

Policy
and Politics
in
France

*Living with
Uncertainty*

Douglas E. Ashford

Douglas E. Ashford

Policy and Politics in
France

Living with Uncertainty



Temple University Press

Philadelphia

Temple University Press, Philadelphia 19122

© 1982 by Temple University

Published 1982

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Ashford, Douglas Elliott.

Policy and politics in France.

(Policy and politics in industrial states)

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. France—Politics and government—1958—
2. France—Economic policy—1945—
3. France—Social policy. I. Title. II. Series.

JN2594.2.A82 320.944 82-5771

ISBN 0-87722-261-4 AACR2

ISBN 0-87722-262-2 (pbk.)

Editors' Preface

All industrial states face a tension between bureaucracy and democracy. Modern governments have found it increasingly difficult to formulate policies adequate to the complex tasks they undertake. At the same time the growing specialization and widening scope of government have led many to question whether it can still be controlled democratically. *Policy and Politics in Industrial States* explores how some of the major democracies have dealt with this dilemma.

Policy is a pattern of purposive action by which political institutions shape society. It typically involves a wide variety of efforts to address certain societal problems. Politics is also a much broader concept, involving the conflict and choices linking individuals and social forces to the political institutions that make policy. Comparative analysis of the interaction between policy and politics is an essential beginning in understanding how and why industrial states differ or converge in their responses to common problems.

The fact that the advanced industrial states are pursuing many similar aims such as increasing social well-being, reducing social conflict, and achieving higher levels of employment and economic productivity means neither that they will all do so in the same way nor that the relevance of politics to such behavior will always be the same. In looking at an array of problems common to all industrial states, the books in this series argue that policies are shaped primarily by the manner in which power is organized within each country. Thus, Britain, Japan, the United States, West Germany, Sweden, and France set distinctive priorities and follow distinctive policies designed to achieve them. In this respect the series dissents

from the view that the nature of the problem faced is the most important feature in determining the politics surrounding efforts at its resolution. Taken to its logical extreme, this view supports the expectation that all states will pursue broadly similar goals in politically similar ways. Though this series will illustrate some important similarities among the policies of different countries, one of the key conclusions to which it points is the distinctive approach that each state takes in managing the problems it confronts.

A second important feature of the series is its sensitivity to the difficulties involved in evaluating policy success or failure. Goals are ambiguous and often contradictory from one area of policy to another; past precedents often shape present options. Conversely, adhering to choices made at an earlier time is often impossible or undesirable at a later period. Hence evaluation must transcend the application of simple economic or managerial criteria of rationality, efficiency, or effectiveness. What appears from such perspectives as irrational, inefficient, or ineffective is often, from a political standpoint, quite intelligible.

To facilitate comparison, the books in the series follow a common format. In each book, the first chapter introduces the reader to the country's political institutions and social forces, spells out how these are linked to form that country's distinctive configuration of power, and explores how that configuration can be expected to influence policy. A concluding chapter seeks to integrate the country argument developed in the first chapter with the subsequent policy analysis and provides more general observations about the ways in which the specific country findings fit into current debates about policy and politics.

The intervening six chapters provide policy cases designed to illustrate, extend, and refine the country argument. Each of the six policy analyses follows a common format. The first section analyzes the *context* of the policy problem: its historical roots, competing perceptions of the problem by major political and social groups, and its interdependence with other problems facing the country. The second section deals with the *agenda* set out for the problem: the pressures generating action and the explicit and implicit motives of important political actors, including the government's objectives. The third section deals with *process*: the formulation of the issue, its attempted resolution, and the instruments involved in

policy implementation. The fourth and final section of analysis traces the *consequences* of policy for official objectives, for the power distribution in the issue area, for other policies, and for the country's capacity to make policy choices in the future. The element of arbitrariness such a schema introduces into the discussion of policy and politics is a price the series gladly pays in the interest of facilitating comparative analysis of policy and politics.

An important feature of these cases is the inclusion, for each policy problem, of selected readings drawn primarily from official policy documents, interpretations, or critiques of policy by different actors, and politically informed analysis. We have become persuaded that the actual language used in policy debates within each country provides an important clue to the relationship between that country's policy and its politics. Since appropriate readings are more widely available for Britain and the United States than for the non-English-speaking countries in the series, we have included somewhat more policy materials for these countries. In all instances, the readings are selected as illustration, rather than confirmation, of each book's argument.

Also distinctive of the series, and essential to its comparative approach, is the selection of common policy cases. Each volume analyzes at least one case involving intergovernmental problems: reform of the national bureaucracy or the interaction among national, regional, and local governments. Each also includes two cases dealing with economic problems: economic policy and labor-management relations. Lastly, each book includes at least two cases focusing on the relationship of individual citizens to the state, among them social welfare. Our choice is designed to provide a basis for cross-national and cross-issue comparison while being sufficiently flexible to make allowance for the idiosyncracies of the countries (and the authors). By using such a framework, we hope that these books will convey the richness and diversity of each country's efforts to solve major problems, as well as the similarities of the interaction between policy and politics in industrial states.

D. E. A.
P. J. K.
T. J. P.

Preface

The turbulence and intensity of French politics cannot help but create trepidation for anyone writing about the country. Nearly every writer on France, including many leading French citizens, have nothing but despair for French institutions and politics. The theme of this book is defined in a way that I hope will cause readers to reconsider the flood of criticism brought against French political achievements. The politics of French policymaking is an intriguing test of the more pessimistic arguments, because France has succeeded relatively well in a precarious world, even when striking out with highly nationalist measures and defying many Western democracies. The book is not intended to be an uncritical assessment of French policymaking, but does try to strike a balance between what French performance suggests must be some virtues in the French policy process, and the more well-known critiques of France.

There is less elaboration of the logic behind my analysis than some readers might wish for in this introductory book. The reason is quite simple. If uncertainty is the basic description by friend and foe within French politics, then perhaps it should be treated as a constant of French political life, rather than lamented. The policy analyses are the springboards from which we can begin to see how regularity and consistency is introduced into French politics despite its alleged excesses and weaknesses. In this limited sense, policymaking may be the bedrock of French politics and possibly a substitute for those more formal and reliable institutional relationships that most modern democracies have been able to develop. As I shall suggest in the Conclusion (see Chapter 8), there may even be

positive advantages in having a loose connection between politics and policy, even though such weak institutional links may also expose basic democratic practices to greater risk. The ability to live and prosper with such ambiguous institutions may have its virtues, especially as the task of government expands with the modern welfare state.

In writing the book I have received the assistance of countless French politicians and administrators who patiently responded to a host of questions. I cannot acknowledge them all, and I hope that I have not betrayed their trust and cooperation. A number of French scholars and officials did read particular chapters of the book, and to them I am especially grateful: Louis Fougère, Bernard Gournay, Catherine Grémion, François Lagrange, Jean Padioleau, Guy Terny and Jean-Claude Thoenig. I have also been relentless in calling on many friends outside France who share my fascination with French politics: John Ambler, Suzanne Berger, Ann Corbett, Gary Freeman, David Goldey, Peter Hall, Jack Hayward, John Keeler, Martin Schain, and Vincent Wright. They all have added immeasurably to the coherence and balance of my thinking, and I hope I have done justice to their comments and reactions.

Several comments may help the reader. First, I have provided a list of abbreviations and frequently used them in the text because this is how the French themselves describe their governmental machinery. I have tried to avoid excessive use of French terms, but I do assume that the student will have a basic knowledge of French institutions and their names. Second, I have made a special effort to include in the references as many English writings as possible on French policies and policymaking. The references for Chapters 1 and 8 are all under General References, as well as some general government reports that are cited in several places in the book. I have doubts that the elitist character of French government exceeds that of most modern, complex governments, and so have made an effort to include notes on the many government reports that are available. Third, assuming that most undergraduate readers will not read French, I have tried to provide a balance of political views in the readings, especially so as to take into account the transition to a Socialist government.

Special thanks are due to the University of Manchester where my visit as Simon Professor provided time to write a first draft of the

book. I should also like to thank Catherine Esser for helping with the translations. *Le Monde* kindly gave permission to reprint extended portions of a number of articles. The Royal Institute of Public Administration and Vincent Wright also gave permission to reprint parts of several articles from *Public Administration*. I am also indebted to the Cornell Center for International Studies, whose summer support has enabled me to return regularly to Europe.

Douglas E. Ashford

Ithaca, New York
December 1981

Abbreviations

AAE	Amicale des Algériens en Europe (1962)
ACOSS	Agence Centrale des Organismes de Sécurité Sociale (1967)
ADAP	Association pour le Développement des Associations de Progrès
AEE	Amicale pour l'Enseignement (1961)
AFPA	Association pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes (1946)
AGIRC	Association Générale des Institutions de Retraites des Cadres (1947)
AGREF	Association Groupant les Plus Grandes Entreprises Françaises
AMEXA	Assurance Maladie des Exploitants Agricoles (1961)
ANACT	Agence Nationale pour l'Amélioration des Conditions de Travail
ANFPA	Association Nationale pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes
ANPE	Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi (1967)
ARRCO	Association des Régimes de Retraites Complémentaires (1961)
ASA	Allocation Supplémentaire d'Attente (1974)
ASSEDIC	Association pour l'Emploi dans l'Industrie et le Commerce (1967)
ATOM	Mouvement d'Aide aux Travailleurs d'Outre-Mer (1965)
AVTS	Allocation aux Vieux Travailleurs Salariés

BAPSA	Budget Annexe des Prestations Sociales Agricoles
BAPSO	Budget Annexe des Prestations Sociales Obligatoires
CANAM	Caisse Nationale de l'Assurance Maladie
CANCAVA	Caisse Autonome Nationale de Compensation de l'Assurance Vieillesse Artisanale.
CDES	Commission d'Education Spéciale
CERES	Centre d'Etudes, de Recherches et d'Education Socialistes
CFDT	Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (1964)
CFTC	Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (1919)
CGC	Confédération Générale des Cadres (1944)
CGP	Commissariat Générale du Plan
CGPME	Confédération Générale des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises
CGT	Confédération Générale des Travail (1895)
CGT-FO	Confédération Générale Travail-Force Ouvrière
CIASI	Comité Interministériel d'Aménagement des Structures Industrielles
CIEMM	Centre d'Information et d'Etudes sur les Migrations Méditerranéens
CME	Commission de la Main d'Oeuvre Etrangère (1973)
CNAF	Caisse Nationale des Allocations Familiales
CNAV	Caisse Nationale de l'Assurance Vieillesse
CNLI	Commission Nationale pour le Logement des Immigrés
CNPF	Conseil National du Patronat Français
CODER	Commission de Développement Economique et Régionale
CODIS	Commission de Développement des Industries Stratégiques
COTOREP	Commission Technique d'Orientation et de Reclassement Professionnel
CREDOC	Centre de Recherche pour l'Etude et l'Observation des Conditions de Vie
DATAR	Délégation d'Aménagement du Territoire et d'Action Régionale

DGRST	Délégation Générale à la Recherche Scientifique et Technique (1958)
FAF	Fonds d'Assurance Formation (1968)
FAL	Fonds d'Action Locale
FAS	Fonds d'Action Sociale pour les Travailleurs Migrants
FASTI	Fédération des Associations de Solidarité avec les Travailleurs Immigrés (1965)
FDES	Fonds de Développement Economique et Social
FECL	Fonds d'Equipement de Collectivités Locales
FEN	Fédération de l'Education Nationale (1948)
FGDS	Fédération de la Gauche Démocrate et Socialiste
FIAT	Fonds Interministériels d'Aménagement du Territoire
FME	Fonds de Modernisation et de la l'Equipement
FNAFU	Fonds Nationale d'Aménagement Foncier et de l'Urbanisme
FNE	Fonds Nationale de l'Emploi (1963)
FNS	Fonds National de Solidarité (1956)
FNSEA	Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles
GIP	Groupe Interministériel pour la Résorption de l'Habitat Insalubre (1970)
GISTI	Groupe d'Information et de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés
IGAS	Inspection Générale des Affaires Sociales (1967)
INSEE	Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques
MDARM	Mouvement de Défense et d'Assistance des Rapatriés Musulmans
MODEF	Mouvement pour la Coordination et la Défense de l'Exploitation Familiale
MONATAR	Mouvement National des Travailleurs Agricoles et Ruraux
MRAP	Mouvement Contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples

ONI	Office National d'Immigration
ORGANIC	Organisation Autonome Nationale de l'Industrie et de Commerce
PCF	Parti Communiste Français
PS	Parti Socialiste
PSU	Parti Socialiste Unifié
RCB	Rationalisation des choix budgétaires
RI	Républicains Indépendants (Giscardian Party 1962–1978)
RPR	Rassemblement pour la République (Gaullist Party 1976–)
SFIO	Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (Socialist Party 1920–1971)
SIVOM	Syndicat à Vocation Multiple
SMIC	Salaire Minimum Interprofessionnel de Croissance (1972)
SONA-COTRA	Société Nationale de Construction de Logement pour les Travailleurs
SOUND-IATA	Soutien et Aide aux Travailleurs Africains (1963)
UCANSS	Union des Caisses Nationales de Sécurité Sociale
UCN	Union des Caisses Nationales (1968)
UDF	Union pour la Démocratie Française (Giscardian Party 1978–)
UDR	Union pour la Défense de la République (Gaullist Party 1968–1971)
UDVE	Union des Démocrates pour la Ve République (Gaullist Party 1967–1968)
UIMM	Union des Industries Métallurgiques et Minières
UNAPEI	Union Nationale des Associations de Parents d'Enfants Inadaptés
UNEDIC	Union Nationale Interprofessionnelle pour l'Emploi dans l'Industrie et le Commerce
UNR	Union pour la Nouvelle République (Gaullist Party 1958–1967)
URSSAF	Union pour le Recouvrement des Cotisations de Sécurité Sociale et d'Allocation Familiales (1967)

Contents

Editors' Preface ix

Preface xiii

Abbreviations xvii

1. The Policy Process and Institutional Uncertainty	3
FRENCH POLITICS SEEN THROUGH THE POLICY PROCESS	5
INSTITUTIONAL UNCERTAINTY AND FRENCH POLICYMAKING	10
POLICY CHANGE UNDER A DOMINANT PARTY	18
FRENCH SOCIETY AND POLITICS: LIVING WITH DIVERSITY	25
PARTIES AND ELECTIONS: ONE STEP BACKWARD, TWO STEPS FORWARD	30
POLICYMAKING AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLITICS	45
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND FRENCH POLICYMAKING	60
2. Administrative Reform: Compromising with Necessity	65
CONTEXT	67
AGENDA	70
PROCESS	73
CONSEQUENCES	77
READINGS 2-1 THE POLITICIZATION OF THE FRENCH CIVIL SERVICE	80

2-2	AN EVALUATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM OPTIONS	84
2-3	PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTING ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM	88
2-4	A PROPOSAL FOR A MINISTRY OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM	94
2-5	THE POLITICAL MANIPULATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION	98
2-6	THE NEED TO INCREASE EXTERNAL INFLUENCE ON THE ADMINISTRATION	100
2-7	SOCIALIST PROPOSALS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM	104
3.	Local and Regional Reform: Territorial Compromises	107
	CONTEXT	108
	AGENDA	112
	PROCESS	117
	CONSEQUENCES	121
READINGS 3-1	ON REORGANIZING THE PREFECTS	126
3-2	CENTRAL-LOCAL TAX AND SUBSIDY PROBLEMS	130
3-3	THE LOCAL AND DEPARTMENTAL NETWORK	133
3-4	THE GUICHARD REPORT ON SMOTHERING LOCAL DEMOCRACY	136
3-5	HOW MUTUAL ADVANTAGE REINFORCES THE CENTRAL-LOCAL NETWORK	139
3-6	THE SOCIALIST DEBATE OVER REGIONS AND DEPARTMENTS	142
4.	Economic Policy: Desperation or Design?	146
	CONTEXT	147
	AGENDA	152
	PROCESS	154
	CONSEQUENCES	159
READINGS 4-1	THE PROSPECTS IN 1958	164

4-2	THE POLITICAL MEANING OF THE PLAN	168
4-3	SHIFTING THE COURSE OF ECONOMIC POLICY	173
4-4	INDUSTRIAL AND BUDGETARY PROPOSALS OF THE COMMON PROGRAM	176
4-5	THE FRENCH ECONOMY UNDER BARRE	179
4-6	THE SOCIALISTS' ECONOMIC PROGRAM	182
5.	Industrial Relations: In Search of Compromise	187
	CONTEXT	189
	AGENDA	195
	PROCESS	199
	CONSEQUENCES	202
READINGS	5-1 UNION PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING	208
	5-2 AMBIGUITIES OF FRENCH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING	212
	5-3 PROPOSALS TO REFORM INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS	217
	5-4 MAIRE ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CGT AND CFDT	219
	5-5 THE FUTURE STRATEGY OF THE CNPF	221
	5-6 THE RIGHT TO STRIKE IN QUESTION	224
6.	Social Security: Success by Default	228
	CONTEXT	229
	AGENDA	235
	PROCESS	240
	CONSEQUENCES	243
READINGS	6-1 THE EARLY OBJECTIVES OF FRENCH SOCIAL SECURITY	247
	6-2 EARLY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM	250
	6-3 THE FRENCH CONCEPT OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY	251
	6-4 POLITICAL PARTIES AND SOCIAL BENEFITS	256
	6-5 THE GROWTH OF SOCIAL SPENDING	259

6-6 SOCIAL SECURITY DILEMMAS UNDER MITTERRAND	263
7. Immigration Policy: Social and Economic Uncertainties	266
CONTEXT	267
AGENDA	271
PROCESS	274
CONSEQUENCES	279
READINGS 7-1 THE SEARCH FOR AN IMMIGRATION POLICY	285
7-2 UNIONS AND IMMIGRANTS	288
7-3 AN IMMIGRANT SPEAKS TO THE ISSUE	291
7-4 PROBLEMS OF A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY	293
7-5 CONSIDERING REPATRIATION	296
7-6 REACTIONS TO INCREASED RACIAL TENSION	298
8. Conclusion: A French Secret or Putting Politicians to Work	300
THE DEMISE OF THE “TWO FRANCES”	303
USING POLICIES TO BUILD INSTITUTIONS	307
THE POLITICS OF POLICYMAKING: FILLING OR CREATING THE INSTITUTIONAL VOID?	311
INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: STIMULUS OR DETERRENT TO POLICYMAKING?	316
References	321
Index	339