

# A crisis of ideology?

A study on the ideological implications of the rise of radical  
right parties on the European center-right

# Abstract

This study aims to highlight the ideological aspect of the incumbent crisis of the European center-right. It does so by analyzing election manifestos from national elections between 2012 to 2022. The study parties are Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (CDU) of Germany and Les Républicains of France. The study makes use of theories regarding party competition. The applied method is an idea analysis using ideological ideal types based in conservatism and classical liberalism to guide the analysis. The policy areas that have been studied are derived from what earlier research has highlighted as being central to the emergence of radical right parties. The results of the study are that use of ideology differs greatly between the two studied cases. Theoretically, this was expected to be the case since each national election is its own arena for party competition, with different competitors. The results of the study suggest that the proposed incumbent crisis of the European center-right also has an ideological dimension which is highly dependent on the national context.

*Key words:* Ideology, Center-right, EPP, Idea analysis, Election manifestos  
Words: 19520

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# 1 Foundation

## 1.1 Introduction

The European center-right is in the midst of a crisis (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021). This crisis has largely been induced by the emergence of a new sort of political movement, the radical right party. All across Europe radical right parties have gained traction and are challenging the political status quo. The mainstream center-right parties of Europe have long been the primary option for voters desiring a more traditional and conservative approach to political issues. This is seemingly no longer the case, triggering changes in the European center-right. Studies have shown that the impact of the emergence of the radical right has been different in different European countries (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021, Wolnietz & Zaslove 2018).

Earlier research have suggested that party groups form from similarities in ideological conviction and party family (Marks et al 2002). National positioning has also been identified as an important factor for European party group membership (McElroy & Benoit 2010). From these findings we can deduct that different political developments in different European countries may have an impact on the future of European political cooperation. Party positioning has been explored by earlier research and has shown that the center-right is the closest family to the radical right (Immerzeel et al. 2015). This makes the center-right particularly susceptible to changes in the political landscape brought by the emergence of the radical right.

Election manifestos are documents that are loaded with ideological statements (Dolezal et al 2018). However, in earlier research quantitative approaches to this empirical material has been the norm (see Hadj-Abdou & Ruedin 2022, Habersack & Werner 2022). This is not without a valid reason, studying election manifestos in a quantitative matter is an excellent way to study salience of different issues and individual parties' priorities for a certain election. However, election manifestos hold greater value than only expressing party priorities, that is communicating ideology and in which light the party wants itself to be perceived (Dolezal et al 2018). In using election manifesto's as empirical material in a qualitative manner, we gain greater insights in a particular party's image of itself.

The rise of the radical right is something that has intrigued researcher for quite some time now (see Mudde 2007, Mudde 2019, Rooduijn 2015, Wodak 2021). Multiple studies have shown that the emergence of radical right parties have not only held an impact on other parties but also the entire political system as such (Han

2015, de Vries & Hobolt 2020, Wolnietz & Zaslove 2018). This also suggests that a variance on the national level of politics is to be expected. This study aims shed light on ideological variance within the European People's Party during the crisis sparked by the emergence of radical right parties. This will be done through examining ideological statements in election manifestos regarding policy areas that have been especially important to the emergence of radical right parties. The EPP-parties that will be examined are the German Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands and the French Les Républicains.

## 1.2 Purpose & research question

### 1.2.1 Purpose

It has been argued that the crisis of European center-right parties is due to the emergence of radical right-wing parties in Europe (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021). Studies have been made comparing the national and EU-level of politics using manifestos (Braun & Schmitt 2020). However, research directly comparing the national level of European party politics is required to shed light on the ideological aspect of the crisis of the European center-right. This study aims to highlight ideological changes in two EPP-parties during this crisis of the European center-right.

The European political system is a multi-leveled system. Theorists have proposed that the national level of politics is of great importance when defining one's stances in international cooperation (Putnam 1988). This phenomenon has been observed in European parties as well (McElroy & Benoit 2010). Given this logic, parties' international preferences are an extent of their national preferences. Studies have suggested that parties position themselves in similar national positions as their European cooperation partners (McElroy & Benoit 2010). For the center-right the dominant party group in the European parliament is the European People's Party group (EPP). Given the previous research have shown that the European center-right is in crisis there is a high probability that the crisis bears implications on the EPP cooperation as well. Therefore, understanding the ideological aspect of national politics may grant further inside into European cooperation between political parties. The crisis of the center-right has not been uniform throughout Europe. Studies have shown that the national context on which the parties act is of great importance to how the crisis has manifested itself (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021, Wolnietz & Zaslove 2018). Since national positioning is of importance to European political cooperation, comparing the national levels of politics is of great value when examining the nature of this crisis.

A change in positioning over time can cause the ideological fabric of an individual party or group to change (Facchini 2016). Given the different national

positioning of center-right parties throughout Europe, there is a risk of non-uniform ideological change within the European center-right. Therefore this study aims to highlight the differences in ideological developments between two European center-right parties on the national level.

### 1.2.2 Research question

This study is primarily concerned with ideology. This is due to ideology being a driving force behind European political cooperation (Marks et al. 2002). Ideology, and use thereof, something dynamic which parties can use differently depending on their political context. The fluidity of ideology usage and its dependency on political context makes it an interesting angle to approach the crisis of the European center-right from.

This study is concerned with the national level of politics. This is due to inspiration drawn from earlier research which is presented in the literature review. Ensuring that the empirical material is of equal value, national election manifestos make for suitable empirical material. How the empirical material will be analyzed is further expanded on in the methods chapter.

Because of the time limitation that this study has, the research question must be limited. Since one of the aims of the study is further clarifying the proposed crisis of the European center-right, as described in earlier research, the cases which are being taken into account have to be representative of the European center-right. The way this will be limited in this study is studying EPP parties of the two countries with the most seats in the European parliament, namely Germany and France. The reasoning for this limitation will be further clarified later in the text.

A limitation on time frame also has to be clearly defined. Findings from material from the 2010s lay as an inspiration and foundation for this study (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021, Wodak 2021). In order to contribute in further understanding the phenomenon that is the crisis of the center-right, this study will make use of material from recent elections.

From these aims a clear and concise research question that will be the driving question of this paper can be constructed. In order to fulfill this study's scientific purposes and clearly reflect the limitations placed, the research question is as follows: "How have the CDU and Les Républicains developed ideologically in the timespan of the last three elections in policy areas salient to the radical right?"

## 1.3 Literature review

### 1.3.1 Research on the center-right crisis

The first state of the scientific field that has to be presented is the state of research on the ongoing European center-right crisis. Studies have suggested that the European center-right is in crisis much due to the emergence of radical right-wing parties (Abou-Chadi & Krause 2018, Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021, de Vries & Hobolt 2020, Wolinetz & Zaslove 2018). The first book that is of central inspirational value to this study is *Riding the Populist Wave: Europe's Mainstream Right in Crisis* edited by Tim Bale and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. In this book they propose that the center-right is in a crisis and that the rise of radical right-wing parties played a part in inducing this crisis. (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021). They also show that the impact has been different from country to country. These findings give rise to this study's interest in further examining the impact of the crisis on a national level.

Another book that has served as an inspiration to this thesis is Ruth Wodak's *The politics of fear: the shameless normalization of far-right discourse*. In it it is explained how the far right discourse has been normalized in different European countries (Wodak 2021). She dives into the mechanisms that have been utilized by the radical right and the different ways these mechanisms have been put into practice from country to country. The comparisons on a national level in this book has inspired the focus on ideological change on a national level in this study.

Multiple studies have examined the effect of radical right-wing parties on entire political systems (Abou-Chadi & Krause 2018, de Vries & Hobolt 2020, Wolinetz & Zaslove 2018). They have shown that the emergence of radical right-wing parties has had a major impact on the political system and its actors. Earlier research has suggested that popular support for different issues and the wider political context are main contributors to parties changing their policy positions (Fagerholm 2016).

Studies have shown that ideology indeed plays a role in European political cooperation (Marks et al 2002). Other studies have shown that European political cooperation is also correlated with national positioning (McElroy & Benoit 2010). The link between ideological conviction and national positioning, and what role it plays for the scope of this study, will be further explored in the theory chapter.

The use of manifesto as empirical material is nothing novel. Previous studies have used manifestos as either it's primary empirical material or as supporting empirical material (see Hadj-Abdou & Ruedin 2022, Habersack & Werner 2022). However, the majority of studies using election manifestos as material in studying the crisis of the center-right does so in a quantitative matter. It is fantastic tool when the researcher wants to study salience and to some extent what is important to the party for a given election. However, in understanding ideology, and use of it, a more qualitative approach is needed. How the manifestos will be examined in this study is further explored in the methods chapter. In using the empirical material in a different way, this study aims to further expand scientific knowledge that can be gained through studying political manifestos.

### 1.3.2 Research on radical right parties

In order to examine what impact the emergence of the radical right has had on the center-right, one must first understand what the radical right is, what their ideological standpoints are and what impact they bring on to a political system. The radical right is a phenomenon that has sparked multiple scholars' interest in the 21st century. Cas Mudde argues that there are three main components two radical right-wing parties. These are nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde 2007).

Nativism is “an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (‘the nation’) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state” (Mudde 2007, p.19). In other words, nativism can be understood as an extreme form of xenophobic nationalism. Nationalism itself is built upon the notion of an imagined community (Closs-Stephens 2013). This imagined community is then being reinforced in different ways depending on history and society (Özkırmılı 2017). Ways that this reinforcement is put into practice is emphasizing cultural habits, different symbolic rituals and pointing out the national community's presence in the everyday life of its members (Özkırmılı 2017). So nativism as a concept is intertwined with ordering of society in a nationalist framework. This in turn puts pressure on the members of the national community to uphold the traditions of the imagined community that makes the nation in order for the concept to hold ground.

Authoritarianism can be understood as conventionalism, conformism, and submission to established authorities (Altemeyer 1981). Conventionalism is the ideal that members of a group should uphold a way of life that is conventional to the group. Conformism is the ideal that the individual should conform to the group rather than expressing an individual personality. The ideal that individuals should submit to existing authorities further highlights the collective idea of how a society should be structured. Through this, authoritarianism puts heavy emphasis on homogeneity in members of the group.

The third focal point of Mudde's understanding of the radical right is populism. Populism can be understood as a thin ideology, which means that it is not self-sufficient (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2013, Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2017). In this understanding, thin ideologies interacts with established ideational traditions of full ideologies. In this way, they argue that populism is neither a left or right-wing phenomenon. Rather, it is a mechanism which can latch on to existing ideational traditions. Other scholars have also highlighted that populism is a multidimensional phenomenon with variance depending on ideational context (Meijers & Zaslove 2021). Other central components to populism are the idea that a pure people is struggling against a corrupt elite and that there is a general will of the people (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021). "The people" as a concept is used



to create legitimacy through the idea of popular sovereignty (Canovan 2005). It is a very elusive term that has been used by political movements in order to create legitimacy for political change. Studies have also pointed out that populist communication always entails creating an in-group and an out-group (Aalberg et al 2017). Every democracy rests upon the notion that the people should hold political power. Therefore populism creates the ultimate form of political validity. So when a populist party latches on to an existing school of thought, they subsequently create a validity crisis in the parties who adhere to said school of thought.

## 1.4 Theoretical framework

### 1.4.1 Presentation of theoretical standpoints

In order to shed light on ideological developments in the European center-right, it is central to understand why parties develop as they do. To guide the study and to understand the mechanisms that lay as a foundation for these developments, a theoretical framework must be constructed. Since earlier research has pointed out that it is the emergence of radical right parties that have induced the state of crisis in the center-right, a good place to start is with a theory that explains political development on a party level.

Bonnie Meguid has developed the “Position, Salience and Ownership” theory (PSO) to explain how niche parties' success is dependent on the strategies incorporated by mainstream parties (Meguid 2005, Meguid 2008). The theory is an amendment of the spatial theory of party competition. The spatial theory of party competition argues that parties change their positions in order to compete with each other (Downs 1957). According to the theory, Parties in two party systems will over time start to resemble each other and parties in multi-party systems will try to remain as close to their ideologies as possible, in order to yield as good election results. This argument however is based on the presumption that the number of ideologies in a society is predetermined and fixed. It also assumes that all policy areas that is of importance to the different ideological foundations are known and do not change. Meguid argues that niche parties do not position themselves in already existing dimensions, thus their emergence creates new dimensions of party competition (Meguid 2008). Other research have also suggested that new dimensions of party competition is of central value to political development, strengthening the argumentation of Meguid (Demker & Odman 2022).

PSO-theory argues that voter support, assuming that parties are operating in a system where they compete on issues, is dependent on three factors: the party's position in an issue must be appealing, the issue at hand must be salient and the party must be seen to have ownership of this positioning (Meguid 2008). Given this

understanding of how political parties compete, she argues that the success of niche parties is dependent on strategies employed by the established mainstream parties in order to weaken the niche party's strength in one of these aspects. A strategy that can be employed is an accommodative one, where the mainstream party tries to take the same position as the niche party in order to attract voters. Another strategy that can be employed by a mainstream party is an adverse strategy, where the mainstream parties tries to distance themselves as much as possible from the niche party. A mainstream party can also attempt to dismiss the niche party in an effort to undermine the salience of said issue. Finally, a mainstream party can also try to overtake ownership of the issue that is being brought to light by the niche party (Meguid 2008). For the scope of this study it is important to bear in mind the weight that strategical decisions hold on party success. Furthermore, PSO-theory allows for a understanding of party competition as something that is unique from case to case given the multitude of strategical options granted to the mainstream party.

What Meguid argues implicitly in her theory of party competition is, that regardless of a niche party's success or failure, the entire political system has been affected as a consequence of the niche party. This is because the emergence of a niche party signals an area where the mainstream parties have failed to address a chunk of the popular opinion. The very emergence of a niche party necessitates a reaction from established mainstream parties. Other studies have also made the suggestion that the emergence of a niche party affects the entire political arena (Abou-Chadi & Krause 2018). Populist parties have been shown to impact their surroundings with variance depending on the national context (Wolinetz & Zaslove 2018). These findings are important for the scope of this study as they emphasize the importance of context.

This study does not aim to explain an individual party's success or failure, rather to shed light on the crisis of the European right from an ideological standpoint. It is therefore important to understand how usage of ideology can be understood as deriving from party competition. François Facchini argues that individuals choose ideological adherence based on what ideology is easiest to justify and defend given the individual's circumstances (Facchini 2016). He argues that impactful events can change an individual's perception of the world and therefore change how easy it is to justify an ideological standpoint. Political parties are comprised by organized individuals. This theory can therefore be applied on political organizations as well, keeping the added inertia created by the amount of people in a political organization in mind. In choosing a strategy with which to navigate a new political landscape, brought on to a party by the rise of a niche party, the party in question is trying to find the strategy that is the easiest to justify given the context of their situation.

Earlier research has also suggested that one main contributing factor in ideological change in political parties is popular support in the political arena (Fagerholm 2015). Facchini describes this phenomenon as when more people adhere to a certain ideology more effort and resources are also allocated into justifying the positions of said ideology (Facchini 2016). This can be understood as a mechanism contributing to an ideological inertia in political movements.

However, a major change in the political landscape can be something that changes the public knowledge base and therefore changes the pre-existing conditions for justifying ideological standpoints. In this way, changes to the entire political context, in this case embodied by the emergence of a niche party, forces mainstream parties to take a stand which can in turn have an effect on which political ideology they adhere to.

#### 1.4.2 Theoretical outcome

Since the actors, parties and societal circumstances are unique to each national political arena in Europe it is probable that parties will adapt different strategies in dealing with the emergence of the radical right. This will theoretically lead to justification of different aspects of ideology and that different parties develop differently in their usage of ideology. As each national case is unique with their own unique parties and actors, we can theoretically assume that there will be a variance in ideological usage. The competing parties of the radical-right are also very different between Germany and France. In Germany, the main radical right party is Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) (Wodak 2021). This is an emergent party, who have been represented in the Bundestag since 2017. In France, the radical-right competitor, the Rassemblement National (RN) (former Front National) is an established party since the 1980s (Wodak 2021). Earlier research has also concluded that the silent counter-revolution of the radical-right has been far weaker in Germany than in France (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the German left wing has been fragmented, granting the CDU a beneficial position in party competition (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021). In France on the other hand, Les Républicains have had stiff liberal competition in addition to the rise of the radical right, which has put the party in a desperate position (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021). It has been suggested that the CDU has been able to set the tone whereas Les Républicains have tried to accommodate the positions of their radical right competitor (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021).

The issues that are of interest in the scope of this study are those that have been identified by earlier research as significant to the emergence of radical right parties. This is because PSO-theory stipulates that the emergence of a niche party creates a new dimension for party competition. Policy areas that are of interest to this new dimension of competition are areas salient to the rise of the radical right. Here, center-right parties may change their ideological justifications. The individual policy areas that will be examined will be further clarified and motivated in the operationalization section of this text.

## 1.5 Method

### 1.5.1 Type of study

To fully grasp the nuances of political communications in order to identify ideological changes, one must use a qualitative approach. Earlier quantitative studies have identified changes in the center-right as a consequence of the emergence of the radical right (Abou-Chadi & Krause 2018). Studies have also shown national variance in the impact of the emergence of the radical right (Wolinetz & Zaslove 2018, Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021). In order to complete the state of science this study will use election manifestos from national elections qualitatively in order to highlight possible ideological changes.

In order to address the study's aims the research design will be that of a descriptive comparative case study. It is appropriate since earlier research has only limitedly addressed the prospects of an ideological shift within the European center-right. The comparative elements to this study are a necessity because the study aims to better understand the crisis of the European center-right as a whole. Furthermore, the comparative aspects of this research design allows for a better dialogue with earlier research because it widens the scope of the study.

### 1.5.2 Idea analysis

The next step in designing how this study will be conducted is settling on a method. In order to highlight a possible ideological shift a method that allows for ideological analysis is handy. Idea analysis is a qualitative method aimed at understanding nuanced ideological communication in political texts (Bergström & Svärd 2018). The logic is that a researcher can, through utilizing idea analysis, recreate ideas and a larger ideology that is implicated in political communication. Therefore idea analysis as a method would be helpful in analyzing the election manifestos ideologically.

As with most methods, there are different variants of an idea analysis. Ludvig Beckman has identified three major branches of the method, namely the descriptive idea analysis, the critical idea analysis and the explanatory idea analysis (Beckman 2005). A descriptive idea analysis aims to highlight the underlying ideological motivation behind formulations in political communication. The critical idea analysis aims to test the internal validity of ideological communication. The explanatory idea analysis aims to explain the different factors, internal as well as external, as to why a certain ideological aspect is being communicated (Beckman 2005). Since the aim of this study is to compare ideological developments between EPP-parties, it is wise to choose a method that facilitates such analysis. For this reason this study will utilize the descriptive idea analysis. The results of the

descriptive baseline provided by a descriptive idea analysis will be compared to the results of the other case. This in turn allows for a comparison with the same empirical anchoring point.

### 1.5.3 Ideal types

A qualitative study demands much care and attention to theoretical detail from the researcher conducting the study (Orum 2015). A common pitfall of the case study is losing connection with the theoretical framework that is supposed to guide the study. It is also easily done to fall into one's own subjectivity and look for predetermined answers instead of letting the empirical material answer the questions posed to it. In order to address these problems this study will make use of the ideal type model. Ideal types were heavily favored by Max Weber, who argued that they ought to be a central component to all social sciences (Shils & Finch 1948, Hollis 1994). Using a predetermined ideal type to anchor the analysis makes it easier for the study to stay on its theoretical track (Goddard 1973, McIntosh 1977). Since this study is aiming to examine ideological variance, ideal types can be of great value as individual parties can adopt different aspects of ideology.

The dominant ideology of the EPP is Christian democracy (Hublet et al. 2023). Christian democracy is an ideology in constant change, taking many forms depending on the political context (Pombeni 2013). In Europe, the ideology has principally borrowed ideological concepts from the conservatism and classical liberalism (Pombeni 2013). Conservatism is characterized by a skepticism towards rapid societal change, conservatives believe that society has to be ordered in order for individuals to flourish (O'Sullivan 2013). Liberalism on the other hand, believe that the individual has to be free in order for society to flourish (Freeden & Stears 2013). These two in many ways contradicting schools of thought make up the bulk of the EPP's ideological framework. Historically, this ideological flexibility might have been an advantage for EPP member parties, as it could allow the parties to cover much ideological space in party competition. However, the emergence of radical right-wing parties has created a new dimension of political competition, especially when combining populism with conservatism. This forces center-right parties to pick a coping strategy and in turn clarify their ideological standpoints. For this reason, the ideal types that will be constructed in order to investigate ideological fabric of EPP parties are a conservative ideal type and a classical liberal ideal type.

## 1.6 Delimitations

### 1.6.1 Case selection

The major drawback of a qualitative case study is that examining individual cases is very work intensive, making a large-n study rather difficult. It is therefore of highest importance that the researcher finds an interesting theoretical angle of a phenomenon in either quantitative or more exhaustive qualitative studies (Orum, 2015). This study will make use of election manifestos, in order to bring further clarity to ideological aspects within the EPP given the current crisis of the European center-right. This project would grow to an unmanageable size if every party of the EPP were to be examined given the time aspect of this thesis. In order to address this issue, it is central to find cases that can be deemed as representatives of the EPP as a whole. This logic is commonly referred to as the typical case logic (Seawright & Gerring 2008). Finding cases that can represent every national political arena of the European Union is also rather difficult. Therefore, this study will address this issue in examining the largest EPP party in the two countries with the most constituent seats in the European Parliament.

The two countries with the highest number of constitutional seats in the European parliament are Germany and France. In Germany, the largest EPP party is the Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (CDU), who campaigns federally together with its sister party, the Bavarian Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern (CSU). In France, the largest party of the EPP is Les Républicains (R).

It's important to bear in mind that these two parties do not enjoy the same degree of influence within the EPP. The CDU is the largest party in the party group whereas Les Républicains have lost significant influence due to electoral misfortunes during the last decade. This is important to keep in mind but for the scope of this study it grants a larger degree of a variance between the cases strengthening the typical selection logic. The two countries' significance as European Union member states and the very different realities of the two EPP-parties make them interesting cases to study.

### 1.6.2 Empirical material

The empirical material that will serve as a foundation for this study is election manifestos for the general national election. An election manifesto is defined as “the official statements of intended policy by political parties at the beginning of election campaign” in the Routledge Dictionary of Politics (Robertson 2003, p. 295). The election manifesto is usually a very well worked through document intended to reflect the official party line for the given election. This eliminates the risk of studying personal opinions of individual party representatives because an official election manifesto has been approved by the governing body of the party.

Studies have suggested that the average voter is not as sensitive as one can imagine to positional changes stated in election manifestos (Adams et al. 2011). Furthermore, it has been suggested that surveys made by policy experts play a larger

role in forming public opinion of a certain political party (Adams et al. 2014). These findings makes one question the political importance of an election manifesto. It is seemingly a document designed to win over voters that the voters do not care about. But this study does not aim to measure public opinion, rather it aims to measure the ideological statements made by individual parties. This is where an election manifesto shines. Earlier research has suggested that political parties communicates deeper meanings through their election manifestos (Dolezal et al. 2018). An election manifesto can be understood as a sort of self-reflective document in which parties clarify their standpoints and positions. In doing this they inadvertently communicate traces of their ideological standpoints which can be brought to light by a qualitative analysis and especially an idea analysis.

### 1.6.3 Time frame

Research that have proposed that there is an incumbent crisis in the European center-right is rather recent (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021). Since this study aims to shed light on ideological changes during this crisis, it is appropriate to study recent material. The way this will be done is by studying election manifestos from the last three elections held by Germany and France respectively. In studying material from across a span of around ten years, ideological shifts and changes in positional standpoints can be detected. Since it has been theoretically stipulated that there is an inertia to ideological changes in political organizations, having a wider time span brings more clarity to the subject in comparison to only studying the very latest material.

Germany held elections in 2021, 2017 and 2013. The election manifestos of CDU/CSU are: "Das Programm für Stabilität und Erneuerung - gemeinsam für ein modernes Deutschland" of 2021, "Für ein Deutschland in dem wir gut und gerne leben" of 2017 and "Gemeinsam erfolgreich für Deutschland" of 2013. France held presidential elections in 2022, 2017 and 2012. The election manifestos of Les Républicains are: "Le courage de faire - Valérie Pécresse" of 2022, "Mon projet pour la France - François Fillon" of 2017 and "La France forte c'est pour vous - Nicolas Sarkozy" of 2012.

## 1.7 Operationalizations

### 1.7.1 Policy areas

In defining what policy areas are of interest to the study, we ought to go back and consider theoretical approaches and earlier research. According to PSO-theory, niche parties create a new dimension of competition between political parties (Meguid 2005, Meguid 2008). In order to understand what constitutes this new dimension of party competition, we need to consult what earlier research has concluded to be staple positions of radical right parties. This is where Cas Mudde's definition of what constitutes the radical right comes in handy. Mudde argues that the three main attributes of radical right parties are nativism, authoritarianism and populism (Mudde 2007). Theoretically, these three aspects have created new dimensions in party competition. Therefore, they are of highest relevance when specifying what policy areas that are to be examined.

The concept of nativism is, as discussed in the theoretical framework part of this thesis, a radical version of nationalism. This creates suspicion towards people that are not members of the in-group. Naturally, this creates a rather hostile mindset towards immigration. Immigration has been one of the most important policy areas to the radical right (Wodak 2021, Bale et al 2022). Immigration is therefore one policy area that will be examined in order to see if there has been an ideological shift in the center-right, following the crisis identified by earlier research.

Authoritarianism is the second marker of the radical right. Inherent to authoritarianism is a belief that society should be strictly structured. When people do not adhere to social norms and values it challenges the status quo of the current societal order. For an authority to claim legitimacy popular support and submission is of highest interest. As discussed in the theoretical framework section, authoritarianism is an extension of a strictly ordered society. Policy areas such as security, cultural identity and family policy have all been important to the radical right (Wodak 2021). This means in practice that the way that people live their personal lives are of significant importance to the radical right and also to this study.

Populism is the third criteria that Mudde uses to define the radical right. Populism is a thin ideology used to create political change in depicting the world as a struggle between a pure people and a corrupt elite. In the multidimensional political system that is the European Union, much anti-elitism has been channeled into euro-skepticism (Wodak 2021). Criticism towards European cooperation and European integration have been political positions assumed by radical right-wing parties all across the continent. In examining these policy areas this study aims to address the ideological gap in research regarding the crisis of the center-right. The policy areas are derived from findings of earlier research and theoretical assumptions regarding political development as a result of party competition.

### 1.7.2 Constructing the ideal types

In constructing ideal types it is important to understand historical variance in certain ideologies. As with everything else, political ideologies are under constant change.



However, there are usually fundamental assumptions on which the school of thought is based upon. The grand thinkers of conservatism and liberalism are therefore of interest to this study when constructing the ideal types. Conservatism or liberalism can mean many different things depending on historical and societal contexts. Turning to the foundational texts of the ideologies is a way to minimize the effects of this risk. Basing the ideal type on the foundational text also facilitates the making of a neutral and objective baseline for analysis.

Conservatism is characterized by a skepticism towards rapid societal change (O'Sullivan 2013). Conservatives view the human being as a malleable being and is therefore dependent on a structured and benevolent society. Society rests on traditional values, highlighting the need for social conformism. Society, with its norms and customs, is what creates the good individual. Therefore breaking the traditional norms is something frowned upon.

The most prominent feature of the conservative school thought is that societal change is to be gradual, if it is to be at all. This idea can be traced back to Edmund Burke and the way that he described the events of the French revolution. He argues that the state of revolution is detrimental to societal health, and was therefore be avoided to almost any cost (Burke 2022). In a state of revolution there's a great risk of violence and tyranny gaining the upper hand, and in order to avoid this societal change must be slow and gradual.

Given the risk that comes with societal change, it is best if change is rooted in an already existing societal tradition, conservatives would argue. When change is rooted in existing traditions, the risk of societal change sparking a state of revolution is significantly smaller (Kirk 1953). This further emphasizes the notion that society is to be perceived as a historical collective unit rather than a dynamic structure of individuals. There is a large element of traditionalism to the conservative school of thought. This is an expression of a core conservative principle, that society shapes the individual and not the other way around.

Conservatives believe that society can be described as a struggle between the individual's own goals and the individual's need for customs and community (Scruton 2018). Many conservatives believe that finding a middle ground to this struggle is of central importance to societal well-being. Roger Scruton criticizes both the focus on the individual in liberalism, as well as the communitarian focus in socialism (Scruton 2018). The middle ground is to be found in family and community, where the individual forms the foundation to his or her freedom. It is implied that freedom derives from adhering to traditions, norms and societal customs. In practice, the skepticism towards change and the idea that society shapes individuals renders a school of thought where the collective is promoted before the individual.

In the classical liberal school of thought individual freedom always takes center stage. Classical liberalism traces its philosophical roots back to thinkers such as John Locke, John Stuart Mill and Thomas Paine. These philosophers argued that freedom was an inherent human right, granted by God, conceptualized in the ideas of natural law (Locke 2009, Mill 2009, Paine 2018). Some of these philosophers

also argued that the people have an inherent right to overthrow a tyrannical government as a consequence of this natural law (Paine 2018). To the classical liberal, society is made up by individuals and individuals are therefore the ones who shape society.

Classical liberals believe that society is formed spontaneously, in a process called spontaneous order (Rehbinder 2022). It is through cooperation and transactions between individuals that society as a concept emerges. This yet again highlights the central role that the individual plays in the classical liberal view of the world. Free individuals interact on a free market, on which this spontaneous order is allowed to occur (Rehbinder 2022). Measures that aim to interfere with the free market is there for seen as something that can inhibit societal development. The individual's freedom is highly interlinked with the free market, classical liberals argue (Friedman 1962, Nozick 1974). But freedom is not only conceptualized as the absence of hinders, it is also conceptualized as the possibility to act (Berlin 2009). This further emphasizes the classical liberal ideal that society flourishes when as many people as possible are as free as possible.

Conservatives and classical liberals see the world in fundamental different ways. Not only do their view of society differ, their view on humankind differs greatly. Conservatives see human beings as malleable and are there for a need of societal guidance to make the right decisions. Classical liberals on the other hand, see human beings as independent individuals that through their actions and preferences make up the very fabric of society. These two schools of thought are rather difficult to combine in any meaningful way, and the emergence of radical right-wing parties might spark a justification crisis that can lead to ideological shifts within the European center-right.

### 1.7.3 Measuring the empirical material

Now that the policy areas that are to be examined have been defined and a theoretical baseline of the ideological ideal types has been set, it is time to clearly define what will be measured in the empirical material. The way the empirical material will be approached in this study is analyzing statements made in the policy areas that are being examined, and subsequently comparing the party stances to that of the ideal types that are presented below.

Regarding immigration, the conservative ideal position would be restrictive. Immigration has the potential to radically change the fabric of a society since it changes the demographic in the society. Conservatives would be careful in such issues given their skepticism towards change. Classical liberals on the other hand do not consider immigration to be a societal issue. They would argue that migrating between societies is a right of the individual and is something that is of value to society. Furthermore, inhibiting migration would inhibit the development of the spontaneous ordered society, which in turn could hinder societal growth. The

conservative ideal position in immigration is restrictive whereas the classical liberal ideal position is open.

In matters regarding social structure, the conservative ideal position would support policy that orders society in regard to traditional norms. Since conservatives believe that society shapes good and free individuals, it is important that society is clearly and strictly ordered. This entails supporting policy that punishes people who fail to meet societal expectation. In family policy, conservatives would support policy that facilitates traditional family values. National identity is also something that would be upheld by conservatives since it promotes the status quo. This is due to the conservative ideas that societal norms must be upheld in a healthy society, and that individual freedom stems from the family and communal structures. The classical liberal ideal position on the other hand, would put great emphasis on the individual's right to live a life as they see fit. In family matters, and other issues of societal order, the ideal classical liberal position would be to defend the individual's right to shape their own family life without interference of others. Rights of individuals would be a higher priority than rights of families. National identity would not be something that classical liberals would pay much attention to, as national identity is not something that actively promotes individualism. In social issues the conservative ideal position is to enforce traditional values and punish those who do not fall into these categories, whereas the liberal ideal position is that of tolerance and the individual's right to mind their own business.

Lastly, in questions regarding European cooperation and European integration, the conservative ideal position would be a position of skepticism if further European integration interferes with the interests of the state. Europe is a continent full of different norms and societal values. Therefore, the conservative ideal position would be to keep political power in the hands of the individual member state, only considering further European integration in matters where it is deemed absolutely necessary. The ideal classical liberal position on the other hand would be very positive and open to further European cooperation and integration. This is due to classical liberalism's belief in an free and open market. Societal cooperation on a larger scale would streamline market regulation, creating larger profits and fair competition. In issues regarding European cooperation and further European integration, the conservative ideal position would be putting emphasis on national community whereas the classical liberal ideal position would promote the European community.

## 1.8 Potential sources of error

There are some potential sources of error that need to be addressed in this study. Naturally, it is impossible to avoid all risk for potential variables that could affect

the result. It is therefore important to identify the most blatant sources for error and discuss their potential impact on the study as a whole.

As with any qualitative case study there is a very limited potential for generalization. Despite the fact that the study is based on the typical case logic, which aims to shed light on cases that are representative of the entire phenomenon, one cannot disregard the uniqueness of every case. However, as with every qualitative study, it aims to shed light on a part of the phenomenon which has not been addressed in earlier research. If these typical cases divert from the theoretical assumptions it may be a hint that there are other mechanisms driving ideological change, rather than those examined by earlier research.

Continuing on the topic of uniqueness of each case, there's also the risk that different mainstream right-wing parties compete for the same party positions in different national political contexts. This could, according to PSO-theory, yield very different standpoints since parties are shaped by party competition in the political context. Since one of the aims of this study is comparing ideological differences within the EPP, it is important to address differences on a national basis. Depending on the results of this study, further explaining a possible ideological variance could be subject for future research.

The very political system and the role that the studied party plays within the system, are also different from case to case. Political systems and role within a political system can have an impact on how parties act, earlier research have demonstrated (Helms 2002). When in government parties have a tendency to be a bit more careful in their communications. This is in stark contrast to a opposition parties who tend to vocalize their dissatisfaction clearly. For the scope of this study however, the studied cases are still EPP-parties whether they are in government or not. The political system itself also plays a minor role since the common denominator is the fact that they're all EPP-parties. Whether ideological variance in European party groups are dependent on political systems or role in the political system, is something to be further explored in future research.

Another factor that may skew the result is the layout of the very document itself. Election manifestos can look very differently from country to country, and also from time to time. The documents can vary in length and in level of detail. As a result of this, some manifestos may not address certain policy areas. This is however also telling, in that that the party deemed the policy issue to not be of importance. In comparing election manifestos, regardless of their length or level of detail, there is an opportunity to compare two different parties on the same terms since the documents have been designed for the same purpose.

The final potential source of error, and maybe the most important one, is that election manifestos to the national general election is always written in the party's native language. This puts a lot of pressure on the researcher's linguistical skills. There are many nuances which are almost impossible to comprehend if the language is not one's native tongue. Luckily, election manifestos are primarily designed to reach as many voters as possible which renders the language rather easy to comprehend. This makes it so that the linguistical aspect is less of a risk when

working with election manifestos then other more intricate document such as public speeches, strategy papers or legislative proposals. All translations in this study are the researcher's own.

## 1.9 Disposition

This thesis will follow a thematical disposition in order to facilitate an analysis regarding ideological change in the individual parties.

## 2 Examination

### 2.1 Policy regarding immigration

#### 2.1.1 Germany

It matters regarding immigration the CDU initially paint a very positive picture of immigration in line with the liberal ideal type. They move towards a more skeptical point of view, particularly regarding uncontrolled immigration. However they do retain a positive picture regarding legal immigration.

*2013 – Gemeinsam erfolgreich für Deutschland.*

In the election of 2013 CDU express values that are very close to the classical liberal ideal type. The party paints a picture of immigration as something positive and an opportunity for society to enrich itself.

*Vielfalt bereichert – Willkommenskultur schaffen<sup>1</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 64)*

The party describes immigration as something positive for society during the 2013 elections. The party does not shed light on challenges that immigration may bring, such as rapid change, as conservatives would do. The party continues to describe immigrants as individuals who contribute to society in the following passage:

*Im internationalen Wettbewerb um kluge Köpfe wollen wir weitere hochqualifizierte und leistungsbereite Menschen aus anderen Ländern für uns gewinnen. Für sie und ihre Familien muss unser Land zum Leben und Arbeiten noch attraktiver werden.<sup>2</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 65)*

The party describes an international competition for bright minds, a competition that the party wants Germany to win. CDU wishes to attract more people that can contribute to German society. This goes very in line with the classical liberal way

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<sup>1</sup> Diversity enriches – Creating a welcoming culture

<sup>2</sup> In the international competition for bright minds, we want to attract further highly qualified and motivated people from other countries. Our country must become an even more attractive place for them and their families to live and work.

of thinking, where individuals with their unique skill sets together create society through cooperation.

*Menschen mit Zuwanderungsgeschichte verfügen vielfach über abgeschlossene Berufs- oder Hochschulausbildungen ihrer Heimatländer. Dieses Potenzial liegt aber noch zu oft brach, während unserem Arbeitsmarkt zunehmend qualifizierte Fachkräfte fehlen.<sup>3</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 65)*

Immigrants are described as qualified people with potential to enrich German society. This is in stark contrast to the conservative ideal type, where immigrants are often portrayed as foreign and therefore also potentially dangerous.

*Erfolgreiche Zuwanderer zeigen, welche Chancen mit gelungener Integration verbunden sind. Die ganz überwiegende Mehrheit der rund 15 Millionen Menschen mit Zuwanderungsgeschichte, die bei uns leben und arbeiten, leisten einen bedeutenden Beitrag zum Wohlstand und zur kulturellen Vielfalt unseres Landes. CDU und CSU wollen Aufstiegswillen und Bereitschaft zur Mitgestaltung von Menschen, die in unser Land kommen, gezielt fördern.<sup>4</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 64-65)*

In this passage, cultural diversity is described as a societal strength. This hints that the party has a worldview close to that of the classical liberal ideal type. Cultural diversity as a concept only emerges if society is comprised of individuals. According to a conservative, society with its traditional norms shape individuals and therefore cultural diversity is not necessarily considered to be a strength.

*Auch in Zukunft werden wir Flüchtlingen helfen. Dabei setzen wir uns auch für neue Formen des Schutzes ein, wie der Aufnahme von Flüchtlingen aus Drittstaaten, wenn ihnen eine baldige Rückkehr in das Herkunftsland nicht möglich ist oder wenn sie nicht dauerhaft in das Land, das sie zuerst aufgenommen hat, eingegliedert werden können. Dabei bauen wir weiterhin, ebenso wie bei der Hilfe für Flüchtlinge weltweit, auf die enge und vertrauensvolle Zusammenarbeit mit dem Flüchtlingshochkommissar der Vereinten Nationen.<sup>5</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 67)*

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<sup>3</sup> People with a migration background often have completed professional or university education in their home countries. However, this potential often remains untapped, while our labor market increasingly lacks qualified professionals.

<sup>4</sup> Successful immigrants demonstrate the opportunities associated with successful integration. The vast majority of the approximately 15 million people with a migration background who live and work here make a significant contribution to the prosperity and cultural diversity of our country. The CDU and CSU want to specifically promote the desire for upward mobility and willingness to participate in shaping the future of those who come to our country.

<sup>5</sup> In the future, we will continue to help refugees. In doing so, we also advocate for new forms of protection, such as the admission of refugees from third countries when a prompt return to the country of origin is not possible or

In this passage, it is clear that the party is concerned with the rights of individual refugees. So much so that it is willing to commit its country to upholding these rights. This yet again highlights that CDU are much closer to the classical liberal ideal type than to the conservative ideal type in the 2013 elections.

*2017 – Für ein Deutschland in dem wir gut und gerne leben*

In 2017, the party is much more restrictive when it comes to immigration. Immigration is described as a societal duty and a problem that needs solving rather than a chance.

*Menschen in Not helfen, Migration steuern und reduzieren, abgelehnte Bewerber konsequent zurückführen<sup>6</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 63)*

In this passage it is evident that the party does not hold the same positive values regarding immigration as they did in 2013. This place is the party closer to the conservative ideal type where immigration is seen as a potential threat for society.

*Eine Situation wie im Jahre 2015 soll und darf sich nicht wiederholen, da alle Beteiligten aus dieser Situation gelernt haben. Wir wollen, dass die Zahl der Flüchtlinge, die zu uns kommen, dauerhaft niedrig bleibt. Das macht es möglich, dass wir unseren humanitären Verpflichtungen durch Resettlement und Relocation nachkommen.<sup>7</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 64)*

Further evidence of the changed attitude towards immigration can be seen in this passage. The party expresses a will to keep the welcoming of migrants low for the foreseeable future.

*Mit einer klug gesteuerten und begrenzten Einwanderungspolitik für Fachkräfte unterstützen wir die Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen in Deutschland und verringern spürbar die Attraktivität von illegaler Einwanderung und Migration.<sup>8</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 12)*

This passage shows that the party is more on the conservative side than on the classical liberal side during the 2017 elections. CDU are now discussing societal consequences rather than rights of individuals. It is an explicit goal to make Germany a less attractive country for illegal migration.

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when they cannot be permanently integrated into the country that first accepted them. In this regard, we will continue to rely on close and trusting cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, just as we do with assistance for refugees worldwide.

<sup>6</sup> Assisting people in need, managing and reducing migration, and consistently returning rejected applicants

<sup>7</sup> A situation like that in 2015 must and should not be repeated, as all parties involved have learned from that situation. We want the number of refugees coming to us to remain permanently low. This makes it possible for us to fulfill our humanitarian obligations through resettlement and relocation.

<sup>8</sup> With a wisely managed and limited immigration policy for skilled workers, we support the creation of jobs in Germany and noticeably reduce the attractiveness of illegal immigration and migration.



*Wir haben die Zahl derer, die kein Bleiberecht haben, wirksam reduziert.<sup>9</sup>  
(CDU 2017, p. 63)*

This quote also portrays that the party now deems migration, at least the illegal kind, to be a major societal concern. The classical liberal approach to this would be welcoming people as long as they could support themselves. In highlighting that people have been sent back the party also conveys that some immigrants are not of benefit for society and that action have been taken. For the 2017 election the CDU are closer to the conservative ideal type than they are the classical liberal ideal type.

*2021 – Das Programm für Stabilität und Erneuerung.*

In 2021, the CDU are still critical towards illegal immigration but immigration is not portrayed as a threat towards society.

*Die Europäische Union und Deutschland helfen Menschen, die in große Not kommen, weil sie politisch verfolgt werden oder aufgrund der Genfer Flüchtlingskonvention. Wir bekennen uns zum Grundrecht auf Asyl und den rechtlichen und humanitären Verpflichtungen Deutschlands und Europas.<sup>10</sup>  
(CDU 2021, p. 26)*

In this passage the party makes it clear that the main priority for Germany and Europe is to respect the Geneva convention on refugees. The influx of migrants are no longer portrayed as a societal opportunity but rather as a moral obligation.

*Wir haben Asylverfahren und Rückführungen gerechter, strukturierter und effizienter gestaltet. Wir setzen unsere Anstrengungen fort, damit die Zahl der nach Deutschland und Europa flüchtenden Menschen nicht nur dauerhaft niedrig bleibt, sondern sich weiter reduziert. Hierfür ist klar zwischen Menschen in Not und denen zu unterscheiden, die unser Land wieder verlassen müssen, weil sie nicht schutzbedürftig sind.<sup>11</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 27)*

In this passage is also clear that the party prioritizes people who have legal rights to stay in the country, rather than being open to immigration generally. Reducing the flux of immigration to Europe is also said to hold societal importance. Seeing immigration in any form as a potential societal risk goes in line with the conservative ideal type rather than the classical liberal ideal type.

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<sup>9</sup> We have effectively reduced the number of those who do not have the right to stay.

<sup>10</sup> The European Union and Germany assist people who are in great distress because they are politically persecuted or due to the Geneva Refugee Convention. We commit to the fundamental right to asylum and the legal and humanitarian obligations of Germany and Europe.

<sup>11</sup> We have made asylum procedures and returns fairer, more structured, and more efficient. We continue our efforts to ensure that the number of people fleeing to Germany and Europe remains not only permanently low but further reduces. It is important to clearly distinguish between people in need and those who must leave our country again because they are not in need of protection.

*Gezielte Zuwanderung ist dann ein Gewinn und eine Chance für unser Land, wenn sie von gelungener Integration begleitet ist – in unseren Arbeitsmarkt ebenso wie in unsere Gesellschaft.<sup>12</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 26)*

However, immigration is still portrayed as a societal opportunity when it comes to targeted labor immigration. This is in line with the classical liberal ideal type which argues that immigrants are individuals who contribute to societal well-being.

*Wir wollen die Arbeitsmarktintegration von Migranten zu einer Erfolgsgeschichte machen. Die Erwerbstätigenquote steigt kontinuierlich an. Die vielen Menschen mit erfolgreichen Integrationsgeschichten sind wichtige Vorbilder für gelingende Integration.<sup>13</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 135)*

This passage further highlights that the party sees value in regulated immigration. Integration is not specified to be assimilating to German norms and values, rather integration is seen as the ability to partake in all aspects of society. During the 2022 elections the CDU display classical liberal ideas when it comes to regulated immigration and somewhat more conservative in regard to unregulated immigration.

## 2.1.2 France

Les Républicains paint a picture of immigration that is in line with the conservative ideal type. The party continues to move in a conservative direction in these matters as well. Immigration is portrayed as a risk and a threat for society as a whole.

*2012 – La France forte c'est pour vous ! – Nicolas Sarkozy*

For the election of 2012 the French Les Républicains are rather conservative in their views on immigration. One headline reads as follows:

*ACCUEILLIR MOINS D'IMMIGRÉS POUR MIEUX LES INTÉGRER<sup>14</sup>*  
*(Les Républicains 2012, p. 6)*

In portraying immigration an integration issue the party conveys a collective societal view, which goes in line with the conservative way of thinking. A classical liberal view would be seeing immigrants as individuals who contribute to society and integration will happen spontaneously if people are free to act on free markets.

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<sup>12</sup> Targeted immigration is a gain and an opportunity for our country when accompanied by successful integration – in our labor market as well as in our society.

<sup>13</sup> We want to make labor market integration of migrants a success story. The employment rate is steadily increasing. The many people with successful integration stories are important role models for successful integration

<sup>14</sup> WELCOMING FEWER IMMIGRANTS TO INTEGRATE THEM BETTER

Les Républicains suggest issuing half the number of residence permits in order to reduce immigration.

*Réduire de moitié l'immigration, en passant de 180000 droits de séjour par an à environ 90000.*<sup>15</sup> (*Les Républicains 2012*, p. 6)

Advocating for a reduction of immigration is in stark contrast to the classical liberal ideal type, where immigration is seen as a societal benefit rather than a threat. Furthermore, the party expresses a will to control the stream of immigration and retains the national right to be selective on who gets to settle in the country.

*Il faut réduire de moitié les flux actuels d'immigration dans notre pays. L'accès à notre territoire sera donné en priorité aux réfugiés politiques, à une immigration économique limitée aux compétences dont nous avons besoin, et à une immigration familiale dont le rythme doit être maîtrisé.*<sup>16</sup>  
(*Les Républicains 2012*, p. 16-17)

In this passage, the party expresses ideas that are in line with the conservative ideal type that puts society on center stage, rather than the individual. It further hints that the party has a collective idea of society during the time of the 2012 elections. It is also suggested that France as a country should have the ability to control immigration, whereas a classical liberal would argue that immigration is a global phenomenon beyond the reach of individual states. How immigration is dealt with is also suggested to have an impact on the very nation itself.

*Décider qui a le droit de s'installer sur notre territoire fait partie de notre souveraineté.*<sup>17</sup> (*Les Républicains 2012*, p. 16)

In this quote the collective view of society is further highlighted. Discussing sovereignty on a national basis creates an in-group and an out-group based on collective heritage. The classical liberal approach to sovereignty would be that the individual owning an asset will retain the right to decide the rules. Collective sovereignty as a concept is very close to the conservative ideal type since conservatives believe that society shapes the individuals and not the other way around. In the 2012 elections the French party Les Républicains are much closer to the conservative school of thought than they are to the classical liberal school of thought.

*2017 – Mon projet pour la France – François Fillon*

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<sup>15</sup> Reducing immigration by half, from 180,000 residence permits per year to approximately 90,000.

<sup>16</sup> The current immigration flows to our country must be halved. Access to our territory will be given priority to political refugees, limited economic immigration to the skills we need, and family immigration whose pace must be controlled.

<sup>17</sup> Deciding who has the right to settle in our territory is part of our sovereignty.

Heading into the 2017 election, the party is still heavily conservative in its views regarding immigration. The main argument against further immigration is that French society cannot handle the integration required integration process.

*La France unie commande de limiter l'immigration à son strict minimum afin que nos capacités d'intégration ne soient plus débordées.*<sup>18</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 6)

Just as in 2012 integration is viewed as something to be controlled by the state, and is not something that spontaneously happens. This is close to the conservative ideal type. Interestingly, immigration is also portrayed as a threat to national unity. This is also something that can be categorized as conservative since conservatives believe that rapid societal change can lead to disintegration of society. The party is also very critical to welcoming many immigrants.

*Réduire l'immigration légale au strict minimum.*<sup>19</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 71)

In wanting to reduce immigration, the party shows that it sees immigration not as beneficial for society. This is in stark contrast to the classical liberal way of thinking where immigration enriches society.

*La France est une terre d'immigration depuis la moitié du XIXe siècle. A l'immigration de travail qui a été très importante pendant les « Trente Glorieuses » a succédé une immigration à dominante familiale à partir de 1975. Mais la France est confrontée aujourd'hui à un nouveau défi migratoire. Notre démographie est une des plus dynamiques d'Europe de sorte que nous n'avons pas besoin, à la différence de la plupart de nos voisins européens, de l'immigration pour soutenir notre croissance.*<sup>20</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 71)

In this passage, it is evident that the party thinks of immigration as a way to address societal needs, rather than protecting rights of individuals. This is also in line with the conservative way of thinking since society shapes individuals and not the other way around as in the classical liberal logic.

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<sup>18</sup> A united France commands limiting immigration to the bare minimum so that our integration capacities are no longer overwhelmed.

<sup>19</sup> Reduce legal immigration to the bare minimum.

<sup>20</sup> France has been a land of immigration since the mid-19th century. The very significant labor immigration during the "Thirty Glorious Years" was succeeded by family-dominated immigration from 1975 onwards. But France is now facing a new migration challenge. Our demography is one of the most dynamic in Europe, so unlike most of our European neighbors, we do not need immigration to support our growth.

*Stopper l'immigration irrégulière en renforçant le contrôle des frontières maritimes et terrestres, en conditionnant le bénéfice de toutes les prestations sociales à une durée de résidence préalable de deux ans pour les étrangers en situation régulière, en supprimant l'aide médicale d'Etat pour la remplacer par la seule prise en charge des urgences médicales, en conditionnant l'aide au développement des pays dont sont originaires les clandestins à une réelle coopération dans la lutte contre l'immigration, en réformant les conditions d'obtention de la nationalité française.<sup>21</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 83)*

This passage is very telling of how the party thinks about immigration in the 2017 elections. According to the party, immigration is such a threat to French society that there is an ongoing fight against it. Measures are to be taken to protect France from immigration in form of higher border security. Developmental aid to countries where illegal immigrants originate, is to be conditioned in order to create a real cooperation in the fight against immigration. This is very close to the conservative ideal type where collective ideas of societies are in focus. Immigrants are not considered to be individuals searching for a better life and capable of contributing to society, rather they are considered to be an external threat which can be neutralized through intergovernmental action.

*2022 – Le courage de faire – Valérie Pécresse*

In the 2022 elections immigrants are perceived as an even more acute threat to the French nation than in previous elections.

*Je vous protégerai en remettant de l'ordre à nos frontières et dans nos rues. Nous reprendrons le contrôle de l'immigration pour défendre notre identité et notre culture. Nous appliquerons l'impunité zéro délinquants.<sup>22</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 3)*

In this passage the party's presidential candidate promises to protect people from the perceived threat that is immigration. Not only is immigration explicitly said to be a threat towards French culture, in the same paragraph it is also mentioned that no tolerance will be shown towards criminals. Mentioning this in the same passage as immigrants heavily implies that there is an overlap between immigrants and criminals. This solidifies the idea of an in-group being threatened by an out-group.

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<sup>21</sup> Halting irregular immigration by strengthening control of maritime and land borders, conditioning access to all social benefits on a prior two-year residence period for foreigners in regular situations, replacing state medical aid with only emergency medical care, conditioning aid to development in the countries of origin of illegal immigrants on real cooperation in the fight against immigration, reforming the conditions for obtaining French nationality.

<sup>22</sup> I will protect you by restoring order to our borders and streets. We will take back control of immigration to defend our identity and culture. We will apply zero tolerance to criminals.

*Expulsion systématique des clandestins et zéro visa pour les pays qui refusent de les reprendre*<sup>23</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 5)

This quote shows that societies are considered to be responsible for their individuals, which hints of a conservative worldview. In this, societal structures are promoted before individual rights.

*Fin du droit du sol automatique : demande de nationalité française à 18 ans et preuves d'assimilation (test de français notamment).*<sup>24</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 5)

In proposing to end automatic birthright citizenship, and insisting on proof of assimilation to obtain French nationality, the party demonstrates a clear preference for the French status quo. It is also far from the liberal ideal type which sees immigrants as individuals who enriches society. Furthermore, it goes in line with the conservative way of thinking that society shapes individuals.

*Des quotas d'immigration par métier et par pays pour que la France décide qui peut rentrer sur son territoire, et la fin du droit du sol automatique.*<sup>25</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 16)

In this passage, it is argued that France should have the right to decide who gets enter its territory. This also is very close to the conservative ideal type, because it hints that society is able to control immigration. Furthermore, the party sees birthright citizenship as something negative, which hints of a conservative worldview with emphasis on cultural conformity. In the 2022 elections the French Les Républicains are very close to the conservative ideal type regarding immigration. They move towards alienating immigrants and solidifying the idea of a French national in-group.

## 2.2 Policy regarding social structuring

### 2.2.1 Germany

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<sup>23</sup> Systematic expulsion of illegal immigrants and zero visas for countries that refuse to take them back.

<sup>24</sup> End of automatic birthright citizenship: application for French nationality at 18 years old and proof of assimilation (including a French test).

<sup>25</sup> Immigration quotas by profession and by country so that France decides who can enter its territory, and an end to automatic birthright citizenship.

The CDU express themselves rather conservatively in the first election manifest from 2013, clearly promoting traditional family structures. However, the party makes a significant turn towards the liberal ideal type, putting greater emphasis on individuals' rights and freedom to choose.

*2013 – Gemeinsam erfolgreich für Deutschland.*

In the 2013 election the CDU convey ideas that are rather close to the conservative ideal type. The family structure is described to be very important to the very fabric of society.

*Deutschland muss eine gute Heimat für starke Familien sein. Unsere Gesellschaft braucht starke Familien. Sie sind das Fundament unserer Gesellschaft. Und sie umfasst alle Generationen. Deshalb wollen wir Familien stärken. Vor allem sagen wir Ja zu Kindern. Sie sind eine Bereicherung für unser Land. Wir wollen junge Frauen und Männer ermutigen, sich für Kinder zu entscheiden.<sup>26</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 39)*

Regarding the family structure as a integral part of the foundation of society is hinting of a conservative worldview. The classical liberal view on the matter would be that free individuals make up the foundation of society.

*CDU und CSU wollen Ehe und Familie stärken und mit guten Rahmenbedingungen dazu beitragen, dass die Menschen ihren Wunsch nach Kindern und Familie verwirklichen können.<sup>27</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 39)*

The party puts heavy emphasis on strengthening traditional family structures. In this passage it is evident that marriage goes hand in hand with the family structure according to the party. Classical liberals would not necessarily hold this to be true, as they would argue that it is up to the individual to shape his or her own family structure.

*Wir gestalten Politik für diejenigen, die sich um ihre Kinder, Enkel und Familien kümmern und mit ihrem ehrenamtlichen Engagement zu einem guten Miteinander in unserem Land beitragen. Diese Männer und Frauen sind die Helden des Alltags, die unser Land stark machen. Sie brauchen einen verlässlichen Staat, der ihnen und ihren Familien Sicherheit und*

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<sup>26</sup> Germany must be a good home for strong families. Our society needs strong families. They are the foundation of our society. And it includes all generations. Therefore, we want to strengthen families. Above all, we say yes to children. They enrich our country. We want to encourage young women and men to decide to have children.

<sup>27</sup> The CDU and CSU want to strengthen marriage and family and contribute to good framework conditions so that people can realize their desire for children and family.

*Stabilität gibt. Deshalb wollen wir alle Familien noch besser unterstützen, während Rot-Grün auch Familien belasten will.*<sup>28</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 6)

In this passage, it is adjusted that people who take care of their families also make the country strong. This implies that the party believes that there is an important connection between family and society. This goes in line with the conservative ideal type that would argue that society leans upon traditional structures.

*Familien besser unterstützen – Familiensplitting einführen und Zeit für Familie ermöglichen. Wir wollen starke Familien in Deutschland. In der Familie suchen und finden Menschen Liebe, Geborgenheit und gegenseitige Hilfe. Wir werden Ehe und Familie weiter stärken. Deshalb wollen wir das bestehende Ehegattensplitting erhalten und um ein Familiensplitting ergänzen.*<sup>29</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 9)

In making tax beneficial to be married or have a family, the party promotes the ideal of the traditional family structure. This is in stark contrast to the classical liberal ideal type where taxes would be individual, in order not to push preferences of individuals in any particular direction.

*Ein allgemeines kommunales Wahlrecht für Ausländer lehnen wir ab. Wir werben stattdessen bei denen, die schon über Jahre bei uns leben, arbeiten und gut integriert sind, dass sie die Möglichkeit nutzen, die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit anzunehmen.*<sup>30</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 66)

Conditioning the right to vote to being well integrated is also something close to the conservative ideal type. This is because conservatives believe that society emerges from sharing values and norms. The classical liberal on the other hand would argue that if an individual partakes in society they should be granted the right to vote. In 2013 the CDU expresses conservative values in policy regarding social structuring.

*2017 – Für ein Deutschland in dem wir gut und gerne leben*

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<sup>28</sup> We shape politics for those who take care of their children, grandchildren, and families and contribute to a good coexistence in our country with their voluntary commitment. These men and women are the everyday heroes who make our country strong. They need a reliable state that provides them and their families with security and stability. Therefore, we want to support all families even better, while the Red-Green coalition aims to burden families.

<sup>29</sup> Supporting families better – Introducing family splitting and enabling time for family. We want strong families in Germany. In the family, people seek and find love, security, and mutual assistance. We will continue to strengthen marriage and family. Therefore, we want to maintain the existing marriage tax splitting and complement it with family splitting.

<sup>30</sup> We reject a general municipal voting right for foreigners. Instead, we encourage those who have been living and working with us for years and are well integrated to consider acquiring German citizenship.



For the 2017 election the CDU conveys ideas that are closer to the classical liberal ideal than to the conservative ideal. Taking care of children is regarded as a contribution to society but the traditional family structure is no longer as heavily promoted.

*Wo immer Menschen Verantwortung für Kinder und ihre Erziehung übernehmen, leisten sie einen wertvollen Beitrag für unsere gemeinsame Zukunft.<sup>31</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 25)*

In this passage it is only stated that taking responsible for the upbringing of children is of societal importance. The party makes no suggestions on how to raise children. This is close to the classical liberal ideal type as it leaves it up to the individual how to structure their own lives.

*Wir schreiben Familien kein bestimmtes Familienmodell vor. Wir respektieren die unterschiedlichen Formen des Zusammenlebens. Menschen sollen selbst entscheiden, wie sie ihr Zusammenleben gestalten und ihren Alltag organisieren.<sup>32</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 25)*

In this passage it is clear that the party leans to the classical liberal ideal type rather than the conservative one. In not promoting one family structure over the other the party also rejects the notion that's society is shaped by traditional norms, as is promoted by conservatives.

*Zu unserem Land gehören alte und neue Deutsche, Menschen mit und ohne deutschen Pass, mit und ohne Migrationshintergrund. Die große Mehrheit ebenso wie ethnische und gesellschaftliche Minderheiten. Wir schließen niemanden aus und bitten alle, an einer guten Zukunft Deutschlands mitzuwirken.<sup>33</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 71)*

This statement hints that the party views society as a cooperation of free individuals rather than a community of common norms and values. This goes in line with the classical liberal way of understanding society.

*Wir erwarten von allen Menschen in Deutschland, ganz gleich ob mit oder ohne Migrationshintergrund, die Achtung des Grundgesetzes und der*

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<sup>31</sup> Wherever people take responsibility for children and their upbringing, they make a valuable contribution to our common future.

<sup>32</sup> We do not prescribe a specific family model for families. We respect the different forms of living together. People should decide for themselves how they structure their coexistence and organize their daily lives.

<sup>33</sup> Our country includes old and new Germans, people with and without German passports, with and without a migration background. The vast majority as well as ethnic and social minorities. We do not exclude anyone and ask everyone to contribute to a bright future for Germany.

*Gesetze. Hiervon wird es auch künftig keine Ausnahmen geben.*<sup>34</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 71)

Here, the party writes that it expects the same level of commitment to the laws regardless of cultural background. This hints of a view on society that is based in cooperation between individuals rather than one based in conformity of norms.

*In Deutschland darf kein Platz für Antisemitismus, Fremdenfeindlichkeit, Ausländerhass, Intoleranz oder Diskriminierung sein.*<sup>35</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 71)

Explicitly writing that there is no place in Germany for discrimination based on cultural heritage, further shows that the party is close to the classical liberal ideal type. Conservatives would view foreign cultures as a potential threat to the fabric of society and would therefore not condemn discrimination as explicitly. Rather, conservative would try to impede expression of a foreign culture in order to promote the traditional norms and values of the country.

*Die in Deutschland lebenden Muslime tragen mit ihren Ideen und ihrer Arbeit seit langem zum Erfolg unseres Landes bei und gehören deshalb zu unserer Gesellschaft.*<sup>36</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 74)

In describing Muslims as a part of society, the party further highlights its liberal view of society. Muslims are here considered to be individuals who contribute to society and therefore have the right to be regarded as part of society. Conservatives would rather see Muslims as foreign and only part of society if they conform to existing traditional norms and values.

*Wir werden den Fahndungsdruck in der Drogen- und Straßenkriminalität weiter erhöhen: Durch verdeckte operative Maßnahmen, regelmäßige Kontrollen, offene Polizeipräsenz, beschleunigte Abschiebung von Straftätern mit ausländischem Hintergrund sowie gezielte Aufenthaltsverbote und deren Durchsetzung.*<sup>37</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 62)

In this passage however, the party expresses itself somewhat more conservatively. Here, it is suggested that drug and street crime can be reduced through measures that entail a higher authoritarian presence in society. For the 2017

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<sup>34</sup> We expect all people in Germany, regardless of whether they have a migration background or not, to respect the constitution and the laws. There will be no exceptions to this in the future either.

<sup>35</sup> There is no place in Germany for antisemitism, xenophobia, hatred of foreigners, intolerance, or discrimination.

<sup>36</sup> Muslims living in Germany have long been contributing to the success of our country with their ideas and work and therefore belong to our society.

<sup>37</sup> We will further increase the pressure in the fight against drug and street crime: through covert operational measures, regular checks, open police presence, accelerated deportation of offenders with a foreign background, as well as targeted residence bans and their enforcement.

election the CDU is more on the classical liberal side of its ideological spectrum than on the conservative side.

*2021 – Das Programm für Stabilität und Erneuerung.*

In the election of 2021 the CDU are closer to the classical liberal side of their ideological spectrum. They describe families as the backbone of society, but for this election they are more focused on the individuals who make up families than the structure itself.

*Wir wollen gezielt Familien finanziell stärken. Sie sind die Leistungsträger unserer Gesellschaft.<sup>38</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 73)*

In this quote it is evident that the party regards families as a very important societal institution. They do not clarify any preferences on how families are to be structured however. In this election, women and their role are focal point for the party.

*Bei all unseren Ansätzen wollen wir insbesondere Frauen und Mädchen stärken. Wir setzen uns für ihr Recht auf Selbstbestimmung und Familienplanung ein.<sup>39</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 14)*

In seeing women as individuals and highlighting their right to plan their own life, the party conveys that individual freedom is more important than the traditional family structure. This goes in line with the liberal ideal type where society is comprised of free individuals rather than traditional structures.

*Gleichzeitig versprechen wir, dass wir die Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf weiter verbessern und die Chancengleichheit von Frauen und Männern fördern. Jede und jeder soll sich durch Anstrengung, Leistung und Fleiß etwas aufbauen und nach dem eigenen Glück streben können.<sup>40</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 76)*

This passage also hints of a classical liberal worldview, where society is made up of free individuals who act in their own interest and cooperate. A conservative approach to this phenomenon would be that society with its traditional norms and structures provide happiness for the people who partake.

*Wir wollen eine moderne Gesellschaft, in der Frauen und Männer gleichberechtigt ihre Kompetenzen und Stärken entfalten und ihren*

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<sup>38</sup> We want to specifically strengthen families financially. They are the key actors of our society.

<sup>39</sup> In all our approaches, we particularly aim to empower women and girls. We advocate for their right to self-determination and family planning.

<sup>40</sup> At the same time, we promise to continue improving the balance between family and work and to promote gender equality. Everyone should be able to build something through effort, performance, and diligence and strive for their own happiness.

*Interessen nachgehen können. Frauen und Männer sollen gleichberechtigte Wertschätzung erfahren, wenn sie sich in der Familie, im Beruf oder im Ehrenamt engagieren. Deshalb wollen wir die Situation von Frauen in allen Politikfeldern in den Blick nehmen und dort nachsteuern, wo Rahmenbedingungen verbessert werden müssen.*<sup>41</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 79-80)

This passage also highlights the importance that the party accredited to women partaking in society. This is in stark contrast to the traditional family structure where the man usually makes the most money and therefore enjoys the most freedom. In promoting such policy the party further signals that the traditional family structure holds less importance than freedom of the individual.

*Wir werden den Kita-Ausbau und die Weiterentwicklung der Qualität auch über 2022 hinaus weiter fördern. Damit helfen wir Kindern in ihrer Entwicklung und unterstützen Eltern bei der Vereinbarkeit von Familien und Beruf.*<sup>42</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 81)

The party puts the focus on women's right into practice when suggesting an expansion of daycare center facilities. The reasoning for doing this is to help parents balance their work life with their family life. When discussing the traditional family structure in practice, the woman is usually the one that cares for the children. This is a political suggestion that makes it easier for women to work and enjoy a greater degree of freedom whilst not having to sacrifice having a family.

*Wer in Deutschland lebt, ist Teil unserer Gesellschaft. Uns ist wichtig, dass Menschen mit Zuwanderungsgeschichte in allen Bereichen teilhaben können. Ihre Integration ist auch die Voraussetzung für gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt. Integration besteht für uns aus Fördern und Fordern.*<sup>43</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 135)

The idea that integration is partaking in society rather than conforming to pre-existing norms and values is closer to the classical liberal ideal type than the conservative ideal type. Classical liberalism argues that society emerges when there is cooperation between free individuals. Conservatives on the other hand, would argue that society comes from norms and values inherited from earlier generations.

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<sup>41</sup> We want a modern society in which women and men can equally develop their skills and strengths and pursue their interests. Women and men should receive equal appreciation when they engage in family, work, or volunteer activities. Therefore, we want to examine the situation of women in all policy areas and adjust conditions where necessary.

<sup>42</sup> We will continue to promote the expansion of daycare facilities and the improvement of their quality beyond 2022. This helps children in their development and supports parents in balancing family and work.

<sup>43</sup> Those who live in Germany are part of our society. It is important to us that people with a migration background can participate in all areas. Their integration is also a prerequisite for social cohesion. Integration for us consists of support and demand.

In the 2021 elections the CDU display values that align with the classical liberal ideal type in matters regarding social structuring.

## 2.2.2 France

Les Républicains express themselves conservatively in all examined manifestos. They emphasize societal importance of the traditional family structure, and underscore that the structure is of importance to the very Republic itself. Furthermore, they express these values clearer in later manifestos as they are moving towards more conservative positions.

*2012 – La France forte c'est pour vous ! – Nicolas Sarkozy*

For the 2012 elections, the French Les Républicains are promoting conservative values in policy regarding social structuring.

*Seuls peuvent s'installer en France ceux qui partagent les valeurs de la République.<sup>44</sup> (Les Républicains 2012, p. 17)*

In talking about the values of the Republic, the party conveys that society is to shape individuals and not the other way around. It also protects the current social order since new members of society are to conform to existing values rather than influence societal norms.

*Conditionner le regroupement familial à la connaissance préalable de la langue française et des valeurs de la République.<sup>45</sup> (Les Républicains 2012, p. 6)*

When conditioning family reunification to prior knowledge of republican values and the French language the party makes it clear that it views protecting the societal status quo as more important than rights of the individual. It also creates a reason to conform to these republican values.

*Donner le droit de vote aux étrangers ne réglera aucun des problèmes de l'intégration et est contraire à la conception française de la nation.<sup>46</sup> (Les Républicains 2012, p. 17)*

According to the party, granting foreigners the right to vote goes against the French conception of the nation. This hints that the party's conception of the French

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<sup>44</sup> Only those who share the values of the Republic can settle in France.

<sup>45</sup> Conditioning family reunification on prior knowledge of the French language and the values of the Republic.

<sup>46</sup> Granting foreigners the right to vote will not solve any of the integration problems and goes against the French conception of the nation.

nation is a community of values, rather than a democratic forum of people living in the same territory. The community of values is something very important to conservatives whereas classical liberals see society as something that emerges from a forum of free individuals.

*Mais ce qui fait la cohésion de la nation française, c'est notre capacité, au-delà de nos différences multiples, à nous rassembler dans le même amour de la patrie et de ses valeurs: Français de toutes provinces, Français des campagnes et des villes, de métropole et d'outre-mer, Français de l'étranger, Français de toutes religions et sans religion, enfants d'agriculteurs, d'ouvriers, d'enseignants, d'intellectuels, enfants de familles françaises et enfants d'immigrés... Nous ne sommes pas des communautés vivant les unes à côté des autres. Nous sommes une seule et même nation, capable de s'unir dans l'adversité et de se rassembler sur les choses essentielles.*<sup>47</sup> (Les Républicains 2012, p. 18)

In this passage, the party sheds some light on what makes the French nation. They highlight that there are French people from different backgrounds but underlines that what brings them together is their common French values. These shared values is what makes national unity possible. The nation is also described as a single entity, unified in being French. This way to view society is very conservative, as it emphasizes unity in traditional values. In the 2012 elections, Les Républicains express values that go in line with a conservative worldview rather than a classical liberal one.

#### *2017 – Mon projet pour la France – François Fillon*

For the 2017 elections, Les Républicains express very conservative views in issues regarding social structuring. The family is regarded to be a very important institution of society, and important in upholding republican values.

*Je protégerai la famille et lui redonnerai ses droits, car la famille est l'un des piliers de notre société.*<sup>48</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 30)

In writing that the candidate will protect and restore the family as an institution, the party also implies that the family is under threat. This is a take that would worry a conservative since a change in family structures might change societal structures. A classical liberal would not be as worried about this, since societal structures

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<sup>47</sup> But what makes the cohesion of the French nation is our ability, beyond our multiple differences, to come together in the same love for the homeland and its values: French from all provinces, French from rural and urban areas, from mainland France and overseas, French abroad, French of all religions and without religion, children of farmers, workers, teachers, intellectuals, children of French families and children of immigrants... We are not communities living alongside each other. We are one nation, capable of uniting in adversity and coming together on essential matters.

<sup>48</sup> I will protect the family and restore its rights because the family is one of the pillars of our society.

mimic the way that people want to live their lives. The party later clarifies why families are of such societal importance.

*La famille est un pilier de notre société, le premier lieu de socialisation et d'éducation de l'enfant. C'est pourquoi je veux la soutenir, la protéger et lui redonner ses droits. Des parents qui s'investissent dans l'éducation de leurs enfants contribuent à leur plus grande autonomie et à leur sens des responsabilités. Inversement, quand la famille ne fonctionne pas, c'est toute la société qui en pâtit.*<sup>49</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 30)

In this passage, it is explicitly suggested that the family structure is a pillar of society. They also argue that if the family does not function properly society will also struggle to function properly. The family structure is justified as it serves a greater societal purpose than providing safety and security for children.

*Rétablir le contrat de responsabilité parentale supprimé en 2013 afin de permettre la suspension des allocations familiales en cas d'absentéisme scolaire des enfants ou de comportements non conformes aux valeurs fondamentales de la République.*<sup>50</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 30)

Here it is suggested that families that do not conform to fundamental republican values should be economically punished. It is evident that promoting the family structure is not a matter of personal freedom, but rather a tool used to control society and maintaining the status quo. This can also be seen in the party's preferred family structure.

*Préserver le cadre juridique défini par les lois de bioéthique de 1994, révisées en 2011 : la procréation médicalement assistée (PMA) restera interdite aux couples de femmes et aux femmes seules ; la gestation pour autrui (GPA, « mères porteuses ») restera interdite à tous et les sanctions pénales sur le recours ou la promotion de la GPA seront renforcées. Le gouvernement luttera contre les détournements de procédure par le biais de conventions signées avec les pays autorisant l'une ou l'autre de ces pratiques. Une action au niveau international sera par ailleurs menée en faveur de l'abolition de la GPA.*<sup>51</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 30-31)

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<sup>49</sup> The family is a pillar of our society, the first place of socialization and education for the child. That's why I want to support it, protect it, and restore its rights. Parents who invest in the education of their children contribute to their greater autonomy and sense of responsibility. Conversely, when the family does not function, the whole society suffers.

<sup>50</sup> Restore the parental responsibility contract abolished in 2013 to allow the suspension of family allowances in case of truancy of children or behaviors not conforming to the fundamental values of the Republic.

<sup>51</sup> Preserve the legal framework defined by the bioethics laws of 1994, revised in 2011: medically assisted procreation will remain prohibited for female couples and single women; surrogacy will remain prohibited for everyone, and criminal sanctions for recourse to or promotion of surrogacy will be strengthened. The

When the party calls for restriction of medically assisted procreation for same-sex couples, it conveys that it wants to protect the traditional family structure. This is the opposite of what classical liberals would advocate for. Classical liberals believe that personal freedom and the right to govern one's own life is what drives society, and therefore such a restriction would be of major concern. The party continues to suggest similar discriminatory legislation for the same-sex couples.

*Réécrire la loi Taubira, sans effet rétroactif et en concertation avec toutes les associations concernées, en posant la règle que l'adoption plénière sera réservée aux couples de sexe différent, la filiation n'ayant de sens qu'à l'égard d'un homme et d'une femme.*<sup>52</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 31)

Les Républicains go so far as to explicitly say that same sex parenting does not make any sense. This it's also in stark contrast to the classical liberal ideal type where the state ideally does not have a say in what family structures exist in society. The statement can be interpreted as an extension of the conservative ideal that is conserving traditional family structures in order to maintain the societal status quo.

*Une justice simple et efficace pour assurer la protection des droits et réaffirmer le sens de la peine*<sup>53</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 65)

This quote also highlights the importance of societal order to the party. It is explicitly said that they want to reaffirm the meaning of punishment.

*Impunité zéro : rétablir l'autorité par la certitude de la sanction*<sup>54</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 63)

Punishment is further highlighted in this quote, where it is argued that punishment would re-establish authority in French society. The idea that authority and order is important for societal health is very in line with the conservative ideal type. To finish the manifesto the reader is left with these words:

*Vous avez besoin de votre pays comme votre pays a besoin de vous. Aidez-moi à faire de la France la 1ère puissance européenne dans les dix prochaines années !*<sup>55</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 89)

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government will fight against procedural abuses through agreements signed with countries authorizing one or the other of these practices. Action will also be taken internationally in favor of the abolition of surrogacy.

<sup>52</sup> Rewrite the Taubira law, without retroactive effect and in consultation with all the associations concerned, by laying down the rule that full adoption will be reserved for different-sex couples, since filiation only makes sense with regard to a man and a woman.

<sup>53</sup> A simple and efficient justice system to ensure the protection of rights and reaffirm the meaning of punishment.

<sup>54</sup> Zero tolerance: restore authority through the certainty of punishment.

<sup>55</sup> You need your country as your country needs you. Help me make France the leading European power in the next ten years!



Having the aim that France should be the leading European power in the next ten years hints of a rather collective idea of society. A classical liberal approach would rather highlight improvements in the daily lives of people rather than appealing to an idea of collective glory. During the 2017 election Les Républicains expressed very conservative ideals.

*2022 – Le courage de faire – Valérie Pécresse*

In the 2022 elections the party continue to express conservative ideas. The party's candidate states that she will defend French culture and the French nation.

*Je défendrai la culture française face aux communautarismes et au repli identitaire. Écriture inclusive, réécriture de l'histoire de France, wokisme : je ne céderai à aucune tentative de déconstruction de notre Nation.<sup>56</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 2)*

It is interesting how these social movements are described as threatening towards the French nation. This chimes well with the conservative ideal type that societal change should be gradual if it is to happen at all. The classical liberal approach to this would be incorporating the new ideals into the national community. Expressions of other cultures in public places is also suggested to be sanctioned.

*PAS DE CONCESSION SUR LE VOILE ET LE BURKINI Je refuse le port du voile forcé et j'interdirai le port du voile pour les fillettes. De même, le port du voile sera interdit pour les accompagnatrices de sorties scolaires, les licenciées d'associations sportives, les membres de bureaux de vote et les auxiliaires de justice. Le burkini sera proscrit dans les piscines.<sup>57</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 5)*

Suggesting legislation that regulates what people are allowed to wear goes heavily against the classical liberal ideal type. It is an attempt to uphold the societal status quo which goes in line with the conservative idea that society forms individuals.

*La laïcité doit être défendue à chaque instant. L'ennemi, c'est l'islamisme qui piétine le terrain de la République<sup>58</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 5)*

In this passage the party portrays islamism as an act of threat towards French secularism. Interestingly, state secularism is the idea that the state should not

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<sup>56</sup> I will defend French culture against communitarianism and identity withdrawal. Inclusive writing, rewriting of French history, wokeism: I will not give in to any attempt to deconstruct our Nation.

<sup>57</sup> NO COMPROMISE ON THE VEIL AND BURKINI I reject forced veiling and will ban the wearing of the veil for little girls. Similarly, wearing the veil will be prohibited for school outing chaperones, members of sports association teams, polling station staff, and judicial auxiliaries. The burkini will be prohibited in swimming pools.

<sup>58</sup> Secularism must be defended at all times. The enemy is Islamism, which tramples on the Republic's ground.

interfere with religious beliefs of the people. This is rather an attempt to portray foreign cultures as a threat to French societal order.

*Il faut un choc d'autorité pour ramener l'ordre à nos frontières, dans nos rues et à l'école. Je mettrai fin à l'impuissance publique et à cette loi du plus fort qui gangrène certains quartiers. Je protégerai ceux qui défendent la loi, l'ordre et la République<sup>59</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 2)*

In order to restore societal order, it is advocated that an authoritarian shock is needed. This is very conservative since it hints that societal order is something important to the party and they are prepared to take drastic measures to uphold the order. The classical liberal would never consider authoritarianism as something beneficial for society.

*1 an de prison ferme minimum pour les agresseurs des dépositaires de l'autorité publique : forces de sécurité, élus, professeurs<sup>60</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 4)*

This passage further emphasizes the importance accredited to societal order. In practice this suggestion would make aggression towards people impositions of authority render a harsher punishment than aggression towards others. This undermines the liberal idea of equality in relation to the law.

*L'insécurité et l'impunité ne sont pas des sentiments mais bien une réalité pour trop de Français. Pour que la peur change de camp, il faut un choc d'autorité. Dès l'été 2022, je ferai voter une loi de modernisation de la sécurité et de la justice, assortie de moyens considérables. Grâce à elle, les sanctions seront enfin exécutées.<sup>61</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 3)*

In this passage the authoritarian shock is mentioned again. It is argued that an authoritarian shock could reduce fear through the reinstallation of order. It is also suggested that societal order would be of benefit to French society. When writing about families, the party expresses itself a bit differently from previous elections:

*Je crois au mérite républicain. Je relancerai l'ascenseur social en donnant sa chance à chaque enfant de France. Chaque talent doit pouvoir*

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<sup>59</sup> We need a shock of authority to restore order to our borders, our streets, and our schools. I will put an end to public impotence and to this law of the strongest which plagues certain neighborhoods. I will protect those who defend the law, order, and the Republic.

<sup>60</sup> A minimum of one year in prison for attackers of public authority representatives: security forces, elected officials, teachers

<sup>61</sup> Insecurity and impunity are not feelings but a reality for too many French people. For the fear to change sides, we need a shock of authority. From the summer of 2022, I will have a law on the modernization of security and justice voted, accompanied by considerable means. Thanks to it, sanctions will finally be enforced.

*s'exprimer, sans discrimination. Je serai aux côtés des familles pour les aider et les protéger.*<sup>62</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 2)

In this passage, the individual child is in focus rather than the family structure. What role the family structure plays for society is also not mentioned. However the party still has a preference for how a family is to be structured:

*Non à la marchandisation du corps des femmes et à la gestation pour autrui*<sup>63</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 7)

Making surrogacy illegal is a clear hint that the party wants to protect the traditional family structure. This goes against the classical liberal ideal type where the individual's right to choose is the most important component to society. In 2022 Les Républicains are very close to the conservative ideal type, even going as far as explicitly advocating in favor of authoritarianism.

## 2.3 Policy regarding European integration

### 2.3.1 Germany

It matters regarding further European integration, the CDU express themselves close to the liberal ideal type. They express themselves more carefully in the election of 2017 but they still stay true to their liberal ideals. The importance of Europe as a community is a recurrent theme.

*2013 – Gemeinsam erfolgreich für Deutschland.*

In the election of 2013 the CDU expresses values that closely aligned to the classical liberal ideal. Europe and the European project is portrayed to be of value in its own right and not merely a tool for member states.

*CDU und CSU wollen ein starkes Europa. Unsere Lehre aus der Geschichte war und ist der Wunsch, „als gleichberechtigtes Glied in einem vereinten Europa dem Frieden der Welt zu dienen“, wie es in unserem*

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<sup>62</sup> I believe in republican merit. I will revive social mobility by giving every child in France a chance. Every talent must be able to express itself, without discrimination. I will be alongside families to help and protect them.

<sup>63</sup> No to the commodification of women's bodies and to surrogacy

*Grundgesetz heißt. Dieses Bekenntnis zu Europa ist für uns eine Frage der Vernunft, aber auch eine Herzensangelegenheit.*<sup>64</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 12)

This passage clearly conveys that the party believes that the European project is a matter of highest importance. This goes in line with the classical liberal ideal, where international cooperation and integration is regarded to be of benefit for society. In the conservative idea however, the European project would at least partly be seen as a threat to national sovereignty.

*CDU und CSU sind die deutschen Europaparteien.*<sup>65</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 12)

CDU and CSU wants to be portrayed as the most pro-European parties in German politics. This speaks volumes of how important European cooperation is to the party. The party also mentions how important successful European integration is for Germany:

*Deutschland als führender Industrie- und Exportnation geht es auf Dauer nur gut, wenn es auch Europa gut geht. Wir sind davon überzeugt, dass Europa für ein Leben in Frieden, Freiheit und Wohlstand unverzichtbar ist. Daher wollen wir, dass Europa gestärkt aus der Krise kommt.*<sup>66</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 7)

In this passage it is argued that European cooperation is indispensable for further prosperity in Germany. In this, the party conveys that European integration and cooperation is a higher priority than that of national sovereignty. This goes in line with the classical liberal ideal.

*Die europäische Schuldenkrise ist noch nicht vorbei. Ihre Bewältigung ist eine Herausforderung von historischem Ausmaß. Als größter Volkswirtschaft und Wachstumsmotor in Europa kommt unserem Land in dieser Situation eine besondere Verantwortung zu. Wir stehen zu dieser Verantwortung, weil wir wissen, dass Deutschland auf Dauer nur stark und erfolgreich sein kann, wenn es auch Europa gut geht.*<sup>67</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 4)

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<sup>64</sup> The CDU and CSU want a strong Europe. Our lesson from history has been and remains the desire to "serve the peace of the world as an equal member in a united Europe," as stated in our constitution. This commitment to Europe is for us a matter of reason, but also a matter close to our heart.

<sup>65</sup> The CDU and CSU are the German Europe-parties.

<sup>66</sup> Germany, as a leading industrial and exporting nation, can only prosper in the long run if Europe also does well. We are convinced that Europe is indispensable for a life in peace, freedom, and prosperity. Therefore, we want Europe to emerge stronger from the crisis.

<sup>67</sup> The European debt crisis is not yet over. Dealing with it is a challenge of historic proportions. As the largest economy and engine of growth in Europe, our country has a special responsibility in this situation. We stand by this responsibility because we know that Germany can only be strong and successful in the long run if Europe also does well.

Here, the importance that European cooperation holds for the German society is further highlighted. It is suggested that Germany will only do well if Europe also does well. This focus on international cooperation is in accordance with the classical liberal ideal.

*Erfolg der europäischen Einigung für die Menschen auf unserem Kontinent. Dieser Erfolg verpflichtet und ermutigt uns, den Weg fortzusetzen, der für eine friedliche und demokratische Einigung Europas steht<sup>68</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 12)*

In this statement the party goes even further and explicitly promote action that would lead to a unification of Europe. In this it is very clear that the party regards European integration and cooperation as more important than national sovereignty and self-sufficiency. However, the nation-states and regions have a role to play in European cooperation according to the party.

*Für CDU und CSU sind die Nationalstaaten und die Regionen prägende Bestandteile eines Europas der Einheit in Vielfalt. Wir wollen kein zentralistisch organisiertes und regiertes Europa. CDU und CSU wollen ein Europa, das den Bürgern dient.<sup>69</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 12)*

In this passage the party makes it clear that it does not wish to abolish regional or national communities. Rather, it promotes the idea that Europe is to be united in diversity. Worth noting is that the party describes the goal with European cooperation as serving the citizens of Europe. This is in line with the classical liberal ideal that society is comprised by individuals. A conservative take on the same matter would be that the EU's primary objective is to serve the member states.

*Die Europäische Union braucht eine abgestimmte und zugleich handlungsfähige Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik. Sie muss auf einer weiterentwickelten gemeinsamen Sicherheitsstrategie fußen und den Hohen Vertreter der Union für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik stärken. Dafür wollen wir auch weitere Schritte zur Vertiefung der militärischen Zusammenarbeit in Europa bei gleichzeitiger Weiterentwicklung der transatlantischen Arbeitsteilung gehen, zum Beispiel durch das Zusammenlegen und gemeinsame Nutzen bisher nationaler militärischer Fähigkeiten. Langfristig streben wir eine europäische Armee an.<sup>70</sup> (CDU 2013, p. 119)*

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<sup>68</sup> Success of European integration for the people on our continent. This success obliges and encourages us to continue the path that stands for a peaceful and democratic unification of Europe.

<sup>69</sup> For the CDU and CSU, nation-states and regions are shaping components of a Europe of unity in diversity. We do not want a centrally organized and governed Europe. The CDU and CSU want a Europe that serves the citizens.

<sup>70</sup> The European Union needs a coordinated and, at the same time, capable foreign and security policy. It must be based on a further developed common security strategy and strengthen the High Representative of the Union for

Here, the CDU calls for further integration in foreign and security policy. In the long run the party also advocates for a common European army. These are all areas that have historically been interlinked with national sovereignty. In promoting a common European framework for these areas, the party again conveys that European cooperation is of higher importance than national sovereignty. In the elections of 2013, the CDU express ideals that are in line with the classical liberal ideal type.

*2017 – Für ein Deutschland in dem wir gut und gerne leben*

In the election of 2017 the CDU are still positive about European cooperation and further integration, but they focus more on the security aspect of the European Project.

*Europa muss eine wirksame Sicherheitsgarantie für die innere und äußere Sicherheit seiner Mitgliedstaaten sein. In einer zunehmend globalisierten Welt kann kein Land in Europa seine Interessen alleine und ohne Unterstützung durch andere wahren.<sup>71</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 57)*

Here, it is highlighted that the states of Europe need each other in order to guarantee their security. This shows that the party turns to international cooperation within the EU-framework in order to tackle security issues. This is in stark contrast to the conservative ideal that would argue that security is rather found in national self-sufficiency. The party also highlights the importance of European cooperation in regards to relations with the United States.

*Die Zeiten, in denen wir uns auf andere völlig verlassen konnten, sind ein Stück weit vorbei. Wir Europäer müssen unser Schicksal konsequenter als bisher in die eigene Hand nehmen.<sup>72</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 56)*

In this passage, the party calls for closer European cooperation in regard to the United States adopting more protectionist policy in world politics. The party makes it clear that it does not intend to adopt similar policy, but rather expanding European cooperation.

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Foreign and Security Policy. For this, we also want to take further steps towards deepening military cooperation in Europe while simultaneously developing the transatlantic division of labor, for example, by merging and jointly utilizing previously national military capabilities. In the long term, we aim for a European army.

<sup>71</sup> Europe must be an effective security guarantee for the internal and external security of its member states. In an increasingly globalized world, no country in Europe can uphold its interests alone and without support from others.

<sup>72</sup> The times when we could rely completely on others are somewhat over. We Europeans must take our destiny into our own hands more consistently than before.

*Wir unterstützen den Vorschlag für eine Europäische Verteidigungsunion und für einen Europäischen Verteidigungsfonds.<sup>73</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 57)*

With this statement the party makes it clear that it supports further European integration in defense policy. This further highlights the party's commitment to the European project and its belief that further integration will lead to a higher level of security.

*Deshalb wollen CDU und CSU ein starkes, selbstbewusstes und dynamisches Europa. Ein Europa, das imstande ist, seine Interessen zu wahren und sich seiner internationalen Verantwortung zu stellen. Ein Europa der Freiheit, der Sicherheit und der Prosperität, die es – falls erforderlich – auch gemeinsam verteidigen kann.<sup>74</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 56)*

Here, the party further clarifies its commitment to the European project. Europe is portrayed as an important community and it is implied that greater unity will provide greater prosperity to the continent. However, when discussing immigration the party does not express classical liberal values to the same degree.

*Europa muss seine Außengrenzen wirksam gegen illegale Migration schützen, die Grenzschutzagentur Frontex stärken und das Europäische Asylsystem vollenden. Bis der Schutz der EU-Außengrenzen funktioniert, halten wir an Binnengrenzkontrollen fest.<sup>75</sup> (CDU 2017, p. 57)*

It is interesting that the party retains the right to conduct internal border controls, when this goes against one of the core principles of the EU. However, the justification for doing so does not lie in national sovereignty but rather in insufficient cooperation in the area regarding external border control. In the 2017 election the CDU mostly demonstrate classical liberal values in matters regarding European cooperation.

#### *2021 – Das Programm für Stabilität und Erneuerung.*

In the 2021 election, the CDU showcase values that are close to the classical liberal ideal.

*Die Europäische Union ist und bleibt das größte politische Erfolgsprojekt unserer Zeit. Sie hat den Menschen in Deutschland und Europa Frieden, Freiheit, Demokratie, Sicherheit und Wohlstand gebracht. Auch wenn nicht*

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<sup>73</sup> We support the proposal for a European Defense Union and for a European Defense Fund.

<sup>74</sup> Therefore, the CDU and CSU want a strong, self-confident, and dynamic Europe. A Europe capable of safeguarding its interests and assuming its international responsibility. A Europe of freedom, security, and prosperity, which, if necessary, can also defend them together.

<sup>75</sup> Europe must effectively protect its external borders against illegal migration, strengthen the border agency Frontex, and complete the European asylum system. Until the protection of the EU's external borders is functional, we will maintain internal border controls.

*immer alles perfekt läuft: Die Menschen in unserem Land profitieren tagtäglich von Europa.*<sup>76</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 18)

This passage showcases that the party views European cooperation as a goal in itself rather than a mere tool for the individual member states. It is also highlighted that the project's main beneficiary are individuals and not states.

*Wir wollen europäische Kooperation und Integration statt nationalistischer Abschottung. Nur so werden wir Deutschland und Europa widerstandsfähiger machen: bei Pandemien, ökonomischen Krisen, terroristischen Bedrohungslagen und Cyberang.*<sup>77</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 18)

The party describes further European integration as something of great benefit. It is argued that society is better prepared to handle unforeseen crises through European cooperation. This is very much in line with the classical liberal ideal, where it is argued that cooperation through market integration has a positive effect on societal resilience.

*Auch für Europa brauchen wir ein Modernisierungsjahrzehnt. Denn nur, wenn wir vereint in nachhaltige europäische Zukunftsprojekte und -technologien investieren, sichern wir Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und Arbeitsplätze von morgen hier bei uns in Europa.*<sup>78</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 29)

This passage further clarifies that the European community is of great importance to the party. Interestingly, the party writes about European jobs and not necessarily German jobs. In a later passage the explicitly write about how this would affect Germany.

*Wir wollen das Ziel der Lissabon-Strategie mit Leben füllen: Europa soll zum innovativsten Wirtschaftsraum der Welt werden. Europa und der gemeinsame Binnenmarkt tragen ganz wesentlich zu unserem Wohlstand bei. Sie bilden das Rückgrat unserer global handelnden Wirtschaft und vieler gut bezahlter Arbeitsplätze in Deutschland.*<sup>79</sup> (CDU 2021, p. 30)

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<sup>76</sup> The European Union is and remains the greatest political success project of our time. It has brought peace, freedom, democracy, security, and prosperity to the people in Germany and Europe. Even if everything does not always run perfectly: the people in our country benefit from Europe every day.

<sup>77</sup> We want European cooperation and integration instead of nationalist isolation. Only in this way will we make Germany and Europe more resilient: during pandemics, economic crises, terrorist threats, and cyberattacks.

<sup>78</sup> For Europe, too, we need a decade of modernization. Because only if we invest together in sustainable European future projects and technologies, we will ensure competitiveness and jobs for tomorrow here in Europe.

<sup>79</sup> We want to breathe life into the goal of the Lisbon Strategy: Europe should become the most innovative economic area in the world. Europe and the common internal market significantly contribute to our prosperity. They form the backbone of our globally acting economy and many well-paid jobs in Germany.



In this passage it is described how German society benefits from a high level of European integration. The notion that society benefits from market integration rather than national self-sufficiency is very much in line with the classical liberal ideal.

*Wir brauchen gemeinsame Standards im europäischen Asylrecht und eine europaweite Harmonisierung der Aufnahmebedingungen – hinsichtlich Verfahren, Unterbringung und Versorgung. Dies senkt die Anreize, die manche Mitgliedstaaten für Asylsuchende attraktiver machen als andere.<sup>80</sup>*  
(CDU 2021, p. 28)

The party suggests harmonization the handling of refugees. It is argued that this will make for greater equality between the member states. Germany has provided security for many asylum seekers, so it is not surprising that the party wants other member states to live up to the responsibility. However, the proposal does not have its foundation in ideas of national sovereignty.

*Das Gemeinsame Europäische Asylsystem muss grundlegend reformiert werden. Der Vorschlag der Europäischen Kommission einer fairen und solidarischen Verteilung der Kosten und Lasten innerhalb der Mitgliedstaaten der Europäischen Union geht in die richtige Richtung.<sup>81</sup>*  
(CDU 2021, p. 28)

This passage further clarifies that the party is not entirely content with the current state of European asylum procedures. However, instead of moving in a protectionist direction and invoking claims of national sovereignty, the party sees the solution within the cooperation. This also goes in line with the classical liberal ideal because it displays a belief in international cooperation rather than national isolation.

*Wie die nationalen Parlamente muss auch das Europäische Parlament das Recht haben, eigene Gesetzentwürfe einzubringen. So werden wir das Herzstück der europäischen Demokratie, das gemeinsam gewählte Europäische Parlament, weiter stärken.<sup>82</sup>* (CDU 2021, p. 32)

This passage clearly highlights the party's commitment to the European project. If the European Parliament were to draft its own laws, it would have a major

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<sup>80</sup> We need common standards in European asylum law and a harmonization of reception conditions across Europe – regarding procedures, accommodation, and support. This reduces the incentives that some member states make more attractive for asylum seekers than others.

<sup>81</sup> The Common European Asylum System must be fundamentally reformed. The European Commission's proposal for a fair and solidary distribution of costs and burdens within the member states of the European Union is heading in the right direction.

<sup>82</sup> Like national parliaments, the European Parliament must also have the right to draft its own laws. This way, we will further strengthen the core of European democracy, the jointly elected European Parliament.

implication on the influence of the individual member state. This shows that the party truly regards the European community a goal in itself and not just a mere tool for the state. It also showcases that the party believes that the EU is to serve its citizens and not its member states. In the 2021 elections the CDU portrays values that are very much in line with the classical liberal ideal.

### 2.3.2 France

Les Républicains express themselves closely to the conservative ideal type in matters regarding European integration. The reasoning becomes more explicit and they move towards further conservative ideas in later manifestos.

*2012 – La France forte c'est pour vous ! – Nicolas Sarkozy*

In the 2012 elections Les Républicains express themselves rather conservatively. European cooperation is portrayed as a mean for the state to fulfill its goals rather than a goal in itself.

*Pour mieux contrôler les flux migratoires, exiger de l'Europe qu'elle se dote d'un gouvernement politique de Schengen, comme il y a désormais un gouvernement de la zone Euro. Exiger également l'harmonisation des politiques d'asile et d'immigration. Si, dans les douze mois qui viennent, aucun résultat n'est obtenu, la France rétablira des contrôles ciblés à ses frontières.<sup>83</sup> (Les Républicains 2012, p. 6)*

In this passage it is clear that the party is not against further European cooperation, but its reasoning for this position is national interest. It is however stated that France will reestablish targeted border controls if further cooperation is not established. This places the party closer to the conservative ideal type where retaining national influence is more desirable than pursuing further European cooperation.

*Les solutions dont je veux la mise en œuvre sont des solutions de bon sens. L'Europe doit s'organiser pour aider les pays qui ont du mal à sécuriser leurs frontières. Elle doit adopter une législation commune en matière d'asile et d'immigration. Si cela n'était pas mis en œuvre dans un délai d'un an, la France rétablirait des contrôles ciblés à ses frontières et*

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<sup>83</sup> To better control migratory flows, demanding that Europe establish a political Schengen government, similar to the Eurozone government now in place. Also demanding the harmonization of asylum and immigration policies. If, within the next twelve months, no results are achieved, France will reintroduce targeted border controls

*suspendrait sa participation à la zone Schengen.*<sup>84</sup> (*Les Républicains 2012, p. 16*)

In this passage it is also very clear that the party wants further European cooperation in areas where it serves French national interests. It is yet again suggested that friends will leave parts of the European cooperation if these goals are not attained. This hints that the party does not believe that European integration is inherently important but rather a means to an end.

*L'Europe devait nous protéger, elle a aggravé notre exposition à la mondialisation.*<sup>85</sup> (*Les Républicains 2012, p. 28*)

This quote is very interesting because it hints that the party sees globalization as a threat rather than an opportunity. This is very close to the conservative ideal type where societal change is frowned upon. The classical liberal ideal type on the other hand would see globalization as something positive, as it opens new markets and opportunities for cooperation.

*Je crois dans le libre-échange. Mais le libre-échange, c'est l'ouverture négociée et réciproque des frontières, pas leur disparition. Ouvrir les marchés n'est pas le but de la construction européenne. Son but est la sécurité et la prospérité des peuples européens.*<sup>86</sup> (*Les Républicains 2012, p. 37*)

Stating that the party believes in free trade but that it is not the end goal of the European project also hints of a conservative worldview. The classical liberal thinker would regard opening markets as the very goal of the European project as it in turns creates security and prosperity for the people of Europe. For the 2012 election Les Républicains are not against further European cooperation as such, but they are clear in that national sovereignty and national interests must lay as a foundation for further cooperation.

#### *2017 – Mon projet pour la France – François Fillon*

For the 2017 election Les Républicains are not against further European integration as long as it serves the interests of the French state.

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<sup>84</sup> The solutions I want to implement are common-sense solutions. Europe must organize itself to help countries struggling to secure their borders. It must adopt common legislation on asylum and immigration. If this is not implemented within one year, France will reintroduce targeted border controls and suspend its participation in the Schengen area.

<sup>85</sup> Europe was supposed to protect us, it has increased our exposure to globalization.

<sup>86</sup> I believe in free trade. But free trade is the negotiated and reciprocal opening of borders, not their disappearance. Opening markets is not the goal of European integration. Its goal is the security and prosperity of European peoples.

*Face aux menaces qui l'entourent dans un monde toujours plus imprévisible, j'ai la conviction que l'Europe sera l'un des principaux sujets des années qui viennent. Pour nous protéger contre les menaces de tous ordres, pour peser dans le commerce mondial et dans la compétition pour l'innovation, pour agir de manière efficace pour le climat, pour nous appuyer sur une monnaie forte, gage de stabilité, l'Union européenne devrait être la solution évidente.<sup>87</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 78)*

In this passage the party speaks highly of European cooperation, and she said as a solution for many of the challenges facing society. However, the party is seemingly not too content with the way that European cooperation is taking form.

*Il faut relancer et rebâtir l'Europe. Elle doit être moins technocratique, moins uniforme, plus efficace et plus protectrice face aux puissances du monde.<sup>88</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 6)*

The party wants a less streamlined cooperation within the EU. Europe is also described as an external entity, rather than a forum for cooperation.

*Aujourd'hui, l'Europe se mêle de tout et bien trop souvent de ce qui relève de la responsabilité et de la compétence des Nations et des Régions ! Je veux lever certaines contraintes inutiles et simplifier les démarches qui encadrent la pratique de la chasse.<sup>89</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 55)*

In this passage describing the issue of hunting it is evident that the party sees the EU as something external that occasionally interferes with national interests. This hints that the national community is more important to the party than creating a European community which is a rather conservative take. The areas where the party wants to see further cooperation are areas that go in line with French interests.

*Réformer le renseignement, pour mieux faire face au terrorisme et rendre au renseignement territorial les moyens humains et matériels dont il a été privé. Renforcer les coopérations au niveau européen via notamment Europol et Eurojust.<sup>90</sup> (Les Républicains 2017, p. 63)*

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<sup>87</sup> Faced with the threats surrounding it in an increasingly unpredictable world, I am convinced that Europe will be one of the main subjects in the years to come. To protect ourselves against threats of all kinds, to weigh in global trade and competition for innovation, to act effectively for the climate, to rely on a strong currency, a guarantee of stability, the European Union should be the obvious solution.

<sup>88</sup> We must relaunch and rebuild Europe. It must be less technocratic, less uniform, more effective, and more protective against the world's powers.

<sup>89</sup> Today, Europe interferes in everything and far too often in matters that fall under the responsibility and competence of Nations and Regions! I want to lift certain unnecessary constraints and simplify the procedures that govern the practice of hunting.

<sup>90</sup> Reforming intelligence to better confront terrorism and restoring to territorial intelligence the human and material resources it has been deprived of. Strengthening cooperation at the European level, notably through Europol and Eurojust.

Further European integration is suggested in areas where the state is not able to efficiently provide for its citizens. This hints that the party sees European cooperation as a tool for the French state rather than something desirable in its own right.

*Renégocier le code frontières Schengen pour autoriser des contrôles ciblés dans des zones de vulnérabilité des frontières intérieures, aussi longtemps qu'il existe un risque d'afflux d'étrangers clandestins.*<sup>91</sup> (*Les Républicains 2017, p. 72*)

This passage hints that the party sees national interests as more important than European cooperation. In reintroducing border controls between European nations, one of the fundamental ideas of the EU is undermined. This tells us that the party is more concerned with the national community than the European community.

*Restaurer notre souveraineté migratoire en renégociant les directives européennes chaque fois qu'elles l'entravent et, si nécessaire, ré-adhérer avec réserves à la Convention Européenne des Droits de l'Homme si la Cour européenne persiste à en faire une interprétation restrictive.*<sup>92</sup> (*Les Républicains 2017, p. 53*)

Further evidence of the importance of national sovereignty can be found in this passage. It is suggested that France is to navigate the European political landscape after what suits France the best, and not what will render the best outcome for Europe as a whole. This tells us that the party views European cooperation as a tool for the state to achieve its interests.

*Opposer aux lois extraterritoriales américaines la juridiction française et une réponse européenne commune.*<sup>93</sup> (*Les Républicains 2017, p. 16*)

This quote is the most glaring evidence that party sees European cooperation as a tool for the French state. It is suggested that American extraterritorial should be met with a common European response, but this common European response is to have its basis in French jurisdiction. European cooperation is a means for the French state to gain global influence. In the 2017 elections the party is much closer to the conservative ideal type than the liberal ideal type. However, they do not oppose further European cooperation as long as it serves the interests of the French state.

*2022 – Le courage de faire – Valérie Pécresse*

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<sup>91</sup> Renegotiating the Schengen border code to allow targeted controls in areas of vulnerability of the internal borders, as long as there is a risk of an influx of illegal immigrants.

<sup>92</sup> Restoring our migratory sovereignty by renegotiating European directives whenever they hinder it, and, if necessary, rejoining the European Convention on Human Rights with reservations if the European Court persists in giving it a restrictive interpretation.

<sup>93</sup> Opposing American extraterritorial laws with French jurisdiction and a common European response.

In the elections of 2022, Les Républicains have moved towards a more conservative mindset. Focus lies on ensuring French self-sufficiency and sovereignty.

*Fidèle à l'idéal gaulliste, je restaurerai notre souveraineté militaire, énergétique et alimentaire, et je vous protégerai en donnant à nos armées tous les moyens nécessaires pour nous défendre<sup>94</sup>. (Les Républicains 2022, p. 3)*

In this passage it is clear that national sovereignty is of importance to the party in a number of different areas. Focus lies on how French national sovereignty can be ensured, and further European cooperation does not hold a prominent position on the agenda.

*Cette guerre nous rappelle que la paix est fragile. Qu'elle est le bien le plus précieux que nous devons défendre pour nos enfants. Que nous avons plus que jamais besoin d'une France forte dans une Europe puissante, pour assurer notre sécurité.<sup>95</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 3)*

In this passage, the party describes a necessity for a strong France in a strong Europe. It is implied that Europe plays a part in guaranteeing French security but there is a clear distinction made between what is French and what is European. Focusing on the national community rather than the European community, is to be considered conservative since it aims to uphold existing distributions of power.

*Une Europe qui contrôle ses frontières : renégociation de Schengen ; renforcement de Frontex grâce au recrutement de 10 000 garde-frontières supplémentaires<sup>96</sup> (Les Républicains 2022, p. 13)*

The party wants to increase efficiency in European cooperation when it comes to external border control. However, it also wants to renegotiate the terms and conditions of the Schengen agreement. This is rather similar to previous elections where the party insisted on cooperation when it benefited the state. This hints that the party sees European cooperation as a tool for the state rather than a goal on its own merit.

*La France doit être une puissance respectée dans le monde, libre et fidèle à ses engagements européens. Pour maîtriser son destin, elle doit aussi assurer son indépendance énergétique, garantir sa souveraineté*

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<sup>94</sup> Faithful to the Gaullist ideal, I will restore our military, energy, and food sovereignty, and I will protect you by giving our armies all the necessary means to defend us.

<sup>95</sup> This war reminds us that peace is fragile. That it is the most precious good that we must defend for our children. That more than ever, we need a strong France in a powerful Europe to ensure our security.

<sup>96</sup> A Europe that controls its borders: renegotiation of Schengen; strengthening of Frontex through the recruitment of 10,000 additional border guards

*alimentaire et redevenir une grande nation industrielle et d'innovation*<sup>97</sup>.  
(*Les Républicains 2022*, p. 12)

Here, the party yet again highlights the importance of national sovereignty. It is stated that friends is to respect its European commitments, but focus lies heavily on underlining the importance of France's self-sufficiency. A classical liberal approach would be to find security through international cooperation and access to markets. Les Républicains express themselves much more conservatively than classical liberally during the 2022 elections.

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<sup>97</sup> France must be a respected power in the world, free and faithful to its European commitments. To control its destiny, it must also ensure its energy independence, guarantee its food sovereignty, and once again become a great industrial and innovative nation.

## 3 Analysis and conclusions

### 3.1 Presentation of findings

This study has demonstrated that the use of ideology varies greatly in the two examined parties. Different policy areas also seem to matter, since the two parties have evolved differently depending on the examined policy area. CDU expressed themselves very liberally regarding immigration in the election of 2013, but moved closer to the conservative side of the spectrum for 2017. In 2021, they had found a middle ground between conservatism and classical liberalism. Les Républicains on the other hand, express themselves moderately conservative in 2012, and steadily express themselves more conservatively in the consecutive elections of 2017 and 2022.

In questions regarding social structuring, CDU promoted solutions that went in line with the conservative ideal type in the election of 2013. However, the party expressed ideas in line with the classical ideal type in the subsequent elections of 2017 and 2021. The party went from supporting proposals that actively support the traditional family structure to explicitly writing that deciding family structures should be left to individuals themselves. Furthermore, focus shifted towards a more individualist approach to societal structure. Les Républicains promoted conservative ideals in 2012 and continued to promote similar values in the subsequent elections of 2017 and 2022. The party clearly highlighted the value that the traditional family structure bring to society. In addition to this, the party also advocated that republican ideals should be at the core of what constitutes a family. Les Républicains consistently express themselves conservatively and moved towards more conservatism in their use of ideology.

In matters regarding European integration, the CDU express values that clearly align with the classical liberal ideal type. In 2013 the party wants to portray itself as the German European party. In 2017 the express themselves more carefully, but are still loyal to their liberal view on further European integration. In 2021, the party yet again express clear positive values when describing European cooperation, something that aligns with the classical liberal ideal type. CDU consistently describes the European project as something which holds value in itself and not as a mere form of cooperation between member states. Les Républicains on the other hand, express themselves in a way that is very close to the conservative ideal type. Europe is constantly described as an external force which at times clash with national interests. In 2012 and 2017, Europe is portrayed as a useful tool given that



it aligns with French national interests. In 2022, Les Républicains state the importance of national self-sufficiency rather than relying on deeper European cooperation.

## 3.2 Conclusions

The results of this study suggest that the incumbent crisis of the European center-right also has an ideological aspect. The results also go in line with what has been suggested by earlier research. Especially in the case of Les Républicains, who are seemingly moving further and further to the conservative side of their ideological spectrum. This might very well be a consequence of their earlier pattern of accommodation to positions held by their radical-right competitor (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021). The CDU is moving in different ideological directions in different policy areas. Earlier research has concluded that the CDU has been able to hold on to a prominent role in German politics due to a fragmentation of the political left and a relatively weak silent counter-revolution of the radical right (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021). This can explain why the CDU has not moved towards more conservative positions.

This study also shows that studying the national level of European politics is important to understand European political cooperation. This is much in line with the theories of negotiation presented by Robert Putnam, who argued that in order for something to be accepted as international positioning it first has to be accepted as national positioning (Putnam 1988). In applying this logic to European political cooperation, the national level of politics is of highest importance. Previous studies have also shown that there variance in the national level of politics in other aspects of the incumbent crisis of the European center-right (Bale & Rovira Kaltwasser 2021, Wolinetz & Zaslove 2018). Therefore it is not surprising that ideology also changes on the national level of politics.

The results of this study suggest that the two studied parties have developed independently in their use of ideology. Given that earlier research has suggested that European political party cooperation heavily leans on adherence to the same ideological family, this can hold major implications on the future of the EPP (Marks et al 2002). Furthermore, it has been suggested that national positioning also play a role in the formation of European party groups (McElroy & Benoit 2010). Given that this study has demonstrated that the German CDU and the French Les Républicains are indeed moving in different directions in their usage of ideology, it is not far-fetched to assume that this could bring changes to the political corporation that is the EPP as well. This aspect make it interesting to further study the crisis of the European center-right from an ideological point of view.

However, the study has not been able to demonstrate hard evidence that it is the emergence of radical right parties that have led to these ideological changes. There are many factors that could lead to these parties assuming different ideological positions during this time frame. Much of the patterns suggested by earlier research have been present in the results of this study as well, hinting that the crisis does have an ideological side to it. Further research is required in order to establish or falsify any correlations between ideological changes and the incumbent crisis of the European center-right.

### 3.3 Recommendations for further research

The most important aspect for future research to address his finding hard evidence that the ideological changes are interlinked to the incumbent crisis of the European center-right. This could be done in process tracing ideological changes to different positions taken by the party, especially in relation to the radical right competitor. In doing so, we would also gain important insight in the relationship between parties assuming political positions and their ideological adherence. If such a connection could be made, we would have a scientific method to decipher and predict ideological developments.

In order to grasp the nuances of ideological changes within the EPP, it would be beneficial to examine the ideological developments of more parties in depth. Gathering more information about ideological development within the party group could show us which parties develop similarly and which ones move in different directions. This in turn could grant greater insight in how European national political arenas develop.

Lastly, examining the ideological developments in other party groups when challenged by a niche party could also be a further scientific interest. For instance, researching how parties belonging to the Party of European Socialists (PES) developed ideologically during the emergence of green left parties could be fruitful in understanding this phenomenon. Such a study could also open the door for valuable comparisons in ideological developments of European political parties.

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