

## ABSTRACTS

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**JAMES SHIELDS**, Political Radicalism in France: Perspectives on a Protean Concept

This introductory article reflects on the new momentum that political radicalism has taken on in France. The ebb and flow of radical aspiration featured regularly in French politics under the Fourth and early Fifth Republics, before the failure of the “Socialist experiment” in the early 1980s brought about a paradigm shift. In the wake of this failure and with the “end of ideology” supposedly in sight, political leaders and parties tempered their appeals to radical solutions and conspired, not least through recurrent power-sharing, to vacate mainstream political discourse of much of its former radicalism. Since the presidential election of 2007, however, there has been a marked return to promises of radical change as the common currency of political discourse across the full left-right spectrum in France. This article introduces a special issue of *French Politics, Culture & Society* that brings together scholars from France, Britain, and Canada to discuss some of the meanings, expressions, and prospects of political radicalism in France today.

*Keywords:* France, political radicalism, radicalization, change

**JOCELYN EVANS**, Political Radicalism, Policy Expectation, and Electoral Competition in France: A Means to the End?

Political parties use policy radicalism as a means of attaining electoral success. Differentiation from other parties and ideological renewal after a period of incumbency or prolonged opposition are valid reasons for policy innovation, but excessive radicalization has a number of detrimental effects, including mismanaging voter expectations. This article analyzes a number of examples of policy radicalization under the French Fifth Republic. It starts from concepts taken from policy mood and spatial competition models, and examines how French political parties of both Left and Right have overreached in their ideological stances, and thereby exacerbated political disenchantment among the French public. The article concludes by looking at the notion that mainstream politicians may not be acting in their own best interests when they radicalize the political agenda by misreading electoral competitive cues.

*Keywords:* radicalism, radicalization, electoral competition, policy mood

ALISTAIR COLE, *The French Socialist Party and its Radical Ambiguity*

The French Socialist Party has maintained a deeply ambivalent relationship with political radicalism. Throughout its long history, political radicalism has been experienced both as an internal political contest (hence as a form of intra-party struggle for influence) and as a relationship within (and beyond) the broader party system. This article identifies three levels of analysis as heuristics to facilitate a study of the French Socialist Party over the long term. From the perspective of the party as a whole, the party evolves according to its own eco-system, and is shaped by deeply embedded cultural and political traits. A different level of analysis frames the question of political radicalism organizationally, in terms of relations within and beyond the party. Finally, one can also understand the party's relationship with political radicalism instrumentally and strategically, in terms of electoral alliances. Though there is a tension between these three approaches, each contributes to understanding why the French Socialist Party is sometimes considered a European exception.

*Keywords:* Socialists, Left, France, Mitterrand, Jospin

GÉRARD GRUNBERG, *Le radicalisme dans le parti socialiste aujourd'hui* [in French]

The radical component is still alive in French socialism. It finds expression notably in the anti-liberal economic perspective that the international financial crisis has recently reawakened. It is also expressed in the critique of the institutions of the Fifth Republic that Nicolas Sarkozy's "hyper-presidency" has revived. The tendency toward radicalization, however, is also heavily constrained these days for several reasons. The Socialist Party, first of all, has become a party of government. The centrality of the presidential election in the French system and the presidentialist character that the Socialist Party has taken on make a presidential victory a top priority for the party. Too radical a discourse can become, for such a party, counter-productive. The economic environment, moreover, and the situation the country faces makes less and less credible as a political objective the large-scale, state-led redistribution that has traditionally been how French socialism has translated its radicalism into a program of government.

*Keywords:* French socialism, social democracy, radicalism, anti-liberalism, reformism

FLORENCE HAEGEL, *Sarkozy a-t-il radicalisé la droite française? Changements idéologiques et étiquetages politiques* [in French]

This article draws on two research strategies to analyze the radicalizing effects of "Sarkozyism" in France. The first uses the computer program ALCESTE to compare systematically the presidential campaign discourses of Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy as a way to evaluate how Sarkozy has altered the ideology of the French right. This analysis shows that a radicalization of the French

right has in fact taken place with regard to questions of immigration, national identity, and *sécurité*. The second strategy makes use of the sociology of labeling to analyze expressions of “anti-Sarkozyism” on the internet. A cartographic study of the web sheds light on the variety and dynamism of this anti-Sarkozyism, and in so doing helps us take the full measure of Sarkozyism’s strong polarizing effects.

*Keywords:* radicalization, Sarkozyism, anti-Sarkozyism, ideological changes, world wide web

**JAMES SHIELDS**, *Radical or Not So Radical? Tactical Variation in Core Policy Formation by the Front National*

Starting from a number of general tenets about radical political parties, this article examines the Front National (FN) in relation to its core policy issue of immigration. To what extent has FN immigration policy been defined from the outset by its radicalism? Has that radicalism been constant or variable over time? And how far can a reciprocal influence be detected between the FN and the center Right in immigration policy formulation? Focusing on election campaigns, manifestos, and key moments in the FN’s evolution, the article assesses how the party has tailored its radicalism to contextual factors and tactical considerations. It reveals an FN less bound to a fixed policy and more ready to seek accommodation (with circumstance, public opinion, or the center Right) than is generally acknowledged. Conversely, it also assesses how the FN’s mobilization of strong support on the immigration issue has had radicalizing effects on the center Right. The article concludes by considering whether the change of leadership in January 2011 might confine the FN to the radical Right or see it adopt a more center-oriented course.

*Keywords:* Front National (FN), Jean-Marie Le Pen, far Right, center Right, immigration, radicalism

**NONNA MAYER**, *Why Extremes Don’t Meet: Le Pen and Besancenot Voters in the 2007 French Presidential Election*

Focusing on electoral support for the extreme Left and the extreme Right on the eve of the 2007 French presidential election, this article refutes the “convergence of the extremes” theory. It draws on data from the 2007 CEVIPOF French Electoral Panel to compare the profiles of voters for Jean-Marie Le Pen and Olivier Besancenot. Combining sociological, psycho-political, and economic models for explaining voter choice, it shows how different Le Pen and Besancenot voters are in their partisan and ideological attachments, as well as their social affinities and their positions on candidates and issues. Divergent social and political logics explain the electoral support for these two candidates: their voters do not occupy the same political space, they do not have the same social background, and they do not hold the same values.

*Keywords:* extreme Right, extreme Left, Trotskyism, ethnocentrism, authoritarianism

**MARCOS ANCELOVICI, In Search of Lost Radicalism: The Hot Autumn of 2010 and the Transformation of Labor Contention in France**

This article asks whether the wave of protest in the fall of 2010 in France can be interpreted as evidence of persisting radicalism. It argues that, in spite of appearances, the French labor movement is no longer radical. This claim does not imply that industrial conflict is disappearing. Strong legacies and institutional processes still feed conflict in the workplace and often push workers to use contentious, extra-institutional means; but industrial conflict is not what it used to be, with the total number of working days lost to strikes decreasing steadily over the past forty years, and with conflict itself being reconfigured and transformed. Labor contention is no longer driven by an offensive agenda and has become essentially defensive. If there is radicalism left in France, it might be best described as a “radicalism of tradition.” The article concludes by discussing the relevance of “radicalism” as an analytical category to make sense of labor contention in contemporary France.

*Keywords:* radicalism, protest, strikes, industrial conflict, trade unions, France

## ANNOUNCEMENT

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