017h, 13-14.)

After graduating from Nanterre University, Macron was offered a place at ENA (National School of Administration) which is very often a path to the top positions in both the private and the public sector in France. ENA was followed by Macron's first international assignment in Nigeria, where he was posted as an official at the French Embassy. Macron has remarked that during this period he was introduced to a French progressive business leader, anti-communist, and media executive Henry Herman, who was involved in with several political think tanks. These included Terra Nova which Herman had co-founded, and La Republique, where he worked with Pierre Rosanvallon, back then and still is one of the best-known social scientists in France. These think tanks continue to have close financial and ideological ties to the French Socialist Party (Fulda 2017, 127, Macron 2017, 16).

In his election book Macron emphasised how surprised he was about his success with his studies at ENA, which offered him several interesting opportunities to hone his professional skills and improve his professional prospects. After graduating from ENA, Macron chose to become a finance auditor working as a civil servant for four and half years. This was an entirely new world to him. According to Macron, his time as a civil servant was in many ways a useful and meaningful part of his life, both personally and in a wider context. Macron has emphasised the various skills and new ways of thinking he learnt during these years. More precisely, Macron has written becoming aware of the rigours of auditing, and that he acquired a wealth of experience that can only be gained from fieldwork in a variety of locations, the close collaboration involved in public service, and the progress that comes "from working shoulder-to-shoulder with colleagues". (Macron 2017, 17.)

Henry Herman, who was very close to the earlier mentioned French progressive socialist politician Michel Rocard, to whom he introduced Macron in 2006 (Fulda 2017, 127). Despite their mutual respect, Rocard and Macron approached politics in different ways. According to Macron, Rocard was more focused on traditional party politics and trying to "change them by any means", while Macron has different political priorities. For Macron it was essential that the whole society be involved and committed to improving common interests and shared goals. Moreover, they should be aware of their past: "the nations should be allowed to rediscover the creativity of its great history. Society should be allowed to take initiatives, to

experiment, to find suitable solutions.” (Macron 2017h, 16, 31). “General de Gaulle, like Pierre Mendes France, demonstrated better than anyone that politics must face reality. I subscribe to that”. (Macron 2017h, 16, 31.) (Macron 2017h, 16, 31). (Macron 2017h, 16, 31.)

The terms progressive and progressivism are based on the idea that society will improve and develop by social reforms which are based on synthesis of social equality and market economy. Progressive socialists known as second left (*deuxième gauche*) wanted to break from the old confrontations and traditional cleavages and ideologies between the left and right. These reformist politicians were and are very near the third way of politics and politicians such as Tony Blair in the UK, Gerhard Schröder in Germany, or Paavo Lipponen in Finland. Despite their ideological differences, Rocard became a political mentor, whose determination and intellectual rigour significantly influenced young Macron. Rocard pointed the way and inspired Macron to explore pressing international questions, such as climate change. During his last years, Rocard encouraged Macron among other things to learn about protection of polar zones (Macron 2017, 16-17).

Macron’s career advanced, and he was elected as the Deputy Rapporteur-General to the Commission for the Liberation of French Growth (*la commission pour la libération de la croissance française*), steered by the famous and respected political adviser Jacques Attali, who has been influential at the highest levels of French politics since the late 1970s. According to Macron, during the months at the commission, he had the great privilege of working with Attali, who became like a big brother to him and “toughened” him. Macron also benefited from working closely with many other exceptionally talented women and men - intellectuals, civil servants, and businesspeople who have an essential and vital role in making France the country that it is. (Macron 2017, 17, Fulda 2017, 154, Couturier 2017, 58.)

Attali claims he was the one who found and invented Macron when they worked together at the commission (Fulda 2017, 154-155). Attali even emphasises how he was the only person in the Committee who was able to note Macron’s exceptional abilities and talent for politics (Fulda 2017, 155-156). Attali describes Macron’s working style and qualities in the commission in the following manner: “Emmanuel Macron had an exceptional role in the commission, but his role was just technical because he was leading different teams ensuring coordination.” Attali highlights Macron’s tenacity, extreme competence, great clarity, sound judgement, and ability to distinguish between essential and irrelevant. He cites as an example Macron’s commitment to work night after night on problems of unemployment, especially lack of training opportunities for unemployed jobseekers; in these and other tasks,

Macron was anxious to do things, and was not motivated by praise. The questions of work and unemployment, as mentioned earlier, became the most important themes of Macron's campaign, according to Attali, he has very rarely worked with anyone with the competence to parallel that of Macron's. According to Fulda, the Commission of Economic Growth was founded in 2007 by President Nicolas Sarkozy (2007-2012), and its line-up included talented members from the left and the right. It is notable that several members of the commission became key figures in the En Marche movement when it was established nine years later, and that many of the commission's progressive ideas were subsequently incorporated in the movement's manifesto. Christian Dargnat, Chief Investment Officer of BNP Investment Partners and later Macron's presidential election campaign leader was one of the most important connections Macron made while working at the commission. (Fulda 2017, 156-158).

Attali remarks that both Mitterrand and Macron were fundamentally reformist politicians, but in completely different ways. Mitterrand's purpose was to create at the same time a huge social project and an entirely new world view based on the so-called French Socialism that will be discussed more precisely in Chapter 4.3.1. (Perrineau 1997, 29). According to Attali, Mitterrand's problem was that he did not understand, until the end of his political career, that politics should always be a time-limited project, not a life-long one. This is a notion that Macron shares, and which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. Attali remarks that in Mitterrand's case the problem was his narcissism, which became a relevant issue, not the secondary, as it often is in politics. As I have earlier pointed out, this is the lesson which Attali had tried to teach Macron since their early days, and which is something Macron regularly brings up in his speeches and programmes. (Fulda 2017, 158-159.) The following chapter briefly describes Macron's career as a banker at Rothschild and I will explore how this experience changed his views on several key issues, such as free markets, work, and the questions related to career and finance.

3.1 Rothschild and the Call of the New Profession

Despite his success at public service, Macron was keen to develop himself in the private sector and more specifically in finance. Macron has described that he was eager to learn the grammar of international business and tackle increasingly complex international economic matters. At the same time, he remained confident that someday he would return to politics and serve his country through election. Macron

joined the famous merchant bank Rothschild & Co and was quickly promoted to the respected status of a specialist whose work description was to advise business leaders strategy and offer them support and mentorship. According to Macron, the years at Rothschild taught him the “considerable power of commerce”. However, most important were the lessons about the world in general. (Macron 2017, 18.)

For the purposes of this research project and its key question –who Emmanuel Macron as a politician and a leader is and what is his reformist policy idea – the next sentence is particularly revealing. Macron has emphasised that he is critical of those enthusiasts “who hold a life in business to be the ultimate horizon of our times”. At the same time, it is important to note that Macron does not seem to share the bitter and critical outlook “of those who regard money as a leper and the symbol of man’s exploitation of man”. Macron has claimed that both ideological approaches are useless in today’s world. According to him, “those perspectives appear to me to be flawed by a childish romanticism” (Macron 2017, 19). This outline and approach form a remarkable premise to Macron’s thinking, and I will return to them in the analysis of my research material and in my conclusions.

Macron has praised his years at Rothschild, where he once again was extremely fortunate to work with outstanding colleagues, such as David de Rothchild, whose intelligence and ability to lead brought highly talented professionals to his side. Macron has pointed out “how the banking environment differs deeply from a so-called normal working environment, the personalities are not normal, and it is quite normal that employees have challenges to cooperate”. According to Macron, the banking profession is not “simply involving the management of money or a matter of lending or speculating”. Rather, Macron sees banking as “a consulting profession, in which value lies in people”. Macron remarks that during his four years at Rothschild, he acquired a profession outside of politics. In his view, this should be a goal for all politicians; this new profession provided him with a valuable opportunity to familiarise himself with all kinds of business sectors and leaders from all around the world which has shaped his world view and political views. Macron is completely against “elitist conformity which teaches us that a life-long career in politics is a precondition for aspiring highest positions”. (Macron 2017h, 19, 28.)

Rothschild is not a mere bank: We should understand it as a historical financial institution, which has always been connected to French society and politics. Because of this, Rothchild often represents an invisible power that operates alongside the public political power. A historical example of this is the case of Georges Pompidou, who was the former director of Rothschild (1954-1958) (Fulda 2017, 164). Pompidou was a close friend of both David Rothschild and his father and

participated in the creation of the constitution of the Fifth Republic. Président Charles de Gaulle appointed Pompidou as his prime minister in 1962, a post which he held until 1968. A year later, in 1969, Pompidou was elected president. This was to the pinnacle of his remarkable career as a politician and a highly influential political actor (Fulda 2017, 164, 167.) Macron remarks that during four years at Rothschild's he acquired a new and normal profession outside of politics, which should be a target to all politicians and further this new profession gave him a great opportunity to get to know all kind of business sectors and leaders all around the world which is and has been very meaningful to his world and political views (Macron 2017, 19). Macron is absolutely against "elitist conformity which teaches us that a life-long career in politics is a precondition for aspiring to the highest positions" (Macron 2017h, 28).

Against this background Macron's career has a similar tone as Pompidou had during the 1960's and early 1970's. A successful career at Rothchild, nomination to Hollande's cabinet and later to minister of economy and then President, tells how history and tradition perpetuates. The third example of Rothschild's power to French politics is associated with Macron and François Hollande's Nicolas Sarkozy's choices during his term in office in 2007-2012. During Nicolas Sarkozy's regime the post of general secretary of the President of the Republic was held by François Pérol, who earlier had been cabinet chief in Bercy (treasury) and former managing partner of Rothchild. According to Fulda Fulda it was clear that if Sarkozy would have won his second term, he would have chosen Sébastien Proto to the post of general secretary at Élysée, whose background was at also Rothchild and who has been as a financial inspector at Bercy (the Treasury) like Macron was. In summary I can say that the times are changing, and the presidents will change but the power and the influence of the prestigious Rothchild prevails. The best bank in Paris and prestigious bank also in the global context wants the best talents who are available, and always gets them as well. (Fulda 2017, 164.)

3.2 Back to the Politics

Macron's decision to return back to politics and public service happened in 2012, but at this point it is remarkable to notice that the ties to politics, and especially to the Socialist Party had never gone through. Macron remarks that two years prior to his return, he was already committed to work with politics and prepared a reformist programme to reform the left concerning especially economic issues, which was a wish for Macron by the forthcoming President François Hollande. Macron

participated in Hollande's presidential campaign and he had an important role to cool down nervous investors for instance after the famous Hollande's campaign speech in Bourget, where Hollande proclaimed and called international investors "as a real enemy without face". At the same time Hollande's campaign was very leftist including a 75 % tax rate to citizens who earned more than one million euro in a year. At the same time Hollande's campaign was very leftist including a 75 % tax rate to citizens who earned more than one million euro in a year. After the 2012 Presidential Elections Hollande asked for Macron to join his team at Élysée which meant that Macron was nominated to Deputy Secretary-General. Macron's task was focused on economic matters and the questions on the Eurozone during very hard times especially with Greece's problems and the difficult questions concerning bail-out policy, which divided Europe deeply. Macron was not content with his achievements and two years later in July 2014 he left the position but was asked back soon by President Hollande. Macron was then nominated to Minister of the Economy, Industry and Digital Affairs, which was his last duty until launching the En Marche movement and starting to promote his campaign for the President. (Fulda 2017, 152, Hollande 2012b, 8, Hollande 2012, 8, Macron 2017h, 20.)

After the 2012 Presidential Elections Hollande asked for Macron to join his team at Élysée which meant that Macron was nominated to Deputy Secretary-General. Macron's task was focused on economic matters and the questions on the Eurozone during very hard times especially with Greece's problems and the difficult questions concerning bail-out policy, which divided Europe. Macron was not content with his achievements and two years later in July 2014 he left the position but was asked back soon by President of the Republic Hollande. Macron was then nominated Minister of the Economy, Industry and Digital Affairs, which was his last duty until launching the En Marche movement and starting to promote his campaign for the President. Since Macron started his new position, he was committed to drive policy which was based on thesis and targets, whose purpose was to "remove obstacles, give access, support economic activity and revitalise purchasing power and create jobs". Macron emphasises that he wanted to create a new kind of "industrial policy which was based on innovation and investment". Macron remarks that he was conscious of the long-lasting problems of the industrial sector of France which were concerning for instance shipyards (Chantiers de l'Atlantique) and car industry (Peugeot-Citroen) (Macron 2017h, 20-21.) However, Macron emphasises that he has always been conscious of the limited power³ and the effect of public intervention on the economy

³ Adam Smith strongly believed that the markets were itself objective, and the markets were able to guarantee the proper organization of people's lives without discrimination. The active intervention of

for instance during the economic depression or when an enterprise is in trouble (Macron 2017h, 21). Both last-mentioned issues have always been difficult questions to all politicians in France, regardless of the party or Government. And still I must remember how the public opinion in France has traditionally believed in more state steering economy than markets or market economy, and how the attitudes in general have always been very critical against big business and corporations. I have earlier mentioned how President Mitterrand nationalised France's biggest companies during the 1980's including Rothchild's bank⁴, but even today there are many critical opinions against free market and market economy. According to CEVIPOFFF (2018) 41 % of French citizens want the Government to control, regulate and support the companies which are in trouble and still 38 % of the citizens want to fundamentally reform the market economy (CEVIPOFFF 2018, 34). At the same time 61 % of French citizens want the Government to control the acts and risks of commercial banks (CEVIPOFFF 2017, 51, Gaston-Breton 2017, 281).

Macron emphasises how he noticed during his post as minister of economy, how France was not capable of change at any level. The country was without a "real desire for reform" and the whole social, political, and economic discussion was sterile, useless and without any kind of true sense of purpose. The social discussion was dominated by superficial discussion of terrorism and withdrawal of citizenship of those who were connected or had been convicted on a terrorist act. France was incapable of making any fundamental reform on its economy or labour market when the financial crisis hit the country and the budget deficit and unemployment problem broke. At the same time France had a serious problem with terrorist attacks, which fed extremism and Front National's popularity among the voters. (Macron 2017h, 21.)

In addition to all this, France's internal coherence started to become more and more fragmented. There was growing pressure and demonstrations by the trade unions, youth movements and the so-called Nuit Debout which all created growing pressure on the current Prime Minister's Manuel Valls regime (Bulletin des élus locaux, 2016). The biggest problem and conflicts were focused on reforming labour

the state would cause harm to the economy which would be reflected in the efficient utilisation of the respective resources. According to Smith, man acted as a self-determining player in a market that would work best if one could be without external barriers, that is the state control or steering. One of Smith's key ideas was also that the markets would be able to remedy problem situations itself without the need for the state, for example to intervene in the form of intervention. (Smith 2011, 208.)

⁴ After the elections of 1986 Jacques Chirac became a Prime Minister and first "cohabitation" began which means the situation where the Prime Minister and President of the Republic represent different parties. Chirac immediately launched the large-scale privatisations and Rothchild was returned again to a private company. (Gaston-Breton 2017, 287.)

markets, which divided the Socialist party (Bulletin des élus locaux, 2016). According to Macron, France's competitor countries were, however difficult the crisis at the Eurozone was to solve, capable of making reforms and finding sustainable solutions to their economy and politics, which lead soon to increasing employment and economic growth almost everywhere in Europe and Eurozone. (Macron 2017h, 21-22.)

During the difficult times especially from November's 2015 terrorist attacks to the year of elections 2017, it was clear that the Socialist party will divide even more in different camps, because of the different point of views of their leaders and leading politicians concerning already mentioned policy reforms (Macron 2017h, 21-22). It is not an exaggeration to say that the whole party was near the dissolution between the supporters of the prime minister Manuel Valls, who was a torchbearer for many Socialist as a true leader, and Macron, and the future candidate of the presidential elections Benoit Hamon. They all were conscious of the disaffection of the ruling president François Hollande, and they all started to fight against each other. Deep cleavages inside the Socialist party have been a quite historical phenomenon, as I pointed out earlier (pages 42-43), based on fundamental different point of views concerning for instance economy and labour market. Historically the 2015-2017 power struggles of the Socialist Party echoed these past divisions.

Macron further remarks how his take on politics, especially during the crisis, differed from the mainstream opinions, which were concentrated on very irrelevant issues, which I already mentioned earlier. Macron criticizes Hollande's decision to declare an emergency after the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. Further, Macron claims that the real emergency should have been declared on the state of economy and related social issues – these were the real and most pressing problems to be solved. According to Macron, he did not hide his different point of view from his ministerial colleagues. Macron continues: “as for my actions as minister, they were hindered by the cumulative effects of misjudgments, a lack of people with technical expertise to call on, and the personal hidden agendas of others”. As a result of all this, Macron decided “to take a political initiative by launching the movement En Marche in his hometown Amiens in April 2016 and quite soon after that he decided to resign from the Government”. (Macron 2017h, 21-22.)

Macron summarises his political premise in the following way: “I am very much a man of the camp. For trying to overcome political divisions, the negative consequences of which I had determined. For going the extra mile to reconstruct our country for building something new. For picking up threads of our history and the momentum of progress. For a better life for our children than that of our parents. For building upon the desire prevalent in French society to get involved again. For

bringing to the fore fresh faces and new talents. It is one of shared commitment, based on service. Nothing else counts for me, and certainly not the criticism or calumny of those whose loyalty is reserved not for their country but for the system in which they know exactly how to use every single benefit and monetary advantage for their personal gain. That's what things have come to.” (Macron 2017h, 22, 24.)

Macron emphasises how he was indebted to his country for the opportunities offered to him, and how he felt that the political system and the country itself had grown apart, which meant that the old system and the rules of game were forced to be defined in a new way. Macron was convinced that the real strength of democracy is based on culture where politicians are not part of the system, although they are – and indeed they should be – thoroughly familiar with legislation and the process of political decision-making. Macron believes “deeply in democracy, and in the vigour and vitality of a politician’s relationship with the people”; having direct contact with voters and being able to respond to their concerns in a tangible and meaningful way. Macron stresses that he is a French democrat, who believes in and relies on citizens who can make decisions without politicians or political steering. Macron remarks that especially at a state level, politicians should not tell the nation what to do or attempt to subjugate it: politicians, like already mentioned, are serving their country and its citizens. Further, Macron wants to see the role of the state change. There would not be traditional state regulation or monitoring because “the state is not a guardian of a social body that is judged, arbitrarily, to be weak and incapable of achieving good on its own” (Macron 2017h, 27-31). From the beginning, Macron’s presidential project revolved around the idea called the Great March (La Grande Marche). The name evoked Macron’s keenness to take on board citizens’ ideas and initiatives to develop the country and reform the way politics would be done in the future. Macron claimed he wanted to separate himself from the Republican monarchist tradition and change and update the role of the president (Élysée, 2019). This claim is again arguable, because of strong evidence indicating that this attempt has not succeeded: rather, Macron has more or less followed the Republican monarchist tradition. I will return to this tradition and the role of the president later in the dissertation. The following subchapter discusses Macron’s frequently contradictory relation to the French political culture where the good ideas: reconciliation and forgiveness have not materialised in a way Macron had hoped.

3.3 Macron's Moral Sermon Against the Old Political Culture

"I owe my allegiance only to my country-not to a party, a position, or a person. I accepted the duties that I took only because they allowed me to serve my country, I stated that at the outset, and I never deviated from my pledge. When the obstacles placed in my way, the absence of new ideas and new people, the terrible lack of imagination, and the general torpor showed me that useful work was no longer possible, I drew the necessary conclusions and resigned. My concept of official duties is neither one of promoting a career nor of waiting in line for promotion." (Macron 2017h, 24.)

"At the same time, we need to reinvigorate our fossilised political apparatus. This is the blind side of democratic debate. In our times, the parties have given up on fighting for the common good, they focus on their own interest-to survive, come what may. Such transgressions are not limited to the Left or Right. It is not a question of being a demagogue or a democrat. The people responsible come equally from the extremes and from the centrally positioned parties. The political decline facilitates the co-opting of others and backroom deals it transforms people who were dedicated to a cause into members of an old guard." (Macron 2017h 225-226)

It is interesting to note that the moral questions in French politics and criticism against the parties and party politics have been a great concern and subject to critical debate already in the 17th century for instance to Benjamin Constant and late 1950's to Charles de Gaulle. Constant was convinced that despite good intentions, political parties are always unwilling to limit sovereignty. The parties are greedy in power, and even if the power at a given time belongs to their enemies, they assume that, tomorrow or some other day, the same power will be passed on to them, like a heritage. This greediness also exists inside political parties. (Constant 1815, 15-16, Constant 1872, 10, Couturier 2017, 16, De Gaulle 1971, 11-13.)

Aron, too, has observed how the nature of politics is based on the inevitable competition between and inside various party organisations, because modern societies are not dependent on God or a tradition that might regulate the competition in one way or another. In both political and economic order, there is a problem of the distribution of very few. Aron remarks how only a few can obtain a place in the parliament or become a member of the cabinet. In fact, every political system has created a situation that can be described as oligarchical because there is always a small group of people who control the power. In his famous memoirs on the negative experiences of the Fourth Republic, de Gaulle recalled his concern about the political parties' greedy desire to amass all possible benefits to themselves and hijack power from the citizens, ignoring the needs of people and what was in the best interest of the nation (De Gaulle 1971, 11-13, Aron 1965, 1443.)

Against this historical background, it is understandable that Macron declared in his book *Revolution* that the traditional parties were lost with their current politics and policy ideas which no longer met the demands of the time or the people. The problems in French politics were fundamental; the system and its main actors – politicians and top civil servants – did not serve the country or the nation, but instead were keen to secure their positions or those of their interest group or the party. The result was that the confidence in politics, political institutions and of course the politicians was exceptionally low, as indicated in the CEVIPOFF’s study (Couturier 2017, 238-239, Macron 2015, 1, Macron 2017h, 32-34, CEVIPOFF 2018).

In the wider context concerning morality in politics, Macron, during his presidential election campaign, used the term *Tic-Tac-Policy* when referring to policy in recent decades. By this he meant that both Socialists and Republicans have revoked the decisions of previous Governments when trying to please their voters and different interest groups, such as employers’ unions (Macron 2017 cc, 7). A good example of the *Tic-Tac* politics was former president’s Nicolas Sarkozy’s famous pension reform in 2010, which was watered-down just two years later by the next president François Hollande and his Socialist Government; I will later discuss how the reform has subsequently been returned to the political agenda (Hollande 2012, 4). Macron was aware of voters’ negative attitude towards politics, parties, and the whole system, and he made it very clear that it would be pointless to go on using old methods and mode the traditional parties represented (Macron 2017eb, 2-3). Macron wanted to break from the past political culture where the morale of politicians and parties was constantly questionable and blur and, as described above, their main goal was to keep the achieved positions and benefits; this idea extended also to the individual level where the politicians had embodied to be an organic part of the system. In 2015, Macron gave an interview where he noted and used Aronian language describing the problems of current politics. Macron said that democracy is never a perfect model, and its nature is, in practice, often fundamentally impure as well (Le Figaro 2015b). Macron shared earlier mentioned views on Aron’s on the unrealistic promises of political parties and politicians, who all assume that they have exceptional power and position to cure and repair all problems of contemporary democracies (Aron 1965, 1443).

Macron further continued that this last mentioned approach to politics was very far from his own and criticised it as “stubbornness of the ideologies”. Manent remarks that Macron’s approach to politics is often pragmatic and there is often a visible melioristic approach (Manent 2017, 18). The world as itself is neither the worst nor the best possible place to be, which means that, in the end, healing and

solving current problems depends on people themselves (Manent 2017, 18). It will become a better place by individuals who participate and contribute (Manent 2017, 18. Macron 2017h, 31). However, in a certain way France has drifted closer to the situation François Guizot warned about: the failing politics are connected to politicians who break their promises, and this can lead to violence against citizens. Together, the unfulfilled promises and the threat of violence corrodes people's faith in politics and the reigning Government (Guizot 1849, 6). Guizot also remarked on a third situation when politics fail, which was and still is regularly connected to the nature or disposition of the politics. According to Guizot, it is clear how the indifference of the Government affects the citizens' trust in the politics and the politicians, and it is the first step leading to a failing leadership (Guizot 1984, 29). The next phase happens when the citizens realise that their government is acting like a foreigner with whom they have nothing in common (Guizot 1984, 29). There is evidence on how the confidence in Macron's leadership has wavered but, as the research of CEVIPOFFF revealed, this problem had existed in France for a long time.

“And therefore, to moralise public life, what we will do is to eradicate conflicts of interest in depth, to prohibit the accumulation of an elective mandate and advisory functions, it is to prohibit the hiring of members of one's family. For convenience, as we do too often, it is to have clear, transparent, and again common rules for the remuneration of our elected officials, it is to reduce the number of elected officials not to save money, but to enable them to do their jobs better. To enable them to better evaluate, to better control, when they are parliamentarians, the work of the Government.” (Macron 2017 cc, 7.)

Macron brought up that the moral of the politicians and politicians has been fragmented in the eyes of the citizens as the politicians have used their positions in a moral sense in unquestionable ways, for instance employing family members as their well-paid assistants and giving them other benefits. Some of these cases emerged in the media during the elections and exposed corruption of two of the leading candidates, François Fillon and Marine Le Pen, who had (Fillon in the French parliament and Le Pen in the European Parliament) channelled funds to her own parties. One of Macron's main goals was to restore faith in politics by implementing anti-nepotism and anti-corruption practises and legislation. (Macron 2017 cc,7.)

The next chapter will briefly contextualise Macron's politics with those of some of his predecessors. I pay particular attention to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Nicolas Sarkozy's regimes as both were one-term presidents who faced great expectations since their elections. Giscard, at the time the youngest president-elect,

represented new liberal and fresh ideas which were relatively different from the political ideas the French voters had been used to. At this point there is a certain similarity between the expectations Giscard and Macron faced. Sarkozy had had a very successful career as Minister of Interior, and he had gained considerable respect among French people after showing leadership in stopping nationwide riots in suburbs in 2005. However, the key question concerning both former Presidents of the Republic is: what did they truly achieve during their presidencies?

3.4 Giscard and Sarkozy Faced the Great Expectations

The French people today have trouble understanding the society in which they live. The rapidity of the transformation, which makes the suffer, contradictory of the results to which these transformations led, the impotence of traditional ideologies to provide them with perspectives that satisfy them completely explains this perspective. (Giscard d'Estaing, 1976.)

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was elected president in 1974 (he served 1974-1981) and this quote from 1976 seems very familiar when compared to Macron's speeches analysed in later sections of this study. Macron has repeatedly spoken how the country, for decades, has been unprepared to face the demands and challenges of modern time, and how the ideologies as a truth and all kinds of deterministic ideas of confrontation have lost their significance in people's minds. In 1984, Paul Ricœur (1984) wrote an article in which he placed ideologies in a similar context (Ricœur 1984, 54-55). According to Ricœur, ideologies tend to present the real world in a distorted way, something that was already remarked by Napoleon Bonaparte (Ricœur 1984, 54-55). Ricœur explained that ideologies work simultaneously as a tool that makes it possible to legitimise and justify the existing political power structures (Ricœur 1984, 54-55).

Giscard was publicly committed to liberal reforms and his premise to politics was that French people want to be governed from the centre, where reforms would be easier to implement. (Lefèvre 2003, 190, Raynaud 2017b, 84). The expectations towards Giscard were enormous, because of the liberal mainstream in French political life, prevalent while most popular radical leftist ideas were in decline, albeit still formalised in party programmes (Lefèvre 2003, 190, Raynaud 2017b, 84). There were several reasons for the ideological decline of the radical left, concurrent with the lack of popularity of French intellectuals (Lefèvre 2003, 190). The social movement of May 1968 had lost its charm and momentum and the militant

formations, for the most part, were transformed into tame pressure groups, which have never posed a real challenge to French political institutions. The reason why the social movement of May 1968 had lost its charm was a result of the increasing public awareness of the horror and repression of the Soviet totalitarian regime. Resisting totalitarianism became a new goal for the whole generation of French intellectuals who called themselves “les nouveaux philosophes” and launched an overall attack on Marxism, which they saw as a source of totalitarianism. Les nouveaux philosophes started to fight for human rights and freedom, and these themes became widely accepted among the French intellectuals. (Lefèvre 2003, 190.

However, it soon became clear that Giscard’s programme was not ambitious enough, and its substance, values and especially the social policy, were full of elements of the traditional left. According to Raynaud, Jacques Chirac’s first Government, nominated by Giscard, was the most leftist Government that France has ever had (Raynaud 2017b, 85). Giscard’s programme, Raynaud claims, “led in a certain way to compromise what the republican monarchy could have of monarchy and even of royal”. New Prime Minister Chirac’s Government, still believed for instance in planning concerning the economy, and planning was confessed as an essential tool how to steer for instance medium–term economic development, even if it was mentioned how important it would be to undergo a fundamental adaptation in its methods and objectives (Gouvernement.fr.2018).

More precisely it is interesting to note how Chirac’s first Government advocated for social justice, such as massive investment in social benefits, increase in minimum wages, and considerable improvements of unemployment benefits – all these traditionally reflecting the values and concerns of political left rather than political right (Raynaud 2017b, 86). After the reform, for example, unemployment allowances were calculated based on 90 % of the individual’s latest salary in case of licensed workers (Raynaud 2017b, 86). All these benefits were founded on a socially advocated policy idea to share the fruits of economic growth with all citizens. The economic growth, however, did not last long and came to an end just a year later. (Raynaud 2017b, 86, World Bank 2019). In the larger context, this also signalled the end of the so-called Glorious Thirty ended as well. The French economy, which had regularly grown since 1946, has not recovered since. Unemployment has become an enduring problem with the zero or very weak economic growth.

It is important to keep in mind that France has had a prolonged public deficit from 1974 until present day, and has regularly, for example, breached the EU’s Growth and Stability Pact (1995) which limits the public deficit to 3 % of the GDP (TFEU 1997, 3). We can note that since 1974, there have been only two socialist

Presidents of the Republic and four non leftist Presidents of the Republic and these enduring problems have prevailed regardless of the president and his political background (France-politique 2019). In 1976, during President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's era, the public deficit reached a record of USD 840 million (IMF 2020). Tirole describes the special features of the French economy in the following way: from an "American point of view the French never embraced the free market and capitalism. France has the second-ratio of spending to GDP and a fourth rate of taxation among all OECD nations – outpaced only by the Scandinavian countries" as the country's public spending is currently among the highest in the world: Government expenditure is more than 57 % of GDP. I will return to these questions in more detail in my conclusions and research material analysis. (Tirole 2018, 170.)

As Macron said in a speech in Reims, the time of reckless public finance management was completely over, there was no financial magic that would conjure money from nothing, and this meant that the indebtedness needed to stop. As a former banker Macron was keenly interested in the details of financial management, and the budget responsibility, which extended to the Government and to all ministers, was an important tool to ensure that all decision-makers were on the same page. Quoting Molière, Macron also warned that it would be naive to demonise institutions: the financial institutions, for instance, were helping the nation and French society. However, as I will later point out, Macron succeeded in stabilising the economy, which in two years led to lower unemployment rates and increasing foreign investments. until the Covid-19 completely changed the situation. (Macron 2017 cc, 4.)

As I mentioned in the introduction, all Presidents of the Republic have shared the same problem: how to fulfil the huge expectations of the citizens as their elected president? Nicolas Sarkozy, for example, demonstrated considerable determination, energy and leadership during his term as the Minister of Interior as I mentioned earlier, and this promise made him first a presidential candidate and subsequently the President of the Republic, in which role the expectations for him skyrocketed. Regarding the rise of Sarkozy, Levy (2011) compares his case to the United Kingdom and the moment when Thatcher rose to power and claims that there are several similarities between Sarkozy's and Thatcher's policy making. To Levy Sarkozy presented politics which pursued broad social reforms decreasing the size of the public sector but vice versa than Thatcher Sarkozy wanted to solve the current problems by the negotiations, and this meant concessions to the unions. The starting point to Sarkozy was to assume "how the current social system did not enhance employment, but it fed mass unemployment that influenced and created a threat to

the whole French social model. The current social state produces more injustice than justice". As I have already pointed out; these goals emerged also in Macron's speeches and programmes and they in fact formed a certain grounding to the entire political thinking Macron represents. (Levy 2011, 2-3, Liberation 2007.)

But what was Sarkozy's economic policy and how, in general, did Sarkozy approach economics issues as a politician who came from the right? According to Levy, Sarkozy, during his era as minister of finance, drove politics that advanced the interests of certain domestic companies, positioning him in the pro-business category. More precisely, Sarkozy orchestrated several company bailouts and favoured politics with the goal of protecting strategically important French companies; a goal that is often repeated in, for instance, in the programmes of Marine Le Pen and the National Rally. As I continue the comparison between Macron and Sarkozy, the attention should focus on Sarkozy's reforms which were in the end emptied because of Sarkozy's aims to reach an agreement with opposition. Levy remarks how in some cases, for example, the achieved agreement with trade unions led to increased spending and decreased competition which impede economic growth and increased budget deficit. (Cahuc & Zylberberg 2009, Webber 2009, Levy 2011, 2-3).

The financial crisis of 2008 changed Sarkozy's policy line from liberal to state-led, as the Government took the lead in economics. More precisely this meant increasing bailouts and implementing other industrial policy instruments which were aimed at saving the big industries, such as banking and auto industries. During that turbulent time Sarkozy gained considerable attention by condemning free-market capitalism, restoring state, and demanding stronger market regulation. According to the former minister Luc Ferry, the change in Sarkozy's politics was so significant that it has been described as the right's U-turn of 1983, the year when the left was forced to do the same but in reverse. Askolovitch claims that Sarkozy took a leading role among politicians as the main regulator, a role in which he seemed very close to promoting anti-capitalistic policy (Askolovitch 2010, Levy 2011, 3).

However, Levy considers Ferry's argument strongly exaggerated, and there are a lot of details between the early 1980's and Sarkozy's policy that were never encountered. Sarkozy's U-turn did not lead to a situation where the state would have taken over or socialised private companies which were lead and whose business was based on sectoral economic planning. In any case there are similarities between these U-turns which both emerged from external pressure. In 1983, the French Government was forced to change its policy [line] under the pressure of international and economic constraints, and Sarkozy and his Government were forced to re-

evaluate their policy under the pressure of the international financial meltdown and subsequent recession. (Levy 2011, 4.)

As I do conclusion of the era of Giscard, Mitterrand and Sarkozy concerning their approach to economics, I can say that in fact there has been a deep-rooted pro-business ideology in the Elysée Palace already before Emmanuel Macron took power and started to re-evaluate the economic situation. I have also noted that the French right-wing or liberal political context has been quite blurred and relative as a concept. This was evidenced in the events of Giscard and Chirac's era: adding various benefits to the citizens has been a hardy responsible temptation during their era and after. French domestic markets are large, and France's economy is the fifth largest in the world – it is full of possibilities to operate in many ways if one has contacts and, especially, is a big player for instance in industry or telecommunication. However, the rules of the game favour certain key branches and are not the same to all players. I will return to these questions in more detail in the next chapter where I will discuss the set-up and the premises of the pro-business and pro-market ideologies.

3.5 Macron's Critics Against Multiculturalism

In later parts of the dissertation, I will return in more detail to the questions around statism and the French welfare state model which is based on the principles of strong state and one-nation ideology. However, I want to examine here Macron's relation to multiculturalism, Muslim extremists' terror attacks and Salafism, which have been in the political agenda at least the last decade and have given increasing visibility to critics against communitarianism and multiculturalism, especially among the parties on center and right. Macron's alignment with these issues is important because it connects to the attempt to restore the authority of the state and reconcile the social and political wounds which exist in France. (Macron 2017 cc,8, Macron 2019a,1 2019b, 1, Macron 2017 da, 7-8, Macron 2017db:3:00:00: 3:00:30.) Multiculturalism and immigration policy have become a cleavage between the Right and Left as we have seen in the last five years in events such as the Brexit referendum, and the rise of Donald Trump (Carvalho & Ruedin 2018). Carvalho & Ruedin (2018) argues "it has become apparent that the ideological positions have a significant role in the design and reform of policies concerning the integration of settled immigrants" (Carvalho & Ruedin 2018, 3).

According to Macron, terrorist attacks were specifically targeted against French secular culture, the French way of life, and the values of the Fifth Republic. Macron

had categorically condemned the kind of multiculturalism and communitarianism that manifest themselves in cases where certain minorities, such as radicalised Muslims, have renounced the values of the Republic. However, Macron added that his policy was not “an attack against Islam as a religion”. The key point was the “misappropriation of the religions which leads to terrorism”. To Macron it was also clear that there was only one accepted law which must apply to all citizens regardless of their religion or ethnic background, and the authority of the state was naturally based on this law. (Macron 2017 cc,8, Macron 2019a,1 2019b, 1, Macron 2017 da, 7-8, Macron 2017 db:3:00:00: 3:00:30.)

As I study Macron’s views on the Republican values, I will note how his ideas reflect those of the former prime minister Alain Juppé and the former president Nicolas Sarkozy on secularism, multiculturalism, and the Republican values. Juppé (2016) argued that the common good of the French has always been grounded on the values of the liberty, equality and fraternity which together form the base for a sense of national belonging and will naturally culminate in the declaration of the rights of man in the French Constitution – that is to say, the Government of the people, by the people, for the people – and, last but not least, the principle of secularism. These above-mentioned values concerned all religions, also Islam. While recognizing certain imams’ contributions in advancing Republican values, Juppé firmly condemned all Salafist actions as criminal. (Juppé 2016, 19- 20, 110, Nabli 2016, 134-135.)

Like Macron, Juppé also renounced communitarianism, which he saw as a source of exclusion that would lead to distorted identity. Juppé examined the societal situation in France in a context where the various forms of diversities existed. However, it was also clear that the strong sense of belonging was not self-evident but demanded considerable personal effort. The key element was to have decent capacity to use or at least to obtain a certain level of French. Juppé emphasised this last point in a broader context: it would be important for the whole immigrant population to gain adequate French skills because language is ultimately more than an instrument to communicate with others; it forms an individual’s thought’s structure. (Juppé 2016, 19- 20, 110.)

According to Macron, France was in the middle of a fundamental crisis which extended from economic to social and moral questions. Basically, it was a crisis of French civilization which appeared as there were some actors who were motivated to deny the nation’s common history. They would like to dissolve the French nation, to yield to the temptations of communitarianism which would increase the risk of social disintegration as these actors lacked true desire to be a part of the society.

According to Macron, “they mean they have something that can forever be decided as irreconcilable. And in doing so, they also betray what is the common thread of our millennial history. The fact that the French people are one. They are a people who are nourished by their cultures and want to shape a deep unity. Wanted to shape a common base. We (En Marche party) are not the project of multiculturalism, because it nourishes communitarianism, because it nourishes the Republic ghettos.” (Macron 2017 cc, 8.)

Bauvois (2019) argues that Macron’s anti-multiculturalism reflects suddenly the ethos of the narrow and contradictory scope of cultural diversity which has typically been seen as a part of the neoliberal economy and meritocracy to which Macron himself belongs. According to Bauvois and Doytcheva (2018), it is possible to place Macron’s discussions of multiculturalism in the context of “semantic plasticity” which emerged not from a solid theoretical frame but from a discourse that is regularly employed for instance in business, school and politics. Bauvois further argues that Macron’s criticism of multiculturalism and communitaristic approach also utilise language linked to the extreme right as he emphasises the importance of national unity. (Bauvois 2019, Bauvois & Doytcheva, 2018.)

The crisis of traditional French culture and the decline of moral and “proper” French values are frequent themes in the French political discourse, particularly during national elections. Since the Presidential elections of 1988, immigration and immigration policy have been frequent themes and trigger strong emotions among voters. The questions of immigration were first introduced by Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader and subsequent presidential candidate of National Front, in more recent years, by his daughter Marine Le Pen. However, as we have seen earlier, Macron, too, has increasingly sharpened his tone on immigration policy. A good example is Macron’s 2019 interview in Al Jazeera (2019)

“France can’t host everyone if it wants to host people well, in order to be able to welcome everyone properly, we should not be too attractive a country” (Al Jazeera 2019)

Macron wanted to drive politics based on two main priorities: “giving asylum as quickly as possible to those who have a right to France’s protection and integrating them more effectively through more French language courses and a more aggressive employment policy”. Macron was simultaneously concerned about the lack of any reliable and effective co-operation within the EU concerning migration policy and the question of how to control the influx of migrants. In practice, this law meant that, since 2006, there have been clear restrictions to the immigration policy: only foreigners who can demonstrate their ability to get along in their daily life in France,

and support their family financially are able to legally immigrate to France. The law included the requirement to learn French and to respect French values to which the applicants committed themselves by signing a “Reception and Integration Contract”. (Marthaler 2008.)

It was in the 2007 elections when Nicolas Sarkozy declared that France had drifted to an unprecedented moral and identity crisis (2007a, 5). According to Sarkozy, this was the consequence of the inversion of the values: the state had become a powerless actor and lost its authority in the eyes of the people (Sarkozy 2007). Bock-Cote argues that multiculturalism often represented by leftist politicians and the generation of 1968 had replaced communism and began to dominate society, politics, and its values. (Bock-Cote 2016, 18, 28)

“Listen to them, the heirs of May 68 who cultivate repentance who praise communitarianism, who denigrate national identity, who stir up hatred of the family, society, the state, the nation of the Republic. In this election the question is: whether the legacy of May 68 should be perpetuated or whether it should be liquidated once and for all, I want to turn the page of May 68”⁵ (Sarkozy 2007, (Sarkozy 2007, Bock-Cote 2016, 28).

One of the main aims of Sarkozy’s politics was to eliminate illegal immigration, deport people who had a problem accepting the Republican values, and promote national unity. The main role in all these tasks would be given to the new administration’s newly-established Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development. Despite criticism, this proposal found large-scale approval and a clear majority, 72 % of the voters considered Sarkozy’s decision the right one. However, despite his use of hard language Sarkozy frequently used when referring to Muslims, he drove policies that aimed to support and finance mosques in France; moreover, Sarkozy wanted to establish the French Muslim Council giving an official voice. (Marthaler 2008, Brustier 2014, 25-27, Wiewiorka 2012, 30-31.)

To summarise, when analysing Macron’s relation with and approaches to multiculturalism and immigration policies, we can observe how much there has been emphasis on the former right-wing politicians as were for instance the examples concerning former prime minister Alain Juppé and former president Nicolas Sarkozy. Macron has been aware of the failures of past immigration policies. I will

⁵ “Écoutez-les, les héritiers de mai 1968 qui cultivent la repentance, qui font l'apologie du communautarisme, qui dénigrent l'identité nationale, qui attisent la haine de la famille, de la société, de L'État, de la nation, de la République. Dans cette élection il s'agit de savoir si l'héritage de mai 1968 doit être perpétué ou s'il doit être liquidé une bonne fois pour toutes. Je veux tourner la page de mai 1968.” (Bock-Côté 2016, 28, Sarkozy 2007a, 5, Sarkozy 2007b.)

discuss later how, as the President of the Republic, Macron has acted to address the problems of the past, and how he sees the question of immigration in general.

3.6 Notes on the Biography

This chapter has briefly sketched Macron's family background, education, career and personal characteristics behind his success. It is evident that ever since the very beginning of his academic career, as a student, Macron was focused on developing himself as much as possible and took advantage of the opportunity to work as Paul Ricœur's assistant. After the university years, the personal progress and success continued as a civil servant and as a member of the Commission of Economic Growth, where Macron worked under Jacques Attali, one of the most influential behind-the-scenes individuals in French political life. Macron obtained a place in the inner circle of the French political elite and was highly successful in this place.

In a certain way the climax took place when Macron was recruited to the bank of Rothschild. Working for Rothschild opened to Macron a completely new perspective to economics and the financial issues. Outside of politics, Macron was fortunate to be part of one of the most important banks where he could work with the best talents in the world of banking and finance. I concluded this chapter by drawing some comparisons between former presidents briefly analysing Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Nicolas Sarkozy's terms; this analysis was built on the previous chapter where I analysed François Mitterrand's presidency. I noted several significant details which will be examined in more detail in the conclusion. I also discussed Macron's critical relation to multiculturalism which he considered more as a threat to social coherence than a real possibility to add something of value to the society.

The next chapter focused on analysis of research material which includes Macron's speeches, interviews, and policy outlines during his presidential campaign and during his time in office. I will also discuss how Macron's political thinking has developed since his early university days, work as Paul Ricœur's assistant, and finally at the beginning of his political career. I will also explore how Macron's approach to politics has revolved around values which are exceptional compared to traditional French way of thinking. As an example, Macron has questioned the top-down politics driving the decentralisation in administration where the role of the state would be smaller and, simultaneously, advocated for more openness, accountability and visibility in economics and politics in general. I will present several examples of

this ranging from management of big companies to the rules and moral questions connected to the ENA and to society in general.

I will also discuss how Macron has pushed French people to work more and to seek new employment and professional opportunities if their work situation has become unsatisfactory. Macron considers work as the base of society that guarantees access to individual success and emancipation. I will study in-depth the various themes of work and how Macron has seen their influence on society and an individual. One of the most significant elements I discuss is the idea of individual responsibility, personal effort, and a desire to reach one's personal goals. It has been important for Macron to create a completely new environment and atmosphere in France in which every citizen would have a second chance in life without fear of failure.

After that, I will introduce several critical points of view concerning Macron's politics to approach the near past of French history and, further, how Macron's politics as a new creative political force have been questioned so far. I will also discuss how Macron's politics are connected to those of other leading figures in French contemporary politics and recent political history. I will examine Macron's proposals for education reform and how he has seen the role of the state and enterprises in France in the future. It is also important to analyse Macron's views on the tax evasion of the GAFA companies in Europe.

4 WORK AND EDUCATION AS CORE VALUES

During his presidential elections campaign, Emmanuel Macron repeatedly described himself as a candidate of work and justice in particular (Macron 2016, 5, Macron 2017a, 9). In the second round of debates against Marine Le Pen, Macron argued that unemployment had, for over 30 years, remained the most pressing problem of French society, and claimed France was the only country in Europe unable to solve the issue (TF2 2017, 5.56-6.10, Macron 2017, ca6, Le 1 hebdo 2016,5, Macron 2017, c2-3). Macron also placed unemployment in a wider context, as the main reason behind poor economic performance and insufficient social welfare. He asserted that mass unemployment gave everyone “an unprecedented experience, where the distance from work is a reduction of the social being”, whereas a decent salary from decent work could create an opportunity for the individual for dignity; if this does not happen, the consequences would be disastrous to the entire society (Macron 2017c, 2-3, Le 1 Hebdo 2016, 5, Macron 2017db, 2:46:00-2:49:00.)

Macron’s ideas on unemployment reflect those of Joseph Stiglitz who, already in 2002, wrote that uncontrolled unemployment leads to a vicious cycle that results in deteriorating social cohesion; the society will soon drift to social disorder. In the case of France, wide-spread and frequent demonstrations have often turned violent, resembling social riots and civil strife more than well-organised protests and finally massive unemployment hurts the economy by reducing incentives for investment and job creation (Stiglitz 2002, 17). Like Stiglitz, McAfee and Brynjolfsson have discussed the best role for government and politicians in securing and enhancing opportunities to enter the labour market. McAfee and Brynjolfsson described how, “in times of rapid change, when the world is even more predictable than usual, people and organisations need to be given greater freedom to experiment and innovate”. In many cases, a rigid state apparatus is seemingly incompatible with the current demands of flexibility and the ability to adapt to change. (Stiglitz 2002, 17, McAfee & Brynjolfsson 2016, 3.)

More precisely, McAfee and Brynjolfsson are keen to discuss the creative destruction and its connection to current capitalism, asking what the best response from politicians could be when creative destruction gains momentum. The worst-case scenario takes place when we stubbornly try to maintain the status quo, which,

Macron notes, happened in France during the 1990s. Instead of slowing down the inevitable development, the current situation requires flexibility and “encourages the other elements of the system to also move faster”. (McAfee & Brynjolfsson 2016, 3.) As mentioned in the previous chapter, Macron emphasised how important it will be to restore the value of work in French society. More specifically, this meant that all politicians in France should commit to enhancing those structures and policy choices that create more employment opportunities (Le 1 Hebdo 1, 5). This question concerning work society (or workfare society, as defined later) was linked to social morals as well (Macron 2017 c, 3, Macron 2016). Macron criticised certain citizens’ attitudes towards the work, addressing the growing social phenomenon where the citizens prefer living on social aid as a better choice than working or even seeking the work (Macron 2017c, 3). To Macron and Guizot, work was an admirable part of the French social model, and the motor of a well-functioning society (Macron 2017 c, 3, Macron 2016, Guizot 1837).

Here, I would like to discuss Tony Blair’s politics as a reference for history. Blair and Macron share similar values and ideologies. The similarities of their approaches to politics are interesting, given how significantly the French and British political cultures differ. Blair’s government implemented one of the biggest school and university reforms in the history of the UK, most notably reforming tuition fees and student loans for higher education (Blair 1998, 4, Blair 1997, 10). Macron’s plan to create a so-called workfare society is close to Tony Blair’s programmes to reduce youth unemployment. I will point out later that the premise of Macron’s programme shared many similarities with Blair’s reforms in the late 1990s: Macron aimed at modernising France through employment and digitalization, by reforming the labour market and by promoting individual activity and entrepreneurship (Macron 2017c, 2-3, Macron 2017cc, 2-3).

Macron saw that France and the rest of the world was going through a fundamental change in the ways in which the economy, business life and especially labour markets operate, and how these structural changes created challenges and complications at the individual level. At its basic level, the question was grounded to the theme of emancipation. As emancipation frequently came up in Macron’s speeches and policy formulations, it is important to define what exactly he meant by it. To Macron, emancipation is connected to the concept of freedom and improving an individual’s ability to create their own path in life and simultaneously make this life more meaningful through work and career advancement and, at the very least, a fair salary. It is therefore not far from Berlin’s concept of positive liberty which he defined as an individual’s possibilities to develop oneself. (Macron 2016, 5, 8,

Macron 2017 b 8-9, Macron 2017a11, Macron 2017h, 50, Macron 2017b, 3-4, Berlin 1958.)

Macron further described how the whole En Marche project and his presidential candidacy were based on educational reform and restoring of the importance of the work to the nation and its citizens, which together would create a possibility to reach a state of emancipation at an individual level where work would give an opportunity to earn one's living (Macron 2017d, 6, Macron 2017a, 9, Macron 2017ce, 8). Macron's desire to make substantial investments in education was based on the views and theories of many scholars, politicians and other people.

The relevant question for this dissertation is: Is Macron's politics ultimately politics that serve the elite by producing well-disciplined and law-abiding citizens, who mistakenly believe that the politics Macron drives will improve their lives? To answer this question, I have already noted in my introduction that key voters and supporters of Macron were quite often the educated and wealthy, who had benefited from the reasonable higher education in France. In the next section, I will discuss Macron's economic programme, revisiting the question of the value of work and, by examining Macron's attempts to coordinate and promote the interests of public and private investments. When I return to Macron as a member of Prime Minister Manuel Vall's cabinet, I will discuss in more detail the chaotic political situation in France after the terrorist attacks and economic depression.

According to Macron, the Socialist Party's inability to successfully address the economic depression in France became clear to him after the terrorist attacks in 2015. Instead of declaring a social state of emergency, it would have been more important to declare an economic state of emergency, just as France's neighbouring countries had done. Instead of vital economic reforms that would have helped the entire nation, leading politicians from the Socialist Government and those on the extreme right were focused on questions of French nationality, revoking the citizenships of those who had committed acts of terrorism on French soil. Macron wanted to distance himself from his old Socialist Party and the frictions dividing the party. One of the most difficult topics to the Party was (and still is) its attitude towards the free market and capitalism, as the case example of Michel Rocard indicated earlier. Macron also distanced himself more broadly from the other traditional political cleavages, and this was to become the moment when Macron decided to establish a new political movement. This new movement and its ideas would extend beyond the ideologies and politics which traditionally dominated the political landscape in France. (Macron 2017h, 31-32, Macron 2017c, 3-4, Macron 2017c, 30, Marianne 2016, 14-21, Monteil 2018)

The following section will discuss the specifics of Macron's economic thinking, in particular the role of work: Macron has remarked that the traditional French way to approach politics was typically accompanied by indifference to public finances. This had already been a great concern to the former Prime Minister of the Fourth Republic Pierre Mendes, who turned himself into an apostle of budgetary rigour in opposition to de Gaulle. In Mendes's view, despite outward appearances, laxity could bring about social misfortune. (Macron 2017h, 31-32, Macron 2017c, 3-4, Macron 2017c, 30, Marianne 2016, 14-21.)

4.1 Macron's Programme for the Economy

As a former banker, Macron was keen on tackling several economic challenges including budget deficit, indebtedness, and the role of public investments in France, promoting investments which created real added value to the whole nation. The focus on indebtedness was based on the concern of the accelerating indebtedness which the future generations would be forced to address (Macron 2017c, 30). As pointed out several times, Macron, like Blair in 1997, refused to accept the argument that greater fairness and decreased poverty would come because of increased spending on social benefits. Instead, a better outcome would only be reached with a well-functioning labour market. I will observe later in this chapter that Macron was influenced by the thinking of Joseph Stiglitz and others who advocate decent job opportunities for all (Macron 2017bb, 2). Once again, the role of work plays a significant role in economic policy: economic growth and its positive consequences will reduce the amount of public expenditure as, for example, costs of unemployment will decrease (Macron 2017bb, 2).

Macron announced that the main purpose of his economic policy was to unite the public and private investments for the future. To accomplish this, Macron saw that austerity measures formed an effective tool to regulate public finances and budgetary austerity. To Macron it would be also essential for France to commit to the European Growth and Stability Pact (2013) and maintain a budget deficit below 3 % of the national GDP (European Commission 2020). More specifically, Macron was prepared to implement considerable budget cuts which would target several ministries, while simultaneously proposing huge projects to be funded by public money. Macron notes that he promotes an investments programme of 50 billion euros with the purpose of guaranteeing a better future for all citizens, while at the same time proposing savings of 60 billion euros in public spending over the next

five years. These savings would impact the social sphere (25 billion euros), health insurance (15 billion euros), and an estimated 10 billion euros as the result of lower unemployment. (Macron 2017bb, 2-6). I will briefly summarise below the five key characteristics Macron outlined as a responsible path to implementing his economic programme.

- Responsibility: Economic targets will be set for each minister and those who do not realise the savings will not continue as ministers.
- Visibility: A programming law will set five-year objectives and of each sector (state and social sphere, agencies, local authorities).
- Incentives: The ministries will benefit from the repayment of part of the gains as reforms generate savings.
- Parliamentary control: The Ministry of Finance will present quarterly budget reports to the Parliament.
- Transparency: The results of the actions implemented by the ministers will be posted online. (Macron 2017bb, 2-6.)

It is interesting to note how New Labour's remarks about the situation in Great Britain share similarities with the situation in France as Macron assumed the presidency. I will later return to matter in more detail, but I would like to already here point out how Macron and Blair's ideas reflected each other. One can observe how public power creates the frame to the action while, in the end, the private sector solves the problem. Like Macron, Blair deeply believed in the transitional power of public-private partnerships

“Our approach is rooted in our belief that society needs to act to advance the interest of individuals. For crime, ultimately, is a problem that arises from our disintegration as a community, with standards of conduct necessary to sustain a community. It can only be resolved by acting as a community, based on a new bargain between individual and society. Rights and responsibilities must be set out for each in a way relevant for the modern world. The longer we leave it, the harder the talk will become”. (Blair 1994, 5-6.)

The second interesting point concerns the economics and especially how Blair declared that the era of tax-and-spend would not be New Labour's way of steering on driving the British economy. Like Macron, Blair was also keen to be a wise public

spender and wanted to clearly separate his economic policies from the old Labour's tax-and-spend ideologies. Because Macron has acted the way in French politics has not done before, it is quite clear that Macron has been under the pressure where the President has been accused of managerialism and economic governance where even the ministers, but also the civil servants were under the control as mentioned earlier. However, one can ask whether it is fair to define Macron's leadership as neo-liberal, considering that Blair employed the same strategies to steer his government.

Reconciliation was a shared priority for both Macron and Blair. Both Macron and Blair saw that education, lifelong learning and apprenticeships programmes were a usable policy to get society back on track. Secondly the taxation policy's direction was essential to change that means that taxation had to be an incentive. Thirdly, the economy and national debt were problems Blair faced immediately after his election, just as Macron did in 2017. Blair made it clear he wanted to add more efficiency and value on how the taxpayers' money was spent:

“New Labour will be wise spenders, not big spenders. We will work in partnership with the private sector to achieve our goals. We will ask about public spending the first question that a manager in any company would ask - can existing resources be used more effectively to meet our priorities? And because efficiency and value for money are central, ministers will be required to save before they spend.” (New Labour 1997)

As noted, Emmanuel Macron approaches public finance in a manner very similar to that of Tony Blair during his premiership. Cooperation between the public and private sectors was an essential part of politics and the nation's future. The next chapter will discuss in more detail the themes of work and labour market Macron highlighted during his campaign and after taking office. According to French economist Jean Tirole, there are many grievances and exceptions in the French labour markets; in this regard, France differs drastically from many other European countries. Tirole observed that the French labour markets are diverse, and they have been accumulated during the last 40 years as the high unemployment rate has been a choice which has been accepted by both citizens and politicians. Another special feature of French labour markets is the very low (lowest in Europe) level of job satisfaction and insufficient motivation to change careers from the old to new one, mobility between the workplace, and finally the imperfect matching of employees to jobs. Tirole also remarks that the French have a conflicting relationship with their employers: they rank at 129th out of 139 countries in terms of people's perception of relationships at work, so the harmony does not exist among French employees. (Tirole 2018, 233, 236, 239, 240.) In the following section, I will analyse Macron's

views on labour market reform, and I shed light on the various incentives Macron has wanted to create to enhance the employees' motivation to change their work.

4.1.1 Macron's Six Pillars Programme of Work

Macron's labour market reform was based on the six pillars which formed the frame of his domestic policy for the first five years of his presidency with the goal of tackling the most serious domestic problem: the persisting 10 % unemployment rate.

1. Workers net salary
2. Cost of labour
3. Simplification of hiring labour
4. Creating durable employee instead of temporary jobs
5. Creating a new kind of social security for the digital era concerning digital labour market
6. Negotiating employees' contracts at the company level instead of inflexible central agreements. (Macron 2017bb 1-11, Macron 2016, 5,8, France 2, 5.56-7.55.)

First, Macron wanted to create incentives to work by reducing the gap between gross and net salary and increasing minimum salaries (SMIC Salaire Minimum Interprofession Croissance) by €100 per month (Macron 2016, 8, Macron 2017b,9, 2017a,10, Macron 2017). Because of that, today an employee who has a minimum salary (SMIC) got only €1,141 per month. Macron understood and was convinced that the French welfare state and social security could be financed only by work and, in general, the two priorities for the entire French economy were investments and companies' ability to hire more workers (Macron 2016, 8, Macron 2017h, 77). One way to enhance purchasing power and support employers' attempts to hire new employees was to decrease the cost of labour. This was linked to decreasing the generalised social contribution of the employee (contribution social généralisée) (Macron 2016, 8, 2017a, 10, Macron 2017 ce. 7, Macron 2017c, 3-4, Macron 2017 ca1, Macron 2017b9, Macron 2017h, 76-77).

During his campaign, Macron declared that France was in the middle of a great transformation, and that making this transformation successfully was crucial to the

future of France. The transformation had already profoundly influenced society and would continue and challenge the old ways of working and thinking about work in general. Already during his presidential campaign, in 2016-2017, Macron wanted to introduce a new kind of thinking, a new spirit to workplaces, and, most importantly, a real dialogue between the employees and employers. The increased freedom to negotiate at a local level did not mean that the employer had unlimited power to define and impose on the employer details of the work contract, but it gave them the responsibility to act in a fair and legal manner. This was an important matter also when I discussed questions of gender equality. Local agreements do not allow employers to act as they want to or need to drive salary gender equality seriously. Macron wanted to create a new atmosphere and new approach towards entrepreneurship: the policy goal was to facilitate entrepreneurship for instance in cases of newly established businesses (Macron 2017a, 9-10, Macron 2017ce, 7).

But what were the concrete examples and practises to improve the situation and enhance the incentives among the employers? The most important solution was to add more flexibility to companies' agreement policies, which meant that companies with fewer than 50 employees had a right to negotiate directly past trade unions regarding all work-related matters, negotiating rather with a representative of the personnel (Macron 2016, 7, Macron 2017a, 10, Macron 2017ce, 7, Macron 2017 db, 14-15, Legifrance 2018, France 2 2017, 31.15-31.45). According to Macron, this was important because half of the employees in France were working for companies with under 50 employees. Macron's idea was that agreements would still be based on existing labour legislation (Code de Travail) concerning workers' rights (such as minimum salary, minimum working hours and questions of gender equality) but it would be possible to negotiate most of the other matters at company level (code de travail 2018 article L 2253-1). In general, Macron proposed several changes to facilitate hiring practises and other proceedings for employers and entrepreneurs. He in particular wanted to reduce labour costs by transforming Competitiveness and Employment Tax Credit (CICE) into permanent relief of social contribution of 6 % and by reducing employer fees by 10 % (Macron 2016, Macron 2017b, 9, 6, Macron 2017c4, Macron 2017 ca4, France 2, 27.40-28.10).

“It is because work is essential that it must also pay in a fair way and that is why all workers will see their purchasing power increase with our reform of the activity bonus and our reform of the financing of unemployment. All workers, whether they are civil servants, self-employed, entrepreneurs, or salaried employees, will see their purchasing power increase. One hundred euros for the SMIC, for each worker. One hundred euros a month more, because we will give a different way to the great risks

and because I do not want to hear that it is more interesting not to work than to work in our country.”⁶ (Macron 2017, ca7.)

Gender equality questions remained on the sidelines of Macron’s campaign, as compared to e.g., the discussion around local agreements. Macron was serious with the salary question, which was again an important theme already in 1994 to Giddens as well, when he introduced positive welfare state themes and criticised women’s low-paid salaries and poor status in the labour market (Giddens 1994, 161). Macron wanted to start using the same model than it was already in use in Great Britain; inspecting at working places and companies how gender equality was implemented in practice between the genders. The employer who breaks the law gets penalties for breaking the rules, which is a legal matter and finally the employer’s name will be published (Macron 2017h 117, Marianne 2016, 60). Further Macron wanted a new kind of thinking and spirit to working places and especially real dialogue between the employees and employer. Local agreements do not release employers to act as ones want to or ones need to drive salary gender equality seriously. (Macron 2017 db, 14-15.)

“I am not unaware of the fears that this approach might engender in the French system, contrary to those of Germany and Scandinavia, there is little familiarity with this method of discussion, negotiation and compromise. Our trade unions are sometimes too weak, sometimes not sufficiently representative. Nevertheless, social dialogue is not a luxury. It is at the heart of the approach that I am proposing. Not the social dialogue practised at a national level in recent years, but rather a pragmatic dialogue, at the level of the business sector and the company. This requires us to draw the conclusion that we must reaffirm trade unions and provide them with negotiation tools. To support this development, we will therefore introduce an uncomplicated financing mechanism through which employers can direct resources made available by their company toward the trade union of their choice”. (Macron 2017h, 117.)

“The second topic is work. The real subject of equal pay must be broken down: when there is wage inequality for a comparable job, it is now a matter of law, there must be a penalty. It would be one of the main objectives of the inspection of work with true penalties to the key and secondly, the charge of bad students. I will practice, on this subject, what is called ‘name and shame’ in English, because there is only that which works. I did it as a minister on payment deadlines, there is nothing more dissuasive.

⁶ “C’est parce que le travail est essentiel qu’il doit aussi payer de manière juste et c’est donc pour cela que tous les travailleurs et toutes les travailleuses verront leur pouvoir d’achat augmenter avec notre réforme de la prime d’activité et notre réforme du nancement du chômage. Tous les travailleurs, toutes les travailleuses, qu’ils soient fonctionnaires, indépendants, entrepreneurs, professions libérales, salariés, verront leur pouvoir d’achat augmenter. Cent euros au SMIC, pour chaque travailleur. Cent euros par mois de plus, parce que nous nancerons différemment les grands risques et parce que je ne veux plus entendre qu’il est plus intéressant de ne pas travailler que de travailler, dans notre pays.” (Macron 2017, ca7.)

They are ready to pay fines, sometimes companies; the day you tell everyone that they are bad students on the subject, it's very dissuasive". (Macron 2017 db, 14-15, Marianne 2016, 60)

"Then I want to make gender inequality a subject of social dialogue in the company. I want, you know, to reform and give more room to the company and branch agreement and I want that the subject of gender equality is an obligatory subject of negotiation. Why? Because of the real wage inequality, it is built in the inequalities of promotion and in the inequalities in the relation to the partial work time undergone." (Macron 2017 db, 14-15.)

When I observe Macron's policy goals and proposals, I can see he was influenced by the findings of a 2017 OECD report (2017) on the current challenges of France and the most important measures France should take to fix problems (OECD 2017). According to the report, it was necessary "to reduce the administrative extension of collective agreements, align union finances better with membership fees and continue streamlining workers representation in particular for larger firms"; in other words, OECD recommended enhancing local agreements or, at the very least, sectoral agreements (OECD 2017.) According to the report, active labour market policy might become more effective if there were a connection between job searching and these penalties. However, the report recognized the problems of legal processes in France and how the dismissal processes were regularly creating a duality in the labour market. Briefly: "more legal certainty for dismissals would reduce labour market duality and improve productivity". (OECD 2017)

Like OECD's findings indicated, Macron felt it was necessary to develop dialogue among employees, employers, management, and executive boards. One substantial proposal was to extend the role of the employee representative to communication with the executive level. This has traditionally been very rare in France where the work culture has been based on a top-down mentality and where leaders, management, and the workers each have their special roles within the company. This was reflected in the lack of staff representation in the executive level. With the development of local agreement, the role of the employee representatives would increase, and Macron considered it important that they would have access to special training courses to reflect their increasingly complex and demanding role. Macron's goal was better understanding between the employer and employee which, ideally, would lead to common solutions instead of conflicts. This goal was possible to reach by cooperation between the employer and employee: the employee would select a training course and the employer would finance it. Macron also encouraged employees to participate in union activities and promised to fight against anti-union discrimination. (Le Point 2020.) (Macron 2017bb, 8, Macron 2016, 117.)

It is important to understand the nature of the labour unions in France which can be done by comparing them, for instance, to Scandinavian ones. In France, union membership has always been low. In fact, it is one of the lowest in Europe: only 11 % of the employees belong to trade unions, whereas in Finland, for example, nearly 75 % are union members (Worker Participation 2018). Despite the low level of participation, trade unions have managed to prevent, every seven or eight years, all pension reforms driven by non-socialist prime ministers. The first time this took place was in 1953, but since 1995 pension reforms have become an important goal for all trade unions and especially the CGT. The first major demonstration against pension reforms was organised in 1995 during Alain Juppé's premiership, and they have been resurfaced in 2003, 2010 and 2019-2020.

The final example of Macron's proposed policies to improve working conditions concerned employee security in cases where an employee's future was jeopardised concerning one employment relationship. As a candidate of work Macron wanted to secure and protect workers' rights in these situations. More precisely, Macron wanted to create a special compensation scheme for dismissals without proper cause (such as discrimination or harassment), which would be based on new labour legislation (Macron 2017bb, 6). This new law would mean that "the judge can propose the reinstatement of the employee in the company with maintenance of his acquired advantages. Further on in case of refusal of the employee or the employer the judge grants indemnity to the employee. This compensation, payable by the employer cannot be less than wages of the last six months in addition to the legal compensation of dismissal" (Code de travail 2018/L1235-3).

I will later note that Macron looks at the world through the eyes of individual citizens, like most politicians who describe themselves as liberal. Macron was keen to discuss how public policy would help individuals develop their professional career. One of those interests was connected to safety from the old work. One of the new reforms would guarantee to improve employees' rights when resigning from a job but also oblige the employee to prove at the employment centre a strategy to reach new career goals. Basically, an employee was given two weeks to demonstrate their activeness as a jobseeker or lose their unemployment benefits. In OECD's (2017) report it was assumed that the active labour market policy might become more effective if there were sanctions for failing to commit to job search. However, the report recognized the legal processes problems in France and how the dismissal processes were regularly social creating simultaneously duality to the labour market. Briefly: "more legal certainty for dismissals would reduce labour market duality and

improve productivity”. (OECD 2017.) The report pointed out how this policy will lead to the following consequences:

“Improve the equity and quality of education. Individualised support for weak students and access to training for low-skilled adults would strengthen their productivity and employment prospects, enhancing equity”. (OECD 2017)

“Actions taken: Following a 2014 reform a personal account with training rights is being implemented along with guidance and quality-assurance systems. A lower secondary school reform implemented in 2015 provides more resources for schools with many weak students for individual support and work in small groups”. (OECD 2017)

“Recommendations: implement the guidance and quality-assurance systems for training quickly and ensure access to a wide range of training through the personal account. Introduce more apprenticeships in upper secondary schools and provide teachers with professional training and pedagogical support to effectively implement individualised support to weak students”. (OECD 2017)

Macron’s idea was that the Government would create opportunities to support employees’ effort to reach new career goals while also increasing its control over employees through sanctions that would be consistent and fair for all parties (Macron 2017bb, 8.) Macron remarks that the state is always the organ in society who has final responsibility to help the unemployed and the precariat by involving all stakeholders, particularly social partners (Macron 2017bb, 8). In the following section, I will provide an in-depth analysis on how the creative destruction, French industry and the labour markets have faced themselves in France.

The next section will discuss Macron’s ideas on work and its impact on the individual. I draw here from McAfee and Brynjolfsson’s ideas on the future of work and the great transformation which will arrive and influence all western societies. However, more important for the next chapter is to discuss various themes of work and how these themes are aligned with Macron’s ideas of emancipation and the risk society. Since the early 1990s, some scholars have suggested a threat: is work disappearing because of digitalization, robotization and globalisation? The latest threat is artificial intelligence which deeply divides scholars. Not only manual workers but also the traditional middle-class professions are at risk. Danger of disappearing work will expand and concern well-educated and wealthy citizens as well. (Baldwin 2017, 32.30-33.00.)

4.1.2 McAfee and Brynjolfsson: Work is Essential

It is important/interesting to notice how important the middle-class support and confidence have been to politics everywhere in western democracies. This was clear to Macron: if the middle class loses its professional status and incentives to career advancement, the whole society will suffer the consequences, because the middle class is the most important part of the society that provides the main support for the whole political system as well. (Macron 2017, eb, 4, Macron 2017cc, 5.)

As I have earlier noted, Macron accepted that we live in a risk society, but simultaneously it was vain to fight against the phenomenon. Much more important than engaging in the delay battle, as had been done in France for instance in the mid-1990s, was to adapt to present circumstances and create and seek the right ways to improve the situation. Macron was convinced that in the future there would be less secure or permanent jobs, and an increasing amount of project-based employment opportunities and fixed-term employment (Macron 2017h, 50, Macron 2017b, 12). However, as the individualization continues, people are less often willing to commit to the same employer and, instead of one professional career, there could be several careers; people would be expected to re-educate themselves throughout their careers (Macron, 2017h 50, 118, Macron 2017b, 12).

In any case, it is interesting to note how Macron's understanding concerning full employment changed. I noticed earlier that Macron wanted his government to aim for full employment. This goal was slightly different from that suggested by Giddens (2000) and Aghion & Roulet (2011), who had all argued that a career with one employer does not exist anymore, but considered full employment realistic target, even in France (Aghion & Roulet 2011, 47-48, Giddens 2000, 17). However, as Giddens also points out, full employment used to be a main political aim especially for the traditional left-wing parties, and the new reality where full employment seems/is unattainable has presented a huge problem for them. In the case of France, full employment would be possible if economic growth reached at least 1.1 % in a year. On the other hand, the full employment target has also been supported also by the growing population of active citizens. According to Passet (2019), the shifts in labour supply and demand favour increasing employment. Passet remarks further how the "constant activity rate, the stagnation of employment no longer or almost no longer increases unemployment in absolute terms". More specifically, this means that Macron's goal of full employment would be supported structurally by the age distribution of the population. (Giddens 2000, 17, Giddens 1998, 7, Capital.fr 2019.)

Whatever happens to full employment, one thing is clear: as Baldwin (2017) argues that we are facing an era of new globalisation where the various effects of the globalisation will be “more sudden, more individual, more unpredictable and more uncontrollable” (Baldwin 2017, 32.30-33.00). According to Brynjolfsson & McAfee (2014), we are now in the middle of the second machine age that will have a deep and previously unseen impact on our lives, work, and work environment. Brynjolfsson and McAfee also argue that we are facing an unprecedented inflection point between the first machine age, based on the automation of physical tasks through mechanisation, and the second machine age, based on the automation or cognitive tasks through digital technologies (McAfee & Brynjolfsson 2016, 9-10, Brynjolfsson & McAfee 2014, 1, Mialhe 2017, 2, Bauman 2000, 58).

Macron’s ideas reflected quite accurately Baldwin’s and McAfee & Brynjolfsson thoughts on global transformation and how work as a value is still an essential part of people’s lives and as such vital in a broader context to all societies. Macron is aware of the positive consequences and various elements of the work and how the work encourages citizens to be active members of the society by giving an individual a sense of a dignity; vice versa, losing one’s job leads to a situation where one can lose one’s individual sense of self (Macron 2016, 5, Stiglitz 2002, 9). Work is a value through which we build our future and improve our chances in life (Macron 2017cc, 2). McAfee & Brynjolfsson and Sen (1997), among others, have argued that the value of work does not come only from monetary compensation but extends much further. As Voltaire wrote, work saves us from the great evils of boredom, vice and need: for example, the individual can participate in social life and reach emancipation and satisfaction in his life (Voltaire 1759). In case of unemployment, all these characteristics of good life are at the very least endangered. McAfee & Brynjolfsson further argued that unemployment is always a catastrophic social phenomenon but especially now when the future of work and economy is uncertain because of the above-mentioned robotization and artificial intelligence (McAfee & Brynjolfsson 2016, 11 Sen 1997, 16).

Sen’s ideas accurately reflect Macron’s favourite theme which frequently comes up in his speeches: the individual’s emancipation, and the ability to be the master of one’s own life. Ultimately, the key point was based on the idea that “work gives people meaning” pointing out simultaneously the individual’s position in a society. Wilson (2003) argued that “high neighbourhood joblessness is more devastating than those of high neighbourhood poverty”. Indeed, it is important to differentiate between poverty and joblessness because they are “distinct social features” as the jobless poverty represents the gravest social problem the most serious consequences

of which are the increased “various social disorders, including family dissolution, weakened community control and crime”. (Brooks Dollar, Donnelly, Parker 2019, 1, Wilson 1996 xiii, Wilson 2002, 1103.)

Secondly, Macron wants to approach work in a new way because work itself is in constant change, and that means that we could not work tomorrow like we did today or like we used to work yesterday (Macron 2017h, 52). We are, in fact, in the middle of a great societal transformation which concerns every aspect of our societal life (Macron 2017h, 52). This means also that the whole social order will become different as the role of the state will change as well. New social order runs through and transcends all aspects of the traditional state (Macron 2017h, 52). On the other hand, this great change and transformation creates possibilities for each of us to forge our own path (Macron 2017h, 52). There are plenty of opportunities for the well-educated, but at the same time there is increasing insecurity based on the reason which Beck and Bauman brought up earlier. Briefly, Macron accepts that we are living in a world of risk, where change is a constant phenomenon (Macron 2016, 5, Macron 2017, 52-53).

“So, yes, work is not suffering. You must protect yourself at work, but I do not recommend that you want to protect French women and men from work, it’s not a good idea. Work is what gives us a place in society, it is what gives us our dignity, it allows us to emancipate ourselves, to find trust in ourselves, which allows us to build, which allows us to succeed and make others succeed. I was in New York a couple of days ago where I met Joseph Stiglitz, a terrible leftist to Americans, Nobelist, what was he explaining to me? That precisely, the work was the key to the contemporary emancipation, but it was necessary to leave behind this kind of cautiousness that it is useless to want to make the cake grow, it should simply share it, always a little more that the work would be only a quantity denied. We should finish these desperate ideas. And that the solution is, on the contrary, to understand that work is changing, that we will not work tomorrow like today, nor as yesterday, and that we must encourage all forms of employment to flourish by giving individuals the protections they need, we need to free work, free action at work, business creation, initiative.” (Macron 2016, 5.)

Technological innovations have significantly changed working hours and other work conditions, for example reducing need for a designated workspace (Macron 2017,52). It has become obvious that it would be harmful to repeat the errors of robotization, which in France started over a decade later than in Germany (Macron 2017,52). This delay resulted in a poor outcome for France as “Germany has five times as many robots in its factories, and has been able to keep many more jobs in industry. They now have an unemployment rate that is almost half ours” (Macron 2017,52.) Macron highlights again that he wants to create a society where jobs are

not secured, but individuals and employees are, or they should be (Macron 2017,52). As Giddens argued, flexibility on the labour market and well-functioning social security are not in conflict; they are able to adapt concurrently. This is possible with the premise that citizens have equal rights and responsibilities in the eyes of the administration.

As I have already noted, Stiglitz, MacAfee & Brynjolfsson and Macron all emphasised that any type of work is useful not only to the individual, but also to the whole society (Macron 2017h, 50, 52-53, Macron 2016, 5, Macron 2017h, 74, Macron 2016h, 5). Stiglitz and MacAfee & Brynjolfsson also argue that creating incentives to work and removing pointless regulations and obstacles from actively engaging in the labour markets. The key goal for them was to liberate the work, something Macron has frequently brought up in his speeches (Macron 2017h, 50, 52-53, Macron 2016, 5, Macron 2017h, 74, Macron 2016h, 5). In practice, Stiglitz and MacAfee & Brynjolfsson encourage the Governments to increase flexibility and local agreements in the labour market. In summary, taking into consideration all of the above-mentioned elements, I would argue that Macron's plan for a workfare society was very close to the employment policy Tony Blair favoured during the latter's premiership.

At the same time, entire facets of the economy are undergoing profound changes. Studies show that 10–40 % of jobs may be automated over the coming 20 years. In banking and insurance, one third to a half of the skills that employees currently possess will no longer be needed five to ten years from now. On the one hand, many middle-class occupations, and especially those of salaried workers, will be threatened; on the other, there will be new opportunities for jobs requiring very low or very high levels of skill. Companies will no longer be the workplace for people's entire lives under permanent contracts. Working hours will become independent from places of work: people may work at their company's premises, at their clients' offices, in-co-working spaces, or from home. They will leave their company, business sector, and position more and more often. This transformation is inevitable. (Macron 2017h, 50.) The new social order runs through and transcends all aspects of the traditional state. Besides this, our societies are undergoing a demographic sea change: ageing in developed countries, demographic transition in developing countries, and the increase in world population all constitute profound transformations that have started and will continue to turn our infrastructures and lives upside down (Macron 2017h, 52-53). At the same time, we now find ourselves in a society at risk (Macron 2017h, 53).

Digital technologies are not limited to an economic sector, but represent a complete transformation of economies, societies, and political systems. These new technologies open opportunities for people, and at the same time promote segregation by creating cliques and closed groups. It is an acutely decentralised way of organising society, where each person can play a role and take power. Society is being reshaped because every individual can find their place in the crowd. One can therefore clearly see the challenge of our current social order: its globalizers and at the same time individualises. In this way, it undermines all the traditional ways of organising society and in particular the role of the state as an intermediary. The new social order runs through and transcends all aspects of the traditional state. In parallel, investment initiated by companies is paramount. It is in this way that innovation and the development of new activities will enable us to move towards a robust growth model. Twenty years ago, France lost the battle for robotics by halting investments in that field, believing that this would protect jobs. It was not the case. On the contrary. Germany, for its part, has five times as many robots in its factories, and has been able to keep many more jobs in industry. They now have an unemployment rate that is almost half ours. (Macron 2017h, 52,74.)

4.1.3 France Has Not Been Part of Creative Destruction

The above-mentioned targets are, of course, always topical, but more telling and relevant for this research are Macron's plans for boosting French industry, especially the manufacturing industry, which has suffered significantly due to globalisation and repeated political miscalculations since the mid-1970s. Combined, these have led to profound changes in the social and political life of the country. According to Perrineau (2017), during the last 30 years, the traditional voters of the left (workers, the poor) have shifted to support Front National (le Rassemblement National) which has caused an existential problem to left-wing parties, including the old powerhouse Socialist Party. In the last Presidential elections for instance, 56 % of salaried employees and 69 % of those on low income voted for Marine le Pen. The areas where Marine Le Pen dominates are characterised by anxiety and neglect, significant immigrant populations, high rates of unemployment and low levels of education. The Mediterranean fringe and France's industrial rustbelt in the north and east are areas with most support for Le Pen. A good example is the old coal mining region Pas-de-Calais, historically a stronghold of the Communist party and now one of the most important support bases for the Front National, where the old mine has been

close and replaced by a huge mining museum (The Economist 2017b, 12, visit world heritage 2020, Perrineau 2017, 26-27, 45).

However, in these cases happened or didn't happen the difficult phenomenon called the creative destruction coined by the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter (Schumpeter 1942, 83). Schumpeter argued that creative destruction was a vital and essential element of capitalism that kept the whole system going (Schumpeter 1942, 83). Old production methods were replaced by new and more efficient ones, or by an entirely new business. Schumpeter used the example of how in the course of the history of transportation, old mail coaches were gradually replaced by faster innovations, ultimately by aeroplanes (Schumpeter 1942, 83). In France, this phenomenon has been rare, and too often there has been only destruction without the creativeness as reflected in the case Northern France.

Nevertheless, Macron was convinced that it was necessary for the future of the country to revitalise “our manufacturing dream”, because it was connected to the wider social success where the premise of real prosperity has always been in the production of goods and services (Macron 2017h, 68-69,74). Macron was reminded of the big mistakes in robotization made in the early and mid-1990s and the serious consequences of those mistakes to the whole French industry and the labour markets. Macron makes a significant distinction between the phrase “to protect at work” and “to protect from a work” and refers to the case of robotization in Germany that was, compared to France, ahead of its time and implementing the labour markets to incremental robotization (Macron 2017h, 50, Le1 Hebdo 2016, 6). In other words, this meant that there were many industries, sectors and companies kept afloat only by political support. In practice this meant that the creative destruction was regularly absent: Government regulations eliminated the creative part of destruction which would have been essential for future developments. This was the case, for instance, with the above-mentioned mining industry, but also with the textile industry in the city of Roubaix in northern France.

Clearly, it would have been a grave mistake to fight the inevitable development and repeat the errors from 25 years ago. The role of the state is changing as well. Macron argued it would be impossible to think that the answer to the present-day and future problems could be found by expanding the welfare state model from its current form. Briefly: the role of the state will be intermediary and less managerial (Macron 2017h74, Macron 2017h, 50-52). In any case, Macron points out that France has lost, since the turn of the millennium, almost 900,000 manufacturing jobs; simultaneously, “industry’s share of our Gross Domestic Product has fallen from 17 to 12 percent” (Macron 2017h, 68, Macron 2017h, 50). Macron summarises:

“without production there can be no social model” (Macron 2017h, 68-69,74, Steta 2017 60-63). According to Macron, the result of the old, preferred policy of the moderate right and the Socialist Party was acceleration of unemployment and lower competitiveness of the French industry compared, for instance, to Germany (Macron 2017h, 74). Macron was convinced that the sustainable growth, which France had sorely missed, is based on the private sector’s ability to invest. The long-term problem of the French economy has been that these private investments have been relatively modest, which has also impacted innovations and development of new activities (Macron 2017h, 74, Global Presence 2019).

However, there was clear indication of progress regarding French investments and unemployment rate as the French economy, together with the rest of Europe, started to recover in 2018. According to Bloomberg’s statistics and the National Statistics Office, foreign investment in France increased and surpassed new investments in the traditional economic powerhouse of Germany; moreover, much of the investments resulted in new jobs and facilities. The estimated growth of France in 2019, 2020, and 2021 was also stronger than Germany’s and stronger than the average in the Eurozone. Also, significantly, the unemployment rate of France in fact began to decrease at the end of 2015 after having stayed for a long time at 10 %. However, after Macron took office, the employment rate began to improve and, finally, just before the Covid-19 pandemic in January 2020, the unemployment reached its lowest level in ten years at 7.8 %. This was an exceptionally low figure for France, and the situation continued to improve, reaching 7.1 % in July 2020 (Trading Economics 2020, INSEE 2020, Bloomberg 2019, National Statistics 2019, Bloomberg Survey National Statistics offices 2020).

Macron was aware of the positive consequences of work and how work drives the citizens to be an active part of the society by simultaneously giving an individual a sense of dignity. He also saw work as a value through which people build their future and defend their chances in life (Macron 2017cc, 2, Macron 2016,5, 2016, 57). Macron went so far as to suggest he wanted to set his government the goal of reaching full employment by 2025(LCI 2019, Macron 2019b,10). In 2019, Macron was convinced that the target of full employment was completely within reach, but

⁷ Macron refused to completely accept the universal income which played a significant role in the 2017 presidential campaigns of the Socialist Party candidate Benoit Hamon and the extreme left’s Jean Luc Mélenchon (Macron 2017ca, Macron 2017h, 125 6, Le Point 2017a, Le Point 2017b. Les Échos 2017). Mélenchon (2016) wanted to create the enforceable right to employment by making the state offer jobs as a last resort in cases of long-term unemployment (Mélenchon 2016, 56). Mélenchon also promoted the very generous unlimited unemployment compensation which would continue until the state had managed to arrange suitable work for the unemployed person (Mélenchon 2016, 56).

for the plan to succeed, he considered it essential that it was supported by both the public and the private sectors (Macron 2019b, 10).

Based on the above-mentioned claims, I will next discuss the PACTE (Action Plan for Business Growth and Transformation) programme which was designed to secure and enhance economic growth and entrepreneurship and, in general, improve the business environment in France. The PACTE plan has been described as an attempt to enhance France's economic transformation to the digital era. The goal of the PACTE was simple: to liberate companies from overregulation and secure their capacity to be more innovative while also supporting their aims to act in a more responsible way. Since Macron became the Minister of Economy and launched his presidential campaign, Macron had profiled as a politician who wanted to promote digitalization and took it seriously, both in terms of all the possibilities but also the threats that came with it. Throughout his presidency, Macron has maintained the focus on policies advancing France's digitalization.

In the following pages, I will analyse Macron's speeches on the above-mentioned questions including the economic programme which formed the basis for Macron's vision for the future. I will also discuss how new social risks regularly target individual citizens in the context of a risk society and how Macron has reacted to these challenges. Macron is convinced that all western democracies are experiencing a historical transition based on new technologies and artificial intelligence. Macron also asks what kind of a role France should have in this transition which will extend exceptionally deep; challenging democracy, politics and, finally, the entire society. In the next chapter, I will draw comparisons between Macron's and Tony Blair's politics and their broader vision of the society.

4.1.4 Actions and Incentives for Business Growth

According to the Government (2019), the PACTE plan was based on the results of a dialogue and co-construction between many (625) companies and institutions that had been consulted "to collect proposals from stakeholders in the field". The results of the consultations were reported to the Government which later presented 31 proposals to the people of France who could express their views in an online public consultation. This was a case of the "mobilisation of the collective intelligence that led to the emergence of concrete measures that will have a direct impact on the life of the companies", as secretary of state Delphine Gény-Stephann emphasised. The plan also aimed to redefine the places of the business world and the state in the

economy. The state will act as an investor rather than a manager, disposing of shareholders to invest in sectors of the future. In parallel, it will step up systems for monitoring strategic companies. (government.fr 2019.)

Macron's administration was aware of the present problems of the companies that operated regularly in circumstances described as overburdened with obligations that complicated every step of their development. These obstacles and criticism against pointless bureaucracy existed also during Macron's presidential campaign. When considering the rigid social and economic norms and conventions in France, it is also relevant also to offer concrete examples. According to Babeau (2017), in a report that was published in 2016, the court of auditors recorded 230 different taxes and other contributions paid by companies. These included corporate tax, transfer duties, transport payment, payroll tax, various sectoral contributions, etc. In addition to these payments, there are also the following: CSG, a payment which goes toward funding health care in France, and the CET, territorial economic contribution, paid by all industrial or commercial companies actively operating in France, and which is used to finance local authorities, municipalities, departments, and regions. The CSG payment is split into the CFE, which is a contribution to land investment, and the CVAE, which is a contribution on the added values (French Business Advice 2020, Babeau 2017, 155-156). Babeau further explains how monitoring, assessing, and sanctioning these many transactions employ hundreds of agents who mobilise the energy and implement the will of the state (Babeau 2017 155-156). This previously mentioned detail raises simultaneously the existential question to all politicians, not just to Macron: what are the Governments supposed to do and what are they expected to do? The following three quotes further illuminate how Macron has seen the French economy, free markets, and the role of the state.

“To attain its objectives, the French state has developed, by general consent, a heavy and complicated machinery intended to consistently guarantee equality and safety, two values that we cherish. But when the enterprise weakens and the vision is no longer discernible, that machinery spins its wheels in the absence of momentum and becomes an obstruction and a burden for the whole nation. Hundreds of entities that should have disappeared still exist. Public officials perform useless tasks. Regulation overruns everything, because it is more convenient to promulgate a law or a decree than to give a direction. In so doing, public employees find a reason d'être, and politicians find a pretext to justify their privileges. The regulation itself takes precedence over the reasons for its creation. The country serves the administration, rather than the administration existing for the good of the country. But none of this is inevitable, and it is a mistake to see the state, merely for dogmatic reasons, as an evil in and of itself. Instead, we must take a long-term, practical view of the state –its relationship to our history, and the services it does and can render. For some, the state should be able to do everything, including spending money that it does not have.

For others, the state is the source of all evil, and the solution is to demolish it. In fact, neither of these views is valid. Because the Republic, our common enterprise, which brings us together, is woven around the state.” (Macron 2017h 40-41.)

The second pillar of this agenda or group of reforms is investment and capital. In an economy like that of France, as you show that it is fairer for the middle classes. This is the challenge of “at the same time” which I have tried to coordinate in France, and which is currently the subject of debate in France. The situation is very clear: we must make France more competitive and more innovative to finance a fair system. “It is my aim to make France more competitive in a European context. We require more capital, more funds in this field to finance risks and key innovations. We have therefore also adopted a whole series of reforms to orient our savings in this direction or towards this type of financing. Negotiations are currently underway even on a European and global level to give greater priority to projects, good sustainable projects. Tangible measures have just been adopted to facilitate this sort of work. We have considerably reduced corporate taxation from 33 %. We have also reformed capital gains tax and taken other measures which should enable us to become more competitive. So why are we doing all of this? The goal is to ramp-up the recovery, speed up the return of our competitiveness and, by reducing labour costs, we will also bolster France’s attractiveness. We are therefore investing in innovation financing, notably for disruptive technologies, to bolster this model.” (Macron 2018a, 2.)

“However, I think there is a need for less state in society and in the economy. In wanting to overregulate, the state has weakened and turned into a suffocation. We raise for what concerns entrepreneurship. It has long been considered that the state should replace society and to act and that a standard would protect the weak, according to Lacordaire’s philosophy. This is no longer true in an open world, When the standard is overregulated, it hinders. It prevents the freedom to enter many houses, including those of the poorest. Take the example of coaches. Their use had been made very complicated to protect the rail. The principal victims were the poorest. In economic life, the state standard too. I believe that it is legitimate, in certain sectors, to reflect with less State, because it is more effective and just to let the society breathe, creativity to express itself.” (Fottorino 2017, 58-59)

However, Macron’s PACTE plan also drew criticism, especially from far-left and far-right politicians. The Government was, in particular, criticised for its decision to sell its shares in three major companies: “the Aéroports de Paris (ADP) which manages the two main Paris airports and the 228 million passengers which pass through them each year; the Francaise des Jeux, the company which runs and holds the monopoly on lottery games and sports betting in France; and Engie, the third largest energy provider group in the world”. (Politico 2018) The leftist politicians considered Macron’s decision morally questionable as the profit-driven policy of the highly influential private companies might endanger the quality and availability of services for the citizens. The left was also concerned about underage gambling and increasing risk of gambling addictions, as the Government would not be able to control the

actions of private companies. The political centre and right did not accept the selling of “family jewels” and saw the whole plan as a “short-term policy and a strategic error”. (Politico 2018)

According to Segrestin, Hatchuel, Levillain (2020), the reforms of Macron’s administration were proposed at a time when several scholars expressed their doubts about the interests, merits, and legitimacy of corporations (Clarke et al. 2019). Segrestin etc. note the conflict of interest between the stakeholders and the society: “while corporations indisputably create value for their various stakeholders, their interests are not necessarily correlated with the collective interest” – something above-mentioned politicians pointed out as well (Margolis and Walsh 2003; Scherer and Palazzo 2007; Lazonick 2014). As both Beck and Macron had noted, the big players were the GAFAs companies that had become exceptionally powerful at the global scale and the kind of power that might threaten the stability of the whole country (Metcalf and Benn 2012). Therefore, scholars are increasingly questioning corporate governance and the such legal features of the corporation as limited liability (Ireland 2010; Mayer 2013; Ciepley 2018).

In this context, the French corporate law reform may be meaningful for the debate on the corporation and the legal conditions of corporate responsibility. The above-mentioned elements and values were on Macron’s mind already in 2014-2017 when he, as a Minister of Economy and a presidential candidate, outlined the premise for the French economic policy and promoted the re-evaluation of rigid, heavy and overly complex state machinery, arguing it should detach itself from futile routines and bureaucracy which had no value for the rest of the society. Macron was convinced that bureaucracy and overregulation formed a threat to the entire society and societal life and noted that traditional statism and top-down thinking had already been criticised by the former Prime Minister Michel Rocard. (Macron 2017h 40-41.)

As I analyse in more detail the challenges of France, I can note several phenomena typical for French political culture. More specifically, I have noted that there has been reluctance in France to face the inevitable societal and economic change which has risen from grassroots level to extend and concern all societal and political power as well. In addition to this, there are several phenomena and facts which Macron recognized as essential to solve, and which I now bring to my analysis. Quite often these challenges, problems and national characteristics have deep roots in French economics, society and even culture. One of the main features has always been the country’s relatively weak entrepreneurial culture. This has resulted in the private sector and private companies that have been small compared, for instance, with German companies. Macron was concerned over the very small number of

French intermediate-sized companies (only five thousand and eight hundred) – compared to France’s main economic rival, Germany, where the amount was twice as high (twelve thousand and five hundred).

Macron was convinced that these companies will create the most jobs in France and they have the necessary resources to innovate, digitise and set off to conquer new markets. In any case, despite the challenging economic environment, Macron was keen to drive and promote the policies that would create the best possible ways for enterprises to generate new and sustainable jobs. Macron also wanted the enterprises to carry the social responsibility of unemployment and hire as soon as possible job seekers to permanent jobs. As an incentive, Macron proposed a “bonus-malus” insurance which meant that companies offering sustainable and stable jobs will pay less unemployment insurance and, vice versa, the companies that operate on temporary contracts will contribute more to unemployment compensation. (Macron 2017bb, 6)

Even though France is a huge market and its economy the second largest in the EU, France has suffered from the lack of private capital and foreign investments which has led to a situation in which many key investments and innovations are in trouble (Fottorino 2017, 58-59). French companies suffer from weak growth, and the new entry-level companies struggle trying to compete on an international scale). Tirole summarised the situation as follows: “Employment needs business [...] France has a disturbing shortage of new enterprises at a global scale [...] All the companies on the Paris CAC 40 stock index – which are often very successful internationally – are descended from old companies. That is not the case in the United States, where just a small proportion of the 100 biggest listed firms existed 50 years ago. To create jobs, France (and other countries) needs to develop an entrepreneurial culture and environment” (Tirole 2017, 417-481).

As the Minister of Economic Affairs, Macron promoted a law (the “Macron Law”) to promote buying power, employment, and equal opportunities. Macron was convinced that these were the most crucial elements to improve the competitive edge of France in an increasingly demanding global environment. “The bill is resolutely in step with time, and it addresses the actual issues with an eye to bringing about real change”. The basic idea was to boost French people’s faith in their economic future by simplifying bureaucratic procedures, promoting both the small businesses and business owners’ interests, and increasing the transparency, while also tackling the problem of illegal work and the black labour markets. (gouvernement.fr 2015, 1-5, gouvernement.fr 2014, 4.)

From the perspective of enterprises and the private sector, Macron's law was generous. Macron wanted to enhance their ability and willingness to invest by including in the proposed law a tax over amortisation for the companies that were investing. Macron was convinced that the best way to boost the French economy was to have strong, vital, and competitive companies with an interest in also investing in their employees and productive apparatus. At the same time, it was clear to Macron that these companies would need French capital, and he therefore hoped that French investors would invest in companies and innovations in their own country. In Macron's opinion, the state had the ultimate role to guarantee an equitable protection of all companies, including the same compliance with regulations (Macron 2017h 78). Macron also initiated a reform of the Labour Court (Le conseil de prud'hommes, CPH) wanting to shorten the court procedures by decreasing the fees of notaries while adding more than one thousand and six hundred new positions or offices and enabling intercompany loans, thus putting an end to the banking monopoly, and improving the opportunities of especially the small and medium sized enterprises to get financed on reasonable terms. (Les Echos 1-2.)

Macron's background as a former banker has already been discussed, but in these cases, we can clearly see how he used his skills and expertise and interests to outline and also to influence business. Macron wanted France to reach a completely new level in global economic transformation based mainly on digitalization, artificial intelligence, and 3D printing. The PACTE plan was based on two observations which were deeply connected to the challenges and the roles of private companies in both French society and in international markets. (Macron 2017bb, 6.) One of the most important pre-conditions for achieving this goal was to guarantee the financing and the necessary resources for the companies. (Macron 2018a, 2, gouvernement.fr, 2018.)

The second element of Macron's plan was increasing the companies' interest in corporate responsibility. Macron observed that companies were no longer limited to maximising profits to their owners or shareholders, but that most of them had understood that they have a wider role in society and that they should, for example, better consider the well-being of their employees. At the same time, it was clear to Macron that the old Marxist ideology of eternal conflict between the labour and the capital where the employer exploits the employees, was outdated (gouvernement 2015, 4). As I have already pointed out, for instance in Beck's conclusions, employees are no longer in a position of a victim, but they are frequently aware of their value for their employer.

The above-mentioned elements provided context for the PACTE plan which was designed to empower companies to grow and “create more jobs, by removing the obstacles that complicate their lives and providing them with the resources required to innovate for success”. Macron wanted to restore the value of companies and put them back in the heart of society. For individual employees (or their representatives), this meant gaining an opportunity to participate in the governance of the company, which would allow employees increasing participation in the profit-sharing schemes while also incentivizing them to contribute to the success of the company. (gouvernement.fr 2019 4-5.)

As mentioned, the transformation Macron so keenly wanted to drive had to do with a profoundly changed role and relations between the companies and the society (Macron 2018a, 2, gouvernement.fr, 2019). The PACTE plan did not remain at the level of speeches or bureaucracy but entailed regular monitoring groups and a consultation phase that involved politicians and business leaders. The idea was to enhance the previously mentioned dialogue between the business world and politicians (gouvernement 2019, 4-5). One of the novel dimensions of the PACTE was to bring public research closer to the business world. I will discuss this idea in more detail in the case of Nokia-Alcatel and the major project on artificial intelligence where the interests of private and public sectors and science found a common ground. However, Macron understood that the state was limited in how it could attempt to influence the market, and there was always a danger that this activity limiting regulation would distort competition. Macron saw the role of the state much like Giddens who, in the mid-1990s, had challenged the conceived notions of both the traditional left and the conservative right regarding the role of the state. The state is not an enemy, and it will not provide answers to all the existing social problems (Giddens 1998, 47-48).

The next section will continue to analyse the business and economic programmes of Macron and his administration. I aim to present illuminating case studies where the private and public interest and new technologies, such as AI, have met and created simultaneously the new guidelines to our continent. Macron argues that this game is not just about making money or conquering new markets but, in the end, it is a question about the future of democracy and maintaining the European way of life vital and strong.

4.1.5 Macron Favours Pro-Market Ideology

Our borders also need to guarantee fair competition. What power in the world would accept continued trade with those who respect none of their rules? We cannot suffer in silence. We need to reform our competition policy and reshape our trade policy with penalties or a ban in Europe on businesses that compromise our strategic interests and fundamental values such as environmental standards, data protection and fair payment of taxes; and the adoption of European preference in strategic industries and our public procurement, as our American and Chinese competitors do. (Macron 2019b, 4-5.)

“To this end, the digital single market project is a unique opportunity which we must take to create the methods which will allow us to defend the rules protecting our individual freedoms and confidentiality to which everyone is entitled, which will allow us to protect our companies’ economic data and create European regulations which will at the same time provide legitimate protection to people and companies, which will help compensate for the deep upheaval in the traditional economy sometimes created by this change”. (Macron 2017f 71-72.)

Before I will continue in my analysis it is significant to restore and remind briefly these two terms: pro-business and pro-market, because they will appear regularly in the following chapters. Maliranta argues (2017) the most significant elements concern competition, innovations, and creative destruction. In the case of France, the creative destruction is an interesting phenomenon which I have briefly already mentioned, and I will study this phenomenon more precisely later. Maliranta warns of the enchantment of the pro-business ideology, because it has an ability to take very easily to solutions which might be good for instance to the certain company, but they do not comply with the laws of the free markets. (Maliranta 2017, 18.)

The premise concerns the competition which means that as we demand more competition, we will act behalf of the whole economy but simultaneously we are not acting behalf of the certain company; because the competition as itself does not act in the interests of business owners; because the competition lowers prices and viability of the company. Maliranta sees how the competition acts on behalf of the innovation and allocation of factors of production to branches and the companies where the contributions add the best value to the national economy. Competition can add creative destruction, which will test the companies, but it will simultaneously enrich the whole economy. (Maliranta 2017, 18.)

Pro-market and pro-business doctrines are commonly confused with one another, even though there is a significant difference between the two. Askenazy and

Piketty criticised Macron's politics which they saw in pro-business, and Marine Le Pen amongst others also accused Macron of espousing a pro-business ideology (Askenazy 2018, France 2 2017, 1.16-1.35, 10.30-10.34, Couturier 2017, 53). An illuminating example of the difference between pro-market and pro-business ideologies can be found in the UK. There were clear instances in which Margaret Thatcher's Government, instead of acting pro-market, advanced a pro-business ideology by promoting the interests of the UK arms manufacturers to support the Government's foreign political agenda. Ledger (2019) claims that behind these policy choices was the Thatcher Government's fight against public spending, which led to politics where the terms and parameters of foreign aid profoundly changed, ultimately culminating in the Pergau Dam scandal (Ledger 2019, 50-51).

This scandal emerged when it was discovered that hundreds of millions of pounds of foreign aid was linked to a major arms deal. After lengthy parliamentary inquiries and intense media coverage the deal was declared unlawful in the High Court of Great Britain and Wales (Provost 2020). According to Ledger, there was increasing criticism against the Thatcher Government's actions in domestic markets but among the UK export industry, and it was clear that the Prime Minister was keen to drive pro-business politics instead of pro-market politics. Ledger further argues that British politicians increased multilateral aid during the 1980s and supported neo-liberal aid policy and bilateral aid policy but demonstrated a subordination of aid to foreign policy and a pro-business (rather than pro-market or neoliberal) alignment (Ledger 2018,65 & Ledger 2019, 59, 50).

It is important to keep in mind that Thatcher's well-known market spirit was limited, at least in some cases, to calculated support of the businesses whose interests were aligned with the goals of her foreign policy, and therefore frequently connected to the arms industry. The dominant position in the markets and the influence and the power of the GAFSA companies in both domestic and international politics have been a great concern to many politicians and leaders during the last few years. The concern has emerged more broadly among the citizens to the politics, as GAFSA companies have gained enormous profits and their uncontrollable growth often surpasses the growth of the countries in which they operate. We can remember, for instance, that Beck expressed these concerns, referring to the neo-liberal politics and neoliberalism as the source of the various grievances.

As noted earlier, Macron was convinced of the importance of creating a new competition policy, not just for France but for Europe. This policy should protect the strategic interests of France, and Europe, against competition from China and the United States. During a presidential debate Macron argued that France has always

prospered as the country that is in the front line of international politics and development instead of isolation or closed borders, viz. the political agenda of Marine Le Pen. According to Macron, this would not be an option for France. (TF 2017, 6:30-7: 20.)

In particular, the competition politics Macron wanted to advance included the fundamental values which have traditionally belonged to the tasks of the public sector, such as maintaining and monitoring environmental standards, data protection and fair payment. The most important political premise, however, was the idea of the same rules to all policy. Macron wanted fair and open competition where “the rules of competition enable the smallest and newest business to enter a market if they fight for a place, work hard, and innovate.” Macron refused to accept the old policy of exclusion, described in the previous chapter, of limited or no competition. (Macron 2017h, 78-79.)

As I notice next the economist Rajan & Zingales (2003) saw as Macron that the truly free markets were able to create competition which has an enhancing influence on the already established and integrated companies which were forced, at the same time, to work even harder to maintain their market position. It was also clear that for capitalism to succeed, it was essential to have a balance of how much we would like to have Government’s or EU’s regulation. According to Rajan & Zingales, it was possible to find a middle ground. But how to reach it? Rajan & Zingales were convinced that this target was possible to reach if a country was able to achieve broad consensus concerning the role of the markets, and this consensus was firmly based on and connected to the right of the distribution of ownership. (Zingales 2019, 1-2, Rajan & Zingales 2003,1)

Concentration of the ownership was inimical to the market development, because the bigger the owner grows, the less interest the owner has in prosperous and fair markets. Instead of this, the biggest actors will focus on being able to “protect their immediate interest without a fair and objective judicial system”. According to Zingales (2019), “Business, especially big business is happy with crony capitalism, franchised monopoly or any other device that will avoid the Darwinism of the free market.” Zingales further argues that the existing free and competitive market can eliminate the possibility of huge profit and, at the same time, eliminate agglomeration of capital and political power; a concern already raised by Adam Smith in his classic “The Wealth of Nations” (Zingales 2019, 1-2, Rajan & Zingales 2003,1)

Macron is convinced of the need to regulate the GAFAs companies, and his concern was not only limited to the interest and rights of the citizens and democracy, but also how the big (US and China-based) companies were operating in European

markets and over their influence on such industries as steel. Macron forcefully argued that companies should pay taxes and fulfil other commitments in the countries where they were operating, but also that if their position in the market were to reach a monopoly position, it would lead to distorted competition. Macron saw the situation exactly like Tirole: “The concentration of digital markets raises the questions of competition. If one company has a dominant position, it creates serious risk of high prices and a lack of innovation. New enterprises must be able to enter the market if they are more efficient or more innovative than the established monopoly”. (Macron 2017h, 78-81 Macron 2018c, 17.20-18.00, Macron 2018b, 3, Tirole 2018, 398).

According to Macron, GAF A companies posed a threat to the future success of European-based companies but also to the whole European way of life and free democracy. More precisely, the EU and the European companies represent different values than US or China-based companies do. The American tech giants acted as private companies typically do, aiming for maximum profit for their shareholders, social responsibility being a secondary issue. Chinese companies were in close cooperation with their government that represents very different values from the values commonly shared in European democracies. (Macron 2017h, 78-81 Macron 2018c, 17.20-18.00, Macron 2018b, 3, Macron 2016, 18.)

Macron was convinced that it would be necessary to protect European markets and European people from the unfair competition and business, and this also applied to the domestic market of France. An important measure, for instance, was the already mentioned digital single market and the internal energy market of the EU. Macron also favoured the common financial market tax of the EU, also supported by Thomas Piketty (Piketty 2014, 471-472 Macron 2017g, 8, Macron 2017f, 59-60). Another example of Macron’s interest to enhance and act on behalf of European business interests was the 2016 merger of Nokia and Alcatel-Lucent, in which France, naturally, played an important role.

President Hollande and Macron, as Minister of Economic Affairs at the time, demanded guarantees for French jobs as their condition for support to the merger, protecting French interests. Macron was convinced that the merger was a huge step for both Nokia and Alcatel-Lucent at a business level but, that it was also important in the wider context of shared European interests: It was possible to create a strong enterprise, “the great European champion” to compete against Chinese and American tech giants⁸ (Sülasmaa 2018, 332, Nokia 2015, 1-5, Le Monde 2015, Le

⁸ Consistent with this goal, the combined company expects that after the closing of the transaction it will have a presence in France that spans leading innovation activities including a 5G/Small Cell R &

Figaro 2015, Science Business 2019, Macron 2018b, 3-4, France 2, 4.00-5.35, Macron 2017ce, 10.) The following speech in the World Economic Forum (2018) will open more specific Macron's views on the GAFA giants, and how the EU should act against them.

“Today the GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon) do not pay all the taxes they should in Europe. So, they do not contribute to dealing with negative externalities they create and when they task the sectors they disrupt to pay, because these guys, the old sectors pay VAT, corporate taxes and so on. That is not sustainable. I want to protect privacy in this way or in that way. You don't have the same rule in the US. And speaking of US players, I cannot in the long run guarantee my citizens that their collective preferences or my rules can be totally implemented by these players because you don't have the same regulation on the US side. All I know is that if I don't, at a point of time, have this discussion and regulate them, I put myself in a situation not to be sovereign anymore. So, at a point of time, they will have to create actual legal bodies and incorporate it in Europe, being submitted to these rules. Accountability and democracy happen at national or regional level but not at a global scale. If I don't walk down this path, I cannot protect French citizens and guarantee their rights. If I don't do that, I cannot guarantee French companies are fairly treated. Because today, when I speak about GAFA, they are very much welcome – I want them to be part of my ecosystem, but they don't play on the same level playing field as the other players in the digital or traditional economy.” (Macron 2018b, 4-5.)

According to Macron, GAFA companies formed a threat to the future success of the European based companies but also to the whole European way of life and free democracy. More precisely, European companies represent values different from American or Chinese companies. American giants acted as private companies usually do, aiming for maximum profit for their shareholders where social responsibility is a secondary issue; and in China the companies were in close co-operation with their

D Centre of Excellence; a Cyber-Security lab similar to its existing facility in Berlin designed to support European collaboration on the topic; and a continued focus on Bell Labs and wireless R & D. <http://superfluidity.eu/nokia-bell-labs-france/>. Engaging with and supporting projects and academic efforts that enhance the development of future technologies will remain an important priority. Upon closing of the transaction, Nokia also intends to establish a EUR 100 million investment fund to invest in start-ups in France with a focus on the Internet of Things and the Industrial Internet. Nokia intends to maintain employment in France that is consistent with Alcatel-Lucent's end-2015 Shift Plan commitments, with a particular focus on the key sites of Villarceaux (Essonne) and Lannion (Côtes d'Armor). In addition, the company expects to expand R & D employment with the addition of several hundred new positions targeting recent graduates with skills in future-oriented technologies, including 5G. To ensure ongoing support for customers, activities for support services and pre- and post-sales are expected to continue as well. (Nokia Stock market release 2015.)

government which represents very different values than the values we share as a premise in Europe. (Macron 2017h, 78-81, Macron 2018c, 17.20-18.00, Macron 2018b, 3, Macron 2016, 18.)

Macron was convinced that it would be necessary to protect European markets and the European consumers of the unfair competition and business, but it was also the same situation with the domestic market of France (Macron 2017g, 8, Macron 2017f, 59-60.) One important measure, for instance, already mentioned the digital single market and energy market of the EU (Piketty 2014, 471-472, Macron 2017g, 8, Macron 2017f, 59-60.) Macron also favoured the common financial market tax of the EU, whose supporter was also Thomas Piketty (Piketty 2014, 471-472, Macron 2017g, 8, Macron 2017f, 59-60). Another example of Macron's interest to enhance and act behalf of European business interests, was the merger of Nokia and Alcatel-Lucent in 2016.

The current President François Hollande and Macron as Minister of Economic Affairs Macron demanded guarantees for French jobs, as their condition for support to the merger, protecting French interests. Macron was convinced that the merger was a huge step for both Nokia and Alcatel-Lucent at a business level but, that it was also important in the wider context of shared European interests: It was possible to create a strong enterprise, "the great European champion" to compete against Chinese and American tech giants (Siilasmaa 2018, 332, Nokia 2015, 1-5, Le Monde 2015, Le Figaro 2015, Science Business 2019, Macron 2018b, 3-4, France 2, 4.00-5.35, Macron 2017ce, 10).

The Nokia-Alcatel Lucent merger is a telling example of a policy that combines private and public interests in a global age. As Macron has frequently emphasised, French companies on their own cannot compete in global markets. French companies need partners, preferably from the same European reference groups, with shared political, social, and cultural values. With the Nokia-Alcatel-Lucent merger, Macron and Hollande incorporated Giddens' ideas of the relationship existing between the public sector and the private investments and companies. Another approach by Giddens involves public-private partnerships; the public power lays out the parameters of action, and the private sector puts them into the practice (Giddens 1998, 124-125).

As I examine in more detail the ongoing technological revolution or the great transformation, it is important to emphasise its political dimension. Macron was convinced that, ultimately, the question is about a political revolution where various interests, targets and values meet (Macron 2018b, 2-3, L'Hebdo 1 2016, 11, Macron 2016, 18.) It would be naive to forget this fact and simply focus on technological

hype and advance (Macron 2018b, 2-3, L'Hebdo 1 2016, 11, Macron 2016, 18). The risk calculation is one of the most essential elements of this great transformation (Macron 2018b, 2-3, L'Hebdo 1 2016, 11, Macron 2016, 18).

Macron said: “France will not win against Google or Facebook; Europe does. At least Europe needs to regulate them. Europe could be a critical actor vis-à-vis dumping China and the United States. If we are in Europe, we can fight against Chinese dumping steel, protecting our populations and our businesses”.

Macron made it clear that it would be critical for the future of France that, instead of being left as a bystander, France would assume leadership as a digitalization trendsetter. This could happen through foreign and domestic investments and co-operation with the science community, where interdisciplinary thinking is central. Macron's attitude towards artificial intelligence reflects his views on globalisation and the integration process of the EU where France should always be in the driver's seat. This was based on the idea that France has always been at its strongest and very best when the country has aimed to lead various contemporary processes and influence various political phenomena. (Fottorino 2017, 60.)

This conclusion was based on Macron's concern about the nature and power of artificial intelligence and the above-mentioned big companies, which used artificial intelligence as a tool in their business. More specifically, Macron argued that artificial intelligence, without any surveillance by the public authorities, “may totally dismantle national cohesion and the way we live together”. Given this, Macron stated that the only way to protect European interests and values was strong cooperation within the. Macron himself was ready to take the lead in framing the discussion at a global level and create the same rules for all participants operating in the EU markets on issues such as tax policy that would foster competition while also protecting public interests. Macron wanted to create in France a research environment⁹ that would accelerate foreign investment in France and create more possibilities to connect public and private interests and thereby also generating well-paid jobs for talented citizens in the era of the creative destruction – when the old and established methods and ways to work would be removed to make way for new and more efficient methods of production. (Macron 2018b, 2-3, 11, Macron 2016, 18, Le 1 Hebdo, 2016, 11.)

⁹ An example of this took place on June 18, 2019, when Sorbonne University inaugurated the Sorbonne Centre for Artificial Intelligence (SCAI), where exists for instance the Labouratory of Probability, Statistics and Modelling. The centre has been described as centre of excellence that is “dedicated to research, teaching and innovation in artificial intelligence”.

When discussing the above-mentioned elements, I can draw comparisons to Tony Blair's New Labour and will notice the same values and several shared policy goals. The New Labour Party Manifesto declared how important for the future of the UK it would be to forge a real partnership between the public sector and the private sector, especially the small and medium-sized companies. Like Macron, the New Labour was also keen to increase investments in infrastructure, science, and research. Blair's goals were taken seriously at the time, and the New Labour Government achieved many of them over time. However, Blair's vision focused on domestic issues and the continental level, compared to Macron, who has faced entirely new challenges, especially the emergency of China, the difficult partnership with Donald Trump, and a fragmented EU where the vision and goals of various member states often seem at odds with one another. The following section will focus on Macron's ideas of the key elements and tasks of the welfare state or welfare society. More specifically, I will discuss and identify the risks and threats which exist because of the risk society, but which can also occur as part of natural development.

4.2 The Problems with Social Security Must Be Addressed

Macron has been heavily criticised throughout his presidency. It is argued that his reforms, especially the tax policy, only benefit the wealthiest or educated demographic, enterprises and the big companies. This has also been the main complaint of the Yellow Vests protesters discussed earlier. We have already noticed certain contradictions between the practises and the values the Fifth Republic has represented and continues to represent. This can be observed, for instance, at all levels of education and pension systems, but there have also been several examples in the economic and business world. I will next briefly present Macron's social security reforms which have traditionally been considered a complicated and unequal system by the French. Since the early days of his presidential campaign, Macron has regularly used the term "social investment state", the idea of which, briefly, is to foster and develop the human capital based on the changed paradigm of the welfare state. In practice, Macron was committed to a fundamental reform of the French traditional welfare state model which, he argued, did not serve its citizens equally (Macron 2018c, 9, Macron 2017ce, 10). Macron wanted to design a welfare state model which would offer universal, efficient, and responsible services to all citizens (Macron 2018c9-10). Macron's ideas about the welfare state were similar to Giddens'

vision of a social investment state, which would operate in the context of a positive welfare state society (Giddens 1998, 117).

As a former banker, Macron had a great interest in supervising where and how the public money was spent. Macron also wanted to set new goals for civil servants and the other operators who were managing the Government's task. The key words were openness, availability, and accountability. It was clear that people were well-informed and aware of where investments in education, for example, would lead, and which policies would work in practice, and which would not. All these reforms and plans for further reforms reflect Macron's desire to create a new political culture in France. He wanted to propose policies that were concrete and measurable and had little patience for what he considered endless thinking and talking. Macron had noted that citizens were not in an equal position in case of unemployment because there was significant variation in the benefits, resources, and services available for different professions. Against this background, Macron wanted to design a new universal unemployment insurance. He was convinced that in a constantly changing and unpredictable world, unemployment could no longer be a risk against which some are covered individually and others by weaker collective agreements. (Macron 2016,16, Macron 2017ca7, 13, Macron 2017b,12, Macron 2017a, 10-11, Macron 2017a, 1,12.)

Macron emphasised many times that unemployment could impact everybody and all professions. (Macron 2017h, 119-120, Macron 2017ce, 10). Based on these well-known facts it was clear that the entire unemployment insurance system needed a reform (Macron 2017h, 119-120, Macron 2017ce, 10). But how did Macron plan to implement these reforms? First, Macron wanted to make it easier to access which meant the simplification of the whole system (Macron 2017ce, 10). The second reform was connected to the profound reform of the pension system which involved re-evaluation of the minimum retirement age (Macron 2017, ce10). One of main political and social debates during the last year has been the pension reform. Reform of the French pension system was one of Macron's key election promises, and its implementation should not have come as a surprise to his supporters or anyone else. However, the pension reform has profoundly divided the country as the basic idea was to simplify and transliterate the system, which is complicated, unequal and expensive (Macron 2017 ce, 10). An example of this is the fact that there have been 42 different pension arrangements in France; certain professions, for example among railroad workers, the employees retire at the age of 50. (Macron 2017ce, 10)

Macron has fought hard against the opposition, and he is not the only politician who has been in trouble trying to overhaul local pension systems. According to

Piketty, the pension system has become so complex everywhere in western democracies that it has been almost impossible to make any substantial reforms. Piketty refers to the phenomenon where there exist countless schemes for civil servants, private sector workers, entrepreneurs and self-employed. “The French system is so complex that young wage earners do not necessarily understand what kind of pension they are entitled to. Some speculate that they will be left without a pension at all, even though the whole system relies on a very large general pension contribution (25 % of gross wages).” (Piketty 2014, 44)

However, one of the most important social security reforms was to establish a system where all citizens were entitled to the same benefits and, this time, the coverage would also be extended to independent workers and those who are self-employed. Macron wanted to create new social security administration called SSI (Sécurité sociale indépendants) for all self-employed workers and business owners and abolish the old RSI (Régime social des indépendants), because it was not equal for everybody (France 2 2017, 6.45, Macron 2017 ce,7, Macron 2017a,10). Macron’s idea was that all SSI’s clients would have an opportunity to reach the same quality of services with the same benefits by going through a process that would be considerably more streamlined procedures than under the old administration. (France 2 2017, 6.45, Macron 2017 ce,7, Macron 2017a,10)

Macron wanted his reform to consider that many business owners are micro-entrepreneurs and independents. The aim of the reform, among other things, was to remove the social charges of the entry-level micro-enterprises, improve the position of the independent workers previously practically excluded from social security, and guarantee the same rights to retraining in case of unemployment. In reality, nearly all of these independent workers had been excluded from the social security system, and because of that, Macron used the phrase “being entitled to unemployment”. This was a significant group of workers, estimated at between two–three million people. (Macron 2017bb, 5, Macron 2017ca,7.)

According to Macron, the new unemployment insurance would cover all professions, including workers, artisans, independent traders, entrepreneurs, and farmers, and it would facilitate transitions from one profession to another. (Macron 2017ca, 7), (Macron 2017db, 14-15), (Macron 2017bb,7), (France 2, 30.00-31.00.) In short, Macron wanted to guarantee the same rights for everyone professions, irrespective of profession or one’s education. (Macron 2017ca, 7), (Macron 2017db, 14-15), (Macron 2017bb,7), (France 2, 30.00-31.00.) A feature of risk society is that jobs and professions can come and go, and there will always be a need to re-educate oneself and continue life-long learning (Macron 2017ca, 7), (Macron 2017db, 14-15),

(Macron 2017bb,7), (France 2, 30.00-31.00.) However, it is important to note that there was also an increasing demand for the Government to support attempts to change one's career (Macron 2017ca, 7), (Macron 2017db, 14-15), (Macron 2017bb,7). More specifically, Macron wanted to enhance this development: according to him, people should be able to embrace new challenges with the security of unemployment benefits, if they engaged in legitimate job search where the Government's officials controlled the job search (Macron 2017ca, 7), (Macron 2017db, 14-15), (Macron 2017bb,7). In the quote below, Macron describes a proposal that would guarantee equal rights to everyone in case of unemployment. Macron's politics were driven by at the same time with the principles of individual responsibility and active citizenship and belief that the Government should play a critical role supporting people and offering them incentives but also demanding individual efforts to educate or re-train oneself when necessary (Macron 2017db, 14-15, Macron 2017ca, 7).

Creating a society of work also means providing necessary protections for everyone. And so, we will create a new professional security by changing the rules of unemployment and continuing education. What does it mean? That everyone will be entitled to unemployment, whatever the status: artisans, traders, farmers, self-employed will be entitled to unemployment. And at the same time, I will be more demanding with everyone. It is not normal that we cannot really look for a job, that we can repeatedly refuse the offers that are made. And so, because unemployment there will be universal protection, there will be stronger controls and, with this new right, new duties. And at the second refusal, an employee will lose this compensation for unemployment. (Macron 2017ca, 7.)

I noted how in this speech Macron wanted the Government to empower people and boost the labour markets. It was also clear that all employees have similar social rights and universal protection but also same responsibilities in case of unemployment. In practice this meant that the unemployed were required to actively apply for new jobs or participate in retraining organised by either the public or the private sector and supervised by the public administration. The social benefits and universal protection did not come automatically. A limited safety net was cast for people who wanted to apply for new jobs, and job seekers were obliged to accept the offered employment. (Macron 2017ca, 7.)

The proposals were based on ideas introduced in Giddens' life politics which were part of his third way theory. Life politics and the second chance concerns an individual citizen's personal experience and self-identity, often on questions around work. Giddens argued that "no one who is unemployed would take any job that was

available.” More precisely, this means that “politics of second chances would concentrate on how paid unemployment relates to other aspects of individuals’ experiences and life values in respect of various different transitions in, or changes of, their social circumstances” (Giddens 1994, 185-186). We can see direct correlation between Giddens’ idea and Macron’s politics, resigning safely from old work which, for a reason or another was not fulfilling, would give a start to a more satisfactory career, where the values and various other aspects concerning the wishes and personality of the employee would be better aligned. The next section will study Macron’s concern about the increasing poverty and social exclusion in France. Most of the causes behind this trend were possible to trace to unequal education, especially the weak level of education among immigrant families.

4.2.1 Macron: Accelerating Social Mobility Is a Priority

As mentioned, France has not been able to prevent social exclusion, structural unemployment and many other social phenomena which frequently rise to the surface. Macron did not want to ignore the phenomena, and he wanted to address the root causes, the decline in learning outcomes and the lack of equality and quality in the French school system. A tangible example of his plans was already seen during his presidential campaign. Macron named his 2018 programme against poverty and exclusion using the name of the chapter in his autobiography in which he focused on these themes: *Doing more for those who have less.* (Macron 2017h, 122.)

“The fight against poverty is a constant fight, on which I am mobilised in our cities as in the National Assembly. In this regard, I salute the work undertaken for many years by the associations of Bagneux, Malakoff and Montrouge in favour of solidarity and support for our most fragile citizens. You can count on my determination to put in place, concretely, the measures of the poverty plan for the benefit of all. Our goal is not that the poorest French people live a little better in poverty, it is that they get out of it permanently. We can eradicate the great poverty in our country. If France is not leading this battle no-one will lead it.” (Macron 2018)

“I am a strong believer in a society that provides choices – a society freed of any obstacles and released from obsolete structural framework in which all individuals can decide how to live their own lives, however without solidarity, such a society would degenerate into separatism, exclusion and violence. The freedom to make one’s own life choices would be reserved for the strongest and not for the weakest.” (Macron 2017h, 123.)

Macron launched his poverty plan in September 2018. The plan was based on ideas already introduced during his presidential campaign (Macron 2017h, 122-138, Macron 2016, 12, Macron 2017a,12-13). The poverty plan was based on two pillars: prevention of precariousness (especially among the youngest citizens); and assistance with reintegration into employment, which was the ultimate target of the whole plan. Macron focused his attention on how people's needs, and wishes were very different from those of the previous generation because of the structural changes, for example, in professional life. It is safe to say that when introducing his ideas, Macron was aware of the trends, problems, and challenges of the modern world, like the changing nature of work and the increasing demands of employers to deregulate the labour market by local or branch-level agreements. (Macron 2017db, 14-15.)

One of Macron's most significant reforms concerned residents of problem suburbs, sometimes described as a group of "forgotten France". Typically, these people were non-skilled, often unemployed manufacturing workers or the less educated people from immigrant backgrounds. The goal of the poverty plan was to improve the everyday life of the most vulnerable. Macron was particularly focused on improving and protecting the fundamental rights of children. This meant that Macron wanted early interventions and was ready to significantly increase funding for resources available to young pupils who were in danger of exclusion from their studies because of insufficient reading, writing and maths skills. Access to learning support was often limited, and there were many unnecessary obstacles between an individual and an institute organising training or schooling. Macron also commented on the problems of the quality of education and outdated learning methods, which did not correspond to modern needs. (Macron 2017a, 12, Macron 2017b, 12, Macron 2017h, 118-119.)

In practice, the programme was focused on the elementary school and the duplication of the REP (réseaux d'éducation prioritaire, priority education networks) education. The programme would increase five-fold the number of children who could participate in priority education between 2017–2019 (Rossi 2018, 1-2, Macron 2017h, 97). The idea of the programme was to channel resources to disadvantaged neighbourhoods, typically associated with low incomes and high levels of unemployment. The goal was also to create thirty thousand new places in daycare and increase support for low-income families by guaranteeing a third of the childcare costs subsidised by the Government. In the most challenging areas, the programme also sponsored a free school-based breakfast for children, and the families in the lowest income bracket could purchase school meals for their children for as little as 1 € per meal. Macron was convinced that it was in the school where the young people

first encountered and learned the values that the whole society represents, whether these were values of equality or inequality. Therefore, advancing equality and resolving grievances was a top priority for all politicians. (Rossi 2018, 2, Macron 2017cd: 2:36:35-2.)

“One revolution that we truly need is the transformation of our schools. There are three lines of action. First, in primary school. Because that is where inequalities take root, and where we can have the greatest impact. In France, public investment in primary schools is noticeably lower than the average for developed countries. For as long as we do not attain better results in our primary schools, the situation in middle schools, where we seek to integrate a population in great need, will not improve. Let us therefore establish a better performing and more equitable kindergarten and elementary school system as our principal goal”. (Macron 2017h, 99.)

France has always been known as a country of civilization where institutions of higher education and some of the very first universities in Europe were established, but today, the situation is very different from it used to be. As the poor PISA results indicated, in mathematics, for example, France was among the weakest countries in Europe. According to Macron, the problem was not only pedagogical or academic, but it also reflected societal acceptance, under-achievement, and lack of sufficient efforts to improve the situation. Once again, Macron warned of a disquieting trend: social exclusion, dropping out of school and, in the worst-case scenario, drifting to crime. Ultimately, the question of how to fix the system was connected to republican values, and it was thus the responsibility of the public power to take care of it. (Macron 2017a, 12-13, Macron 2017h, 97)

At this point in my analysis, I want to discuss the concerns of young people in the suburbs, and the problems they face when they grow up and their compulsory education ends. According to Macron, there were every year some one hundred thousand young people who left the French school system without a qualification or vocational training, and there were 1 million young people without sufficient education (Macron 2017h 100). Macron’s programme placed special emphasis on youth who were reluctant to continue their studies at the high school level, and who were in danger of becoming marginalised after primary education because of their poor school results and weak learning skills¹⁰. (Macron 2017, h, 99.)

¹⁰ Macron’s idea of the same primary school and its positive impact on the whole society is an old one. According to Winock (2017) and Craiutu (2002), François Guizot already emphasised that it would be important that the masses and the nations’s elite have similar educational foundation which creates social coherence among citizens (Winock 2017, 904, Craiutu 2002, 10). This will be discussed in more detail in the theory chapter of the dissertation.

Macron wanted to create a massive apprenticeship and vocational training programme (at a cost of €15 billion) as an alternative for young people with difficulties with or lack of interest in academic study. Macron wanted to merge two already existing programmes, combining several grant schemes into a single grant that would be allocated based on the size of the company and the apprentices' level of skills (Macron 2017bb, 5-6). Macron also wanted his government to focus on the less educated long-term unemployed. Macron's Government will also continue the generalisation of the youth guarantee, which will be oriented to precarious young people neither in training nor in employment (Macron 2017bb,8). Macron emphasised that life-long learning was necessary to secure individual freedom with the obligation to accept a job, apprenticeship, or study place, when such were offered (Macron 2017b,11).

The next section will examine one of the most serious challenges of France: social mobility in France is among the lowest in Europe, and this trend has existed for a very long time. There are many reasons behind this phenomenon but, once again, lack of decent schooling and the excluded societal system will emerge as the main reasons for the low social mobility. The contemporary debate in France has questioned the status of ENA and other elite schools and whether they add real value to society. Elite schools have been accused of bouncing off the birth of a closed elite where the student's choice policy has skewed and based on wealth and money. I will discuss these issues in more detail and analyse how Macron, a former student of ENA, has reacted to these accusations.

According to the France Strategy report (2018), some of the main problems in France for the past 30 years have been the very low social mobility, unemployment, real poverty, and various problems related to unequal education and social security. It has been estimated that low social mobility is an even worse problem for the society than changes in real wages. It is estimated that for a person born into a low-income family it would take 108 years to reach a level equivalent to middle class. All these problems have prevailed despite one of the most generous welfare-state models France has had during the last decades. (France Strategie 2018, 2.)

4.2.2 Life-Long Learning

Like Blair in the late 1990s, Macron focused on older pupils with fewer opportunities to educate themselves in traditional ways. More specifically, both Macron and Blair were aware that there will always be a certain number of students who are not

interested in continuing studies after finishing compulsory secondary education. Macron wanted to create a massive apprenticeship and vocational training programme (at a cost of € fifteen billion) as an alternative for young people with difficulties with or lack of interest in academic study. The President of the Republic wanted to merge two already existing programmes, combining several grant schemes into a single grant that would be allocated based on the size of the company and the apprentices' level of skills (Macron 2017bb, 5-6). Macron also wanted his government to focus on the less educated long-term unemployed, emphasising simultaneously that life-long learning was necessary to secure individual freedom with the obligation to accept a job, apprenticeship, or study place, when such were offered (Macron 2017b,11).

The following quotes will open up more precisely Macron's views on education, and training which goal was to secure especially the young citizens integration to the labour markets. Macron wanted to keep in mind the connection between work and training, and how important it would be to secure permanent employment instead of the temporary or precarious work (Rossi 2018, 2). The purpose of the internship program was to guarantee a training path for all young people by extension of training obligation to 18 years, generalisation of the youth guarantee allowing young people in very precarious situations to find employment and strengthening of social assistance for children up to 21 years of age. (Rossi 2018, 2.)

“In addition to this reform, we will also reform the apprenticeship and professional training system. These are two crucial elements in our education reform. Why? Because if we want to support people in this global change, we must offer them something. These last few years, both the left and the right promised to protect individuals from change. But sometimes we need to step up! On the contrary, we must stay anchored and provide genuine protection for people, genuine protection which is achieved through training to enable these people to get a job.” (Macron 2018a, 1-3.)

“True equality of opportunity is to allow everyone to have a guarantee and can access compensation when they are unemployed whatever their condition. But at the same time there are rights and duties, and when a decent job given the qualifications is presented, it must be accepted, that is responsibility. And this professional security, it is also that which makes us train everyone, it is a revolution in our learning, because we will have to focus these resources on those who have them most need. We will have to concentrate on the means to enable them at each age to have training for six months, one year or two years to return to a decent job.” (Macron 2017b, 12.)

Internship schemes were also important for Tony Blair's administration, and social exclusion in Great Britain decreased in the early 2000s.). Like Blair earlier, Macron was aware of the at-risk groups, typically the young people whose potential was

somewhere else than at school, and felt it was important to give them a helping hand for instance by improved apprenticeship programmes. Blair declared in 1997 that “the UK had a smaller share of seventeen–eighteen year-olds in full-time education than any major industrial nation and nearly two thirds of the British workforce lack vocational qualifications”. Blair and the New Labour were among the first politicians and political movements to realise the importance of the life-long learning ideology for the future. The 1997 New Labour Party manifesto declared:

“We must learn throughout life, to retain employment through new and improved skills. We will promote adult learning both at work and in the critical sector of further education. We will invest public money for training in individual learning accounts which individuals – for example women returning to the labour force – can then use to gain the skills they want.” (New Labour 1997)

The Labour Party Manifesto (1997) declared: “Our plan is to tailor our education system to individual pupil needs with parents supporting teachers and support staff in further raising standards.” There was an increasing need for cooperation between parents, who were seen as “responsible consumers of the education”, and the teachers. According to the New Labour politicians, parents were the experts in choosing the right kind of school for their children. In practice, this meant that if the school did not achieve certain learning outcomes, they could close down the school and have a new one start on the same site. New Labour declared the party would never put dogma before children’s education: “Our approach will be to intervene where there are problems, not where schools are succeeding.” (The New Labour 1997.)

Here again I can see the notion of decent work as the best form of social security. According to Giddens, “the best protection against poverty is holding a good job”, and spending money on desired public goods, like training, education and skills is more recommendable than investing money upon unemployment benefits (Giddens 2002, 17). Wanting to address the above-mentioned enduring problems, Macron and his administration created an education guarantee to all 18-year-olds who were in danger of exclusion from the labour market and society. The programme will have half million beneficiaries between 2018–2022, and a total governmental investment of €100 million. The programme was designed to address the individual and their needs and avoid administrative bureaucracy. Briefly: the most important goal was to secure and guarantee the individual success and development in education. (Macron 2017b,1).

Macron follows Anthony Giddens’ idea of the workfare society where social benefits are not a solution in the long run, but the work itself, as it creates the

possibilities to reach the level of emancipation when the citizen is able to implement their wishes and desires. It is a well-established fact that in France the unemployment rate among North-African and Middle Eastern minorities is at least twice as high than for the native French demographic, and the problems of these minorities typically begin in early childhood. Poverty is inherited, and Macron wanted to target these at-risk groups with his programmes. (Statista 2020.)

Alongside the low social mobility, another pressing and embarrassing problem in France is its huge number of people living in poverty. This demographic is exceptionally large at nearly 14 % of the whole population, almost 9 million people (INSEE 2016, Rossi 2018). This is an important fact to discuss because it is closely connected to the previous problem: poverty and low education are often inherited, making social mobility more unlikely. France Strategie (2018) reports concludes that the risk of drifting into poverty exists and extends even to the generation who are currently between 30 and 45 years old. Their risk of drifting into poverty depends mostly on their social and educational background, and less on gender, age and ethnicity, as has often been assumed. This effect is largely explained by the influence of social background on the level of qualification attained by the individual: inequality in educational opportunities explains half of the differences in average standard of living between the children of workers and the children of managers. (France Strategie 2018, 8.)

The second focus area and policy proposal were funding of support for pupils with learning difficulties, and especially early intervention. This concern led to several concrete acts, and Macron's administration made considerable investments in learning support. According to the Ministry of National Education (2018), the number of the pupils who received learning support increased from sixty thousand in 2017 to one hundred ninety thousand in 2018 and reached three hundred thousand in 2019. The additional investment in learning support has been fundamental, but of course it is clear that the results will not be visible until years later and depend on many other factors as well, such as the level of individual effort. As we have already noticed, poverty and exclusion from society often begins in early childhood, living conditions, in addition to the family background, plays a significant role. (Ministry of National Education 2018)

Macron has often expressed how lucky he was, being surrounded in his early years by educated parents, and good teachers and professors, while emphasising that this is not the case for everyone in France. Macron wanted to focus attention on reinforcing the individualization of learning by developing digital media and adapted applications to change teaching practises. More precisely, Macron outlined that it

would be necessary to start the basics of reading, writing and mathematics already in kindergarten by the enhanced support and individualised learning from kindergarten to the primary education which give everyone an opportunity to succeed. This was to assess the needs of a great number of students who leave primary school without sufficient level of reading, writing, and maths. The goal for Macron was an education reform in which high schools would prepare pupils for either rapid and successful professional integration or the pursuit of higher education. (Macron 2017b, 1-3.)

Ultimately, Macron's goal was a profound and systematic change of the entire culture of education and governance in France. He wanted to increase the autonomy of schools, colleges, and universities, but also other institutions, such as hospitals and police stations, by increasing the autonomy of teachers and professors. According to Macron, it was essential to overhaul the rigid Jacobin-Gaullist culture of centralised governance, where few important decisions trickled down to the local level. This phenomenon was also criticised by Macron's mentor Michel Rocard in his last interview in 2016. According to Rocard, most of the contemporary social and economic problems were based on the politics and culture in which the possibilities of the free market were completely ignored, in stark contrast, for example, to the prevalent culture in Germany. (Macron 2017h, 234, Le Point 2016, Macron 2017dc,18, Macron 2016, 10.)

“When people's backgrounds and positions are more and more diverse, it is essential to move away from a uniform approach. If we fail to do this, public intervention will perpetuate and even exacerbate inequalities where it ought to correct them. This requires a radical change in the role of the state. It must become a true social investor, that sees individuals not as what they are, but as what they can become and what they can contribute to the public good. So, the state must not limit itself to providing a safety net –this is, of course, the least it should do. It needs to enable each person, wherever they are, to express all their talents and all their human qualities. The state must place the accent on intervention before the fact, which is less costly and more effective. This is particularly evident in healthcare, where an ambitious prevention policy is essential.” (Macron 2017h, 123-124.)

“Firstly, I would like to talk about human capital. Our world has changed and, today, we need fewer arms and more brains; we need educated, trained individuals. France's men and women must be able to adapt to change and must be educated effectively. We have therefore started to profoundly reform our education system today, and no later than today, to educate and train our citizens because when we look at the rankings – and Angel Gurría is with us on this – I am sorry about the last few years but, as it stands, we have dropped down from the tables.” (Macron 2018a, 1-3.)

When I examine the policy goals of Macron's administration, I will notice many similarities with Blair and the Labour Party manifesto of 1997, more precisely this

chosen policy meant that there existed the increasing demand for the cooperation between the children's parents who were seen as "responsible consumers of the education". There was an increasing demand for tailor-made solutions because student backgrounds varied to the extent that a uniform approach would not be possible (Macron 2017h 123-124). According to Macron, this meant that the state should become a true social investor, especially in education (Macron 2017h, 123-124).

Behind new principles of education was the basic idea the state should recognize the value of the work of teachers and professors. Macron was convinced that the education system was not an integral part of the rest of the society, and it had to change with the rest of society. These above-mentioned ideas were not merely expressed in speeches – there were policy goals and objectives and practical initiatives behind them. Like I have already pointed out, Macron has been keen to provide opportunities for personal progress, whether this is a question of working conditions, unemployment or other instances where Government support and a well-designed public policy can make a difference. In the case of education, Macron considered it important that, at the beginning of every semester, there would be personalised assessments to provide teachers with necessary information about the skills of individual students thus helping select and develop teaching methods best suited to everyone's needs. (Macron 2017b, 1-3.)

As I continue to examine the French system, Piketty and Tirole have remarked that the weakest primary schools and high schools in less popular areas in France typically have less educated and less experienced teachers. Tirole argues that this system routinely works for "the detriment of the most disadvantaged and in favour of the better informed and those whose parents live in well-off neighbourhoods." In practice this means that these schools spend less public money per pupil than the schools with better learning outcomes. The consequence of this policy is very detrimental to the whole society (Tirole 2017, 56, Piketty 2014, 441, 521.)

According to Tirole, the French education system has excellent egalitarian goals, which are based on the national curriculum, but unfortunately in practice, the system has led to significant inequalities. Interestingly, public opinion is typically negative when discussion turns to the question of increasing teachers' autonomy and experimentation in the classroom. It is curious that the public tends to consider these new elements as threats to equality, even though their purpose is to increase incentives for learning, not only for teachers, but especially for students. However, Macron was keen on decentralised governance and decision-making at all levels,

outlining his vision in a 2019 letter addressed to all citizens. (Tirole 2017, 56, Le Point 2019, 1, Macron 2019, 4, Macron 2017h, 233-238, The Economist 2017, 10.)

4.2.3 Higher Education Is in Trouble

The inherent weaknesses in the French education system were not limited to primary school, but existed in higher education as well. As discussed, the ENA has become an institutional powerhouse and a stronghold in France with alumni with powerful networks. According to Dulong & Matonti (2007), the ENA as an institute has created a new nobility of the state, who attach themselves to the top of the hierarchy in politics, administration, culture, and business in France. (Dulong & Matonti, 1 2007.)

The idea behind the founding of the ENA was to prevent the mistakes of the French authorities in the 1930s and during the Second World War. A new trend after the war confirmed the significance and status of the ENA: the professionalisation of political life increased the demand for new skills and knowledge in politics, but also in business, culture, and administration. During the 1970s, politics became a profession for many talented graduates of the ENA. These alumni, several former heads of state among them, have played significant roles at the very top of the French political hierarchy. (François 2011, 6, 16, Dulong & Matonti, 1 2007, Brezis & Crouzet 1999, 237.)

Macron gained considerable attention when he announced that he wanted to abolish the ENA in its current form and reform it to reflect the modern values of the country and better address the needs of the society Macron envisioned for the future. Macron considered it problematic that the ENA students tended to come from similar backgrounds, often from the wealthy Parisian families. Macron's criticism was not a new one: Brezis & Crouzet had argued in 1999 that the ENA students were recruited from a very small pool of candidates who typically came from the same part of the country, even after the school was moved from Paris to Strasbourg in 1991 during the premiership of Edith Cresson. Similar background of the French elite has led to monolithic thinking which is particularly prevalent in the economy. Although Brezis & Crouzet saw that the shared background and education had previously resulted in "positive effects during the period of innovation", this had turned into a disadvantage for a country during the modern technological revolution. (Le Point 2019,1, Le Monde 2019, 1, Brezis & Crouzet 1999, 236-237.)

In any case, as I return more specifically to the challenges of French higher education, our attention will be drawn to the open system that has created inefficiency (Macron 2018a,1). University students have suffered from the lack of guidance and other necessary support, which has led to the current situation in which every year a huge number of students interrupt their studies because the courses and programmes they have applied for have not met with their expectations. (Macron 2017h 101)

The second grievance relates to the previous claim and forms a paradox and combines the supposed egalitarianism of French higher education. The consequence of the open model policy is that there are huge numbers of students who fail at the end of their first or second year in the university. The system is based on the idea that the students with the poorest performance are eliminated after the first years of study and will not be able to graduate. As Tirole remarks, these eliminated students have wasted, in the worst case, up to three years of their lives, studying in vain. Tirole also notes that the practice of elimination typically does not apply to students from privileged backgrounds. In short, “the French educational system is a vast crime network of insider trading.” (Tirole 2017, 56.)

Echoing Tirole and other scholars, Piketty has argued that although the official France has gladly spoken in favour of a discourse of meritocracy, the reality is very different. The structural inequality has not been limited to primary schools; the problem exists in higher education as well. A telling example, as Piketty points out, is that despite some students from lower-income backgrounds, the average family income of a student in the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po) is ninety thousand per year. The inequality deepens when the Government distributes money among universities, grandes écoles and other higher institutions. Elite universities with their students from elite backgrounds regularly receive more Government funding than other state universities. Briefly, “the inequality due to social considerations is supported by the public funds”. However, as Piketty reminds us, the perfect higher education system does not exist yet; this problem is one of the biggest challenges the welfare states face in near future. (Piketty 2014, 441, 521.)

According to Giddens, one of the most important goals of all Governments is to promote the active development of human capital through its central role in the education system. To Giddens, equality does not mean the distribution of income by the distribution of possibilities and focus on cultivating human capital that is needed to secure the cohesion of the meritocratic society (Giddens 1998, 47-48). If the meritocratic society is in danger, it could threaten social peace, particularly if the middle class fails in their lives. (Giddens 1998, 47-48, 101).

As I continue my analysis of Macron's position on pro-market and pro-business ideologies, it is impossible to ignore the significance of the ENA with its network of former students, who to all intents and purposes run the country. It is quite clear that as a former student of the ENA, Macron was aware how the elitist and insular French system works; this is a fact he himself was quick to admit. Macron gained attention by demanding a systematic overhaul of the culture represented by the ENA. Briefly, Macron's reformist ideas are on a collision course with the policy and culture the ENA and, more broadly, the French society represent (Bloomberg 2019). More specifically, this criticism is based on and closely connected to pro-business ideology which I will discuss next.

4.2.4 The ENA and Its Contradictory Reputation in France

According to Maclean, Harvey, Chia (2010) and Scott (1991), the existence and the strength of the power elite is based on their capacity to create trans-corporate networks where the personal and capital connections are entangled. The second detail concerns the shared directorship and is highlighted especially in case of the large companies and corporations. The consequence of the phenomenon has been that they have been raised and formed the highest floor inside the ruling capitalist class that is exceptionally clear and typical in the case of France. There is evidence that "reciprocal directors mandates and cross-shareholdings foster cohesive corporate ties", which give birth to a strong inner circle of the business, cultural and political life of the country where the business and pleasure have mixed and reinforced themselves, forming multi-strand relations and contacts. (Maclean, Harvey, Chia 2010, 336-337, Scott 1991, 181-203).

Despite some efforts to prevent this development through governance reform – as discussed in Barbier (2003) – the elite in France remains extremely powerful and influential. When examining the phenomenon of shared dictatorship in France, it is useful to analyse Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the social capital and especially the field of power at its purest form. According to Maclean etc. Bourdieu saw the modern world as "highly differentiated and stratified". While divided, there existed simultaneously various subfields between the actors who were able to make connections with others without necessarily knowing each other. (Maclean, Harvey, Chia 2010, 336-337.)

According to Bourdieu (1980), "social capital is based on various forms of resources which already exist or will be possibly to be used in future". The resources

also have a connection to the occupation of a sustainable network which is in many cases institutionalised one way or another. Secondly, it is worth noting that this phenomenon is interactive in nature and that the people who possess social capital often belong to a certain group with the same educational, cultural, or economic background, and that their group therefore also possesses symbolic capital. This group can renew its social capital, and they are able to act like a group of agents, having useful connections and other links which work well regardless of the current social situation of their country. Bourdieu (2012) argued that the elite belonged to the intelligence, the technocrats, and other highly educated and networked people, with legitimate and natural authority in the eyes of the citizens that was based on science and knowledge. (Bourdieu 1980, 1, Bourdieu 2012, 324.)

A brief look at the numbers and cultural features of the French companies in the near past suggests some interesting details concerning the key figures, and how the role of state and the certain elites have been central at least until Macron took office. As I already know, the French economy has always been closely connected to politics, with shared interests between politicians and company leaders: to secure, in a spirit of pro-business ideology, the achieved advantages of the companies, and to protect the French companies from competition from foreign businesses. In this case, meritocracy, social capital and the contemporary system of exclusion have given birth to a group of public capitalists who have used their achieved positions and networks for common good, saving existing jobs but forgetting the idea of the creative destruction which, in a long run, might create sustainable and real value to owners, workers and small investors. In practice, this has meant taxpayer interventions to save certain companies from bankruptcy. (Scherrer 2016, 50-51, Bénard 2010, 2-3.) The following examples will illuminate in more detail how the closed French system has operated until recently.

When analysing the French economic landscape, I cannot ignore the role of the state and certain prevalent suspicions towards the free markets and capitalism in general. As Levy argues, France has for a long time embodied the possibilities for state-led or dirigiste economic development. It is important to keep in mind that the role of the French politicians and civil servants has been exceptionally strong and influential; they have had, for instance, a significant role in ranking and prioritising companies. More specifically, the civil service has a long tradition of “manipulating the array of policy instruments including trade protection, to subsidies, to cheap credit, to exemption from price controls” with the goal of accelerating the economy and economic modernization. Levy continues by analysing the kinds of roles the state authorities have had supervising and allocating resources to certain, often

privileged, groups. The highest priorities were investments, industry, and big business, leaving consumption, agriculture; the lowest were small businesses. The weak position of the last three economic sectors is in some ways surprising, and this comes up frequently in the media as winegrowers and other agricultural producers demand better conditions for their livelihoods. (Levy 2011, 5.)

The state authorities also had the power to pick winners in heavy industry, such as coal and steel – but also during the 1970s when *Les Trente Glorieuses* ended. This era was characterised by the emergence of nuclear power and telecommunications as major industry sectors, soon overtaking for example the coal industry. These multinational corporations, also called national champions, were important standard-bearers in France in the ever-intensifying struggle for economic leadership. The common interests emerged also in situations where these “national champions” lacked capital: state authorities were always ready to help by offering cheap capital and loans and guaranteed access to state markets. Public aid was not limited to financing, but also extended to cases concerning technology. If the national champion needed lab services, the “state-run labs performed research for them, transferring cutting-edge solutions in computers, nuclear power, high-speed trains, and digital telecommunications switches”. (Cohen & Bauer 1985; Cohen 1992, Levy 2008, 419-420, Levy 2011, 5.)

In 2015 alone, the total depreciation made by Areva, EDF, Engie and SNCF reached €25 billion. Over the past year, the portfolio of state-owned shares in listed companies has lost more than 28 % of its value. The total amount of its holdings has dropped from €123 billion to € sixty billion in just 10 years. There are many companies, some better-known than others, where the state has an interest as an owner (SNCF 100 %, La Poste 73.4 %, EDF 84.6 %, ADP 50.6 %), or the state owns a part of the company for one reason or another (Areva 28.8 %, Renault 19.7 %, Engie 32.76 %, Thales 26.3 %) (Haquet 2016).

According to Scherrer, competition for political good can be compared to competition for wealth, and in the strict sense of the word, there is no liberal competition in politics. Scherrer was convinced that political competition is always oligopolistic where a chosen and networked elite dominate and control their interests. A small number of individuals or groups compete for goods, the main one being participation in power. The best-organised policy reduces the oligopoly to the duopoly, the rivalry of the two parties. (Scherrer 2016, 50-51.)

It is quite clear that if the above-mentioned phenomena recur from decade to decade, it will become a reality for both the politicians and the business leaders of the most important CAC 40 companies (the 40 largest companies in Paris stock

market) and other members of the exclusive elite. There exists, according to Scherrer “a dangerous confusion of the interests that does not lead our businesses and the laws which regulate their activities in a good direction”. A good example of this is the competitive bidding of a new high-speed railroad network. SNCF, France’s main train operator, was forced to participate in the competitive bidding by politicians even though everyone was aware that it would never be a profitable move for the company that has long struggled with huge losses and a massive debt of €35 billion. (Scherrer 2016, 50-51, Reuters 2018.)

Babeau was very critical of the French system, arguing that the French state is in service for certain interests and interest groups and is an environment where bureaucracy flourishes and protects the achieved benefits of the civil servants and state companies’ employees (Babeau 2017, 121, 124, 139). Civil servants and the administration should serve its citizens, and this is not the case in today’s France. The problem gets worse as the civil servants have grown to exercise political power (Babeau 2017, 121, 124, 139). Before Macron’s era, there had been few efforts to improve frequently blurred and ambiguous relations between the state, companies, and civil servants. As Barbier remarked, there was, already in 2003, a committee that published a report of new ideas on how to act, develop and improve the management of the state-owned companies (Barbier, Joly, Rouvilloism, David 2003). According to Barbier et al., the existing problem was the result of many premises which were complicated from the very beginning. To give some examples, I will discuss the role of a director which varies from company to company. (Scherrer 2016, 50-51, Barbier etc.2003, 7, Bénard 2010, 3.)

Following a recommendation of a new agency to manage the state holdings of the 77 companies where the state held a role; the APE (Agence des participations de l’État) was subsequently founded in 2004. The roles of executive directors were unified as 53 top civil servants were tasked to create stability and predictability in the companies. They report the collegial nature of the decisions taken and the responsibility attached to them. This meant also that all directors must have the same rights and same obligations, something that was not self-evident before. (Barbier etc., 2003, 16). It can be argued, however, that nothing has changed since the publication of the report and the establishment of the APE. The goal to create a new culture has failed: the results, lack of vision for the future, mass strikes, un-competitiveness, and many other problems of certain companies still exist. Given all this, it was no wonder that the economist Marc Guyot asked: Do we still need a single state-owned company today? (Scherrer 2016, 50-51, Barbier etc.2003, 7, Bénard 2010, 3.)

In any case, as I summarise in this chapter on the themes and ideas on the cultural, political, and economic motivations and characteristics, I have noted that France's development has been quite exceptional compared to other European countries, especially to Germany. As Piketty has formulated, France has experienced one of the most associated state-led industrial growth in Europe, and the consequence has been that France has always held a socialist image in the eyes of its neighbours. In the case of France, the political, administrative, and economic power has centralised and, in many cases, led to distorted competition. It is important to remember that after the war, most key industries were nationalised and, from the early 1950s to 1980s, France was the "kingdom of the capital" (Piketty 2012, 131). Considering this, it is surprising that the bigger picture of France's economic policy is so controversial and, further, that the general claim is still that France has never been a country of pro-capitalism or free market ideology. During the Glory Decades, industrial and tax policies were in many respects more pre-capitalist: the taxation of capital was much lighter than it was, for example, in the United States, the supposedly promised land of free markets (Prasad, 2005 15).

When I discuss the role of the companies in the French society and economy, I notice how all the actors, business leaders, politicians, trade union leaders – thought that the most important thing imaginable is to keep jobs in France, no matter what the cost to the rest of the society, and secure the future of the companies, with support from the Government, if necessary. The basic idea was to secure economic growth even by the superficial way using the tax and spend ideology where, for instance, the questions on social justice were side-lined; this indicates that a "larger state does not necessarily mean a political economy that is oriented toward social justice." (Prasad 2005, 2).

There are many contemporary economists who subscribe to the idea of free markets as creator and motor of wealth of the society. Piketty remarks that there are many economists who support this view and place emphasis on the significance of a competitive market as a tool of reducing social equality (Piketty 2013, 583, Acemoglu & Robinson 2012, 321). Key elements of pro-market systems are economic freedom and open competition, which has been a great challenge to French society and economy since the Fifth Republic was founded (Zingales 2019, 2). Concentration of the ownership hindered market development because the more wealth the owner amassed, the less interest they have in wealthy and fair markets. Instead of this, the main actors will "protect their immediate interest without a fair and objective judicial system." (Zingales 2019, 2)

When I study economic systems in general, one of the most important elements to analyse is whether a country leans towards pro-market or pro-business politics, or whether it is geared towards state capitalism or private capitalism; China and Russia being prime examples of state capitalism. However, there are several examples that have proved that there always exists a certain kind of temptation to lean towards a pro-business ideology instead of the pro-market ideology where even the Presidents and other leaders are involved supporting the companies which have strategic positions concerning for instance the national interest. In the summer of 2019, for instance, Macron and President Donald Trump strongly disagreed over the digital tax which was targeted against the GAFSA companies (Foreign Policy 2019).

By 2018, Macron's politics had faced considerable criticism and he has been accused of using his role as the president to drive the interests of businesses at the expense of employees (Askenazy 2018, Fraser 2017). Askenazy argues that Macron's politics are based on "a reincarnation of the kind of progressive neoliberalism Nancy Fraser recently declared defeated in the United States with the election of Donald Trump" (Askenazy 2018, Fraser 2017). As I discuss competition politics, I can notice that there exists a consensus among economists about the significance of competition: that it creates the foundation to the whole economy and the economic environment but, at the same time, it is considered merely a tool to service the wider society. As capitalism, competition is rarely a completely perfect model, but sometimes needs correction and regulation when results have been weak or less than satisfying. (Tirole 2017, 357.)

Acemoglu & Robinson, Tirole and Macron agree that the markets and capitalism on their own cannot repair themselves without the Government's intervention. This means that in many cases, the state should be strong and governed by the principle of the rule of law. Acemoglu & Robinson and Summers (2014) argue that without the right kind of regulation by the state, the markets and capitalism will drift to exclusiveness once inclusive by its origin. According to Larry Summers, the former secretary of treasury of the United States, (approached the economics and capitalism in the same context saying in his interview, the Government in fact is basically an integral part of the capitalist economy, and should be seen as such, instead of as a nuisance. (Acemoglu & Robinson 2012, 323-333, Tirole 2017, 162, Financial Times 2014: 1:14-2:20, Pedder 2018, 151).)

As I continue this line of thinking, the situation gets worse as the markets become economically and politically powerful, and they are able to abuse their powers by creating monopolies. This applied to the earlier mentioned GAFSA companies, but also to other business giants, such as Chinese actors, which were a great concern to

Macron. As Acemoglu & Robinson has argued, the inclusive institutions, with operations based on openness, accountability and the rule of law, are the only way to fight absence of and unfair competition, because they are able to create “a playing field and economic opportunities for the majority of the people.” (Acemoglu & Robinson 2012, 323-333, Tirole 2017, 162)

Tirole remarks that “the market and the state are not alternatives but, on the contrary, are mutually dependent” – they are undivided, and they need each other so they can do their part in the most effective way. The proper functioning of the market depends on the proper functioning of the state (Tirole 2017, 162). Tirole further argues that France has experienced exceptional development during the decades when the state and industry bodies have intervened the most in contractual relationships between sector bodies and employees; in the UK and the Scandinavian countries, for example, the situation is more flexible (Tirole 2018, 262). As mentioned, in the UK the employee and the employer negotiate agreement on the terms of employment, and in Scandinavia there are specific sector bodies and employees who do the same (Tirole 2018, 262). It is always important to keep in mind that Macron was not hostile towards the state, nor was he a politician who blindly believed in the free market ideology: Macron saw the free markets and the state apparatus in the context of co-operation.

All the previously described elements and phenomena reflect values that are drastically different from those that Macron represents. As I start to examine how Macron expressed his views concerning the insular and elitist system in France, our attention is first drawn to the question of labour markets and pro-business ideology. Macron voiced his opinion about how difficult it has been, for example, for a young and inexperienced professional to integrate into their first jobs, because the system has been so closed. Macron especially brought up the status of the ENA, a symbol of the closed system that smooths the way to well-paid jobs in administration and business. Macron went as far as proposing to abolish the whole institute as its present form, even though the President of the Republic himself is an ENA alumnus who enjoyed the status and benefits of such a young professional.

Secondly, Macron criticised the reality in which the managers of state owned-companies, civil servants and leading politicians have for all practical purposes created a dirigiste economic system which was profoundly unhealthy. Macron saw how politicians, while claiming to work for the common interests of the employees, were mainly preoccupied with securing their achieved benefits and status and maintaining their reputation in the eyes of the public. This was made possible through subsidies, cheap loans and co-operation between the Government and

academic community. Even the situation and the future of the companies was questioned with globalisation or based on other remarkable reasons. The considerable assistance was ultimately coming from the state, which frequently controlled huge domestic markets with superficial, limited, or non-existent competition.

The above-mentioned themes finally bring us to one of Macron's favourite topics in economy: supporting fair and open competition in both domestic and global markets. According to Macron, the key to success in domestic markets were the public-private partnerships where the Government set the rules and the parameters of the game which were the same for all actors, regardless of the ownership or the size of the company. In the international context, Macron was convinced of the need for European cooperation because there was no country in Europe that could fight alone the interests of China or the United States. Ultimately, the question was about politics even though technological issues emerged at the forefront.

The next section will analyse Macron's relation to France's recent past and the country's complex history in general. I will discuss the practical ways in which Macron aimed to advance national reconciliation and support attempts to seek the truth, an exercise he personally considered very important and valuable. I will focus on the Algerian Civil War and its aftermath which have thrown a long shadow over the nation.

4.3 Statism Has a Long and Complex Reputation

It is important to start by defining the concept of statism. To begin with, the French word l'État (the state) has the same number of letters as Dieu (God). According to Babeau, the state has always represented to French citizens virtues such as security, justice, education, health, work and culture. In brief, the state has represented stability and values that are decent and good. At the same time, there has always existed a taboo of the failures of the state, individual interests, compared to the concerns of the state, have been described as of secondary importance. The interests of the individual have been seen as egoistic, and these interests have been frequently mixed with self-serving as commercial activity. (Babeau 2017, 7, 9, Levy 2008, 418-419.)

Levy (2008) sees statism in the following way: In the case of France, the strong central government and a great number of civil servants have always held a central role in decision-making processes whereas powerful interest groups, such as trade

unions and employers' organisations have been left outside of the decision-making. In France, various corporations have been frequently seen as actors who distort the expression of public interest. It is telling that freedom of association became legalised as late as 1901. After the Second World War, and the weak Fourth Republic (1946-1958), there was a need to rebuild the nation. France was drifting to a situation where the strong state, state institutions and centralised administration including the decision making were the only realistic option. However, the state-led policymaking, which also extended to the economy, caused huge domestic problems in the early 1980s. According to Levy, "the dirigiste economic policy-making broke down after François Mitterrand's failed Keynesian experiment in 1983. The concurrent drive towards decentralisation that the new left Government had undertaken in nineteen eighty two-nineteen eighty four underlined the necessity to include local actors". (Levy 2008, 419-422.)

The most important reason behind the development towards Statism, however, was arguably the conduct of private French corporations during the Vichy regime. According to Piketty (2013), the memory of the Vichy regime and the German occupation contributed to suspicions against free market and capitalism. After the war it became widely known that French private companies had made huge profits with Germans. Therefore, the attitudes in France turned increasingly against capitalism and started to favour nationalisation, and many of the mining, finance and car industry were taken over by the Government. (Piketty 2013, 130, Levy 2008, 419-422.)

Piketty's conclusion is that from the 1950s to 1980s, France was a mixed economy: the system was based on state capitalism and state ownership, while in other European countries neoliberalism became prevalent (Piketty 2013, 131-132). Piketty's point is relevant, but he forgets that economic liberation was limited to the questions of ownership. Labour market and labour market policy was, and still is (despite Macron's efforts at reform), exceptionally rigid and based on the protection of workers with complicated regulations. According to Tirole, "even highly specialised professors of labour law do not fully master it. Hence, the adage 'ignorance of the law is not an excuse', which normally makes perfect sense, becomes almost laughable in this context." (Tirole 2018, 262).

Cole argues that French politics have always mattered, and have global significance, because France is looked up to as a country that always acts for equal rights of all citizens, rights that are guaranteed by the Government and further connected to general interest. The French model has been well-defined and coherent, and it has had a solid and distinctive foundation compared to other models

of citizenship, especially concerning state and public services. France has symbolised a policy or a doctrine of equality refusing for instance ethnic differentiation. However, according to Cole, France has represented itself as a state-centred republican model, which is deficient. The French model adjusts a structure for us to make the modern world, which seems frequently chaotic, more understandable; at the same time many Anglo-Saxon countries have turned from statism toward liberal values and policies, including transitions in governance. (Cole 2008. 2-3.)

In addition to the previously mentioned attitudes concerning capitalism and free markets, the third feature has been the role of the French media and public intellectuals who have been highly sceptical about free markets (Bénard 2010, 3). It is arguable whether there is an independent or free press because the press has been supported by the Government (Bénard 2010, 4). As a result, even the most right-wing papers in France just know “how not to go too far in the criticism of the state and its servants.” (Bénard 2010, 4). The important question is: Is there any truly free press in France or is there a flourishing quiet censorship, a situation where it is normal to avoid complicated issues like the enduring problems of public deficit and unemployment? (Bénard 2010, 4). Concerning the scholars’ attitudes Bénard notes that even today, most of the French scholar’s manuals declared to their young students that large companies are “places of workers’ exploitation”, how capitalism increases inequality, and globalisation forces French companies to outsource their activities (Bénard 2010. 3). Bénard’s conclusion is that teachers have used their position “in building solid anti-capitalist roots” in their students’ minds, and it is quite impossible to assume that this policy would not influence young students. (Benard 2010, 3)

In any case, as I conduct research on the French political system and culture, I will always encounter Statism and its significant role everywhere in French society. In the following speech, Macron discusses the role of the state and his views on how France has become the country it is today. Macron reflects on the European values while also recognizing a great difference between the Anglo-Saxon values and the traditional European values. At the same time, Macron emphasises that his policy model, which is based on the values of the Enlightenment, combines liberty and protection and will reconcile the society.

But fraternity is at the heart of this balance because Europe has refused a totally ultra-liberal model or a model that denies freedom in the name of equality. And our social democracy, the very heart of Europe and, originally, the Enlightenment itself, that is it, it is the “at the same time” of freedom and equality. And they want us to choose. That’s a big mistake and that mistake, they’re re-committing it and they have re-committed it recently. These companies which, in the name of efficiency, told us “We

need a much more liberal Europe, we must not harmonise the rights, we must go ahead, we must believe in the market”, they are in the process to fracture on it. Brexit is a doubt about Europe, the inequality of rights. This is the fracture within Europe because we did not, at the same time, think about equality. And because we must build solidarities, to give a place to the middle classes, to the popular classes, in the project which is ours. We need to liberate and protect. So yes, we will do both to gather and reconcile. It is to make France stronger and more independent. And I believe that it is through work, through the economy but also through social modelling. I also do it so that everyone finds the mastery of his life, his destiny and which is a path of justice and that, I have not shown enough. (Macron 2017da, 8-9.)

I want to reconcile France with the world, to reconcile the freedom and equality, to reconcile our stories, the ones and others which too long have been divided, to create a collective future to find the progress which unites us. I want to fight with you so that each French citizen finds his place in this shaken world, so that the middle-classes can choose their future and meet the challenges of our country. (Macron 2017b, 3, 5, Macron 2017 db, 2:46:00: 2:47.00)

In a campaign speech given in Nantes, Macron made a clear distinction between France and the Anglo-Saxon countries and the values they represent (Macron 2017da, 8-9.) The main difference was emphasis given to the concepts of personal freedom and social justice. Macron wanted to promote policy that would enhance coherence of society, distancing itself from the neoliberal world by choosing traditional European values, fraternity, freedom and equality. According to Macron, neoliberalism means that social coherence is secondary and the role of the state needs to be as small as possible. To Macron, state regulation and public services are also noticeably of secondary importance and of lower standards than we are used to experiencing in most European countries. The premise of the whole question was based on the social model which in the Anglo-Saxon countries is completely different from France. (Macron 2017da, 8-9.)

It is important to note that Macron does not believe that a strong state, freedom, and basic rights would exclude each other. Like the Anglo-Saxon model, the European model that France represents gives the individual citizen a possibility to be a master of their life. According to Macron, the European model represents social justice and freedom, both principal values of the Enlightenment. The key words to Macron were solidarity, liberty, and protection, which together have built the European social model. The difference between these cultures was clear: as the Anglo-Saxon countries have chosen the maximum of freedom and personal liberty, it has made their societies crueler and more unfair – but also more efficient. To Macron the question was fundamental, and again he emphasised the nation’s collective future where the three important values were reconciliation, freedom, and

equality, and where the middle-class position had a significant part of his programme and plans. (Macron 2020 da, 8-9, Macron 2017b, 3, 5, Macron 2017 db, 2:46:00:2:47.00.)

Macron emphasised earlier how deeply he was committed to restoring the authority of the state as a part of his plan to reconcile the nation. It is important to keep in mind that French history and political culture are considerably different than, for example, British or American, and that the pre-condition and, in fact, the whole premise to the nation's rising was connected to the development and authority of the state. In France, the king personified the state, compared, for instance, to the United States and its democracy, which was based on down-top ideology and a very powerful civil society, or the development in Great Britain, which was based on trade and the command of the seas which brought the country extraordinary wealth and ability to influence global politics. (Macron 2017h 39-40.)

Macron agreed with Alain Juppé (2016) that all French citizens are children of the state that holds together the whole nation, while acknowledging that France is a very political country by nature. Macron argues that it was the state which, after the Great Revolution of 1789, took care of the continuity of the nation and represented the authority during the turbulent times in the 19th century. It is the state which has made France the country it is: conquering territories, setting the rules, and promoting (or at least trying to promote) equality among its citizens. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, François Guizot had a similar argument about the state. Macron's thoughts also reflect Hegel's argument on how the whole idea of the state is based on the origin of consciousness and self-consciousness of the nation. (Macron 2017h, 39-40, Juppé 2016, 21)

However, Macron also comments on the cases where the state has failed. I have mentioned these examples and phenomena in Chapter 3 where I discussed the importance of history and the need for reconciliation for the nation. Macron emphasized that all events in the past have not been representative of the Republican values; abortion, for example, did not become legal until 1981, and death penalty was not abolished until the same year by the President François Mitterrand. In the next section, I will discuss the other side of statism which has also emerged in Macron's speeches and his comments concerning the role of the state and the future of the nation. I will introduce some critical views on statism which will once again expose the difference between the current President of the Republic and his predecessors concerning, for instance, their attitudes towards the value of work and pension reforms, especially in cases where it is necessary to postpone retirement.

4.3.1 Statism and Its Social Anaesthesia as a French Phenomenon

Babeau (2017) argues that the French political tradition has been connected to the phenomenon of sacralization of the state, which means that the “state has become a pillar of the state obesity, the shield who prevents any questioning” and, at the same time, has become a solution to all imaginable problems (Babeau 2017, 51-52). State expansion is a phenomenon that has not been limited to France. According to Buchanan (1999) and Meadowcroft (2011), this is a phenomenon that concerns almost all western countries, where the role of the state has changed from a protective to a productive role, which means that the Government “directly supplies public goods or supplies goods as if they were public goods”. (Buchanan 1999, 25, Meadowcroft 2011, 54)

At the same time, the problem is connected to the self-interest of different political agents who are not driving the interests of the citizens but interests of their own (Buchanan 2007, 11-12). Babeau further remarks that in the minds of French citizens and politicians, statism has become a so-called TINOS, an acronym for the mantra “there is no other solution”. This was created by the UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. The phrase refers to the French ideology of subordinating private resources to the interests of the state. Babeau further argues that statism emerges, for instance, when I study party programmes during the last four decades. It is not an exaggeration to say that the parties have reached a consensus on the political matters where the role of the state has been crucial. According to Babeau, it has been important for all French political parties to leave issues such as social protection unreformed, even though reforms would have been necessary. Politicians believed in statism as a driving force of social coherence, justice and economic growth and a protection against unemployment. Here I must keep in mind that public choice theory and liberal ideas in general were not popular in France in the mid-1970s and 1980s, because they challenged the omnipotence of the state¹¹. (Babeau 2017, 19-20, 51-52, 69-70)

“True equality is not written in laws. Instead, it places every person at the same point of departure-in practice. It gives every individual the tools to succeed at school

¹¹ According to Rowland (2011) “state involvement in the productive economy in France has a 350-year history, commencing with the Finance Minister to Louis XIV, Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Under Colbert and his successors, the state effectively micromanaged the country’s merchants and small businessmen (dirigisme) through application of detailed rules and regulations mostly drawn up at the centre. The hand of state was heavy and there is little evidence of public-private sector dialogue. Indicative planning to the contrary, was premised on a continuous give and take between the Governments and the private sector.” (Rowland 2011, 2.)

and at work and provides health services and opportunities for mobility and security. That is what politics owes the French people.” (Fottorino 2017, 57.)

“The old French habit of creating rules or laws about every subject under the sun has become untenable. There have been more than fifty reforms of the labour market in 15 years! During that time, unemployment has been rising continually-proof the laws are not the cure for all ills. Before starting to draft a new rule, one must begin by carrying out a thorough assessment of the situation in question. More generally, by changing the structure, recruitment, and methods of the administration, we need to put an end to the belief inherited from the 19th Century that considers drafting a law the be-all-end-all of action. How many laws passed are, in fact, not implemented? And how many laws that are implemented fail to fulfil their initial goals? Every time a law is passed, it should thus be mandatory to assess its effectiveness two years after it enters into force. Effectiveness also means guaranteeing the stability of legislation. The assessment process that I have just outlined provides a reasonable safety net but is not sufficient. I want to ensure that a tax or a policy is only altered once during a five-year presidential term. That commitment is an indispensable component of effectiveness.” (Macron 2017h, 231-233)

There is a notable difference between the traditional French approach to the questions around equality in societal context and how Macron approaches the same questions. Macron criticises the French tradition where equality has too often relied on legislation and argues that realisation of true equality should happen without the guiding hand of the state. The situation has drifted very far from its original purpose, as the citizens have often ignored them. Macron understood that the commitment and effectiveness are very closely related to each other on a fundamental level and, basically, the former culture tells much of the lack of confidence in French society. Once again, the key here is French society’s low levels of confidence, which I discussed earlier in the context of the CEVIPOFFF research findings. (Macron 2017h, 231-233.)

Analysing Macron’s words in more detail, I will note that the French society has become too complex and too rigid. While the rest of the world, or rather most European countries, have tried to liberalise their economies and deregulate, France has maintained the domestic regulations: I have given several examples of this concerning labour markets, entrepreneurship, free markets, and pro-business doctrines. As noted, the state and advancing the interests of the state has been a long-time favourite to many politicians. Bénard (2010), argues that the entire French state and especially the idea of the Fifth Republic has always suffered from “lack of efficiency which is deeply rooted in a very tough and cultural context”. Bénard further claims that the lack of efficiency has a connection to a perverse combination of sociological issues, media culture, and French history. They gave excessive power

to anti-liberal forces which are based on three pillars or traditions: Gramscian, Anarchy and Accommodation, which are still influential today. Bénard notes that although the gramscist way to approach the society, especially questions of education, has succeeded in France after World War II, it is essential to remember that the basis of thinking was developed already in 1881. This means that this all happened long before Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was even known in Europe, when the free education was implemented to concern the primary level in France by François Guizot. (Benard 2010, 1-2)

Bénard argues further that the chosen education policy has always come from a very centralist tradition, a top-down ideology, where the core of the education was based on a country-wide network of state schools, instead of schools sponsored by regional or local entities (Benard 2010, 1-2). The official programmes were designed by the few bodies in the Ministry of Education in Paris, and the teachers worked under a very tough set of rules leaving little autonomy for individual teachers. (Benard 2010, 1-2). Today, French education policy still follows the same top-down ideology (Benard 2010, 1-2). In practice, it can be described in military terms: at any given time, 880,000 teachers are deployed to state schools across the country; the principals have no power to influence recruitment and staffing (Benard 2010, 1-2).

The problem becomes worse when teachers are forced to get results based on the above-mentioned policy; when they have achieved certain learning outcomes, they can request a reassignment (Bénard 2010, 1-2, The Economist 2017, 10). The system does not function at all equally, because newly-qualified teachers are not able to achieve expected levels of success and are routinely sent to work in the most demanding parts of the country (Bénard 2010, 1-2, The Economist 2017, 10). This negative phenomenon emerged in the feedback after the Grand Debate in 2019, and discussed earlier, Macron's administration has subsequently tried to improve the situation by dismantling the old top-down politics, Macron was already during his campaign convinced that the only sustainable policy in the long run would be to give the power to the grass root level where the well-educated professionals with best first-hand knowledge can make right decisions in the field of education.

France has always been famous for its bureaucracy and the heavy administrative structures run by five and half million civil servants (Financial Times 2019) who embody the essence of statism. After the war, the common trend in economic and social policy was to expand and develop new public services, especially on education and health services. It became clear that there was a great demand for construction and maintenance of public buildings and infrastructure, for instance for communication and transportation (Financial Times 2019, Piketty 2013, 129). The

post-war public services in France were more extensive than in the UK, even though the idea of the welfare state was largely based on the previously mentioned Beveridge report. Piketty argues that from the 1950s until the 1970s, there was a common trend in France to establish large public companies especially in industry and finance sectors, which were then privatised in the mid-1980s when liberal politics dominated French economic thinking after the era of French socialism ended in March 1983. (Financial Times 2019, Piketty 2013, 129.)

According to Bénard, the status of civil servants and administration emerged from 1945 when de Gaulle formed a Government with the Communist Party and appointed their leader Maurice Thorez as Minister of Civil Service. Thorez used his opportunity to influence the appointments of strategically significant positions to challenge the current political system. Thorez can be considered as one of the godfathers of the French civil service code which required administrative directors to share power with unions especially in the management of the job force. According to Bénard, the above-mentioned policy has been in effect since the end of the Third Republic. The Fourth Republic that emerged after the Third Republic and the Second World War was led by several weak and unstable governments which provided opportunities to gramscist actors to widen their influence for instance in education politics. (Aron 1954, 475, Bénard 2010, 3.)

Macron briefly refers to the significance and necessity to find and rebuild confidence and trust among citizens on a national level, and comments on how important it would be to rejoice in the success of others (Macron 2017h, 74, Macron 2017eb, 2). When I discuss politics in general, our attention is caught by the issue of trust or mistrust, on which the whole idea of democracy and parliamentarism is based.

In a certain way, statism culminated as French Socialism became, for a while, the leading political doctrine because of François Mitterrand's rise to power. When Mitterrand won the 1981 presidential elections, it paved the way for a radical state-led reform programme of the Socialists, once characterised as French socialism (Partie socialiste 1981, Cameron 1987, 18). According to Michel Rocard, the Socialist Party – or the socialist movement in general – did not envision making another society emerge from the existing production apparatus, but building something else, alongside a mainly ethical legitimacy in the name and therefore not in the name of a supposed sense of history (Rocard & Ricœur 1991, 8). Ricœur argues that the phenomenon which emerged was based on the internal battle of the Socialist Party where the party's Marxist wing were finally the winners and took the control advancing the values and politics which were close to socialism, such as

nationalisations of big private corporations, including largest banks, insurance companies and many enterprises in the industry sector (Rocard & Ricœur 1991, 8). Two years later, however, economic policy had to make a U-turn and revoke many of the decisions mentioned above (Amable & Palombarini 2017, 67). The so-called reformist wing of the Socialists had won over the steep line of Socialists (Amable & Palombarini 2017, 67). In the past, France had been plunged into economic turmoil, with several devaluations (October 1981, June 1982, and March 1983), cash crises and various emergency solutions, such as price regulations and freezes (Cameron 1987, 19-20). This points to a second dimension of the state's strategy of social anaesthesia – a huge expansion of the possibility for early retirement, not just in the conversion poles, but in every troubled industrial sector.

Conflicts within the Socialist Party, between the reformists and the traditional socialists, had arisen because of France's internal problems and disagreements. According to Amable & Palombarini, attitudes towards the deepening integration process of the EU and especially the nature of economic policy had become a dividing line. The so-called second-line Socialists (*Deuxième gauche*) in the minority considered the policies of Mitterrand and most of the party incompatible with the fundamental values of the EU. With the deepening economic and political integration of the EU, it had become impossible to safeguard the interests of the working class and public sector workers, as had been the case before the integration deepened. The leading figures of the reformist Socialists were Michel Rocard, Laurent Fabius and Jacques Delors, all of whom wanted to modernise the French economy in accordance with the rules of the market economy and to distance themselves from state-led thinking, while at the same time strongly anchoring the development of the EU and its institutions. (Amable & Palombarini 2017, 66-67.)

According to Breznitz & Zysman (2013) the societal and political life of France in the 1970s and the 1980s was characterised by a “social anaesthesia strategy” which manifested itself in the retirement policy. As already mentioned in a different context, the state intervened on behalf of the troubled industries, such as coal and shipbuilding, by various financial support mechanisms. By the 1970s it had become clear that coal and ship building industries would be in deep trouble in the future, and it was of utmost importance to do something to address the rising problems of the employees at the age of fifty the full pensions. This policy began during the era of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and under the dominance of centre-right Governments, led by prime ministers Jacques Chirac and Michel Barre. If we analyse the previously described policy in numbers, we can see that between 1974–1980, the number of early retirees more than tripled from fifty nine thousand to one hundred ninety

thousand. After François Mitterrand and the Socialist Party came to power in 1981, the number of early retirees again tripled; meaning that in 1984, seven hundred thousand workers retired early. According to Breznitz & Zysman, the idea behind the early retirement policy was to demobilise the labour movement and the working class because the leaders of France were aware of the need for industrial restructuring. The left wanted the workers to be compensated for the consequences of the unpleasant decisions and possible unemployment. The vast majority of French workers in smelly, physically taxing and alienating jobs were more than willing to receive 90 % of their previous wages without having to report to work. In such a context, France's already anaemic trade unions were completely incapable of mobilising their members to fight industrial restructuring. (Breznitz & Zysman 2013, 329)

As the Prime Minister Chirac resigned and the new Prime Minister Barre and his Government began their work, they decided to abandon the traditional leftist target of Keynesian full employment. Even though wages were still mainly determined by the government, the new policy was based on the "restrictive fiscal and monetary position after 1976 decreased the inflation from thirteen point seven percent in 1974 to nine point one percent in 1978" (Giddens 1998, 7, Scharpf & Schmidt 2001, 36-3). However, France faced one of the most difficult problems since the Second World War as unemployment increased from two point eight percent in 1974 to five point two in 1978, while the state simultaneously used nationalised companies as an employment butter and tried to prevail on private sector firms to avoid mass layoffs". According to Scharpf & Schmidt, the effects of early retirement on the French labour market cannot be overestimated. Today, fewer than one worker in three is still employed at the age of 60, and France's labour force participation rate for men aged fifty five to sixty four is under forty percent – among the lowest figures in Western Europe (Scharpf and Schmidt 2001, 36-3). If I stop for a while to think about the history of the French pension systems, and how the middle-aged citizens have become used to integrating themselves to the working life and the pensions, it will also be easier to understand why Macron's ambitious pension reforms have been so difficult to implement. None of the presidents before Macron have been able to reform the outdated and highly expensive system, which in fact does not even serve its citizens as expected. The next section will summarise the main criticism against Macron starting from his personality and extending to the election programmes, and the accusations of promoting neoliberal policy and arrogant leadership style. (Louise 2021, 3-10, Cole 2019, 79, 11-12).

4.3.2 Macron's Contradictory Thinking

In the theory chapter I analysed Paul Ricœur's thinking concerning forgiveness and reconciliation in politics and the questions such as where forgiveness should extend in society and in politics, and who might be the social actor or actors asking for forgiveness. It is relevant to discuss why these questions are so important to Macron and to his politics and whether, in practice, these ideas have been or have not been realised.

Abel (2017) argues that Macron's passion to act as a politician who wants to reconcile the past and various historical phenomena is based on Ricœur's ideas on the subject. The importance of reconciliation and admitting the errors of the past became a topic of public discussion during the 2017 presidential campaign and raised criticism especially among the supporters of Front National, concerning France's colonial past and in particular the case of Algeria. (Abel 2017, 10, Couturier 2017, 97-98, Macron 2020.) Unlike other politicians, not to mention the former Presidents or Presidential candidates in the previous elections, Macron was aware of the historical burden of the nation which suggested that nothing concerning social progress and social reconciliation should be taken for granted. (Macron 2017h)

The events of the past have had profound social consequences which still influence French society, discussion, and academic research. It is a paradox of sorts that a country celebrated for its debates and conversational-intellectual culture has been silent about the many dark and traumatic moments in its history. The latest example on the difficulties to admit the brutalities and horrors of the Algerian war came up as Macron chose the historian Benjamin Stora to write a special report of the Algerian independence process and its escalation into a full-blown war. According to Ramdani, the fact that the appointment was made by the President and the profile of the chosen scholar alone influence the premise of the whole report and lead to a one-sided truth of the events. It is obvious that the official France, and Macron, still want to manage and lead the research and control the official truth about the Algerian war for independence. (Ramdani 2021, 1.)

The reason why Stora's appointment was considered at the very least controversial was based on his academic Parisian background. Stora was one of the people known as the *pieds-noirs* (Black Feet), refugees of French and European origin, hundreds of thousands of whom escaped from Algeria after the independence. Ramdani points out that "Stora's family was ultimately displaced by members of the indigenous Arab Muslim and Berber communities who continue to inhabit Algeria to this day". Despite Stora's background, Macron was convinced that

he would be an ideal scholar to offer historical reconciliation by finding out what really happened in Algeria nearly 60 years ago and shading light to the events that have thrown a long shadow over both countries. Macron, like so many other French political leaders, has repeatedly refused to offer an official apology for uncontrollable violence and war crimes against the civilian population which took place on French soil. According to Ramdani, Stora's report evades the truth and is closer to manipulation of the events of the era. Stora had a unique opportunity to extend an honest apology for the savageries of the war and the colonial era and build bridges between the past and the present, but instead, Ramdani argues, he chose to "downplay the unspeakable crimes that are in living memory". (Ramdani 2021, 1-2.)

Stora's approach to his study becomes clear at the beginning of his report which controversially starts with a description of the 2020 Islamist terror attacks rather than French war crimes in Algeria. Ramdani points out that the Islamist terror attacks are completely out of context for a research project that was meant to establish what really happened in Algeria, and, more broadly, about the consequences of the inexcusable politics the French Empire practised (Ramdani 2021, 1-2). Like Ricœur and Guizot, Ramdani also emphasises how important it would be to the nation to discover the truth, and that, in this case, seeking the truth is vital for understanding the present-day divisions and grievances in France (Ramdani 2021, 1-2). This cannot be achieved by avoiding the truth, manipulating historical facts, or distorting accounts of events that really took place (Ramdani 2021, 1-2). Macron himself has stated that finding truth is the ideal goal of scholars and politicians (Fottorino 2017, 22-23).

Against this measure, the historian he appointed falls short. Instead of presenting an objective account, Stora echoes Macron's opinions. Ramdani argues that there is a populist dimension resembling the far-right conspiracy theories in the way in which Macron's opinions are supported by Stora. More specifically, this can be seen in the claim that there is a connection between the current Islamist terror and the bitter Algerians who have remained resentful and violent since the end of the war. According to Ramdani, this is a caricature based on "the early days of colonisation when Arab Muslims were considered morally inferior to Christians". Ramdani further argues that it is also clear that the present French establishment is convinced that the motivation behind the terrorist acts comes from the history and what happened to the Algerian parents or grandparents of today's terrorists. In this respect, it is worth noting that Stora does not pay any attention for example to the massacre of 45,000 Algerian civilians by the French army which happened over a few days in May 1945 around the market town of Sétif in French Algeria. This is

acknowledged as a genocide in Algeria. Riots also took place in Paris. After the Second World War celebrations in Paris the pieds-noirs militias began to demonstrate and demand for Algerian independence which soon led to violence between the police and the protestors. Both sides perpetrated atrocities, but the French authorities were better armed and, in the increasingly chaotic situation, fired protestors. The tension between the pieds-noirs and the French authorities deteriorated as the civil war in Algeria erupted in 1954, and during the next twenty years, took increasingly violent brutal forms. (Ramdani 2021, 2.)

The ultra-nationalistic Secret Armed Organization (OAS), made up of French police and army officers, opposed the French withdrawal from Alger, and perpetrated numerous atrocities and systematically used torture, “use of napalm and gas chambers to wipe out civilians”. It is important to keep in mind that the OAS also tried to assassinate the President of the Republic Charles de Gaulle in Pont-sur-Seine in September 1961, and a month later one of the most infamous massacres ever on French soil took place. Over 30,000 unarmed demonstrators had gathered in Paris in a peaceful protest when the French National Police attacked them. The police beat the demonstrators and threw them into the Seine, some of them already dead and some drowning. It has been estimated that there were as many as 200 victims although the official number of casualties is 40. (Ramdani 2021, 2, You Tube 2017, de Gaulle 1971, 111-112,)

According to Ramdani, Stora and Macron both aim is to continue whitewashing some of the darkest events in the recent history of France. As further support for Ramdani’s argument, Macron himself said in a speech in July 2020, that “The Republic will not erase any trace or name from its history; it will not take down any statues”. Macron was convinced that this would lead to the useless re-writing of history which, in its turn, would lead to even more controversial situations between native citizens and the citizens with a background for example in North Africa. According to Macron, it is possible to have a conversation about the past without useless overreaction, such as attempts to rewrite history. Ramdani finds Macron’s idea to eliminate the possibility of using history to open further division seems to be strange and ostensibly. In practice, Macron’s reaction and the way he has handled the complex and sensitive issue of Algeria is a repeat of the same old official line: France still wants to evade its responsibility of the war and other crimes against humanity. (Macron 2020, Ramdani 2021, 2)

“The Republic is not always only a declaration of rights. It is also the massacres of the Vendée, colonialism followed by the excesses of the colonial wars, censorship of books, and special courts, which existed until recent times. What is good is not always Republican and what is Republican is not always good”. (Macron 2017h,42.)

Macron cited several examples of the grim past of the Republic, and the events which have shaken the fundamental values of the nation. Macron refers to the massacre of Vendée during the French Revolution; lack of basic rights throughout the 19th century, such as freedom of speech and expression; the so-called Dreyfus Affair, a well-known case of an innocent Jewish army officer wrongfully imprisoned at the turn of the century; the aforementioned brutality of the civil wars during decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s; and, finally, the abolition of the death penalty only as late as 1981.

As I study French political history and its various phenomena, I cannot avoid the term populism which also applies to Macron's approach to politics. As I continue to examine French populism, it is important to define populism which, much as liberalism, is often discussed in the media without exact definition. According to Mudde & Kaltwasser (2012), the roots of the modern populism extend to the end of the 19th-century Populist Party in the United States and the Narodniks in Russia (Mudde & Kaltwasser 2012, 3, Raynaud 2017a, 9-10). However, the premise of these parties was different: the Populist Party in the United States was a mass movement the core supporters of which were the farmers who were against the ruling political system demanding radical reforms; while the Narodnik movement in Russia was a movement of "middle-class intellectuals who endorsed of the romanticised view of the rural life". In general, the populist phenomenon everywhere in Europe at the time focused on rural life "as the peasantry was seen as the main pillar of both society and economy". (Mudde & Kaltwasser 2012, 3, Mudde 2002, 219, Raynaud 2017a, 10)

According to Taguieff (2015), current populism in Europe rises from the contradictions of the uncontrollable globalisation, in which fear of immigration has played a significant role. Taguieff argues that the financial crises have put into doubt the whole existence of nation states which, in fact, are under similar threat as their citizens who chronically worry about unemployment and job insecurity. The social situation grows increasingly worse as people observe the "irresponsibility, incompetence or corruption of ruling elites". Together, all these phenomena increase "insecurity of goods and people", which is combined with a new global threat in a form of Islamic terrorism. People in Europe have become concerned over the growing Islamization of the old European nation states while at the same time worried about their own cultural identity. According to Taguieff, the EU as an institution has added to this sense of confusion and complexity as people have seen its bureaucratic face replace their national sovereignty amid ever-deepening European interdependence. (Taguieff 2015, 1-2)

Returning more specifically to France, I argue that most of the above-mentioned phenomena have taken place there and, in fact there has nearly always been a tendency in politics to gear towards populism which has repeatedly emerged at the forefront of political and societal life since the Great Revolution in 1789 (Perottino & Guasty 2020, 546). The following chapter will discuss in more detail the populism in France and how Macron's politics has been seen in a populist context by Perottino and Guasty. Like Taguieff, Perottino and Guasty describe populism as a "thin ideology" where the ordinary citizens and elite oppose each other, and their interests in politics are also incompatible. In Macron's case it is possible to place him in a classical context of populism of this definition but also in the already mentioned technocratic populism. In many cases, these populist parties and politicians have accused their way to offer simple and superficial solutions to the grievances which are often very complicated and multifilament. (Bickerton & Accetti, 2017; Caramani, 2017, Bustikova & Guasty 2020, 304-305.)

Perottino & Guasty argue that the phenomenon in France has a rich history, and that the differences between various populist parties and their politicians have been considerable. Perottino and Guasty examine how populism first emerged in a modern context during the late 1900s in the form of boulangism and continued during the 1950s as poujadism when Jean-Marie Le Pen, the future leader of the extreme right, achieved considerable attention as a political actor. (Perottino & Guasty 2020, 546, Eltchaninoff 2017, 21) The next section will discuss this theme in more detail.

4.3.3 Macron Faces the Citizens' Agony

In the fall of 2019, the French Government once again attempted to introduce a major pension reform. The previous attempt to reform the pension system in 1995 had been met with wide-ranging protests that led to the resignation of Prime Minister Alain Juppé. Learning from the past, Macron's Government had designed an efficient communication strategy characterised by "populist and technocratic appeals of us vs. them". According to Guasty & Perottino, the policy Macron and his administration had chosen to set against each other the old and the new systems, and the clash with the citizens was therefore not avoidable. The confrontation was also seen as a clash between the new experts (the Government, the administration, and the President of the Republic himself) and the old ideologies. The experts represented the necessity of reform whereas the ideologies and the old system

belonged to the past as they were seen in a context of irresponsible status quo. However, Macron was not able to understand how the social situation, environment and atmosphere had changed since 1995. In 1995, the trade unions were weakened and the whole society was depoliticized as the opposition was inefficient and could not mount strong arguments against the proposed reform. (Guasty & Perottino 2020, 551, Pedder 2018, 262)

In the end, the 1995 pension reform proved fateful for the Prime Minister Juppé and the reform was watered down. Despite the protests of 2018–2019 and the subsequent social disorder, the situation never escalated to high-level resignations. According to Rouban, behind the large protests in France during the years 2018–2019 were “to protests a lack of political power, as they have not benefited from economic and social independence presumed by Macronism’s neoliberal reforms”; it was clear that the reasons behind the protests were personified in the President of the Republic, and Macron was seen as a politician who represents neoliberal values (Chamorel 2019, 1, Rouban,1). Although Rouban does not discuss the neoliberal reforms Macron has driven so far, I can assume they referred, for example, to a tax reform which was widely considered unjust. Macron decreased for instance corporate taxation from thirty three point three to twenty-five point five percent and increased the fuel tax, although the latter was suspended in response to the protests (Tax Foundation 2019).

At this time, it is important to remind ourselves of possible definitions of the controversial ideology or political doctrine known as neoliberalism. Giddens saw neoliberalism and Thatcherism as a zero-sum game in which the victory of the other was the defeat of the other. More specifically this means that the private and public interests were always against each other without sharing the values or common interests. Like Giddens, Miettinen (2018) emphasises that the neoliberal politics saw the role of the state as an administrator of competition and as an actor that controls the principles of the rule of law in action. Briefly, to a neoliberalist point of view, the state should be strong but its role at the same time should be apolitical. (Miettinen 2018, Rouban 2019, 1-2, Giddens 1998, 8 Smith 2015, 64-78)

Miettinen argues that by analysing neoliberalism of its origin especially in Europe, neoliberalism was seen as a social philosophical project that emphasises the importance of multidisciplinary. This meant that in Germany the main goal of neoliberalism was to connect economics with other social sciences such as sociology, jurisprudence and political sciences. Further, according to Miettinen, neoliberalism was very critical of neoclassical economics for its dependency and focus on the needs of individual citizens whereas the focus of neoliberalism was on political and legal

institutions. (Miettinen 2018.) I will return to this theme in the research analysis and conclusions.

As I examine in more detail the reasons and the societal environment behind the Yellow Vest movement, I encounter Rouban's claim that Macron has suffered and still suffers from the cultural set-up, heritage and success of the former President Jacques Chirac who had a "paternalistic political style that is far from the kind of managerial or economic governance favouring a utilitarian handbook in which winners are distinguished from losers". As Couturier remarks, Macron belongs to the small group of French politicians who have questioned various features and practises in the French political and social life. (Rouban 2019, 1-2, Couturier 2017, 68-69.) As the Yellow Vest protests gained momentum, questions arose in public about who the Yellow Vests were and what kind of policy and societal goals did they want to advance. Work was such a central issue for Macron's administration, that it was important to recognize and pay attention to the questions provoked by the protests. According to Kipfer (2019), the surveys indicated that the activist were an exceptionally fragmented group of people representing several political parties and interest groups including far-left and far-right parties, the monarchists and neo-Nazi movements, as well as identarian and antisemitic national socialists. The activists were also older than the average age in France, and disproportionately white. Concerning professional status, the variation was wider: among the activists there were working-class people, independent workers, self-employed and small-business entrepreneurs. In general, the activists of the Yellow Vest movement represented the working and lower-middle class whose social spaces have fragmented as most of them live between larger urban centres and in inner city suburbs. These people suffered from cuts to public services and often had to rely on their own cars to access work and conduct their everyday business in a satisfactory manner. (Kipfer 2019.)

I can note that it is quite rare in the French political discourse to find leading politicians who would question people's willingness to work and stay longer in the labour market. This comment from Rouban strikes at the core of Macron's approach to politics, but it also strikes at the core of his way of representing his Presidency. Rouban compares Macron and Chirac, who both had an ENA background; interestingly, Chirac has after his death gained exceptional popularity among people as his style is considered "anti-macron" and he is now seen as "the President of proximity who did favours for modest people". Rouban further argues that Macron's politics stem from the huge pressure against the French economy which should finally adapt to and accept the globalised capitalist order. Rouban's views form part of my research question: defining Macron's relationship to old state-led policy and

the nearly-closed political system, which is possible to describe as pro-business politics. I will return to this question in more detail in the chapter on research material where I give concrete examples concerning the era before Macron and the reforms and ideas Macron advances now (Rouban 2019, 1-2, Couturier 2017, 68-69.)

As I return to the politics and the claims of political weaknesses of the Yellow Vest movement, I immediately notice that the demands of the movement were difficult to achieve. These demands reflected the heterogeneity of the movement: the extremists met to drive any politics which would be possible to implement. Rouban remarks that the Yellow Vest movement demanded “immediate political action with constant control in a form of direct democracy exercised on all territorial levels” and by doing so they bypassed, for instance, the chosen members of parliament and, more broadly, the institutions where the political debate has always taken place. In short, the Yellow Vest movement prioritised an absolute citizen-based utopia which was impossible to accept. (Rouban 2020 & 2019 1-2). Below I will present the most important targets of the movement. I put my attention especially to the strongly progressive taxation, rent control and better pay for workers (Dianara 2018). The taxation in France is already at a high level. According to OECD (2019) France ranked 2nd out of 37 OECD countries in terms of the tax-to-GDP ratio in 2019, and had a tax-to-GDP ratio of forty five point four percent compared with the OECD average of thirty three point eight percent In 2018, France was ranked 1st out of the 37 OECD countries in terms of the tax-to-GDP ratio (OECD 2019). Based on the OECD’s statistics it would be quite difficult to tighten taxation from current levels without serious consequences to the economy.

4.3.4 Does Macron Lack a Shared Language with Citizens?

Perottino & Guasty (2020) sees Macron’s reaction to the 2018 Yellow Vest protests in a critical populist context and, in fact, argues that the consequence of the 2019 protests was the rise of technocratic populism as the leading political doctrine in the whole country. According to Perottino & Guasty, “Macron portrayed himself and his government as the representatives of modernity, promoters of expert solutions, and the legitimate voice of the people”. Macron set up the confrontation between him and the protestors by describing the protests as “illegitimate, imprudent, promoting illegitimate social gains for few (protesters, strikers, trade unions) at the expense of the many”. As noted by Perottino & Guasty, the Yellow Vest movement was frequently violent and caused disorder which delegitimizes the movement and

decreased its power as its public image became worse. Macron and his administration tried to communicate that for instance the pension reform protesters did not understand the bigger picture of the reform, society, and economics and, further how this similar technocratic policy Macron has driven has followed also during the COVID-19 crisis. (Perottino & Guasty 2020, 551.)

As I study the reactions to the 2019 protests, I note that there remains a considerable gap between the political elite and the citizens or, to put it differently, between the technocratic populism Macron represents and the will of the people. Perottino & Guasty argue that Macron's immediate reaction to the negative public feedback was to ignore and overrule their opinions on the grounds that they did not align with Macron's goal of a "national nation", and because those voicing their opinions lacked the knowledge and competence of the President of the Republic and his staff. The worst possible consequence of Macron's chosen politics will be social apathy: of people's ability to express their will and the validity of their opinions is questioned, political opponents are delegitimized and, finally, the state will be led and organised as a big corporation. (Perottino & Guasty 2020, 551, Bušítková & Guasty 2020, 302)

Given Macron's position as a strong proponent of institutions and rule of law, it was little wonder that the protestors and the President found themselves on a collision course. Adding to his critique, Rouban makes an interesting comparison between Macron and Chirac, commenting on the completely different style and vision of the two former students of the ENA. In Macronism, I can observe a "lack of distinction regarding politics assimilated to economic order in the former case, and immediate satisfaction of needs and desires in the latter". According to Rouban, Chirac was the president of proximity, the real anti-Macron, and the real anti-technocrat whose success and authority were based on genuine charisma instead of the cold rationality that Macron represents (Rouban 2020 & 2019 1-2).

Regarding the difficult relation between Macron and Yellow Vests, Grossman (2019) notes that Macron gained votes from all income groups despite the fact he enjoyed strong support among the wealthiest part of the population. According to Grossman, there were disappointed voters of Macron among the Yellow Vests who had believed Macron would be capable of changing the whole political system festering with shady deals and entrenched privilege. The protestors saw in Macron a traitor who had turned out to embody the same values and the same political culture as all his predecessors. Macron also suffered from lack of political experience which was exposed in his choice of questionable phrasing: he criticised the people for laziness, adversity to change, and their entitlement to a "crazy pile of cash", referring

to the Government-funded social allowance. Macron's comments made him come across part of the elite, hopelessly out of touch with the lives of ordinary citizens. (Grosmann 2019, 4.)

In response to the Yellow Vest movement and the nationwide violent riots and demonstrations, Macron announced in January 2019 the launch of "The Great National Debate" (*Le grand débat nationale*) designed to remove or at least reduce the hatred a huge number of citizens felt against Macron and his reforms, widely experienced as unjust. The national debate "comprised of more than 10,000 local meetings, generated more than 2 million proposals on four topics: energy transition, economy (including taxation, retirement age, pensions), democracy, and citizenship (including immigration, 'political Islam,' and reform of state and public services – including the role of elite schools such as ENA." (Perottino & Guasty 2020, 551, Macron 2019, 2.)

The Great National Debate toured the whole country, and Macron himself participated in meetings in which he promised to prioritise the needs of the people rather than the structural reforms he had so far emphasised in his policy. According to Perottino & Guasty, all previously mentioned elements reflect Macron's desire for a concrete and visible bond between the President of the Republic and the citizens (Perottino & Guasty 2020, 551). It seemed that only Macron was able to unite the people and their will (Perottino & Guasty 2020, 551). Unprecedented in the history of France, in a certain way the Grand National Debate was a successful initiative, because Macron's popularity rose, and the riots and protests subsided. One of the main grievances was once again the infamous French top-down policy, the culture in which decisions affecting the whole country were made by a small group of people in Paris. Locally elected representatives, whom their constituency knew and trusted, were not to be able to make any decisions or influence the daily lives of their voters. This quintessentially French problem, labelled as "Jacobine top-down policy" by Michel Rocard, was already in Macron's campaign platform in 2017. I will return to this grievance again in the next section. (Macron 2019, 2, *Le Point* 2016, 23, CEVIPOFFF 2018.)

From the early days of Macron's term, there have been signs of how difficult it has been for the French people to understand his views on issues such as the value of work, not only at an individual level but also at societal level. At first glance, the role of the work should be vital for all societies but, as mentioned above, this is not the case in France. Why this has happened, while the country has suffered from decades of significant structural unemployment, is an interesting question. In more general terms, Macron was concerned about the lack of morals in French society

(Macron 2017h, 28). Restoring the value of the state was not enough, it was equally important to pay attention to what was happening at grassroots level (Macron 2017h, 28). More specifically, Macron was convinced that the whole society should adopt a new approach to issues such work, social security, education, and entrepreneurship (Macron 2017h, 28). There were too many “sad passions” in French society: jealousy, defiance, dissension, petty-mindedness, and baseness (Macron 2017h,28). In short, the question was of collective morality where a sense of individual rights and responsibilities (Macron 2017h, 28).

It seems that the people who voted for Macron did not completely understand what they were voting for, because there is a clear contradiction between public opinions, behaviour, and reactions before and after the elections. Interestingly, we have noticed that Macron was soon after the elections in a collision course at least with a certain group of the citizens. This happened soon after Macron announced his plans to reform the labour market, social security, and other significant sectors of society. According to Dungan, (2018) in French culture the work itself has been considered by many as a necessary evil, even though the country has suffered more than thirty years of the difficult unemployment problem, which I have raised several times in this research. (Dungan 2018, 1.)

Work in France is typically viewed as a tool whereby it is possible to pay the bills, go on vacations and have savings for retirement. A considerable number of the French are not able to think of work as its very best as a source of personal empowerment and emancipation. Another paradox concerns the role of the president and other politicians: Macron has declared that he is a pragmatic politician (in contrast to his predecessors) given his orientation on results. More specifically, Macron’s actions have increased to the level which means that the results are decisive and the most important detail in politics. (Dungan 2018, 1.)

However, the attitudes of the French people concerning the work have fluctuated. Macron has seen how especially the left-wing parties have been only keen to improve public services, pursuing the ideal of equality and while completely ignoring how these rights and services could be funded. Macron had observed that the French left and his former Socialist Party were divided into several camps without shared values or policy targets; it soon became that it would be impossible to drive any fundamental reforms while being part of the chaotic party. (Couturier 2017, 238-239, Macron 2015, 1, Macron 2017h, 32-34, Marianne 2016 14-21).

Macron’s reforms led to large nationwide protests, which started from the increased fuel tax and continued to cover Macron’s tax policy and pension reforms – all of which were considered to favour the wealthier demographics. Macron

thought that his landslide victory in the presidential and general elections had given him a mandate to pursue the reforms without paying attention to the interests of ordinary citizens. For example, the fuel tax reform impacted the rural lower middle-class particularly hard, due to their heavy reliance on personal vehicles given the large distances in the countryside.

According to Guasty & Perottino, Macron's reactions to the 2019 protests meant the return of technocratic populism. This saw the way Macron described "himself and his administration as the representatives of modernity, promoters of expert solutions, and the legitimate voice of the people". In the case of the Yellow Vests, instances of violence during demonstrations were instrumentalized to delegitimize the movement and its grievances. The pension reform protest was delegitimized on the grounds that the protesters lacked the competence to understand complex issues. (Guasty & Perottino 2021, 551.)

I have noted earlier that there are certain contradictions between Macron's speeches and his actions. Macron's way of steering "the official truth" with the Algerian war provoked questions about his intentions as the President of the Republic – one who supposedly always pursued truth and national interests in his leadership. However, Macron also describes having learnt from Ricœur that one of the premises of politics is to recognize and forgive the evil political opponent. Macron used the example of the events in South Africa after the end of apartheid, as the public debate of the past began and the controversial Truth and Reconciliation Commission was founded. In the case of France, Macron refused to accept the need for institutional apology in the past or even acknowledge there have been injustices. He refused to even consider the removal of statues of the politicians and military leaders who had been in charge and responsible for the atrocities during the war in Algeria and France's other colonial wars. (Fottorino 2017, 259, Tontti 2015, Ricœur 2000, 630–642.)

Rather than a Ricœurian reconciliation so keen to Macron, his politics ultimately led to further polarisation. As Macron failed to explain his reasons behind the reforms, the escalating conflict erupted in the form of the Yellow Vest movement. The severe criticism against the President of the Republic also addressed his person and background; the attention was frequently drawn on Macron's career as a banker and his status as an ENA alumnus. In July 2020, Macron gave an interview where he said he understood the critics and the criticism against his politics, but strongly condemned the anarchy and violence which had been part of the demonstrations. Macron was convinced how these actions had weakened democracy and people's confidence in politics. (Macron 2020.)

The following section will study how much Macron has faced both from the right and the left. I will also briefly study the real origin of Macron's movement: whether it was a real new civic movement or whether it was a civic movement only superficially, with the decisions that mattered done by real professionals. Since the very beginning, Macron has cultivated the image of a candidate outside the traditional ideologies, political cultures and political parties, emphasising his direct connection to the people and a genuine desire to reform the entire French political life.

4.3.5 Macron Has Faced Considerable Criticism from Both the Right and the Left

French scholar Emmanuel Todd (2020) views the current chaotic social and political situation in France in a Marxist context. He raised the work of the period 18 Brumaire of Marx, which was Marx's famous analysis of the social and political conditions in the mid-1850s France where Louis Bonaparte opportunistically used the political situation in raising to power (Le Point 2020, 49-50, Bainville 1942, 404-405). Todd refers to how Marx explained and approached Louis Bonaparte as a political actor without consistency; and despite that, Bonaparte became the Emperor of France. This same phenomenon has happened also with Macron, who operates without genuine intellectual consistency continuing further, that when Macron speaks about the empowerment of the state, the latter becomes just a powerful social agent (Le Point 2020, 49-50, Bainville 1942, 423). In France, the terms "society" and "state" are often used interchangeably, even though the premise of the whole conversation is quite often the opposite; the state and the society are not the same thing.

Macron's platform of restoring the moral, justice and the authority of the state may seem mere idealistic talk, but there is evidence to suggest that he has had genuine desire and determination to act on those ideals and impact change. The chosen way and the chosen policy have been ambiguous, difficult and quite far from populism. The remedies Macron offers have been difficult, even impossible to accept, for the millions of French citizens. Compared to his predecessor Hollande, Macron has repeatedly shown himself to be inflexible, unaccommodating, and arguably too frank because he believes that he and his politics are the only way to save the country and the future of the nation. Paradoxically, there have been certain reflections of the

TINA (There is no alternative) mantra of the former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (Queiros 2016).

Macron's politics have led to the well-known conflicts with the trade unions, workers, opposition and even his own party. The reality and the results have been very different: the political system has not been able to meet the persistent demands and gain the confidence among citizens. As Beck and Bauman have argued, risk society is not a new phenomenon, but has existed at least the last 25 years. The way Macron has reacted to risk society and the cumulative effects of the last 30 years, reveal his pragmatism and desire to solve problems. The pragmatism emerged already in the 2017 campaign, and there were accusations at the time of the ideological and intellectual emptiness of Macron's program: his values were glued on, he was not able to create or say anything new, how much there was borrowed from Blair's New Labour programme of the late 1990s, and, finally, surrendering in the face of the market forces. Macron's style to lead the country has been tenacious, but at the same time also too straightforward, stubborn, and even indifferent to the opinions of the masses. While it is by no means uncommon for a politician to face criticism and even severe accusations, in Macron's case his perceived personality and communication style contributed towards a massive social movement directed against him.

In 2018-2019 Macron faced a strong and violent opposition as the Yellow Vest movement united against him and started a long campaign against him and his administration. There have been numerous allegations against Macron, for example that his politics have been too market-driven and that his tax policy has favoured the rich. Macron and his administration have increased social inequality and Macron has been an agent for companies that simply advance their own interests. These allegations were brought forth already during the 2017 election campaign for instance by Marine Le Pen and several leftist policy analysts, and now there is an entire social movement – albeit an incoherent one – formed around these allegations (Marketic 2017, 1-3, France 2 2017, 1.16-1.35, Le Monde 2019, 25.4).

These confrontations have not come as a surprise. In his book *Revolution*, Macron writes explicitly that he will lead the country and implement the reforms at the front seat, no matter what the price. Macron was convinced that for instance the pension reform of 1995 went wrong because the President Jacques Chirac did not invest his personality and prestige in the game. Instead, it was the prime minister who became the target of political attacks which eventually resulted in a watered-down reform and Juppé's resignation. One way or another, both reforms resulted in huge protests, social disorder and a movement against the President that united the

trade unions. It is not an exaggeration to say that the authority of the state, which was and continues to be significant to Macron, has at the very least faltered. (Macron 2017h, 231.)

This was the case for instance with Sarkozy's pension reform, which was watered down by his successor François Hollande who in 2012 lowered the retirement age to 60. At the same time, it has become expected that the ongoing reforms cause deep cleavages also inside the Government. This was the case, for example, with the El Khomri law which deeply divided the Socialist Party. François Hollande himself also faced protests as his government tried to reform labour laws and increase local agreements on questions concerning working conditions. As a minister of economy at the time, Macron supported "El Khomri law", which passed in the parliament after several concessions to trade unions. The bill was passed by the parliament by using article 49:3 which meant that it was approved by the senate in an accelerated process and was subsequently rapidly confirmed by the Constitutional Council. (Legifrance 2016, Cole 2019, 18.)

Throughout the study, I have discussed Macron's expressed concern about the long-term problems of France where the authority of the state has become fragmented and, further, how justice, equality and truth are often missing in politics. As I have noted earlier, the same values were shared by Macron's mentor Paul Ricœur who stressed to Macron the importance of always searching for the truth while accepting the imperfection of the politics. As François Guizot already outlined in the 1800s, the success of a nation is based on the above-mentioned elements which are very close or identical to the Republican values France so proudly has at least wanted to represent. As Guizot said, the Government operates on two levels: it has the responsibility to preserve social order and social justice, in addition to conducting state affairs.

Even at the peak of the Yellow Vest protests, Macron accepted the demonstrations, defending them as the basic human right of freedom of expression. However, Macron has been very forthright in saying that there was no understanding of the anarchy, disorder and devastation which were and historically have been a part of the French protest tradition. As I have noticed the questions around the moral and moral issues have been of great concern to Macron since he started his presidential campaign. Macron was keen to restore the moral and moral order in politics but wanted the change to extend also to the grassroots level of French society.

Since the early days of his campaign, Macron had been under heavy criticism from the other candidates' competitors and the opposition parties, especially the

Republicans and Rassemblement National (formerly the Front National). According to Behrent (2018), Macron's policy goals have proven impossible to obtain for all his predecessors. Deregulation of the labour market and economy and decreasing the size of the state were unrealistic goals for any president ever there was a well-acknowledged need for a fundamental change. According to Behrent, Macron's ideas are not new ones; he is recycling ideas which have already been used in the late 20th and early 21st centuries by such politicians as Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder. It is interesting that the Doctrinaires were subjected to similar allegations as Macron: they did not create anything new and were too eager to promote the entrepreneurs and middle-class interests even though the times were turbulent and even revolutionary, which would have created an opportunity for fundamental change in French society. (Behrent 2018,7.)

Behrent describes Macron's presidential platform as a political smorgasbord, arguing that Macron's policy is full of already used policy proposals; tax and budget cuts, privatisation, and workfare policy (Behrent 2018, 7, Craiutu 2003, 4). According to Manach (2017), behind the myth of Macron is a product that represents the French tradition of technocracy in its purest form; one in which the ENA plays a central role (Manach 2017, 1, Couturier 2017, 52). The idea of the technocrat was based on the recognition of the centrality of the executive power. It was first operated in the form of a celebration of administrative power, anti-parliamentarism and the denunciation of political apparatuses led after the First World War to see in the empowerment of machine administrative to adequate form of effective executive power. This apprehension revolved around two main themes firstly: the project of a rationalisation of the state envisaged from a managerial perspective and, secondly, the project to constitute an administrative power drawing its force and its legitimization from its depoliticization. Technocrats are connected to the elite, the ENA, and the phenomenon of professionalisation of political life – the first example and product of which was the former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. (Rosanvallon 2015, 90, François 2011, 22-23.)

Marine Le Pen, for example, accused Macron of supporting and representing uncontrolled globalisation, the interests of big companies and the interests of the private sector, claiming that he rejects the national interests of France. During the presidential campaign several left-wing think tanks, such as La Belle Alliance, and prominent academics and public intellectuals, such as Dominique Méda and Thomas Piketty, regarded Macron as a spokesman for liberal globalisation which refused to criticise the current world, free market, and the European structures. On the right it was common to downplay and ridicule Macron's intellect based on his jargon (such

words as “teams”, “manager” and “corporate” had not typically been used by politicians, and the voters were unaccustomed to hearing them in political speeches) and his suspiciously close ties to the business world. (France 2 2017, 1.16-1.35, 10.30-10.34, Couturier 2017, 53, Marketic 2017, 1-3)

According to Le Pen, Macron’s politics would lead to a precarious and brutal labour market and break the social cohesion; there would ultimately be a war of all against all (France 2 2017, 1.16-1.35). It is clear why Le Pen phrased her criticism in this way, because the two candidates were so far from each other and represented completely different ideologies and visions for France and Europe. Le Pen’s France was inward-looking while Macron believed in France that would be a part of Europe and the EU and that it would reclaim its political and economic power in international cooperation (France 2, 4.00-5.35). The most important thing for Macron was to reform the country in a profound way and distance it from the old ideologies and the old confrontation and cleavages between the left and the right.

Neither does being in politics mean being dogmatic. Nothing runs contrary to my conception of politics more than a stubborn ideology. Our compatriots do not expect those in charge to conduct abstract political debates. They expect their leaders to give meaning to their lives and to develop practical and efficient solutions. The venture cannot be taken for granted, for the political class. Engaging in politics assumes going beyond thought patterns that are convenient and, in some respects, comfortable, but which offer nothing beneficial –by which I simply mean whatever may contribute to building a world that is more acceptable and more just. The grand policies of the past, those that were beneficial to our country, were always inspired by this spirit. No one had a greater sense of justice than Pierre Mendès France. But in 1945 he turned himself into the apostle of budgetary rigour, even in opposition to de Gaulle, because he saw, beyond outward appearance, how laxity could bring about social misfortune. I cannot resign myself to being confined within the divisions of another time. My desire to go beyond the conflict between the Left and the Right was misrepresented by the Left as neoliberal treason, while the Right depicted me as a hypocrite of the Left. I cannot accept seeing a desire for justice impeded by old patterns that leave no room for personal initiative, responsibility, and inventiveness. If neoliberalism one means trusting people, I agree to be] branded as a liberal. Because what I defend, on the other hand, should enable everyone to find in their country a life that fulfils their deepest hopes. If, on the other hand, being on the Left means believing that money does not bestow all rights, that the accumulation of capital is not the ultimate aspiration of one’s personal life, that civil liberties must not be sacrificed on the altar of an absolute and attainable security, that the poorest

and weakest must be protected and must not suffer discrimination, then I gladly consent to be branded as a man of the Left. (Macron 2017h, 31-32.)

Macron was convinced that the ideologies and the basic premises of the politics still have their status and substance, and it was necessary to re-estimate them completely in a new deliberative way in which they were expected to adapt depending on the current situation, with the best argument finally winning. However, Macron realised that while ideologies would not fade away, they would mean completely different things in the future. The change was inevitable because the old cleavages, confrontations, and the rationales behind the ideologies were so different. Believing in a traditional way in the old would lead to blindness on politics; the insular elite has not been able to reform the country and has focused on holding onto the achieved benefits and privileges. The consequence of this all has been nearly destructive to French society as the confidence among people in the whole political system has remained amongst the weakest in Europe (Macron 2017h 1-2, 32-35, 225-226, 231, Macron 2017cb: 1:30:00-1:30:38, Raynaud 2016, 20-21, CEVIPOFFF 2018). In addition to criticism aimed at Macron's political values, his campaign raised speculation during the elections: who, in the end, is Emmanuel Macron and what does he believe in? Many of his political rivals and the media accused Macron's platform of being superficial and without deeper reflections on the nation. Matyjasik argues that since the beginning of Macron's term, "every action of the executive is supported by a demonstration of modernity, evoked in an almost religious way". (Matyjasik 2018, 2.)

Instead of analytical thought and a thorough values-oriented public discussion in which all citizens could participate, Matyjasik compares Macron's politics to a cult of numbers and performances, where the duty of efficiency and a language of truth are connected to the rhetoric of private management. Matyjasik further comments on Macron's uncontrolled way of leading reforms; the time frame has been rushed since Macron's early days in the office. Politics have become a mathematical setting, where all kinds of proliferation of quantification and evaluation devices are widely used. The instruments used are well-known from the 1990s ideology of the New Public Management which aimed to "regulate, fragment and control and conform all social practises". Matyjasik notes that the New Public Management was connected to neoliberal ideas of the 1990s the purpose of which was dismantling of the state. (Matyjasik 2018, 2.)

According to Matyjasik, Macron's "new political world" has been politics without novel values or vision; policy that is based on and limited to the rhetoric of private management. This is seen, for example, in Macron's repeated use of the terms such

as bottom-up, impact, benchmarking and evaluation when describing his new policy, and how this policy aims at technical objectivity and neutrality while not giving any space for protests or critics. Policy is meant to be effective and efficient. Matyjasik concludes his criticism by commenting on how policy is meant to be effective and efficient. Matyjasik concludes his criticism by commenting on how Macron's policy and the language he uses to describe it (measurement, evaluation, governmentality) contribute to "a movement of expropriation of thought, a confiscation of the decision of the citizens". According to Matyjasik, Macron's purpose is to create a sphere where all indicators are visible, and it is possible to evaluate the results of the politics conclusively. At the same time, this course of action constitutes a threat for democracy, because public debate ends when there is no credible sphere for public discussion. (Matyjasik 2018, 2-3.)

This criticism – especially from the Yellow Vest movement – has been particularly vocal in 2020, as the goal of social equality among all citizens has not been realised as expected. Despite growing criticism, it is notable that Macron is the first president who wants to thoroughly reform the whole social care system, the problems of which I have discussed in the previous chapters. Before Macron's presidency, there was even a historical continuum concerning citizens' inequality for instance in social care. Prasad argues that the French welfare state policies benefit a sheltered core of the population at the expense of an excluded minority (Prasad 2005, 16-17). As noted, these problems were a high priority in Macron's programme (Macron 2016, 8, 2017a, 10, Macron 2017 ce. 7, Macron 2017c, 3-4, Macron 2017 ca1, Macron 2017b9).

While some of Matyjasik's criticism of Macron's politics seems valid, I disagree with certain aspects of it. I would argue that Macron does not invent new original ideas on politics, because there have been many examples which original ideas are based on, for instance on Blair's politics. Those accusing Macron of wanting to dismantle the state are not correct, because Macron specifically wants to restore and develop the authority of the state and advance the politics and resources to the targets with the greatest needs, as could be seen in the cases of education reforms and the poverty plan. Marine Le Pen's claims about Macron's politics during the elections are now particularly interesting. The riots which lasted almost a year in fact began as a nationwide movement against Macron's politics, just as Le Pen predicted. However, they also ended quite suddenly which was also an interesting phenomenon.

What about the LREM movement and its real origin? Is it a real new civic movement or a civic movement only superficially? Perottino & Guasty argue that

the LREM founding as a movement based on the bottom-up idea is a myth rather than a real new political phenomenon. According to Perottino & Guasty, LREM is a traditional top-down movement with visible elements of professional communication and organisation strategy. The main difference Macron and his staff offered was the opportunity for voters to express their opinions directly bypassing traditional party bureaucracy. Macron's strategy was based on door-to-door campaigning where volunteers had a key role interviewing and collecting information of the voters' views on politics. Macron's door-to-door campaign was not a first of its kind, but it was unusual in being professionally organised and effective. The campaign hired skilled professional and technical staff, among them 200 experts and spin doctors with significant experience in politics and campaign management (Perottino & Guasty 2020, 550, Dryef, 2017; Strudel, 2017).

According to Perottino and Guasty LREM drew historical parallels to the letters of grievances (*Cahiers de doléances*, drawn up in 1789), but using experts' competence to aggregate the answers into a coherent electoral programme. The basic idea of collecting people's grievances was a way to create a direct linkage between the people (everybody can participate) and the leader where the old political divisions and cleavages will be eliminated by eliminating intermediate bodies. Macron was convinced that the result would be the real moralization of French political life where the above-mentioned policy was realised as everybody can participate. Perottino and Guasty argued that Macron's ideas and methods were typical of technocratic populism which is based on the mixture of populist and technocratic appeals (Perottino & Guasty 2020, 550.).

As an example of the previously mentioned phenomena, Perottino & Guasty analyse Macron's reactions to the Yellow Vests protests in 2018. The future President of the Republic launched his election campaign in 2016 as a nationwide "Great Walk" tour. In 2018, Macron organised in a similar vein the "Great National Debate" that offered a possibility for the unhappy and disappointed citizens to be heard by the President. Perottino and Guasty further argue that technocratic populism forms the base of Macron's and his party's ideology. Macron outlined his agenda in 2017 before the first round of the presidential elections: "A France which goes beyond the old divisions to put in place the solutions that work, and which finally leads to a real moralization of its political life." (Macron, 2017a)

Technocratic populism best captures this mixture of populist and technocratic appeals. *En Marche* started in May 2016 with a large door-to-door campaign. In the Great Walk, 4,000 volunteers surveyed 100,000 people, providing the basis for LREM's platform. The aim of the Great Walk was to project responsiveness and

competence – LREM surveyed the will of the people and processed this will into a “unified interest of the country”. This was an effective campaign using techniques and staff with experience from the campaigns of François Hollande and Barack Obama. The survey was processed and analysed by 200 experts and spin doctors (Dryef, 2017; Strudel, 2017, Perottino & Guasty 2020, 550).

As I consider leadership characteristics of a technocratic populist politician, I can often define them through the leader’s personal charisma (Perottino & Guasty 2020, 547). Secondly, a technocratic populist leader wants to speak in the name of the people, directly communicating with the citizens, bypassing intermediate bodies. (Perottino & Guasty 2020, 547). According to Havlik (2019), technocratic populism aims to represent itself as an alternative to the ideology of liberal democracy when the present party system has proved to be dormant and non-effective in solving voters’ grievances. At the same time, the old party politics have lost their credibility, influence, and capacity to react to new challenges (cf. Caiani & Graziano, 2016). The old party system has fragmented, and in this environment, there is demand for new political actors. (cf. Aprasidze & Siroky, 2020; Buščíková & Guasty, 2019; Castaldo & Verzichelli, 2020; Ganuza & Font, 2020, Perottino & Guasty 2020, 547)

Analysis of Macron’s speeches and communication style makes it clear that some of Havlik’s observations on technocratic populism apply to him. It is true that Macron used the dormant and fragmented party system successfully, and his young age increased expectations of his ability to offer a true alternative. Insecure social and political environment and the failings of Macron’s predecessor François Hollande contributed to a situation where the ability and expertise met. The final section of the empirical analysis concludes by discussing how Macron has faced his critics from both the left and the right since assuming office. I will also give examples of the previous leaders and how their reforms failed in the face of the same accusations as those of Macron’s critics: arrogance towards the ordinary citizens.

4.3.6 Commentary on the Macron’s Critics and Research Material

We live in the middle of a great social, political and economic transformation which irrevocably challenges not just the French people, but the ways in which people in all western democracies live and work. Unlike many of Macron’s predecessors, Macron himself was ready to accept this fundamental change instead of promoting politics that would focus on avoiding necessary reforms, always leaving them for the next Government. Macron was also ready to accept, in the spirit of Aron and Ricœur,

the imperfectness of politics and the relevance of trying to find the truth and identify politics that would serve the common good and public interests as well as possible. I also examined the unsuccessful pension reforms of Macron's predecessors, noting that reform had taken place, the following administration had watered it down. According to Foessel & Dutent (2017), while analysing Macron's politics and his relation to Paul Ricœur's thinking, it is important to remember that whatever and however profound the relation between Macron and Ricœur has been, and regardless of what Ricœur has said about the role of the institutions or the politics of memory, Ricœur's ideas and thinking are not soluble as such in this case to Macron's political programme. It is essential to keep in mind that Ricœur's ideas have formed a sounding board for Macron's political thinking (Dutent & Foessel 2017,1).

Dutent & Foessel and Schlegel & Dutent (2017) agree on Ricœur's influence on Macron, which they argue is noticeable, but emphasise that this does not count for anything as it comes without concrete political outlines or policy initiatives. Schlegel & Dutent note that despite Macron's parentage or Ricœurian inspiration, in the end only the President of the Republic himself could say what he has truly retained and what in Ricœur's philosophy and thinking continues to inspire him. Schlegel & Dutent refers to the Ricœurian theme of the capable man, which has emerged regularly in Macron's thinking, and how Macron seemed to be broken out of it, to rise beyond the context of its origins and condition. Regarding this, it is relevant to ask: Is Macron as a practising politician faithful to the ethics of Ricœur or was the philosopher not talking about anything more fundamental than this very material conception of the capacities of each to get by socially? More specifically, Dosse refers to the elements concerning the changing national identity which are always present in transformation and will never reach its final destination; and Ricœur's belief in the individual and the individual's possibilities and capacity and to act, and how the last two mentioned elements intertwined. (Schlegel & Dutent 2017, 1, Dosse 2017, 1.)

However, Foessel (2017) reminds us of that Ricœur always referred to "socialism" which in our time is a very inaccurate term full of different meanings; today, it is possible to argue that we have reached a certain democratic dimension of socialism and a certain balance between social justice and political freedom. Foessel discusses whether the policy Macron represents fits into this context and suggests it is allowable to pose questions about the role and ideas of Macron's politics when Macron regularly emphasises the spontaneous benefits of economic freedom. (Foessel 2017, 2.)

When I discuss this great transformation, it is quite clear that it needs to be analysed through the phenomenon and theory of the risk society. Macron admitted

that the phenomenon, together with the accelerating globalisation, challenged all traditional institutions in France, and especially the social security and labour market. Macron also brought forth some very uncomfortable and even painful aspects of French society: the very low social mobility, social exclusion, and educational problems. Macron declared that his programme and politics focused on two policy areas to address these long-lasting problems: education, which is the basis of development of any society, and work, the influence of which extends much wider than we usually think. Macron was convinced, just as Brynjolfsson & McAfee amongst others, that the relationship between work and society creates added value for society at large, which benefits all actors, creating reciprocity where all actors are also interdependent. Macron believes in politics that go beyond ideological cleavages, and he approaches the economy and its challenges much like Jean Tirole.

If I go back in history, I notice Friedrich Hegel's similar ideas about common good. According to the Church, Hegel was convinced of the importance of the mediating institutions and their essential role in securing the common good. The corporations and states are inseparable in the same way as individuals are inseparable from the corporations. The evolution is clear, and the basic question is based on honour, meaning that everyone has a need to feel proud and valuable. According to the Church, Hegel argued that an individual wants to feel honour for the corporation, to be connected, and, simultaneously, the same person wants to feel honour for state one, to belong. This progress of connection and belonging is strengthened and intensified by education organised by corporations, and it will lead to a situation where the individual realises that they are acting for the common good, or, in other words, for the country. The attachment of the individual to the estate was grounded in the individual's work effort. Hypothetically, it can be assumed that this progress also reflects relations between the individual and the state or the nation. This can happen when the individual notices how one's activity and work effort have an influence also outside of one's estate or reference group. The individual realises that the emerging corporations and estates are acting for the common good: "then an individual can feel honour in the nation as a whole". (Church 2009, 16, 212, 1034, Hegel 2005, 253, 255.)

Comparing Macron's ideas to the policies of Tony Blair's premiership, I have noticed similarities between the two leaders, all of them in line with the proposals of the OECD (2017). Blair's goal was to develop individual citizens' ability to succeed by addressing the problems that have blocked the way to success (Blair 1996, 4 Blair 1997, 1, 3). According to Blair, these problems were often linked to poverty and poor education (Blair 1997, 1, 3). During his election campaign, Macron started to

design grassroot-level interventions in the problems of education, suggesting many concrete solutions with the purpose of preventing social exclusion of youth. Macron and his administration implemented a huge poverty programme aimed at increasing social mobility by early interventions, but also addressed weak learning outcomes by offering remedial teaching already in early grades, a major reform, and a massive investment in the French school system. Macron also recognized the questions of inequality in higher education, and shared Piketty and Tirole's concern about the ineffectiveness, unequally distributed university funding, and high dropout rates.

As a new generation political leader, Macron was tired of hearing how France had always been in the middle of a crisis whether the economic environment in France was good or bad. Macron announced that he wanted to reform the entire political culture to meet the requirements of the times. Macron was convinced that the old political cleavages and the way politics had always been approached in France did not work in the present-day environment with a completely different set of issues and challenges. The mission of politicians and leaders was to think and advance the interests of the country and the nation and break away from the old political culture of closely-knit elite negotiating shady deals and securing their achieved benefits. In this context, it was necessary to remove politics from the old ideologies and interest groups and seek the truth in politics, even though the goal was always on the move. Macronism appears to be a political doctrine which moves all the time in search of the right economic and social conditions which create possibilities for pluralism, individual effort and responsibility while not ignoring the intellectual and political rights of the citizens. These elements and premises share considerable similarities with the philosophies of Raymond Aron and Paul Ricœur whose work will be analysed in more detail in the chapter on.

Comparing Macron's ideas to Tony Blair's policies, I have noticed similarities between these leaders, all in line with the proposals and attentions of OECD¹² (2017) report. Blair's premise was to develop individual citizens' ability to succeed and reach

¹² Since 2000, the workforce has become more highly educated across OECD and partner countries. Whereas in 2000, the majority of young adults had attained upper secondary education as their highest education level, today the largest share of 25-34 year-olds holds a tertiary degree. The share of young EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2017 - ISBN 978-92-64-279834 © OECD 2017 adults with below upper secondary education only has also declined in the majority of OECD and partner countries, to 16 % in 2016 on average across OECD countries. Although more adults are reaching upper secondary level, completion of the programme still remains problematic. Among countries with available true cohort data, approximately 25 % of students who enrolled had not graduated after two years from the theoretical end date of the programme; four out of five of these students are no longer enrolled in education. This is a critical loss: the unemployment rate for young adults (25-34 year-olds) who failed to complete upper secondary education is close to 17 %, compared to 9 % for those who did.

one goal by intervening in the problems and challenges which have been obstacles and obstructed the last mentions (Blair 1996, 4 Blair 1997, 1, 3). According to Blair these problems were often linked in poverty and poor education (Blair 1997, 1, 3). Macron started his election campaign to plan the various measures to intervene on the grassroots level problems of the education offering many concrete solutions which purpose was to prevent especially the social exclusion of the young citizens. This meant that Macron and his administration implemented the huge poverty programme which purpose was to improve the base to the social mobility and intervene on the social problems as early as possible, but also to intervene on weak learning outcomes by offering remedial teaching already in early level which was a remarkable reform and a big investment in French schooling system. Macron also recognized the inequality questions in higher education and how much there was ineffectiveness, inequality in university funding, and student dropouts, which was a great concern also to Piketty and Tirole.

As a new generation political leader, Macron was tired of hearing how France had always been in the middle of a crisis. Macron announced that he wanted to reform the entire political culture to meet the requirements of the times. Macron was convinced that the old political cleavages and the way politics had always been approached in France did not work in the present-day environment with a completely different set of issues and challenges. The mission of politicians and leaders was to think and advance the interests of the country and the nation and break away from the old political culture of closely-knit elite negotiating shady deals and securing their achieved benefits. In this context, it was necessary to remove politics from the old ideologies and interest groups and seek the truth in politics. Macronism appears to be a political doctrine which moves all the time in search of the right economic and social conditions which create possibilities for pluralism, individual effort and responsibility while not ignoring the intellectual and political rights of the citizens.

Macron's politics follow the reformist line with a great concern about the future of the welfare state, a concern shared, for instance, with Thomas Piketty. At the same time, however, Macron was also concerned about various threats to the European way of life. The President of the Republic does not make any exception of the dominant mainstream politics in Europe. We live in a mixed economy, a society of risks, where the debate about the future of the welfare state will revolve around ways to organise, reform, and streamline it. Macron's politics are geared towards actively seeking different solutions to all of the above-mentioned challenges and, like Piketty, and the President of the Republic is convinced that if the public sector is not to be

able to reform itself and if the public services have no capacity to respond to the needs of the citizens, the consensus in favour of a high tax rate and, finally, the welfare state may shatter (Piketty 2014, 436-438)

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5 CONCLUSIONS: PRESIDENCY CHANGES?

The goal of this research has been to clarify who Emmanuel Macron is as a politician and as a leader of France, and whence Macronism rises in the era of the risk society. Investigating this, I have asked the following research questions: What are the core tenets of Macron's thinking regarding work, education and economics; and what kind of a reformist is Macron in French politics?

Before turning to my conclusions, I want to give some concrete examples of the changes in how Macron has represented his Presidency during the first four years of his term. As I wrote in the introduction, the role of the President in France has traditionally been distant and sublime, and when I make a brief historical comparison with Macron, it is interesting to notice that Macron assumed something close to a royalist style immediately after the results were published. Macron had his victory ceremonies in front of the Louvre, where the French kings held court until Louis XIV moved the court to Versailles. Macron walked alone through the massive courtyard to the lectern where he gave his victory speech assuring that he would be the leader, like the President of France should have always been, but at the same time the great servant to the whole nation, defending the values that have always been a source of great pride to France.

“I will defend France, its vital interests, its image and its message: I make that commitment to you. I will defend Europe, the common destiny the peoples of our continent have given themselves. Let us love France. From this evening, and for the next five years, I am going to serve it on your behalf with humility, devotion and determination.” (Macron 2017)

Macron also gave several interesting statements referring to his meteoric rise of power in which there were echoes of Napoleon Bonaparte: Macron said “everyone told us it was impossible, but they did not know France”, echoing Napoleon's famous quote, “the impossible is not French”. Another quote of Macron's worth paying particular attention to is, “nothing is more important than the free exercise of oneself, the realisation of one's own ability whatever it may be”. Both quotes reveal Macron's love of the great words of the great statesmen, reflecting a politician who understands the romantic approach to life. It has become obvious that Macron belongs among the politicians and presidents who are optimistic about the future,

believe in reason, are solutions-oriented, trust in science and in an individual's capacity to influence their life. Macron distances himself from such leaders as Charles de Gaulle, a pessimist compared to Macron and someone who considered statism (Gaullism) as the key to success. Macron has clearly put his whole personality and capacity in play, taking considerable risks and accepting defeats and failures. Most of all, Macron has a vision for the future of the nation, believing somewhat naively that he is the only one who knows how to lead the country, and perhaps Europe. (Nykänen 2017)

It has been a long journey from the royalist victory ceremonies of May 2017 to the situation in 2019 when Macron was forced to directly engage with French people during the Great National Debate. Until then, it had been impossible to imagine that the President of the Republic would face people's questions in marketplaces or sport venues. Macron drastically changed this tradition when the Yellow Vest movement was at its strongest. With this gesture Macron wanted to communicate to the people that they and their protests had been heard. Sometime later, Macron was also forced to give up the planned fuel tax increases and raise the minimum wage by €100 per month. In the end, Macron's course correction was necessary, not only for national security but also as the entire authority of the state and the authority of the President had been compromised. Since then, Macron has continued to change the image of the President: he is frequently in social media, providing almost daily live broadcasts of all his public engagements and press conferences, also occasionally using social media to engage directly with ordinary citizens.

At this point it is important to remember what kind of role the President of the Republic in France still is in general. As I brought up in my introduction the role of the President of the Republic is very central in French political and societal life. It is still a powerful institution. According to Cohen (2013) the President's status is based on royalist history and tradition which means that the presidents have usually been seen against this background, beyond and far of the citizens, and further how this idea is based on an idea where the nation's will have been incarnated by people in a spirit of plebiscitary or Bonapartist tradition (Cohen 2013, 55). This combines a dynastic claim that recalls sometimes criticised monarch tradition with the help of a direct emotional relationship between the ruler and the people and forms further called republican monarchy (Cohen 2013, 55).

Gueniffey and Couturier discuss this same French feature, remarking on how not even the decapitation of Louis XVI could stop the French citizens' demands for current leader (be it the President or the King): there will always be the demands to be filled. Gueniffey and Couturier view that there have always been the heroes and

the saviours of the republic: Gambetta, Clemenceau and Poincare until General Charles De Gaulle. All of them successively and in various ways revived the royal figure of incarcerated power as if the Republic could compensate for the fragility of its foundation only by reconnecting with the monarchical sacrality applied to the executive. (Couturier 2017, 69, Gueniffey 2017, 12.)

When De Gaulle institutionalised the Fifth Republic during 1958–1962 and started to drive the strong state policy (statism), it did not change the premise of the Fifth Republic, with its royal head posited on a Republican body. De Gaulle was not a conqueror, as France’s colonial era ended under his watch – in this sense he was distinctly un-Napoleonic. De Gaulle was a patriot and leader who put his personality in the political game, and whose mission was for France to regain its dignity abroad in addition to domestic reforms aiming to restore the authority of the state and politics. In the view of Couturier and Gueniffey, the above-mentioned also explains Macron’s style of representing himself in public with great gravity and formalism, compared to his predecessors Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande. The contrast between Macron and the predecessors was clear when Sarkozy’s style was more or less hyper energetic and sometimes provocative as Hollande wanted to be represented as “President normal”, a statement which never achieved resonance among the citizens. (Couturier 2017, 69, Gueniffey 2017, 12, Merchet 2017). François Hollande’s style and the way he represented his modest President belonged more to Scandinavia than to France.

5.1 Macron’s Contradictions Raise Questions

I have seen that Macron has had a desire to represent values of the late Enlightenment: justice, truth, reason and reconciliation. These provide the frame to the whole political concept Macron believes in. I have also seen that there have been several occasions where these values and targets have not been realised. Macron’s vision and his expected commitment to people and his thought of the citizens trusting him have appeared in a strange light during and after the events of the Yellow Vest movement. Macron’s motives came across as questionable also in the case of the Algerian War truth and reconciliation project when he wanted to steer the official truth in the direction that would be less damning for France. I am not sure how this example is possible to adjust to the original target and value to drive politics which one of the most important premises is based on striving for the truth. Based on the above-mentioned values, Macron has clearly tried to distance himself

from the traditional ideologies and ideology-driven politics, because ideologies can be seen as articles of faith or religion, rarely reconcilable with truth. In this case, the significance and influence of Paul Ricœur to Macron's thinking is a strongly emerging theme. Because the world will never be completed, politicians should be aware of and prepared for the imperfections of politics and try to understand the opposition instead of seeing it as the enemy. Macron is convinced that there are no ultimate solutions – they will always be incomplete because the goal is always moving; this, however, should not prevent politicians from making the best decisions possible (Fottorino 2017, 24). Ricœur's influence on Macron's political thought concerns his approach to the truth in politics: it does not exist, but it is essential to seek it regardless and come as close as possible. I could say that Ricœur's influence has extended to Macron's thought in the form of a paradigm (Fottorino 2017, 24, Monteil 2017 92-95, Duhamel 2017, 1-2, Monteil 2018, 2:00: 2:20).

There were also interesting points of views concerning the accusations of populism Macron has faced during his time in office. Often populist politicians offer simplistic solutions to difficult and complex questions. In Macron's case, there was clear evidence of cases where the ruling elite were at loggerheads with the ordinary citizens. However, it is important to note that Macron's offered solutions to these deep-rooted grievances have not been superficial or incomplete. Quite the opposite, Macron has been forced to give them his all: his whole personality and the institution of the President of the Republic. I have pointed out that, for example, in 1995 President of the Republic Jacques Chirac cancelled his pension reform in the face of protests. Macron has pursued his reforms despite the protests even though in some cases some of the reforms have been delayed. In this regard, the accusations of populism are at least partly ungrounded.

5.2 What Kind of a Reformer Is Macron?

As I draw the conclusions and answer the research questions, I would like to recall some interesting elements in Macron's approach to politics discussed throughout this dissertation. First, since assuming office, Macron has tried to continue implementing the three values that I have focused on in this research: work, education, and pro-market thinking, including enhancing entrepreneurship in the economy. Macron firmly believed that better education at all levels will accelerate social mobility, a serious and long-standing problem in France. Macron believes in politics that go beyond traditional ideological cleavages of French politics. Macron

truly wants to – and he has proved this – to distance himself from statism and traditional economic policy of most French politicians who have considered the interests of free market and entrepreneurship of secondary importance or, at the very least, less worthy of attention. I brought up the fact that the French Government has been running a deficit since 1974, and the overwhelming number of regulations and taxes that complicate operations in both labour markets and business. I discussed the French economy at large, where the big players are protected and receive several benefits guaranteed by the earlier administrations. To Macron, pro-market ideology represents justice and the future, whereas pro-business and crony capitalism belong to the past, to the era when the economic environment was completely different, and the economy of France strictly regulated. This policy line was not dependent on the Government's political leanings but has been accepted by both the Socialists and the moderate right. As a side note, there have been 23 prime ministers during the Fifth Republic, 15 of them with affiliation to the right and only nine to the left (gouvernement.fr.2021).

The Doctrinaires argued in their time that work creates the sense of belonging somewhere, and it also creates the sense of being someone. By analysing Macron's favourite themes, the President of the Republic favours work, entrepreneurship, commercial and business life. I will get the historical juxtaposition from Benjamin Constant's ideas. According to Constant, there was a connection between the commercial life and personal activity and their influence met the increasing personal independence together with a sense of ownership. This development was based on the nature of commercial activities which supply people's needs while excluding all external interventions. I recall that Macron, unlike his predecessors, was aware of the very limited possibilities concerning direct Government interventions. Constant argued in the 19th century that most of the Government interventions had been unsuccessful, even embarrassing to the nation and its people. Constant refers to a phenomenon (without giving an example of it) where the speculation and the meddling of collective powers with private business have caused more harm than any real benefit for the actors involved. In the previously mentioned context, it is possible to see Macron as a true reformer who represents ideas that are different from any of those of the former Presidents of the Republic.

One possible way to approach different varieties of liberalism, and later Macronism, is by determining the role of individual freedom, and personal responsibility in Macron's policy and how they are equated with the tradition of neoliberalism and the third way political theory during the era of the risk society. The research material indicates that there are elements in Macron's politics which have

been connected to the third way political theory, and if I want to define his politics and political ideas, it is necessary to understand these elements and how they interact. When I discussed Macron's relation or accusations of neoliberalism, I noticed that Macron wanted to reconcile the nation and heal the social wounds where the state played a significant role alongside the free market economy. Both need each other, because it would not be possible to finance the strong welfare state with its comprehensive services to its people without a well-functioning market economy and entrepreneurship: like Macron said, the welfare state cannot be conjured with a wave of a magic wand. According to Giddens, it was essential that welfare state and Government policy would be aimed at creating and supporting positive traits for the whole society and especially to individuals, such as happiness, self-satisfaction, and self-esteem, instead of negative ones, such as unemployment. Want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness and their significance to the old welfare state model were analysed earlier on page 88. (Giddens 2004, 4 Giddens 1998, 115, 128).

Giddens remarked that it is important to understand a positive welfare state as a policy which emphasises "mobilising life-political measures, aimed once more at connecting autonomy with personal and collective responsibilities" (Giddens 1994, 18). Ultimately, it was work which would guarantee personal freedom and emancipation, rather than the "gift economy" with its increasing social benefits, income traps and inefficiencies (Tirole 2018, 50). Giddens further argues that "with expanding individualism should come an extension of individual obligation, which should carry the obligation to look actively to work and it is up to Governments to ensure that welfare systems do not discourage active search" (Giddens 1998, 65). Once again, I am able to see the extent to which Macron's politics have been influenced by Giddens, and also by Tirol. Macron warned on many occasions about the income traps and the useless social benefits, the value of which is routinely questioned by many economists.

Macron's ideas and policy goals aimed at healing the society share close similarities with Guizot who saw the connection between a well-organised society (even though at the time there was no concept of welfare state in its current meaning) and citizens' opportunities as a useful instrument for finding one's right and satisfactory place in a society. Like Guizot, Macron has expressed that French society needs to reconcile in a similar way. According to Guizot, the whole premise of the politics was reconciliation, and if reconciliation does not exist, politics will turn into theatrics: truth, or even an aspiration to truth, disappears. The above-mentioned stages of development would lead to an ideal society, in which satisfactory work and salary had removed evil and wars had ended when all human capacity contributed to

the common good equally. Macron sees that the moral questions of politics are essential, recognizing that the old system (the state companies, political parties, trade unions and employers' associations) did not serve interests of the nation, nor represent the values of the Republic or advance the common good. This moral crisis was evident also in the findings of the CEVIPOFFF report. Relating to the previous, according to Macron, the state, politicians, and civil servants were serving the nation and its citizens, not the other way around. Reason, morality, and good manners were considered self-evident premises for politics and represented the ideal of the state. It was something that François Guizot and Benjamin Constant wrote about during the July Monarchy of 1830-1848. Raymond Aron also stressed these premises during his active career as a public intellectual which extended from post-war years until his death in 1983 (Bouniol 2017). Macron advocates the policy idea of which is to update the tasks of the state and modernise the state to meet the challenges of the 21st century in the way France has ever seen.

It was also clear to Guizot and to Macron that the profession of a politician should always be a temporary one, not the work of a lifetime. Guizot envisioned a fair society which should be built all the way from the top to the bottom. Whether an idealist or not, Guizot was concerned that the politics in France during his time were no longer good and true and warned about the worst scenario, a situation in which the legal institutions would become politicised. When I continue discussing social coherence in France, I pointed out how Macron saw the connection between social problems, such as exclusion and unemployment, and how these phenomena at their very worst led to the social disorder and economic depression as it was during the 1930s worldwide.

The next section will conclude my analysis of Macron in his relation to Tony Blair's politics and values. I will also point out how the political environment Macron faced in 2017 had certain similarities to Blair's era as the long conservative hegemony ended in 1997. It is also interesting how the people on both sides of the channel put their wishes and expectations on the relatively young politicians who had a lot of similarities in their personalities as well.

5.3 In the Wake of Blair

Tony Blair became the UK's prime minister in 1997; Macron assumed presidency in 2017. I can summarise the situation in their respective countries at the time they took office as follows. After 18 years of the Conservative Party's neoliberal policies and

austerity measures, British voters wanted somebody with a new approach to politics and society and found this in Tony Blair and the New Labour. In France, voters were frustrated with the old political culture and the murky business dealings of politicians and their inner circle, wanting somebody who symbolised fresh hope. Macron, however, was also convinced that the existing French model could not meet the expectations set for it by the Republican values. For Macron and French citizens, the question was both profound and painful. France had a proud historical legacy as a country of liberty, equality and fraternity; these values have played a significant role in the nation's history, and ought to drive the nation's politics even to this day.

As Macron took office, he set out to resolve several well-known societal problems. According to some estimates, up to 10 million people in France lived below the poverty line. Long-term unemployment was a huge problem, and people's ability to get even temporary jobs was limited, because of insufficient training and skill set. As I have earlier discussed, cultivating human capital was an essential element to secure the cohesion of the meritocratic society. If social cohesion is in danger and social peace threatened, the middle class will not succeed in their lives. Macron agreed with Guizot about the role of the middle class as the foundation of the society. The support of the middle class has always been crucial to any politician in power and losing or gaining their support determines the outcome of elections.

I noticed earlier that Blair was in a difficult situation where his top priorities were reconciling the nation, improving social mobility and equality of opportunity, and rebuilding social solidarity. The premise of Blair's politics was work. The key goal of Blairism was to advance workfare politics: individual activity, in the form of job search and participation in training or formal education was mandatory for the unemployed, who could face sanctions and lose unemployment benefits, should they not comply. To both Blair and Macron, it was important to recognize the changed role of the state as an economic actor: in the future, the state could no longer expect any direct intervention in the economy, for example by creating a new industry, and the state could not keep financing the ever-expanding public services with reduced tax revenue. Blair called for the abandonment of the old passive welfare state where the target was the changeover to the workfare society. He also emphasised the importance of "reinventing the state" and pursuing decentralisation of the Government. Finally, Blair called for an international approach to centre-left politics, instead of the isolation of right-wing forces. (Cerny & Evans 2004, 56.)

As I will summarise Macron's politics, the President of the Republic drives the politics where the whole nation should be aware how essential it will be to restore the value of the work, because it's good consequence and influences will always also

expand to the wider society in the spirit of Voltaire, Guizot, Constant and Hegel. Macron was convinced that work itself gives an individual a sense of belonging to the society, simultaneously keeping the citizens from the temptations of idleness with the work rhythms of our daily lives. As Guizot and Constant Macron emphasised the role of the middle class and how their welfare and success was a key also the success of the whole nation.

In this sense both Macron and Blair can be described as elected leaders whose core supporters were middle-class voters. In the case of Blair, this was also a strategic choice as he wanted to change the whole party image, and the culture the Labour Party used to be. As I continue our conclusions concerning Macron's and Blair's relation, I will notice how both Macron and Blair wanted to drive the politics which support the citizens to commit to adapt to the current demands, including the life-long learning projects which are essential especially in cases when one has recently lost their job. On this point, both Macron and Blair accept the existence of the risk society and they throw the responsibility of success on the individual oneself.

The goal of New Labour, instead of full employment, was to have social investments involved in the world of the workfare concept described above. In economic policy, the redistribution of income through transfers was of secondary importance. Instead, an important goal was to create an economic policy with a pro-market idea, and privatisation policy would be accepted as a conditional part of the management of public services (Cerny & Evans 2004, 56). I have also noted that Macron's policy line concerning economy and the role of the state has been quite similar with the policies of Tony Blair and New Labour. One of the premises was that the free markets, public sector and, more broadly, the state, were not against one another and should focus on their common interests rather than pointless confrontation. The state should be strong, but this strength should maximise its ability to serve, in the best possible way, the society, citizens and businesses. In this sense, Macron's approach to society – the role of the state, free markets and their interests – is different from his predecessors, and it is also challenging to explain Macron's politics in a neoliberal context.

Re-education gives a possibility to reach the new and even better job opportunities even during the era of risk society and by education it will be possible to reach the status of emancipation where the individual is the master of one's life. In practice this means that Macron emphasises individual responsibility and work ethic as a key to success in the world. Entrepreneurship, self-esteem, work and incentivising it are the values Macron wants to instil in French society. If you are not content with your work, you can always resign safely and try to find a new job. More

precisely, Macron wants to accelerate social mobility in the context of working life, not just in a context of education. In the middle of everything was and still is the work.

However, it is significant to remember how Macron wanted to take public sector and public policy to support individuals in the era when we are facing constant change not just in our daily lives, but also throughout our arc of life. More precisely this meant that it was essential to create a modern safety network to the society which can answer to the various demands of the era. Macron said many times how important it is to define the role of the state in a new way. The state cannot be everywhere as it has been in France.

More precisely Macron was convinced how the state should operate in a completely different way than it has been used to in France and this concerned especially the role of the state as an owner and business operator. However, Macron saw as an essential detail the cooperation between the state and the private sector, which has already led for instance to the remarkable project concerning the development of artificial intelligence in France where the above-mentioned elements have been materialised. (Macron 2017bb, 6, Le1 Hebdo 2016, 2.)

When I put all these above elements together and do the comparison to the New Labour's thinking, I notice several interesting similarities between Macron and Blair and the New Labour. Both Macron and Blair were convinced that it was possible to seek and promote prosperity, social justice, communality and more effective market operations. The policies that Macron and Blair represented would favour private actors and businesses, and would drive the government's positive role and implement an active social model. An important role and goal of the state should be the enrichment of the individual's life, the creation and encouragement of the community, while at the same time seeking to bring about a new kind of social thinking, responsibility, and communication from other people. To achieve all the above would be possible through various state-guaranteed services. However, services could produce a third sector instead of a state or a private operator. (Driver & Martell 2000, 3, Blair 1996.)

Macron believes in politics à la Blair beyond ideological cleavages, and approaches the economy and its challenges in a similar way to French economist Jean Tirole. According to Tirole (2018) economics is a science, which at its very best, reaches beyond ideological chasms, learning from the efficiency of markets, instead of trying to steer them. Tirole claims the citizens personal freedom is based on effective and free markets, which ultimately guarantee a personal freedom and

emancipation instead of the “gift economy” with increasing social benefits, dependence on them and finally inefficiency (Tirole 2018, 50).

According to Blair in the centre-left, he understood that the era of globalisation should aim for sound governance and stable public finances (Cerny & Evans 2004, 56). Blair’s statement is very close to Macron’s opinion of a strong economy and its significance to guarantee social justice. Macron was very concerned about the French economy and rising debt, and rising public deficit as well (Macron 2017, 30). Macron remarks that he refuses to give his inheritance to the economy, which is not stable and healthy, so all of these reforms were targeted to put the French economy back on track again (Macron 2017, 30).

I mentioned a couple times also of the huge public deficit of France, which began already in the mid-1970s. Despite the government or the Prime Minister or the President the huge indebtedness has continued further ever since. It is interesting how Macron followed (consciously or otherwise) Blair’s footprints also in this case. Macron declared how he and his party were committed to cut the indebtedness, driving the politics where the government’s role will be different to before. Both Macron and Blair thought that the government or the state should be a wise investor which should not intervene in the markets but act in the background and foster the fair rules of the competition and create better possibilities for the companies to act in the most efficient way possible. This last claim emerged when I opened Macron’s critique of the GAFSA companies and saw how keen Macron was to drive even supranational politics and decision making to curb competition-distorting corporate tax evasion.

The old left’s politics of tax-and-spend did not represent the values of the New Labour and the Party and its leader were deeply committed to run the economics and public finances responsibly. The free markets and capitalism were in service for the country and not the other way around. Related to the education both Macron and Blair were keen on to improve and reform their countries education system because they were convinced how the well-functioning education system create the better possibilities to the social mobility and social progress which were great concern to both Blair and Macron.

5.4 Risk Society Does Not Exempt from the Responsibility to Act

Macron readily acknowledges that we live in a chaotic and very uncertain world that is full of risks. Our job, in the end, is to adapt to changing circumstances. The

changing circumstances present an enormous challenge to the institutions, safety networks, and the whole set-up of the welfare state, which, ideally, should support and incentivize its people, offering everyone the same basic security, regardless of religion, sex or ethnicity. In any case, the most relevant and important question of the risk society is always the work and unemployment. To Macron it was clear, as it had been to Blair, that in case of unemployment, people would have a responsibility to re-educate themselves. Even in a risky society the whole social dynamic is dependent on work, entrepreneurship and sufficient education to steer people back into the labour market. Despite the negative aspects and threats that are inherently part of the risk society, Macron wanted to see it more in terms of opportunities than possibilities to fail. The premise for success was reformed public policy that would extend an equal safety net to all citizens regardless of their profession, age, or sex. It was also important that the safety net would not be a hammock; it would support the citizens and there were inbuilt incentives for the individual to go forward and take controlled risks, taking advantage of second chances without fear of failure.

As I summarise the previously mentioned values and consider their relation to the risk society, I noticed that these fundamental values of people are now under threat. I have discussed that Brynjolfsson & McAfee and Stiglitz, for example, argue that all work has value to the citizens and that the future of work is - in the middle of creative destruction. Like Brynjolfsson and McAfee, Macron has also talked about the bigger picture of the history that has shown us that technological progress and innovations have not only destroyed jobs but simultaneously created new ones, and because of this, productivity has risen to new levels. Macron has emphasised many times that it would be useless to create artificial obstacles to hold onto jobs in the dying fields of industry. In other words, unlike his predecessors, Macron supports the creative destruction.

As the CEVIPOFFF's report revealed, the confidence of the French citizens related to anything (other people, political institutions, politicians, courts, enterprises, etc.) has been at an exceptionally low level since the mid-1990s. This is a good example of the risk society phenomenon and its consequences in France, as also remarked repeatedly by Beck & Beck-Gernsheim. The former President of the Republic Valéry Giscard d'Estaing referred to the great transformation already in the mid-1970s, and his comments remain relevant today. Giscard d'Estaing was concerned about people's very low level of sense of belonging to the nation, which would lead to a negative phenomenon: social progress would suffer, and the result would be social disintegration. The question of the sense of belonging has also

emerged regularly in Macron's speeches and policy proposals. (Perrineau 1997, 1, Giscard 1974.)

Macron spoke many times about the individual emancipation that will happen only through decent work. For Constant and Guizot, the pursuit of happiness was one of the most important goals for anyone. Macron also repeated several times his conviction that emancipation, happiness, and decent work form a circle of happiness. More specifically, this still means the situation in which personal independence and freedom have been realised in a decent way. However, this did not mean that the individual, having achieved success, would leave the society. Macron's specific goal was to advance policies with the purpose of restoring the cohesiveness and inclusivity in society and the authority of the state, which was not possible without contributions of French people and their commitment to the values the nation represented. As I have discussed earlier, Macron described all French citizens as children of the state, and he wanted to re-evaluate the role of the state without putting the state and free markets against each other. Macron's views on the role of the state and neoliberalism are very different from the views Reagan and Thatcher represented in the 1980s when the state was seen as a kind of an enemy. Macron, by contrast, hugely valued the co-operation between the public and private sectors, as demonstrated by the case of the Sorbonne Centre for Artificial Intelligence.

I have noted that Macron has been preoccupied with the questions of democracy and the status of politics and political institutions. Macron has frequently stressed that it is essential to restore confidence in politics, political institutions, and social equality (equality of opportunity); once these targets have been met, the whole society will become more stable and fairer. Macron saw political parties as institutions but argued that their role should be completely overhauled. He was highly critical of the old party politics (described by him as tick-tack politics), where the parties in turn watered down each other's decisions and focused on staying in power rather than serving the country – already a concern for Charles de Gaulle in the late 1950s. As the parties promoted their selfish interests over and over again, people lost their faith in politics. It will become harder to break the vicious cycle: citizens feel left out of decision-making, and faith in democracy weakens.

Because the social and political environment has changed, we should adopt new ways to study ideological and political questions. This also applies to how I estimate Emmanuel Macron and his politics. Freedén's (2012) premise concerning ideologies is interesting: ideologies are connected to languages, and as languages change, ideologies will follow. Instead of following their old essences rigidly, current

ideologies might change and evolve in the long run. According to Freedon, ideologies must be seen more as tools that allow us to understand the world – rather than a traditional rigid and normative ideological structure (Niin & näin 2012, 3). This approach to politics is particularly at home in today’s postmodern world, where the only constant is change. This is the point that Emmanuel Macron understands admirably.

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