Language, cultural policy and national identity in France, 1989-97

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LANGUAGE, CULTURAL POLICY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY
IN FRANCE, 1989-97

by

Louise Strode

A Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

September 1999

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ABSTRACT

The French State, and political elites operating within it, have a long tradition of involvement in the production, management and even the control of language and culture. This has been - and remains - important in terms of the construction and definition of a State-led model of French identity. Against this background, the present thesis examines conceptions of French identity held by political elites, the agents of the State, in relation to language and cultural issues prominent on the policy-making agenda in the 1990s. The thesis specifically considers the possibility that elite visions of identity may be changing under the influence both of new approaches to French cultural policy-making introduced from the 1980s by the Socialists, and specifically the Ministry of Culture led by Jack Lang, and of a series of potentially destabilising challenges to French models of cultural policy and identity which have been debated in the 1990s.

In order to examine these issues, the thesis takes three case studies, focusing on political debates in the public arena surrounding a number of language and cultural policy issues which have been perceived as symbols of French identity. The regulation and promotion of the French language, audiovisual broadcasting policy and the Internet are selected as case study areas, which reveal these perceptions, and point to anxieties about identity in the debates which surround them. Thus these debates are used as a means of reexamining contemporary elite perceptions of French identity. This examination is carried out through the close reading of contributions to the debates, made by political figures of significance in each case study area. The term ‘political elites’ is used in the sense of Pareto’s definition (1935, in Parry, 1969, pp.34, 46) of the elite as a ‘governing elite’, composed of all political ‘influentials’, whether or not they act for the State, as part of a government, or indirectly as part of the wider polity, in opposition.

The case studies demonstrate that elite conceptions of identity in France of the 1990s, whilst disturbed by contemporary challenges to French cultural policy-making, did not change in any fundamental way. Instead, they illustrated a reversion to traditional, rigid conceptions of identity, rather than the welcoming of more dynamic and hybrid ones.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCT</td>
<td>Agence de la Coopération culturelle et technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALF</td>
<td>Avenir de la langue française</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMI</td>
<td>Accord multilateral sur l'investissement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>Assemblée Nationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARP</td>
<td>Association auteurs, réalisateurs, producteurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAEF</td>
<td>Conseil de l'audiovisuel extérieur de la France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDS</td>
<td>Centre des démocrates sociaux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Commission of the European Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CILF</td>
<td>Conseil international de la langue française</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNC</td>
<td>Centre national de la cinématographie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSLF</td>
<td>Conseil supérieur de la langue française</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2 MAC</td>
<td>Name of a digital standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGLF</td>
<td>Délégation générale à la langue française</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGTV</td>
<td>Direction générale des Télécommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOM-TOM</td>
<td>Départements et territoires d'outre-mer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FD</td>
<td>Force Démocrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>Front National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GATS</td>
<td>General Agreement on Trade in Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GATT</td>
<td>General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G7</td>
<td>Group of seven leading industrialised nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCF</td>
<td>Haut Conseil de la Francophonie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDTV</td>
<td>High Definition Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHEDN</td>
<td>Institut des Hautes études de Défense nationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JO</td>
<td>Journal Officiel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIA</td>
<td>Mesures pour encourager le développement de l'industrie audiovisuelle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILIA</td>
<td>Marché international du livre illustré</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>Phase on Alternate Lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Personal Computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCF</td>
<td>Parti Communiste français</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Parti Socialiste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTO</td>
<td>Public Telephone Operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPR</td>
<td>Rassemblement pour la République</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECAM</td>
<td>Séquentiel couleur à mesure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC</td>
<td>Union des Centristes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>Union pour la Démocratie française</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOD</td>
<td>Video-on-Demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: LANGUAGE, CULTURAL POLICY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN FRANCE: INTRODUCING THE LINKS

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to explore the perceptions of French identity that were held by political elites in France in relation to the language and cultural issues prominent on the policy-making agenda in the 1990s. The term 'political elites' signifies in the first instance the most important actors of the State who take part in policy-making, including both politicians and administrative elites. The peculiar overlap between administrative and political posts in France has been highlighted by various authors, and is discussed further in Chapter Two. These groups are likely to be products of the French State's clearly established mechanisms for the creation of elites through highly centralised education and training, as described by Suleiman (1974, 1978, 1984). The French State has a long tradition of involvement in the production, management and even the control of language and culture, predating the Revolution (Cook, 1993, pp.8, 10; Looseley, 1994, p.18; Ruby et al., 1993, p.15). This has been important in terms of the construction and definition of a State-led conception of French identity, and the attitudes surrounding it. Political elites are more specifically taken in this thesis to signify politicians involved in either policy formulation, or debates on culture and its relationship with national identity, whether or not they act for the State, as members of the party in government at a given time. This definition follows Pareto's conception of the elite as 'governing elite', composed of all political 'influentials', whether they exercise this influence directly as part of a government, or indirectly as part of the wider polity, in opposition for example (1935, in Parry, 1969, pp.34, 46).

Policy-making in France on language and culture has developed and become more institutionalised since the establishment of the Fifth Republic in 1958 by General de Gaulle, and the creation of the first Ministry of Culture in 1959 headed by André Malraux. From this period, terms like Culture and la politique culturelle (cultural policy) have found significance in France, and have been the subjects of much debate for various sections of the French polity (amongst other groups). Studying the attitudes of political elites towards identity in connection with policy-making on language and culture can enhance our understanding of the factors

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influencing such policy-making in contemporary France, and in particular of the continuing importance and meaning of the role of identity in this process. The broad intention is that debates communicated by political elites in the public arena - that is, the statements of politicians - focusing on particular areas of cultural and linguistic legislation, can be used as a lens through which to reexamine contemporary elite perceptions of French identity. More specifically, the thesis aims to consider if, and if so, to what extent, contemporary elite visions of identity may be changing in the light of both the influence of new approaches by the French State to cultural policy-making introduced from the 1980s, and recent challenges to this policy from beyond the State which may impact on French identity.

The purpose of this chapter is to lay the theoretical groundwork for this investigation of perceptions of identity, by means of a review of the literature surrounding identity, cultural debates and cultural legislation in France. It is argued that elite perceptions of French identity in relation to language and culture represent a key topic of research and debate because of the long-standing role of the French State, and political elites more generally, in the development of French identity through policy in linguistic and cultural areas. The role of the State is itself subject to continuing debate. It is argued that debate surrounding the State's role in language and culture has intensified in the post-1945 period, as France has modernised, decolonised and developed into a consumer society. This is because such a transformation has in turn entailed the questioning of (amongst other issues), received conceptions of culture, national and cultural identity, and of the influence of the State on these. This has particularly been the case for the post-1968 generation who, having once criticised established institutions, eventually found themselves in policy-making positions and the unprecedented election of a Socialist President and government after 1981.

These debates, and their effects on post-war cultural policy-making are reviewed, together with ways in which identity has been conceptualised. Despite the influence of possible shifts in perceptions of identity brought about by social change, cultural debates and policy in post-war France, it is not the case that elite visions of French identity have changed. Rather, the development of a series of issues and debates in the 1990s around possible challenges to French policy-making on language and culture, and to the elite views of identity which inform these, has revealed the tendency of policy-making elites to frequently revert to traditional, rigid conceptions of identity, as opposed to an embracing of more dynamic and hybrid ones. This is the key argument which I wish to present in this thesis, and it is outlined through analysis based
on three aims outlined in the concluding section of this chapter, related to the demonstration of the elite preference for traditional conceptions of identity. I will illustrate the complexity of the responses of French political elites to a series of contemporary language and cultural policy issues, demonstrating these responses to be fundamentally undynamic, and revealing many tensions and ambiguities.

The rest of the thesis is structured around three case studies. Following a methodology chapter discussing the design of my research, and issues arising from the attempt to analyse political debates about identity, in Chapter Two, I then go on to provide the context for understanding elite conceptions of identity and culture in France through an exploration of the centrality of language in the State-led construction of French identity (Chapter Three). The next three chapters (Four, Five and Six) consist of case studies of political debates surrounding some cultural policy issues in the 1990s which have implications for the safeguard and development of French culture in various sectors, from films to language, which may be regarded as symbols of French national identity, given their role in the construction of a State-led vision of French identity and the range of State resources and policies which have traditionally been devoted to them. The regulation and promotion of language, audiovisual broadcasting policy and the Internet are selected as case study areas, which reveal these aims and anxieties about identity in the debates which surround them. The case study chapters illustrate the central argument that elite conceptions of identity in France, whilst disturbed by contemporary challenges to French cultural policy-making, are not changing. Finally, the seventh chapter concludes the thesis with summaries of the main findings of the case studies, and suggestions for further research.

1.2 Introducing identity and culture in France

'Culture' and 'identity', are terms which are surrounded by seemingly endless theories and controversies in the fields of social, political and cultural studies. 'Culture' is a term that has been given a variety of meanings in several different contexts, discussed, for example, by Jenks (1993) and Featherstone (1995). In the context of contemporary France, the word 'culture' has a long-standing status as an important term, much used and debated (Cook, 1993, p.4; Rigby, 1991, pp.4-5). Rigby for example (1991, p.197) notes how cultural debate or discourse has been, and remains, 'such a vital component of French intellectual life'. And as Cook notes (1993, p.2) 'There are as many definitions of culture as there are writers on the subject'. For example, culture may be considered in a narrow sense as relating to artistic creativity, or it may
be given a more broad, anthropological interpretation in the sense that all cultural practices and representations within a society may be taken into account. These would include, for example, arts, beliefs, institutions and forms of communication, encompassing specific cultural forms such as 'popular culture'. 'Culture' may refer to the values of a group, the norms they follow, the material goods they create, indeed their whole way of life. In addition, 'cultural studies' often examines the relations between ideology and culture, such as how power and domination are produced through culture (Grossberg et al., 1992, p.4). As McGuigan describes (1997, p.5), recent work in cultural studies has been increasingly concerned with 'race', sexuality or gender issues. Examples are the work of Gilroy (1987, 1992, 1993) and Mercer (1990).

What is of interest in the context of this study is the selection made by French elites of certain aspects of culture for debate and promotion, and how these choices have been and continue to be, so bound up with the construction and maintenance of a French national identity. As has already been noted above, the French State has, since the ancien régime, played a key role in the development of national identity in France, through the production, organisation and even the control of culture. As Flynn notes: 'The myth of the state and the myth of the nation have been intimately interwoven in France' (1995a, p.3). This in turn impacts on issues of culture, as Ritaine suggests: 'Dans le savoir politique français, la triade Peuple-Nation-Culture est centrale: la culture y est le fondement de la nation, l'instruction du peuple est l'instrument majeur de la démocratie.' (In French political thought, the relationship between People, Nation and Culture is central: thus culture is the foundation of the nation, and educating the people is the key to democracy) (1983, p.13). Moreover, as Hall argues (1992a, p.293), identities can be constructed through the production of 'meanings about “the nation” with which we can identify [Hall’s emphasis]'. These meanings, Hall maintains, are contained in the 'stories' which are told about a nation, as well as memories which connect its present with its past, and images which are constructed by it'. The significance of views such as these will be demonstrated below, when I review the literature treating the origins of this relationship between ‘People, Nation and Culture’ in France. However, by way of introduction to this central point, it is first necessary to consider what ‘identity’ signifies, and its position in the investigation charted by this thesis.

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2 This and all subsequent translations are my own, unless otherwise stated. The use of square brackets denotes where I have quoted part of a sentence or section from a text.
‘Identity’, writes Billig (1995, pp.7-8), is a strange notion, which cannot be found ‘within the body or mind of an individual’! In simple terms, the term indicates the sense of being, that is, who and what you are, and where you belong. Billig goes on to describe identity as not a ‘thing’, but ‘a short-hand description for ways of talking about the self and community’ (1995, p.60). Staab too offers a similar view of identity, and argues: ‘Through such an identity the individual locates and defines him or herself in the world, acquiring a collective personality based on shared values, experiences and orientations’ (1998, p.34). Identity may be linked with a place such as a city or country, or a people, such as an ethnic group, a religion, a gender, sexuality, a profession, for example. So, besides being conceived of on a personal level, identity may be discussed in relation to a group or collective (Preston, 1997, p.54). Hence we may speak of the significance of ‘national identity’, ‘cultural identity’, for example. Furthermore, it is often more appropriate to consider ‘identities’, as a person or group may adopt more than one identity at any given time. Identity may not remain the same, as it may be subject to change, disturbance or disruption from various forces. As Hall maintains (1995, p.65), identities are ‘points of suture, points of temporary attachment, [ ... ] a way of understanding the constant transformations of who one is or as Foucault put it, “who one is to become”’. So identity can be constructed in multilayered and contradictory ways.

What is of particular interest in the context of this study is clearly the concept of ‘French identity’; what it is to be French. Especially important then to review first of all are notions of ‘French identity’, including ‘French national identity’, and, closely linked to that, ‘French cultural identity’ and how these have developed in line with the French nation-state. Following on from this introduction, I consider how ideas about identity in France have been subject to change and redefinition over time, and how these ideas have been linked to the development of cultural policy. Through examination of these debates, I will identify the possible challenges to the State’s views of identity which have emerged, before the rest of the thesis considers the impact of these challenges as they are illustrated in contemporary political debates on cultural and linguistic policy.

1.3 The development of a national identity in France, pre-1945

Identity can be conceptualised as a historical and social construction. It has been argued that the concept of national identity is an artificial one, invented and developed over time rather than something that has simply existed naturally since time immemorial, as we might imagine. Thus we cannot believe ‘national histories’, which tell us about ‘a people, passing through time - “our” people, with “our” ways of life, and “our” culture’ (Billig, 1995, p.71). Instead, Anderson (1983), proposes a definition of the nation as an ‘imagined political community’ (p.7). Anderson explains how factors like the development of ‘print capitalism’ (newspapers, the novel, for example), the standardisation of language, the encouragement of literacy, religion, education, colonial exploration and the enlargement of the State all played a role in defining the nation as an imagined community. Bhabha (1990b, p.1) also views the nation as imagined, requiring construction and narration:

Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind’s eye. Such an image of the nation - or narration, might seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical, but it is from those traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the West. An idea whose cultural compulsion lies in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force.

Similarly, Hobsbawm (1983, p.1) argues that the formation of national identities works partly through the creation of nationwide symbols and ‘invented traditions’, stressing that the ‘traditions’ of a nation which may be taken for granted as long-established, may in fact have been ‘invented’ relatively recently. Hobsbawm goes on to discuss the development of particular ‘mass-produced’ examples of such traditions in late nineteenth and twentieth century Europe, such as education, official public holidays, commemorative ceremonies, heroes and sporting events. So the rise of the nation-state, besides transforming the ways that people thought about themselves and their communities, transformed identity, even introducing the notion of ‘identity’ itself into everyday vocabulary (Billig, 1995, pp.61-2, with reference to Giddens, 1990).  

1.3.1 Building Republican identity

Billig explains that throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, there was little conception of national identity, as being ‘French’ or ‘English’, and little conception of a territorial nation to owe allegiance to (1995, pp.19-21). In the case of France, various authors have noted how the country, far from being ‘united in its Republican traditions and in its language and culture’ (Rigby, 1991, p.8), and moreover, becoming ‘the most State-centred of all European nations’ (Schnapper, 1994, p.132), required its national identity and cultural unity to be ‘constructed’ by artificial means. This process could be viewed as part of France’s ‘shift to the modern world’, as described by Preston (1997, p.108), who explains how, for France, ‘the shift was made in the form of a revolutionary upheaval, the construction of a self-conscious republic and thereafter a slow process of embedding these ideals in the routines of everyday life’. Brubaker (1992, p.1) argues that modern-day France was created on the basis of a political ideal of Republican nationhood, in relation to ‘the institutional and territorial frame of the state’, thus reinforcing the political understanding of nationhood established in the ancien régime. The building of citizenship meant that cultural differences had to be subordinated. Indeed, Brubaker maintains that ‘while French nationhood is constituted by political unity, it is centrally expressed in the striving for cultural unity’. Thus the French nation-state which was gradually formed advocated assimilation, in deference to a single political and cultural centre (pp.1, 3, 5). So cultural and linguistic homogeneity was formed by what Llobera calls ‘state generated nationalism’ (1994, p.200).

Johnson describes (1993, p.49) how at the time of the Revolution, symbols of nationhood now taken for granted did not exist in France, such as a national flag, a national language. So, as Billig argues, ‘the ‘nation’ was not a concrete entity, whose existence all citizens could take for granted. It was a project to be attained’ (1995, p.25). The Revolution then created a new community, which Johnson describes as believing in a ‘mythical past which linked it to Greece and Rome, and with its own symbols and rituals’. He also maintains that the key theme of the Revolution which emerged was that of being in danger, particularly from enemies who worked in league with foreigners. It was this fear, which allowed rival political groups in the Assemblée nationale (National Assembly) to work towards this new community,

5 Although Billig notes how the dating of the nation-state’s appearance in Europe has been contested by some historians (1995, pp.19-21).
and to exploit aggressive and nationalist rhetoric, linked to symbols and rituals like flags, army colours and oaths of loyalty.6 Thus, the French nation and the Revolution became synonymous, as nationalism spread (Johnson, 1993, p.49). Political elites attempted to develop not only political and administrative structures but the idea of nationhood, a 'unity of spirit' (Weber, 1977, p.97). The French Republic, Nouvel and Ruby argue (1992, pp.3-6), became a 'grand narrative', in the terms used by Lyotard (1979), and its message of unrivalled liberty, universality and legitimacy could be transmitted via institutions, public services, social security and the military. Indeed, Weber explains, it was the Revolution that had had the effect of transporting national politics and the national language into regions it had previously scarcely touched (1977, pp.98, 277). So the Revolution removed the power of royalty, the aristocracy and the church, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen set down the principle that all sovereignty was enshrined in the nation (Johnson, 1993, p.48). The French Revolution, Soboul claims, 'completed the nation which became one and indivisible' (cited in Weber, 1977, p.95; see also J. Hayward, 1973). This idea was enshrined in the first article of the French Constitution of 1958: 'La France est une République indivisible, laïque, démocratique et sociale.' The official translation of this, reproduced in the copy of the Constitution available from the Assemblée nationale is: 'France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic'. I feel that this translation however does not adequately convey the meaning of 'sociale' in the context of the constitutional statement; here I would argue that it really suggests the idea of mutuality, commonality of interests and aims and solidarity. Moreover, the Revolution offered the chance to be proud of being French (Johnson, 1993, p.48).

Hobsbawm's concept of 'invented traditions' in European States also has a particular resonance here (1983). He describes how, in France for example, 'traditions' established during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included the declaration of 'Bastille Day' as a public holiday, the building of revolutionary and Republican monuments, together with war memorials, the Eiffel Tower and the creation of the Tour de France race (1983, pp.271-3).7

6I will return to this theme in the case study chapters, as I demonstrate that the French elite feeling of being under threat continues to be significant in more recent times. The threat of invasion from once hostile neighbours such as England and Germany may have disappeared, but French elites feel at risk from other sources as French culture can still be threatened. 'Foreigners' have changed too: in the post-cold war environment they are less likely to be military rivals, following the break-up of the Eastern bloc, but cultural ones, with the Japanese, Americans and 'Anglo-Saxons' treated as the most obviously menacing forces.

7Interestingly, Robertson (1992, p.179), describes the period from around 1870 to the mid-1920s as 'the take-off
However, Hobsbawm argues that such efforts required a ‘genuine popular resonance’ in order to be successful: the development of a ‘conscious tradition’ relied on ‘broadcasting on a wavelength to which the public was ready to tune in’ (pp.263-4). Smith too (1993, p.9) points to the importance of imagery like the Republican icon of ‘Marianne’ in creating French national consciousness. The first attempts at taking education and culture to the people and creating a new ‘authentic culture of the people’ are also traced back to the French Revolution by Charpentreau and Kaës (1962, discussed by Rigby, 1991, p.39). In this way, the State intended to replace the various forms of popular culture found in all of the localities of France and perceived as ‘archaic’, being based on ‘a folk culture of superstition, ignorance, irrationality, violence and local factionalism’ with a national popular culture, ‘a modern culture of the people, a secular, rational and national culture, which was seen as the only possible culture that could lead France into the twentieth century’ (Rigby, 1991, p.9).

Hobsbawm (1990, p.21), explains the significance of the French insistence on linguistic uniformity since the Revolution. He argues that the willingness to acquire the French language was really more important in making a person a French citizen than the native use of French, given that the Revolution itself spent so much of its time proving how few people in France actually used it. According to Ford (1993, p.34), language acted as ‘an essential litmus test to define the unitary body that was to comprise the Republic’. Thus linguistic plurality was made unacceptable, since the use of numerous languages was deemed to reinforce the superstitions and historical memory that the Revolution wished to efface. As Billig notes (1995, p.27), it was the language of Paris which was imposed on the whole of France, and the ‘Rights of Man

period of modern globalization’, in which ‘the general issue of the coordination of the particular and the universal received widespread practical and political attention’. He sees the general focusing on the need to invent tradition and national identity, as discussed by Hobsbawm (1983), in this period as developing within the context of ‘an increasingly compressed, globalized world’, and influenced by the contingencies of this global compression. He points to the establishment of ‘basic geohuman contingencies’ around this time such as the time-zoning of the world, the creation of the international dateline, the use of the Gregorian calendar and the seven-day week. Besides these, he notes the importance of movements connecting the local and the pan-local, such as the ecumenical movement, the international socialist movement, the International Youth Hostel movement, the Olympic Games and Nobel prizes. All of these may be considered as ‘particular-universal’ developments, and happened at a time of increasing consciousness of the global world, itself facilitated by more rapid travel and communication, discussed in the case of France by Weber, for example (1977). See also Featherstone’s discussion (1995, p.95) of Robertson (1990) ‘After nostalgia? Wilful nostalgia and the phase of globalization’, in B.S. Turner (ed.) Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity, London, Sage.


Hobsbawm refers to studies like de Certeau et al., 1975. I return to this point in more detail in Chapter Three.
and of the Citizen' declared in the Revolution did not extend to Bretons and Occitans who could not use their languages in school. So language was used to help construct a French national identity on a linguistic, rather than ethnic, basis. The centrality of language in the construction of French national identity will be explored further in Chapter Three.

1.3.2 Spreading Republican identity

Lebovics (1992, p.7), sees the last decades of the nineteenth century as ‘an intellectual and political watershed in the quest for France’. It was then, Lebovics claims that ‘sentiments, ideologies, even words came into intellectual use in ways that continue to operate powerfully today’. Hazareesingh (1994, pp.125-6) would seem to support this view, noting the emergence of the ‘popular sense of nationhood’ during the second half of the nineteenth century. This feeling, he argues, was ‘as much an ideological construct of the Republican State as a recognition (and affirmation) of shared cultural values by diverse sections of the community’. Weber (1977, p.493), goes even further, providing much evidence to support the view that a form of cultural homogenisation came about after economic integration. He explains how, particularly between 1880 and 1910, fundamental changes took place in French society, which altered the face of rural France forever. For example, the development of roads and railways made remote regions more accessible, and increased mechanisation improved productivity and aspects of life such as diet, for many people. The development of the school system represented for Weber ‘an instrument of unity’, an ‘answer to dangerous centrifugal tendencies’, the ‘keystone of national defense’ (p.333). Geography and History lessons became particularly good ‘instruments of indoctrination and patriotic conditioning’. Girardet (1989, pp.156-7) has written of: ‘une sorte de prédestination géographique de la nation française, l'idée d'une France préexistant à la France, l'image d'une patrie virtuelle antérieure à la patrie réelle’ (a kind of geographic predestination of the French nation, the idea of a pre-existing France, the image of a virtual country existing before the historical or real France). This vision was the one dominant in nineteenth-century school textbooks such as Le Tour de la France par deux enfants (Bruno, 1877), which offered the apparently vital knowledge of la patrie (country, implying sense of its heritage, see preface). The episodes in this book, presented through narrative and drawings, emphasise moral lessons as well as knowledge of France, highlighting the national unity of an ‘amazing France’. The conclusion to the preface of the book is particularly telling ‘En groupant ainsi toutes les connaissances morales et pratiques autour de l'idée de la France, nous avons
voulu présenter aux enfants la patrie sous ses traits les plus nobles, et la leur montrer grande par
l'honneur, par le travail, par le respect religieux du devoir et de la justice.' (So in grouping
moral and practical knowledge around the idea of France, I wanted to present France with all of
its most noble traits to children, and to show them it in all its glory through honour, work, and
the religious respect of duty and justice.)

Lebovics claims that loyalty both to one's region and to France was 'ideologically
universalized' at the beginning of the twentieth century' (1992, p.4). Until the end of the
nineteenth century, inhabitants of the French regions felt little common identity with the State
or with people from other regions (Weber, 1977 pp.241, 486). For this to change, people would
have to feel like a community by sharing experiences: these were provided by the development
of roads, railways, schooling, military service, markets, money, goods and printed material, thus
contributing to the creation of a 'national view of things in regional minds' in the late nineteenth
century'. This process has been described as one of 'acculturation', that is, 'the disintegration
of local cultures by modernity and their absorption into the dominant civilization of Paris and
the schools' (Weber, 1977, pp.485-6). This included the suppression of 'popular' culture,
which represented not only a danger to national unity, but also a menace to the social and moral
order (Rigby, 1991, p.13). Thus, 'the unassimilated masses had to be integrated into the
dominant culture as they had been integrated into an administrative entity' (Weber, 1977,
p.486). The peasants of the nineteenth century were seen as unenlightened, since they were so
different from people in Paris and other towns, living according to different economies,
speaking different languages and being unaware of the 'culture' of the city, and especially of the

Economist Adolphe Blanqui, as Weber notes, noticed in 1851 how France seemed
composed of 'Two peoples living on the same land a life so different that they seem foreign to
each other, though united by the bonds of the most imperious centralization that ever existed'.
Blanqui also noticed how towns were becoming increasingly alike whereas country people
showed great diversity from one region to another and even from one province to another.
Weber describes how such diversity had not previously seemed of any consequence, yet the
influence of the Revolution had made the idea of national unity 'an integral and integrating ideal

10See also Douglas Johnson's point about how in the Middle Ages, people in one part of France would have had
difficulty understanding those in another region, and this continued into the nineteenth century (1993, p.41; see also
at all levels' (Weber, 1977, p.9). As Llobera describes (1994, p.185), one of the earliest
decisions of the Assemblée nationale was the decree of 4 August 1789 which abolished feudal
democratic rights and privileges. This meant that provincial rights and boundaries were suppressed, as 'it
was obviously no longer possible to keep a double "national" identity; the regions no longer had
the right to see themselves as nations; France was the only possible nation.' Thus diversity
became synonymous with 'imperfection, injustice, failure, something to be noted and remedied'
(Weber, 1977, pp.9, 97). This attitude is part of the Jacobin tradition, in which 'all
provincialisms and particularisms were equated with feudal backwardness and
antirepublicanism' (Safran, 1995, p.39). The rapid development of schooling in the nineteenth
century introduced mass teaching of 'the language of the dominant culture, and its values as
well, among them patriotism', values which were later reinforced by military service. Thus rural
lifestyles were to undergo dramatic changes as a result of urbanisation and the spread of urban
values (Weber, 1977, pp.493-4)).

Indeed, it has been argued that patriotism was emphasised with the attempt at
developing a unified national consciousness, as urban ways of thinking were imposed on the
rural world in a kind of 'colonial exploitation' (Weber, 1977, p.98), where local and regional
cultures were badly treated at the expense of the development of centralised, State institutions
(Hazareesingh, 1994, p.128). Weber argues that this process was one which was 'akin to
colonization', since it followed the idea that 'conquered peoples are not really peoples; lacking
their own culture, they can only benefit from civilizers' enrichment and enlightenment'. Thus
France became governed by officials in a colonial-style administration, which barely understood
the ways of rural France and its 'natives', and chose to pursue a systematic destruction of local
or regional culture. This kind of 'cultural imperialism' then is highlighted by Weber, who notes
that 'order imposed by men of different code and speech, somebody else's order, is not easily
distinguished from foreign conquest' (1977, pp.486-7).

Flynn (1995a, p.6) notes too how French elites adopted a similar mission civilisatrice or
civilising mission, in the approach to France's overseas colonies, since 'French policy foresaw a
transformation of local populations through education and an extension of French culture'.
Similarly, Hazareesingh (1994, pp.131-2) explains how universalism, as one of the major
intellectual legacies of the Enlightenment, became 'blended after 1789 into a messianic vision
which portrayed French political and cultural values as paradigms of excellence.' But, he likens
'this elevated universalism' to other types of internationalism, which he describes as 'essentially
a cloak for the pursuit of an expansionist strategy'. Jack Hayward too (1994a, p.27), argues that French elites believed the idea, pioneered during the Revolution, of nationality as the foundation of the political community, and the context for legitimate political decisions, to be universally valid, and a model for other nations. However, as Marshall (1973, pp.47-8) notes, the 'colonial myth', the idea of colonialism as liberation, or 'saving' peoples by applying republican principles abroad, did not entail the extension of full political rights to the native populations, who were believed by colonial elites to be mentally unable to handle true democracy.

Moreover, as Brennan explains (1990, p.59), this overseas expansion by France and other European countries served to bolster the development of nationalism and national identity within the colonist states: 'The markets made possible by European imperial penetration motivated the construction of the nation-state at home. European nationalism itself was motivated by what Europe was doing in its farflung dominions'. Indeed, the International Colonial Exposition of 1931 held in Paris aimed 'to intensify the loyalty of the metropolitan population to the colonial empire so that the French visitors, and eventually the nation, would arrive at a deep realization that they lived in a new greater France with hometowns (petites patries) all over the globe' (Lebovics, 1992, p.53). Thus the idea of la Grande France (greater France) was promoted.

Lebovics describes (1992, p.100) how figures such as anthropologist and politician Louis Marin (1871-1960), who helped to organise some of the 'ethnographic displays' at the 1931 exposition, became involved in the early twentieth century with the discipline of sciences humaines. Lebovics explains sciences humaines as one of the new disciplines studying 'humans whom nature had brought together' and their social organisation. These flourished because of 'the need socially to stabilize the new republic after its political consolidation and the task of governing a new colonial empire', and were set up as sciences around the social visions of intellectuals of both the Right and Left, who often had no formal training in social sciences (p.6). The societies, publications and meetings of sciences humaines groups Lebovics describes, were concerned with 'keeping alive a conservative vision of French identity', with powerful figures like Marin speaking for 'the authentic and eternal France', against urbanisation and the development of a more modern, democratic France (pp.13-4); for nationalism and protectionism (p.37) and ultimately for a scientifically-based racism for determining who was French (p.41). Such ideas are part of what Lebovics calls 'True France', which is 'half cultural style, half political project' (p.9). His fascinating study traces this project or discourse through
socio-political and cultural thought of the period 1900-1945, explaining its essentialist, determinist vision of a monolithic national identity: "The idea of France it [‘True France’] consecrates is profoundly static and ahistorical, indeed antihistorical, for despite all vicissitudes of history - monarchy, republic, empire - a vital core persists to infuse everything and everyone with the undying if seriously threatened national character" (p.9).

In the 1930s for example, Lebovics maintains that the Front populaire or ‘Popular Front’, a Communist-Socialist coalition government, followed a largely conservative vision of identity, as it concentrated on breaking down barriers to ‘high culture’, or the democratisation of traditional culture: ‘No one, or no one in office, contemplated fostering new modes of creation’ (1992, p.157). Looseley however (1995, pp.14-5) offers a more positive view of this period, arguing that the Popular Front did attempt a perhaps more ‘sociocultural’ approach to cultural policy, with policies for youth, sport and more leisure time. He explains that earlier on, in the 1920s and early 1930s, the PCF had pledged to move away from a ‘high cultural’ approach, viewing this as bourgeois and counter to ‘authentic cultural proletarian practices’, but were encouraged to turn back from this strategy as fascism loomed, in the hope of developing a new patriotism based on France’s great artistic heritage. Rigby (1991, p.4) notes how from the 1930s, Marxists and Marxist sympathisers had begun to argue that the universalist, humanist notion of ‘Culture’ was a bourgeois strategy for concealing the economic exploitation of the working class. Later, an even more traditional approach was felt under Vichy (1940-44), as Pétain and his followers ‘set out to uncover and to renew the True France of their imaginations’ (Lebovics, 1992, p.171), with the promotion of popular art glorifying Pétain, the régime and the family, the celebration of regions, countryside, local crafts, religion and local languages (see also Looseley, 1995, p.19).

In France then, national and cultural identity was established between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, via centralisation, the school, and military and legal systems. This happened as elite groups behaved as ‘guardians’ of ‘French culture’, resisting and

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11In the post-war period, Lebovics writes, French anthropology had to disengage itself from the legacy of figures like Marin, with Claude Lévi-Strauss for example attempting to steer French social theory away from questions of identity, towards an acceptance of cultural democracy and pluralism within France, even if he too presented this aim ‘in the peculiarly French way of positing one humanity indivisible’ (1992, p.49).

opposing other cultural influences, which may be described as belonging to ‘Others’, that is, the cultures outside of the promoted canon. This occurred because, as Billig explains (1995, p.78), an ‘us’ requires a ‘them’, to formulate shared cultural descriptions of social groups. Lavabre too (1996, p.52), highlights the centrality of the Other to any assessment of national identity, which, she argues, is constructed around ‘difference’:

Quant à l’identité nationale, elle se définit par la permanence (la durée) et par la différence (nous et les autres): elle relève à la fois d’un ensemble de caractères objectifs et de représentations subjectives, partagées, et, dès lors qu’elle est spécifiée comme collective ou nationale, suppose une conscience d’appartenance. (As for identity, it is defined by its permanence (its existence) and by difference (‘us and them’): it encompasses a collection of both objective characters and subjective, shared views, and, when it is specified as collective or national, presupposes a consciousness of belonging.)

The imposition, by elites, of what can be described as cultural norms, in this case a particular construction of national identity, reveals a suspicion of cultural hybridity and difference. This process can be seen to have acted in France on members of the same society, and not only on societies and countries that are far away in geographical terms. I will argue in this thesis that this process is still at work during the contemporary period, being revealed in the construction of national identity by French political elites in relation to cultural policy. Furthermore, the State-led ‘construction’ of France as a nation and of French identity may be said to have contributed to a publicly and politically accepted feeling that identity in France is such a subject for debate, and a legitimate area for State intervention. Indeed, Zeldin comments that national identity has long been problematic in France, claiming that ‘no nation has tried harder to find and express its identity’ (1983, p.5).

However, moving on from the period 1789-1945, which saw the establishment of the French State’s conception of national identity, the present study must now consider the socio-economic, political and cultural debates and developments arising in more recent times. Their impact on, and links with elite thinking on identity and action on culture, will be specifically addressed.

1.4 National identity and modernisation in France, post-1945

1.4.1 The search for stability

Following the Liberation of France in 1944, France began a period of reconstruction and
modernisation, which was to have significant effects on conceptions of national identity and culture. After the disastrous experiences of the Occupation and Vichy, France needed to restore its position in the world, to rebuild a sense of nationhood and to reunite the country. Kelly, Fallaize and Ridehalgh (1995, p.103) argue that following the Liberation, Others within the French nation were identified: the cowards and collaborators picked out in the épuration (purges); or the external Others such as Britain and the United States, who threatened French reassertion on the world stage. But French elites also needed to establish political stability. This necessity led to a search for national unity via the post-war debates concerning the type of political system which could bind the nation together, helping it to break free from the ghosts of the Vichy era and avoid damaging political divisions (ibid.).

The establishment of a new stability however was hampered by the question of decolonisation, which appeared inevitable as the country's economy and armies could no longer support an empire, at the same time as independence movements were becoming more vociferous. The issue became extremely divisive, and mainland France experienced civil unrest because of it. Marshall (1973) explains how, prior to World War Two, most French citizens had shown little interest in supporting the colonial regime, yet, following the Liberation of 1944 and the 'Free French' action partly organised from Algiers, political elites worked to develop a kind of 'colonial consensus'. They argued that the colonies were a key economic, political and strategic force in both the reconstruction of France's domestic economy and the rehabilitation of its international role as a powerful nation. Thus this sought-after consensus, promoting ever closer union between France and the colonial territories, became significant at a time when a new constitution for France and for the French Empire had to be drawn up by the Constituent Assemblies in 1945-46. The collapse of this consensus ultimately contributed to the end of the Fourth Republic in 1958 (Marshall, 1973, p.2).

Still, the French State had one final use for the colonies in order to modernise and 'compete in the post-war industrial contest', when it called on the labour of its ex-colonial immigrants (Ross, 1995, p.9). Moreover, as Ross emphasises (1995, p.7), decolonisation was

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16 Yacono effectively summarises French feelings behind decolonisation at the end of the Second World War and Brazzaville conference on the future of the colonies: 'En réalité au début de 1944, pour un esprit français, la décolonisation était encore une chose impensable et l'idéal demeurait toujours qu'un Africain français devint un jour un Français africain'. (In reality, at the start of 1944, decolonisation was still inconceivable for the French mindset and the ideal remained that one day a colonised African would become a French person first and an African second.) (1991, p.56)
inseparable from modernisation, so that:

The peculiar contradictions of France in that period can be seized only if they are seen as those of an exploiter/exploited country, dominator/dominated, exploiting colonial populations at the same time that it is dominated by, or more precisely, entering more and more into collaboration or fusion with, American capitalism.

This complex position for France has been instrumental in the formulation of national identity and attitudes towards culture in the post-war period. As I will discuss below, the situation of France as caught between the desire for its own power and prestige on one hand, and on the other, its own fears of domination, has proved a particular challenge to State conceptions of identity and policy on language and culture.

1.4.2 The birth of consumer culture

Modernisation of industry and the economy began quickly after the war, and became, along with the social changes which accompanied it, a central preoccupation of France in the 1950s (Kelly, Jones and Forbes, 1995, p.140). Ross (1995, p.4) describes the State-led drive for modernisation as particularly strong in France, and accompanied by a widespread desire for a new way of living. With the help of American ‘Marshall Aid’ from 1947, improved industrial production began to lead to sustained economic growth, and the beginning of the period known in France as ‘les trente glorieuses’. Moreover, the French experience of modernisation was rapid, in contrast to the experience of the United States. The US, which provided financial assistance and a model of consumerism for France, was a country whose own route to modernity had been slower and more steadily undertaken throughout the twentieth century (Ross, 1995, p.4). Suddenly the old, rural, Catholic France was transforming itself into an urban, industrialised consumer society, where new prosperity brought access to consumer goods designed to make everyday life easier and more efficient, such as washing machines, cars, refrigerators, detergents. Work too was changing, as the jeune cadre dynamique, the bright young executive, became both the new model worker, epitomising business, success, and modern American management techniques; and the new agent of consumption (see Kelly, Jones

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14 The ‘thirty golden years’ of prosperity; the thirty-year post-war economic boom.

15 Ross refers to Lefebvre’s writings, but gives no precise reference.
and Forbes, 1995, p.143; Ross, 1995, pp.165-76). As Story and Parrot remark, the enthusiasm for US management techniques in the early 1960s was even more surprising as up until then, French employers had ranked amongst the most conservative and hierarchical in Europe (1977, cited in Marceau, 1981, p.120)\(^{16}\). Further opportunities were provided thanks to the expansion of the education system and the new markets offered by the birth of the European Economic Community in 1957. Yet, as Gaffney has commented (1988, p.5), the paradox of France’s rapid modernisation lies in the fact that France’s amazing capacity for change has been demonstrated within a complex relationship to tradition and convention. After all, it was de Gaulle, “‘the old man’, whose values, attitudes, dreams of glory, codes of honour and cult of the hero were really of the nineteenth century, who brought the “modern” into twentieth century politics’. Political, institutional and cultural change has involved incorporation of the modern and the old, so that the post-war embracing of American/Northern European lifestyles has taken place against a background of a ‘continuing “Frenchness”’ (Gaffney, \textit{ibid.}).\(^{17}\)

This tension may be revealed in the fact that the new prosperity and new religion of consumption brought both delight and guilt, as expressed in the 1950s obsessions with happiness and hygiene, evident in the media and in advertising, which stressed the duty of women to provide a clean and pleasant environment for their families, and in moral political discourse, as politicians pledged to literally ‘clean up’ crime, terrorism, prostitution and industrial unrest, ‘just as they had earlier purged France of traitors’ (Kelly, Jones and Forbes, 1995, pp.143-4).

A further reaction to the new French identity of consumerism was humanist thought, which became especially concerned with the ‘modern world’ and how people fitted into it.\(^{18}\) So, whilst the need for scientific progress and industrial reconstruction was recognised, debates

\(^{16}\)Marceau does not provide a reference for Story and Parrot.

\(^{17}\)The concept of ‘modernity’ has been subject to considerable debate, as summarised by Featherstone (1995, pp.145-54). Basically, we might call it, as does Giddens, a ‘post-traditional order’, with its major features including: machine-based industrialism; capitalism founded on commodity production and the commodification of labour; a great increase in organisational power in terms of surveillance of populations; the control of violence and the industrialisation of war; the development of the nation-state as the basic referent for ‘society’ (see Anthony Giddens (1991) Modernity and Self-Identity, Cambridge, Polity, cited by Featherstone, 1995, p.145).

\(^{18}\)Kelly, Fallaize and Ridehalgh (1995, p.109), write that humanism after the Second World War was quite a vague notion, not proposing specific policies, but more an ‘ideological framework’ suggesting that what humans had in common should guide human endeavours, and especially those of the State.
centred on the consequences of this development of capitalism for society, spirituality and
culture. For example, the new prosperity, consumer society and the mass media effectively
served to destabilise high culture, through the strengthening of popular culture, as discussed by
Kelly, Jones and Forbes (1995, pp.144-7). For example in publishing, traditional categories and
boundaries were undermined with the first cheap paperback collection, the ‘Livre de poche’, in
1953. Similarly, art publishing offered the mass production of posters and prints. The
development of the audiovisual media (the transistor radio, the television) brought a more
diverse range of music to listeners, as new singers, especially influenced by rock ‘n’ roll from
America and then the UK, found a wide audience. New music transformed young people’s
leisure into a major consumer industry, as records, concert tickets, fashions and pop magazines
developed around it. Mass circulation magazines aimed at various specialist audiences
flourished, such as the women’s magazines like Marie-Claire and Elle, or the celebrity, photo-
journalism Paris-Match. The weekly L’Express changed its format and layout to copy that of
the American newsmagazine Time: ‘it was a form of import-substitution: a conscious attempt to
meet the challenge of US cultural dominance by appropriating American methods’ (Kelly,
Jones and Forbes, 1995, p.147). 19

Indeed, the debates around the validity of mass culture found a particular focus in the
form of hostility to the USA, whose mass production methods and culture were models to be
both emulated and attacked (Kelly, Jones and Forbes, 1995, p.140). Although Kuisel (1993,
p.4) writes that Americanisation seemed to be ‘a kind of global imperative’, Hazareesingh
(1994, pp.130-1) describes how following the Second World War, ‘there was a distinct streak of
cultural nationalism which ran through the entire French intellectual community, and was
founded on a common apprehension of the consequences for French culture of the rising tide of
American cultural barbarity’. Such debate regarding mass culture mirrors the rather ambiguous
rapport that France has long enjoyed with the United States. America has traditionally
represented for France ‘à la fois paradis et enfer’ (both heaven and hell) (Forest, 1993, p.115), a
place to be revered, since ‘modernization has long been equated with Americanization’
(Morley, 1996, p.328), yet held in suspicion. So the American conception of modernity became

19Interestingly, the editor of L’Express, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber wrote a book called Le Défi Américain
(The American Challenge) (1967) which had an extraordinary impact in France and other European countries. It
warned of a complacent, outdated Europe dominated by American industry. Yet instead of protection from
American influence, the book advocated renewal for Europe through the adoption of Americanisation’s dynamism
and innovation, where it could be beneficial.
a target for French opponents of various political persuasions who wanted to defend traditional French identities. However, as Kelly, Jones and Forbes argue (1995, p.142), this ‘anti-modernism’ of nationalists and protectionists was ambivalent: ‘most of its own supporters were simultaneously proud of the home-grown modernity of their own industry and culture, certainly as compared to that which they regarded as backward and pre-modern: that is the people of the African, Asian and Oceanic territories of the Empire’. French elites, they argue, did not want their vision of modernity as part of ‘la mission civilisatrice’ (the civilising mission) to be threatened, especially after the humiliations of the war had weakened the State-led sense of national identity. Anti-modernism was evident in some advocacy of cultural protectionism, for example in the hostility to the 1946 Blum-Byrnes agreement, in which US economic aid to France was agreed, but at the price of increased access of American films to French cinemas (see Looseley, 1995, p.27). The French government began to legislate for protection against foreign competition, and to subsidise the domestic film industry, particularly ‘art’ films. Further anti-American measures included attempts to reduce imports of American children’s comics and to protect the Franco-Belgian cartoon or bande dessinée, despite the popularity of such American cultural forms (Kelly, Jones and Forbes, 1995, pp.140-2, 171). All of this relates to the feeling that American culture could infiltrate France by numerous underhand means, with American cinema often depicted as a ‘Trojan horse’ in the 1950s (Forbes, 1995b, p.294). This fear is still alive in the 1990s, as my case studies will illustrate.

Kuisel (1993) and Gaillard (1994), link the attitudes of intellectuals who have a shown a long tradition of aggression towards the USA (Rigby, 1991, p.167), to those of politicians and wider society, explaining how ‘depuis cinquante ans, la France hésite entre la fascination pour la civilisation américaine, et une hostilité marquée vis-à-vis de l’« impérialisme » d’outre-Atlantique’ (for fifty years, France has oscillated between fascination with American civilisation, and a marked hostility regarding its ‘imperialism’ (Gaillard, 1994, p.8). Rigby (1991, pp. 163-4) also notes how all of this debate surrounding the traditional idea of a ‘painful, self-questioning’ acceptance of mass culture is of course foreign to the younger generation, who have been ‘for decades [ ... ] perfectly at ease with it, considering Anglo-Saxon rock and pop music and American cinema to be their own living culture’. Others have regarded mass culture as synonymous with conformism. Barthes for example in Mythologies (1957) criticised mass culture for its ‘conformist, sensusalist nature’, whilst using it to fight against the process of embourgeoisement (Rigby, 1991, p.177). Lefebvre too denounced mass culture for repressing
and alienating all members of society, making citizens merely passive spectators in a fantasy world (1968, cited in Rigby, 1991, p.36). Such an attitude was however criticised by Edgar Morin, who, unusually amongst French intellectuals in the post-war period, tried, like pioneers of 'Cultural Studies' in the UK\textsuperscript{20}, to understand youth culture and attempted to expose what he saw as the 'puritanism' of French intellectual culture which rejected the new post-war youth culture of America (see Rigby, 1991, pp.168-74). Yonnet (1985), explains how the unwillingness of French intellectuals and academic institutions to accept modern popular culture has often been synonymous with a distaste for 'culture ouvrière' (working class culture), and, as Rigby maintains (1991, p.22), a politically conscious culture. Yonnet (1985, pp.196-7) describes how, after the Second World War, the French elite notion of 'high culture', la Grande Culture, became even more dominant, as the followers of the 'popular culture' ideal held by the Popular Front, the education and theatre movements tried to promote literary high culture to French people as a whole, whereas previously it had been restricted to a relatively small audience. In particular, the championing of high culture as a means of moral and self improvement was encouraged by intellectuals and early sociologists of leisure time like Joffre Dumazedier, who in Vers une civilisation du loisir (1962), worried about the possibly 'inferior' quality of pursuits which were filling up newly available leisure time, and the consequences for society. Dumazedier's anxieties still included a hostility to culture from the USA, as he criticised the spread of 'une télé-civilisation' (a televisual society/culture) which was being spread by improved communications, since 'la planète est devenue plus petite' (the planet has shrunk) (1962, p.241). He argued that the central question for contemporary society was as follows:

Comment une civilisation où le loisir est devenu un droit pour tous et tend à devenir peu à peu un fait de masse, peut-elle favoriser en chaque homme, quelles que soient sa naissance, sa fortune ou son instruction, la réalisation d'un équilibre optimum librement choisi entre le besoin de repos, de divertissement et de participation à la vie sociale et culturelle. (How a society where leisure has become a right for all and is gradually becoming a mass commodity, can enable each man, of whatever background, means or education, to achieve the perfect, freely chosen balance between the need for rest, for entertainment and participation in social and cultural life) (1962, p.243).

\textsuperscript{20}See, for example, Hebdige (1979).
This argument indicates a still prescriptive attitude: for Dumazedier, an apparently progressive pioneer of social enquiry, 'culture' still required 'official' management, in the supposed interests of the 'masses'.

Yonnet also suggests (1985, pp.197-8) that the dominance of the French ideology of high culture perpetuated by schools, universities and the tradition of French popular song explains the rejection of American rock and pop music by some. Yet it is also possible that all of the hostility to mass (synonymous with American) culture was particularly felt in France because mass culture developed there comparatively late. This is because modernisation and the move away from a rural, localised society to an industrial, urbanised one did not take off until after the Second World War and the beginning of the trente glorieuses, unlike the situation in countries like Germany, the USA and the UK which had seen more modernisation at an earlier date (Rigby, 1991, p.9; Ross, 1995, p.4).

As modernisation made prosperity rise and leisure time increase, culture became more important to the State, as it developed as a commodity. Writers and artists began to make more money and to gain increased recognition. Consumer demands in turn encouraged 'repetition over risk, sensitivity to market segment, and an awareness of culture as an industry in which each participant has a particular specialised role' (Kelly, Jones and Forbes, 1995, p.150). Moreover, as the economic importance of culture grew, the French State became more and more involved with its development and organisation.

1.4.3 French identity, 'High Culture' and the establishment of Malraux's Ministry of Culture
Initial post-war State intervention carried on the types of action undertaken by the Popular Front and Vichy, mostly in Paris, but increasingly in the provinces with library and theatre work (Kelly, Jones and Forbes, 1995, pp.150-1). Following on from this, culture became an overt policy area, as the first Ministry of Cultural Affairs was set up in 1959 by General de Gaulle, headed by critic and novelist André Malraux. The establishment of the Ministry arguably resulted from de Gaulle's wish to restore France's international prestige and national identity, and his belief that culture was important in the achievement of this aim (Looseley, 1995, p.33; Kelly, Jones and Forbes, 1995, p.151). Malraux himself saw culture as a humanist alternative to religion, which could develop a sense of national cohesion. Looseley (1995, pp.36-7) describes how Malraux regarded culture as 'the highest and most lasting forms of artistic achievement of the past'. Elsewhere (1994, pp.120-1), he likens this particular conception of
the ideal culture as ‘a culture that was high in every sense, a “culture cultivée” which hovered immaterially like a skylark above material, sociological and economic realities’. Malraux also saw culture as distinct from leisure, and saw his role as not one of involvement with how people spent their free time, since the consumer society would address that, but one of ‘the far greater task of helping them create significance’ (Looseley, 1995, p.37). With such a philosophy, the Ministry’s mission statement was described in a decree on 24 July 1959 as: ‘Rendre accessibles les oeuvres capitales de l’humanité, et d’abord de la France, au plus grand nombre possible de Français, assurer la vaste audience à notre patrimoine culturel, et favoriser la création des oeuvres de l’art et de l’esprit qui l’enrichissent’ (reproduced in Looseley, 1995, p.37). (The Ministry Responsible for Cultural Affairs has as its objective to make available the major works of humanity, and particularly of France, to the greatest possible number of French people, to ensure the widest possible audience for our cultural heritage, and to promote the creation of works of art and of the mind which can enrich it. - translation taken from Kelly, Jones and Forbes, 1995, p.151).

So the ethos of Malraux’s Ministry became concerned with not only the traditional promotion of the national heritage, but also the new ideas of the creation and ‘democratisation’ of culture, i.e. making it easily available to ordinary people (Looseley, 1995, p.37). However, it was still a ‘high’ definition of culture and a universalist conception of identity which the French State followed and aimed to ‘democratise’, as it set about refurbishing major monuments and establishing the Maisons de la culture around France as multi-disciplinary centres with facilities for theatre, music, exhibitions, cinema, lectures, television and science, designed to decentralise high culture as a whole (Looseley, 1995, p.41). This ideal of what culture is and/or should be, and how this can be ‘democratised’ has continued to inform many debates on cultural policy and identity since the beginning of the Fifth Republic.

Such ideas about ‘high’ culture, and its possible challenge by ‘mass’ culture, introduced earlier in connection with modernity and Americanisation, can be considered in the context of longstanding French intellectual and political debates about the nature of ‘culture’. Rigby, in his comprehensive survey of French cultural policy and debates during the twentieth century (1991, pp.5-7), emphasises that a ‘universalist, humanist notion of “Culture” with a capital C still survives strongly in French society, despite many vigorous attacks upon it’. He refers to various collocations of ‘culture’, besides ‘la Culture’, all indicative of the idea of Culture being a unified, universal culture ‘of the mind and spirit, made up from the great works of writers and
artists: "la haute culture", "la culture supérieure"; "la culture universelle". Meanwhile, other terms indicate that Culture comes from the State and its institutions, and is closely related to the education system, such as 'la culture cultivée' 'la culture savante', 'la culture officielle', 'la culture universitaire'. Similarly, there are terms suggesting that Culture belongs to dominant groups, like 'le pouvoir culturel', 'la culture dominante'. The owners are 'les cultivés', 'les intellectuels'. Various conservative and right-wing authors and journalists have sought to defend this dominant form of 'true' culture, which remains a powerful force in contemporary French life, given the volume of debate surrounding it.

Linked to notions of 'high culture' is the idea that it is French culture rather than any other which incarnates the values of high culture, of a 'superior' culture (Kuisel, 1993, pp.xii; 236; Rigby, 1991, p.7). Indeed, as Jenks maintains (1993, p.9), 'the dominant European linguistic convention equates “culture” largely with the idea of “civilization”: they are regarded as synonymous'. Rigby (1991, p.8) describes how the term 'la culture française' has traditionally implied for many writers 'a culture characterised not only by its unity and homogeneity, but also by its aesthetic superiority'. This may indicate 'civilisation', 'taste', 'haute cuisine', and a philosophical stance (Kuisel, 1993, pp.xi, 23), together with the works of great French writers and artists for example who demonstrate the natural 'greatness', 'la grandeur' of French cultural identity (see also Looseley, 1995, p.4). As Featherstone argues (1995, p.31), and as we saw earlier in considering Weber's 'internal colonisation' of France by the State in the nineteenth century, this 'view that French culture represented universal civilization and the meta-culture of humankind' was promoted by the formation of the highly centralised, integrating French State.

However, the perpetuation of traditional, elitist ideas about culture, by, for example, the French education system, and notions of high culture, has come under attack. In particular, celebrated French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who developed the term 'cultural reproduction', has highlighted how a culture which is established by elite social groups as 'legitimate' sets up a norm which cannot be rivalled by any other 'inferior' social group (1979, discussed by Rigby, 1991, p.6). Jenks (1993, p. 131) explains how Bourdieu's definition of culture includes 'all semiotic systems, ranging from language as a communicative network, through science to art and literature; all instances of a symbolic universe'. According to Bourdieu, culture has real power, since it 'remains one of the most important ways in which classes demarcate themselves from one another and in which certain classes exert power over other classes'. He maintains
that the social importance accorded to culture has an impact on everyone in society, from the already cultured petit bourgeois who displays a certain reverence towards culture, to the working classes who have ‘high-flown notions’ of what it is all about (Rigby, 1991, p.6). His famous research published as La Distinction (Distinction) (1979) analyses how cultural and social mechanisms have constructed the ‘aesthetic’ as a space of privilege and cultural capital, based on no other rationale than the limited possibility of individuals having ‘taste’ (Shiach, 1993, pp.214, 216). Bourdieu defines cultural capital as ‘a form of knowledge, an internalized code or a cognitive acquisition which equips the social agent with empathy towards, appreciation for or competence in deciphering cultural relations and cultural artefacts’ (R. Johnson, 1993, p.7). Randal Johnson (1993, p.24) explains how for Bourdieu, cultural capital leads to domination by legitimising particular practices as somehow ‘naturally’ superior to others and by making these practices appear superior, especially to those who do not participate, and who are led to regard their own practices as inferior and to exclude themselves from the legitimate practices. Bourdieu’s key argument is that possessing cultural capital, or a ‘code’ for being able to understand and be interested in works of art, arises from a long process involving education through the family or group, educated members of society and social institutions (R. Johnson, 1993, pp.7, 23). Although Bourdieu’s ideas have been criticised by some commentators 21, they do nevertheless have a resonance when we consider elements of French elite thinking on culture and identity such as Malraux’s ideal of French identity based on high culture as ‘cultural capital’ to be ‘democratised’, and the frequent relegation of mass culture and ‘non-French’ identity to the non-legitimated cultural sphere.

Yet there are factors in the post-war era, which have arguably had effects on State conceptions of the meaning of ‘culture’, ‘cultural policy’ and ‘French identity’. Some of these issues will now be reviewed, and the possibility of a re-evaluation of these concepts raised.

21For example, Bourdieu has been accused of being too deterministic in his analyses, as he does not really envisage a possibility of an alternative to the cultural hierarchies found within educational institutions for example (Shiach, 1993, p.215, with reference to John Frow (1987) ‘Accounting for tastes: some problems in Bourdieu’s sociology of culture’, Cultural Studies, no.1, pp.59-73). Similarly Archer (1993) argues that Bourdieu’s theories of cultural reproduction, whilst advanced as being universal, are in fact over-dependent on the structure of French education.
1.5 Identity debates and global change: towards destabilisation of State views of French culture and national identity?

So far we have reviewed factors related to the socio-economic and cultural development of France in the post-1945 period which have influenced elite ideas about French identity and cultural policy. We must now consider debates about identity and global development, which have provided challenges to State visions of French culture and identity.

Mercer has noted how identity becomes an issue only when it is seen to be in crisis (1990, p.43). Billig too (1995, pp.5-6) argues that in times of crisis, signs of nationalism which were taken for granted; ‘banal nationalism’, may be adopted as a resource by groups such as politicians. Billig refers to examples like the American flag, the national anthem, but in the case of France they might also include the constituent elements of the ‘invented’ French Republican national identity, such as the French language, the centralised education system, the evocation of a common history of the Revolution, the Resistance, the May 1968 Events (see also Safran, 1995, p.60). Kelly (1995, p.2) draws attention to the paradox that ‘national identity is most strongly asserted when it is most sharply challenged, and the internal and external challenges to the French have been substantial in the [last] century and a quarter’. Lipiansky too, although focusing on the representation of identity in political essays of the first half of the twentieth century, does draw attention to some more recent identity debates, suggesting that they seem to transcend traditional ‘ideological cleavages’ (1991, p.255). He highlights twentieth century concerns about identity, mentioning the various ‘Others’ felt by some to threaten French identity. These include immigrants, present within France; American hegemony, from outside; as well as growing internationalisation, or ‘globalisation’, of the economy, politics and solidarities, especially seen in European integration and the re-unified Germany (1991, pp.3, 255, 259). Similarly Max Silverman, writing on immigration and citizenship in France, effectively summarises how debates on national identity appear to transcend traditional party or class divides:

The ambivalence of the discourse of nation traverses social relations and runs, like a fault line, across right- and left-wing politics, and across the state and civil society. It cuts across class affiliations and creates numerous contradictions in the ideologies of parties. [...] These contradictions can only be understood within the context of the more profound ideologies of the French republican nation, which do not necessarily respect class, party or any other affiliations (1992, p.7).
Lipiansky (1991, pp.253-4) also comments on the use of ‘the nation’ as a symbol of unity and power to be invoked by politicians during periods of doubt, difficulty and social dislocation. Writing about the 1980s, he argues that the ‘identity crisis’ for France is less about the affirmation of a French national character, than the feeling of a threatened identity, which must be defended against numerous dangers, both internal and external. This recalls Revolutionary ideas about France, discussed earlier in section 1.3.

Indeed, Safran writes of the ‘defensive posture’ of French cultural superiority surfacing periodically ever since the end of the Second World War, amongst not just the extreme Right but intellectuals and others, ‘educated Parisians, even those with leftist leanings’. The rise of American power, the weakening of France’s economic and international position, the popularity of the English language and the development of an international technocracy were denounced as the perceived threats. Safran continues to point out that for several generations, most intellectuals and politicians, particularly those on the Left, remained committed to the Jacobin tradition. Thus anything which could be regarded as contrary to the ideals of the Republic was condemned and suppressed. This included the development of class consciousness, and ethnic minorities, who were felt to threaten ‘national ideology’ (Safran, 1995, pp.38-9).

1.5.1 The challenge of immigration
The increased presence of ethnic minorities due to immigration in the post-war period began to change the ethnic composition of France, suggesting that it was becoming a more plural society. However Schnapper (1994, p.134), argues that the French experience of immigration has been based on a model of integration ‘through an individual citizenship which is universal and “colour-blind”’, whilst Weil and Crowley (1994, p.111), write of France being ‘proud of its ability to assimilate immigrants into its “republican” society’, which has included the aim of erasing ethnic or national origins by the second generation. This notion has caused particular problems for the French State, which has had difficulties in adjusting to a new era of ethnic diversity. In the 1990s, the traditional idea that ‘multiculturalism’ cannot work; that there is only one French culture, to which assimilation may be impeded by the beliefs of ‘alien’ or

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‘separate’ subcultures, has been especially challenged by Islam. Yet for some people, Islam has confirmed their views on the unworkability of multiculturalism. For such people, the idea of the creuset or ‘melting pot’ of different identities coexisting is terrible, and challenges in the 1990s brought particularly by Islam have reinforced this opinion, even if some people have changed their ideas about Frenchness. Certain aspects of Islam, as a code including both the private and public domains, have been felt by some to threaten the French Republican tradition, which advocates assimilation and homogenisation of individuals, not communities (Hofmann, 1993, pp.64-7). This was clearly seen in the debates over the foulard islamique (a headscarf worn by Muslim females), which emerged at several points from 1989 onwards when groups of girls in French state schools wished to wear the headscarves, and were in dispute with their schools who argued that they were contrary to the Republican principle of laïcité (secularism) which discouraged signs of religious practice in public education. Yet Gaspard and Khosrokhavar have argued (1995, p.204, cited in Leruth, 1998a, p.58) that blind Republican hostility to the wearing of the headscarf ‘denies the young women their right to choose “integration without assimilation” and to create for themselves a new hybrid identity as French women and Muslims’. The public and political debates over this issue split many groups in France, not necessarily along party political lines.

Indeed, Scullion (1995, p.37) argues that, as in the 1930s, ‘a cohabitation of Left and Right on matters concerning the status of foreigners’ has existed since the mid-1970s, and this has drawn apparently ‘progressive’ thinkers into essentialist and conservative views on immigration and identity, concurrent with Lebovics’ idea of an exclusive, reactionary French identity (1992, p.xiii). Kastoryano (1996, p.62) reminds us that from the mid-1980s, diversity, multiculturalism or the ‘right to be different’ have been regarded by some figures in the French media, politics and academic circles as a questioning of the French nation’s identity and a threat to national unity. Thus for some, the ideal of integration as le creuset français or


24Anti-immigrant policies and discourse were displayed by Socialist governments for example, such as Prime Minister Edith Cresson’s comments about chartering planes to repatriate illegal immigrants (Shields, 1994, p.242). As Bernard notes (1993, cited by Scullion, 1995, p.37), such ideas have sometimes pandered to the xenophobic elements within the French electorate, encouraged by the influence of the far-right Front National party and fears about religious fundamentalism, urban violence and unemployment.

25See Braudel’s comments on the desirability of the assimilation of North Africans for example in L’identité de.
‘melting pot’ which assimilates different identities, described by Noiriel (1988) reigns supreme. And, as Hargreaves explains (1995, p.31), doubts over the willingness of young immigrants to conform to the dominant values of French society were symbolically expressed in the 1993 reform of French nationality laws, which made gaining French nationality harder, requiring most immigrant-born children to specifically request French nationality, rather than to receive it as a matter of course.

1.5.2 The end of Empire and decentring of identity

More generally, we should also consider the implications of France’s position in a new world order, and in particular the effects of decolonisation, which might be said to have encouraged a ‘decentring of the subject’ in the case of the State view of French national identity. Forbes (1995, pp.292-3) explains how over time, decolonisation began to erode ‘a system of values which placed the culture of metropolitan France at the pinnacle of a hierarchy’, and encouraged the recognition of the diversity of the French language and French-speaking cultures which existed in many countries. Political, linguistic and cultural unity could no longer be maintained. Symbolically, the French of metropolitan France lost its claim to be a ‘universal’ language and became ‘just another dialect’. This has not been easy to accept, as Apter suggests, noting French intellectuals’ resistance to post-colonial theories of culture and identity (1995).

Salon too (1984, discussed by Rigby, 1991, p.8) notes the importance of the State’s aim of the ‘rayonnement’ or diffusion of French culture, a concept linked to the policy of bolstering the French language, which was really begun in earnest after the Second World War by the French government, which I consider in more detail in Chapters Three and Four (Gordon, 1978, p.56; Forbes, 1987, p.141). This concept remains significant today, as Rigby notes:

No doubt many French people would scoff at the idea that France had a special civilising mission, but the fact remains that the State and its agencies still take extremely seriously the question of the promotion of French language and culture from foreign corruption, and take equally seriously the protection of French language and culture abroad, a policy and attitude expressed in the phrase ‘le rayonnement de la culture française’ ['the influence of French culture'] (1991, p.8, with reference to Salon, 1984; and Gordon, 1978).

The significance of this statement in relation to the continuing seriousness of contemporary language policy in France will be examined in Chapter Three, which explores State mechanisms for language policy in relation to the continued centrality of the French language to elite conceptions of French identity. Chapter Four follows this, providing a case study of language policy and political elites’ thinking on French identity in the 1990s.

Yet even if the idea of rayonnement remains, French elites have still had to confront a series of international factors, which have affected France’s standing in the world. Following the end of empire and the ‘decentring’ of a colonial model for French identity, French elites needed to look, in the post-1945 period, towards a ‘recentring’ of the country’s position under a hexagonal, Europe-facing vision of metropolitan France within a more integrated Europe. Since de Gaulle’s time, successive French political actors have turned towards Europe to rediscover and express French identity through seeking a dominant economic and decision-making role, France being a founder member of the original European Community in 1957. However, as Jack Hayward notes (1994b, p.296; see also 1994a, pp.27-8), these ‘Gaullist dreams of self-assertive, independent national grandeur’ have been thwarted at various times over the years through disagreements with other nations who would not defer to France. The reunification of Germany, the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the reconfiguration of alliances at the end of the 1980s also contributed to this. My case studies (particularly Chapters Four and Five) will discuss how, despite some opposition, French political elites have nevertheless turned more and more often during the 1990s to ‘Europe’ as a site for their own linguistic and cultural policy agenda, concerned chiefly with the expression and promotion of a ‘French’ identity.

1.5.3 Nations, culture and global change

Flynn (1995a, pp.5-6) argues that the increasing interdependence of nations, which might be described as globalisation, has had uncomfortable consequences for French elite conceptions of national identity. He writes that the need for France (like many countries), to look towards other states to achieve national goals, is especially problematic for French policy-makers ‘because of the way France has chosen to represent itself to itself’, given the State’s tradition of power and prestige. Moreover, French identity, Hoffmann reminds us (1993, p.77), ‘has never

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26See Lipiansky, 1991, p.251, for example, who comments on French politicians’ liking for using the Gaullist style of attempting to personify the French nation, and for making reference to the ‘quelques considérations graves sur l’âme nationale’ (weighty reflections on the national consciousness).
been detachable from French political institutions and programs - it has always been tied to the state'. Thus the acceptance by the State of Europeanisation or globalisation of the economy must have implications for its visions of French identity.27

At the global level, Friedman argues that economic fragmentation, decentralisation of capital, increased competition, and the weakening of national identities has led to a crisis of identity, in that we are witnessing the breakdown of the idea of 'citizenship' in the sense of a territorially-defined and state-governed society. Instead this is being replaced by an identity based on 'primordial loyalties', such as ethnicity, 'race', local community and language; forms which he describes as 'culturally concrete'. This process of fragmentation, Friedman maintains, has also taken the form of nationalist movements, movements for cultural autonomy, ethnic movements, and a general trend towards local autonomy and self-control of communities (1994, p.86; see also Kellner, 1998, p.35). We might regard such change as part of what Lyotard (1979) describes as the 'postmodern condition', characterised by the collapse of 'grand narratives', in this case the loss of the State's power and the shift in decision-making away from politicians and elected representatives towards civil servants and business leaders (see citations in Forbes, 1995a, p.258). 'Grand' or 'meta-' narratives, Lyotard suggests, aim to establish definite boundaries between truth and falsity, and these belong to the modernist past, just like confidence in science and the inevitability of progress (1979, discussed by Billig, 1995, p.131). By contrast, postmodernist thought, taking ideas from post-colonialism, post-Fordism and post-structuralism, rejects such universalist, 'totalising' theory, once dominant in science and philosophy, and privileges difference, fragmentation, indeterminacy and 'the other' (Harvey, 1989, p.9; Kellner, 1998, p.3628; Kellner, 1992, p.143). I should note at this point however that the theories surrounding modernity versus postmodernity, like the existence of globalisation, are currently subject to considerable debate in social and political theory, with some authors

27Globalisation' is however a term subject to much debate, as writers such as Hirst and Thompson (1996, pp.2, 7) suggest that the concept of globalisation as a recent phenomenon is flawed, arguing that the current highly internationalised economy is not unprecedented, as the importance of foreign trade and significant international flows of capital were features of the international economy between 1870-1914. We saw earlier (note 6) too how Robertson (1990, cited by Featherstone, 1995, p.95), suggests that the period 1880-1920 was a period of globalisation, drawing more nations into a global figuration of interdependencies and power balances. See also discussions in Waters (1995, pp.38-64).

questioning the notion that we have gone beyond the ‘modern’ era into a ‘postmodern’ one.29 Others suggest that we might be in an ‘interregnum’ period between the two, since ‘historical epochs do not rise and fall in neat patterns or at precise chronological moments’ (Kellner, 1998, p.39). Indeed, it may be the fact that we are in a ‘borderland between the modern and postmodern’ that creates tensions, insecurities, confusion and perhaps panic, together with a sense of excitement and possibility as we live in ‘a cultural and social environment of shifting moods and an open but troubling future’ (Kellner, 1998, p.39). Whatever the explanation, it is true that in the contemporary period we are witnessing such feelings of uncertainty and confusion. These are evident in political debates surrounding cultural policy and identity in France of the 1990s, and my case studies will discuss how these anxieties are developed in political debates on language, audiovisual and Internet policy. However there is not scope within this thesis to engage in the debates surrounding modernity as opposed to postmodernity, fascinating though they are.

Concepts such as postmodernity are nevertheless useful in understanding possible ways in which identities might be subject to change in the contemporary period. What we can suggest, is that the collapse of ‘grand narratives’, such as those concerning the power of the French State and economy, have implications for the traditional elite view of French culture as superior, as Kuisel summarises: ‘Gallic confidence in the superiority of French culture does not fit easily the dictates of political and economic reality, which remind the French they should accept a secondary position in the world economy and in international affairs, whatever their cultural pretensions. Such humility is difficult’ (1993, p.235).

Douglas Johnson meanwhile (1993, pp.59-60), suggests that the French problem of identity, manifested in concerns over Europe, regionalism and immigrants for example, is strongly felt because ‘the French have invariably seen themselves as intrinsically special, frequently occupying a position of leadership, whether political or cultural’. He also points to

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29See also criticisms of the concept of ‘modernity’, e.g. that some argue that we are really speaking of Western modernity, since in some places such as East Asia, modernity may not have yet peaked (although the term ‘West’ may also be criticised, on account of it always signifying the positional superiority of Europe and the USA, not a geographical category, as David Morley and Kevin Robins suggest (1992) ‘Techno Orientalism’, New Formations, no.16, pp.136-57, discussed in Morley, 1994, p.134)). Thus it may be more appropriate to talk about modernities, not modernity (Featherstone, 1995, p.84). Massey too has criticised much of the literature on postmodernity for failing to acknowledge that the apparently new sense of dislocation, displacement and hybridity is really a First World perspective, since many people around the colonised world may have a long history of destabilising contact with other alien cultures (Doreen Massey (1992), ‘A Place Called Home’, New Formations, no.17, pp.3-15, cited in Morley and Robins, 1995, p.217; Morley, 1994, p.139).
the difficulties of adapting within a short time to defeat and occupation, trauma and guilt over anti-Jewish collaboration and colonial wars, the loss of power and prestige, the need to adapt State apparatuses to regional and European institutions, and a complex range of political loyalties.

Indeed, Philippe Ricalens, a prominent army official\(^30\), argues (1994) that French cultural exceptionalism - or the idea that French culture is something special and different, worthy of protection - must be defended when France is faced with changes in the political, economic and military spheres\(^31\). By means of my case study analysis of debates on cultural policy, I will be arguing in Chapters Four, Five and Six that contemporary political elites in France have certainly tried to re-discover a kind of ‘Gaullian grandeur’, through defending and bolstering their conception of French culture against external threat.

Furthermore, to return to Flynn’s point about France and globalisation discussed at the beginning of this sub-section, we can usefully consider here Featherstone’s argument (1995, p.84) that we should not disregard the role of the nation-state, in the more global climate, particularly ‘[ ... ] the continuing political struggles between nations, blocs and civilizations, as well as the cultural aspects of this process, [which] has often been neglected’. Kellner too writes that culture and nationalism remain important in an apparently globalised world, as clashes continue between global, national and local cultures (1998, p.35). This is relevant even though we may frequently speak of globalisation, in terms of a ‘compressed world’, where consciousness of the world as a whole has intensified (Robertson, 1992, p.8); or ‘time-space compression’, where space seems to shrink to a ‘global village’ of telecommunications and rapid transport, and a ‘space-ship earth’ of economic and ecological interdependence (Harvey, 1989, p.240). Related to Featherstone’s argument about struggles between nations and cultures is Kelly’s summary (1995, p.3), of how several countries such as Germany and the United States, which represent ‘external others [ ... ] against who the French assert their distinct existence’, have been used by French elites for the ‘projectioning’ of France’s ‘self-questioning’, and anxieties about French identity. This, as we saw earlier, is in spite of the fact that French elites have simultaneously rejected and welcomed the social and cultural models

\(^{30}\)contrôleur général des armées

\(^{31}\)See also how the idea of ‘cultural exception’ was used in debates on audiovisual policy, as discussed in Chapter Five.
offered by the USA and Germany (Kelly, *ibid.*; Bishop, 1995). Further examples of the Other for French elites have been Japan, as a model of economic success, yet potentially a threat; and the economic and political union of Europe, which has encouraged debate over both increased and decreased prestige for France as it has evolved. Relations with both Japan and the developing European Union have been significant in the formulation of elite conceptions of French national identity in relation to contemporary language and cultural policy, and I will demonstrate this in my case study chapters on language, audiovisual policy and the Internet.

Featherstone (1995, p.111) also highlights the ‘continuing importance of cultural factors in the development of nation-states and in their relations with other nation-states’. Interactions between nation-states, ‘especially those which involve increasing competition and conflict, can have the effect of unifying the self-image of the nation: the image or national face which is presented to the other’. Furthermore, Featherstone explains how ‘in effect the process of cultural formation of a national identity always entails a part being represented as a whole: a particular representation of the nation is presented as unanimous and consensual’. Such a portrayal of the nation has been significant in the case of France’s cultural relations with certain other nation-states during the post-war period, most notably the United States. As I explained earlier, the US has been the subject of elite attacks on account of mass (American-led) culture’s supposed harmful effects on French culture and the universalist values of French elite conceptions of national identity. The presentation by French elites of a ‘unanimous and consensual’ French identity or representation in opposition to American and other threats has been important in language and cultural debates of the 1990s, as my case studies will illustrate. It was particularly prominent in the debates on audiovisual policy, which are discussed in Chapter Five.

1.5.4 Global change, cultural imperialism and identity

Yet if we consider the implications for identity of aspects of global geo-political change such as those mentioned above, we would expect traditional representations of French national identity as ‘unanimous and consensual’, to use Featherstone’s terminology (*ibid.*), to be subject to re-evaluation. Many theorists argue that in the late twentieth century, identity is multi-faceted, and ever open to new influences. Consequently, many authors would suggest that the identification of a ‘French national identity’ or ‘national culture’ is problematic, indeed impossible, since in reality, both culture and identity are constantly changing (see Jameson, 1983 and 1984 for
French culture, and by implication, identity, just like any other, may be said to have a 'hybrid and permeable' character (Kuisel, 1993, p.233; Said, 1993, pp.xvii, ssxv, ssxii, 15; Tomlinson, 1991, pp.92-3; Morley, 1994, p.152; Andrews, 1995, p.78). This is because, as Hall explains (1992a, p.302), 'as cultures become more exposed to outside influences it is difficult to preserve cultural identities intact, or to prevent them from becoming weakened through cultural bombardment and infiltration'. Such exposure to other influences or 'infiltration' is often said to result from the 'time-space' effect of globalisation on communications, which have become more rapid, so that the world feels smaller and distances shorter, enabling easier, quicker access (with the correct equipment) to information from different locations (Hall, 1992a, pp.299, 304; Harvey, 1989, p.240). The development of global computer networks is of particular significance, since ideas, information and images can be instantaneously circulated around the world, overcoming boundaries of time and space (Gates, 1995, referred to by Kellner, 1998, p.28). Friedman (1994, p.195) notes how early discussion of globalisation often concentrated on describing such changes in communication as a form of cultural imperialism, since they were feared to privilege the growing hegemony of particular cultures, especially American consumerist values. The result has been suggested, by some, to be cultural homogenisation, which could undermine national identities and the supposed 'unity' which national cultures may enjoy. It is this interpretation of globalisation, which is frequently employed by contemporary French political elites in their discussions of cultural policy and national identity. However, such a view of cultural imperialism has been criticised by many theorists, as I outline below.

Morley for example (1994, p.144) explains how the traditional 'crude version' of the cultural imperialism thesis describes the global dominance of the American media as evidence of 'the threat posed by American popular culture to all authentic indigenous national cultures and identities'. Such an interpretation is also invoked by Tunstall in The Media are American (1977, p.57, in Tomlinson, 1991, p.8; Morley, 1994, pp.138, 150). Similarly, other authors

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refer to the powerful and continued influence of Americanisation, which combines with the effects of globalisation to act on the media and keep the ‘global village’ (McLuhan, 1964), as an American-dominated village, despite the traditional American hegemony having been weakened and threatened by the action of other countries such as Japan (Morley, 1994, pp.135, 138-42; Morley, 1996, p.331; Robertson, 1992, pp.8-9). Such a model was especially important at the time of what was considered to be the peak of American cultural hegemony, that is immediately after the Second World War (Morley, 1994, p.142).

The non-American forms of cultural imperialism did not in fact figure in the traditional concept of cultural imperialism espoused by Schiller for example (1971). Moreover, the traditional cultural imperialism argument is open to criticism because it presents the media audience as somehow consisting of puppets, or passive viewers who absorb everything and criticise none of what they view or hear (Tomlinson, 1991, pp.21-3). Thus the ‘colonising’ effects of the media on identity are described as easy to predict. Several researchers have nevertheless indicated that viewers actually play a more active role and are therefore capable of interpreting American broadcasts in different ways, according to their own circumstances and cultural experiences, although accepting this view is not to suggest that the international, American-dominated media, are powerless (Katz and Liebes, 1985, in Tomlinson, 1991, pp.47-50, and Morley, 1994, pp.142-3; also Miller, 1992, cited in Morley, 1994, p.150). Yet (Morley, 1994, p.143). In fact, at a time when the world is said to be shrinking, when we speak of the ‘global village’, the notion of the possibility of resistance to cultural imperialism assumes a new significance for identity, as Kellner describes: ‘[ ... ] culture is an especially complex and contested terrain today as global cultures permeate local ones and new configurations emerge that synthesize both poles, providing contradictory forces of colonization and resistance, global homogenization and new local hybrid forms and identities’ (1998, p.28).

So whilst French political elites may regard the globalisation of culture as bringing American imperialism, other groups may view it as a movement towards the development of a

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more cosmopolitan culture. Hargreaves and McKinney for example (1997, pp.4-5) describe how aspects of globalisation such as less constrained air travel and international communications allow individuals to participate more easily, both physically and mentally, in more than one society at a time. Developments in television have been particularly significant, as the French State can no longer act as such a strong ‘gatekeeper’ of television and marginalise or exclude cultural diversity associated with international migration from television programming. This is because viewers in France may now access channels originating in other countries, especially in the Arabic world, thanks to the increased use of satellite broadcasting. Together with imported video cassettes and cable stations, this method allows migrants and their descendants an alternative to the neo-colonial images of migrants as aliens or victims which have traditionally characterised terrestrial television representation (Hargreaves, 1997, pp.93-6). It has also been suggested that instead of seeing a complete ‘renaissance’ of cultural imperialism, especially of the unsophisticated and deterministic model proposed by traditional theorists, we are in fact experiencing a postmodern situation, which according to Morley, may represent the ‘highest stage of cultural imperialism’ (1994, 1996), on account of the more hybrid identities which may be produced as a result of changes in global communications.

For example, Hargreaves and McKinney (1997, p.4) discuss how in ‘post-colonial’ France, French-speaking minorities originating in ex-colonies but now settled in France are using creative forms including film, literature, art and music to effectively cut across the old binary logic which opposed ‘insiders’ to ‘outsiders’, thus creating what Bhabha describes as a hybrid ‘third space permitting the development of new cultural forms, new political initiatives and new structures of authority (Bhabha, 1990a, p.211; also Bhabha, 1994, pp.19-39).’ Furthermore, the tendency of the traditional thesis of cultural imperialism, particularly the over-deterministic, ‘hypodermic’ model of the effects of the media, to regard ‘foreign’ culture as all-powerful and manipulative is too simplistic since it takes no account of the way in which such influences can act as progressive forces, changing the established cultural hierarchies set up by social or political elites (Morley, 1994, p.143, 145; Fejes, 1981, on Schiller’s, in Tomlinson, 1991, p.40). It is quite possible to argue that ‘the French’ do not always perceive the products,
attitudes and language coming from other countries as completely ‘foreign’ (Kuisel, 1995, p.39), given the French consumption of non-French cinema and television, discussed in Chapter Five. On the contrary, some groups of people may feel less threatened by ‘Americanisation’ and mass culture, for example, than by the traditional ‘high cultural’ version of French identity which political elites may seek to defend so vigorously. So, if we equate Americanisation with globalisation, we must take account of the view that people are active, not passive, in the reproduction of social institutions on the global scale. Aspects of global culture cannot just ‘happen’ on their own; they have to be reproduced around the world by people: ‘Globalization can be mistaken as an external influence. In fact global influences can only exist as social influences if people take them into their lives’ (Spybey, 1996, p.5). Globalisation may also be more than imperialist domination in the style of Americanisation, since Axtmann suggests that globalisation and ‘global citizenship’ (being responsible for and participating in global challenges and problems) might lead to more acceptance of diversity, heterogeneity and otherness, not uniformity (1997, in Kellner, 1998, pp.37-8; also Featherstone, 1995, pp.13-4).

1.5.5 Multiple identities?
This idea is significant if we return to contemporary theories about the nature of identity and its relationship with culture. Hall for example (1990, p.225), describes cultural identity as something which is in motion, subject to change with time: ‘a matter of “becoming” as well as of “being”’, since it is ‘not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture’. Although Hall situates cultural identities in terms of their histories, he explains that this does not mean they are not subject to transformation: ‘Far from being grounded in a mere “recovery” of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past’. Identities may be said to be changing due to the fragmentation of ‘cultural landscapes’ in modern societies, such as class, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, nationality, and Hall explains that these once provided us with ‘firm locations as social individuals’ (1992a, p.275). This may be considered as part of the postmodern condition, where identities are sometimes described as being transformed by such fragmentation through the loss of a stable ‘sense of self’ called the ‘dislocation’ or ‘de-centring’ of the subject (Hall, *ibid*.). This process can be linked for example to the collapse of the ‘Eurocentric imperative’, meaning the loss of the colonial model of European culture as
universal; the unquestioned Centre noted earlier. Slater describes this as symptomatic of postmodernity (1994, p.88, with reference to Young 1990, p.193). Indeed, elsewhere, Slater highlights Vattimo's argument that the West may be said to be 'living through an explosive situation', as it confronts other 'cultural universes' such as the developing world, but also issues within itself, 'as an apparently irreversible pluralization renders any unilinear view of the world and history impossible' (1992, p.6, cited in Slater, 1994, p.98).

It is also argued that individuals have multiple identities or objects of loyalty, 'each of which can claim priority depending on the circumstances or the issue in question' (Flynn, 1995b, p.236). Such multiple identities, Flynn maintains, may be described as 'concentric circles', centring on the individual and moving outward, through local, regional or national levels, then on to the European level and further beyond (1995, ibid.). So identities cannot be fixed and unitary. Hall also explains (1995, p.66) that because identities are not static, this 'undermines any notion of a politics constructed around fixed identities or 'real' interests'. He argues that because political collectivities always result partly from 'imaginary identifications', they are 'imaginary communities' which 'can act as a mobilising political force'. I will demonstrate later in my case study chapters that this is an important resource available to and used by contemporary French political elites as they attempt to use cultural policy debates to present a conception of French national identity which is a static, traditional vision rather than a forward-looking, dynamic one. We can argue that such political elites may deny the reality of culture in the postmodern age, as they refuse the culture of others, preferring to cling to a mythical certainty of 'traditional' culture (see de Sola Pool, 1979, in Tomlinson, 1991, pp.92, 94).

Billig (1995, pp.136-7) describes the postmodern world's fluid conditions, with the loss of certainty, the blurring sense of place, the collapse of old boundaries. Consequently, citizens of this world who feel insecure may be 'driven to seek secure identities, often regressing to an earlier stage of development. Myths of nation, tribe and religion seem to hold out the hope of

39See Robert Young (1990) White Mythologies: Writing History and the West, London, Routledge, also Slater's arguments for recognition of the 'non-Western other': 'The life of the mind does not begin and end inside the Occident; there can be no Western checkpoint to keep out non-Western thought' (1994, p.116).


psychological wholeness, offering the fragmented, disorientated person the promise of psychic
security'.

My analysis of 1990s cultural debates will show this comment to be extremely pertinent in the case of French political elites and their attitudes towards national identity. Moreover, I will suggest that French actors who behave, through their discourse on culture, as if so sure of their cultural identity, reveal a tendency towards a kind of racism by ignoring the increasing presence and significance of foreign influences in French contemporary life. This ‘us and them’ syndrome, it has been argued, has re-appeared in several European countries (including France) and has been termed ‘the new racism’ or ‘cultural racism’ by sociologists examining issues of identity (for example Wieviorka, 1994, pp.173-88). Thus we see the tendency of some cultural groups to consider themselves somehow superior to other groups displaying different cultural characteristics or traditions (Morley, 1994, p.144). Gilroy has commented on this idea, highlighting links between ‘cultural racism’ and ‘the idea of “race” and the ideas of nation, nationality and national belonging’:

We increasingly face a racism which avoids being recognized as such because it is able to link ‘race’ with nationhood, patriotism and nationalism, a racism which has taken a necessary distance from crude ideas of biological inferiority and superiority now seeks to present an imaginary definition of the nation as a unified cultural community. It constructs and defends an image of national culture - homogeneous in its whiteness yet precarious and perpetually vulnerable to attack from enemies within and without. [ ... ] This is a racism which answers the social and political turbulence of crisis management by the recovery of national greatness in the imagination. Its dream-like construction of our sceptred isle as an ethnically purified one provides special comfort against the ravages of decline. (1992, p.53)

Although Gilroy writes about the UK here, such comments are also relevant to the French context, since ethnic divisions in France, resulting from the diverse experiences of different regions and immigration serve to challenge French identity: ‘With striking frequency, the expression of Frenchness is inflected by the specific experience of groups who perceive their own place within the nation as distinctly problematic’ (Kelly, 1995, pp.2-3). We saw earlier the significance of difference, since identities are constructed according to each other and exclusion is as much a factor of identity as is inclusion (Morley and Robins, 1989, p.14, 1995, p.45).\(^{42}\)

\(^{42}\)See also McRobbie, 1994, p.40
However, the notion that the ‘Other’ constructed in political discourse on national identity is always perceived as a threat is misleading. The Other can, in some cases, be portrayed as an opportunity, for example when another cultural identity or country can provide a location for the increase of French influence. This will be demonstrated in the thesis, which will seek to examine both constructions of the Other. My case studies will illustrate how the Other is revealed as both a threat and an opportunity at different times. It has been suggested that easier acceptance of multiple and unstable identities under postmodernity could be a progressive feature, as individuals have more freedom to change their identities (Kellner, 1992, p.174; also Melucci, 1997). My case study chapters will demonstrate how this strategy has been adopted by some French political elites, who refer, for example, to their multiple identities as French, European and francophone (French-speaking) at different times.

Finally, we must consider how ideas about changing identities might influence elite attitudes towards culture in France, and ultimately, their effects on policy.

1.6 ‘Popular’ culture as national culture and new identity?

Postmodern theories often privilege popular culture, regarding it as ‘the site of the implosion of identity and fragmentation of the subject’ (Kellner, 1992, p.144). There is also an emphasis on the blurring of boundaries between art and everyday life, the collapse of the distinction between high art and mass or popular culture, together with ‘a general stylistic promiscuity and playful mixing of codes’ (Featherstone, 1992, p.267). Such ideas emphasise the breaking down or levelling out of symbolic hierarchies, and a movement towards ‘cultural declassification’ or ‘decentring’ of culture, related to the classic ideas of postmodernity (Featherstone, *ibid*). This is also linked to the growth of the consumer society and the development of communications. Baudrillard for example has described how under postmodernity, everyday life becomes ‘aestheticised’, as the distinctions between reality and image become blurred, thanks to media like television. Thus we are in a ‘depthless culture of floating signs and images’ (Featherstone, 1995, p.44).43 Baudrillard sees high culture as being destabilised, as symbolic hierarchies based on canonical judgements of taste and value are being eroded. So his conception of ‘mass’ is not the same as traditional theories of mass culture, in which the masses are taken to be manipulated.

through the popular media. Instead, commodity development has led to a postmodern era of 'cultural disorder', where distinctions between levels of culture have broken down (Featherstone, 1995, p.19). Lipovetsky too (1983) sees consumer culture in the postmodern era as a positive development, since dominant culture can no longer repress, leading to greater individual freedom. For Lipovetsky, the consumer is now an active agent, in a more personalised market of 'self-service' culture (see pp.156-9 for example). This idea is similar to Jameson's point about the cultural logic of late capitalism, whereby the commercial consumer's importance means that any product offered in the cultural market-place is as good as any other (1991, in Preston, 1997, p.86). Moreover, Billig explains (1995, p.131) that on one level, the logic of capitalism is perhaps leading to a homogenised culture, since the world cannot be a 'network of bounded, national cultures which claim to be uniquely different'. Yet, as we saw earlier, in a globalised, postmodern era, identities are increasingly crossing boundaries of state, since consumers can create their own identities through their changing patterns of consumption aided by the international media. Furthermore, in such a climate, the French State, declining in its powers as we have seen, can no longer impose a uniform sense of identity; supra-national and sub-national identities may challenge the State's claims. So the State version of identity must now compete for the loyalties of an individual in the new free market of identities. And within the national territory, multiple narratives and new identities can emerge more easily, and local, ethnic and gender identities become the site of postmodern politics (Billig, 1995, pp.132-3, with reference to Roosens, 1989).

The consequences of global change and its implications for conceptions of identity have had an impact on the elite views of identity prevalent in recent cultural policy developments in France. Both intellectuals and political elites appear more ready to accept into the cultural field cultural forms which would not seem to belong to 'high culture', such as pop music, science fiction, cartoons and television. Rigby for example (1991, p.161) notes how arts like jazz and cinema, described quite recently by Bourdieu as not being granted cultural legitimation, are now perceived as 'part of the long-accepted cultural heritage'.

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44 Featherstone refers here to Baudrillard (1983) *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, New York, Semiotext(e). However Baudrillard did sometimes come to negative conclusions, when he argued that people consume the media without making judgements (see *Simulations and Symbolic Exchange and Death*, *op.cit.*, discussed in Featherstone, 1995, p.44).
1.6.1 French cultural policy in the 1980s

The easier acceptance of 'popular' culture is associated with the 1980s and the arrival of Jack Lang as Minister of Culture, who brought a modernised, decentralised attitude to French State cultural policy, well-documented by Looseley (1994, 1995) and Wachtel (1987). Significantly, after twenty-five years of political opposition, the Socialists - including participants in the anti-authority protests of 1968 - were now in power, in both the Presidency and the Government. The ethos of May 68, with its criticisms of all that was established, rigid and elite, was brought to the new policy approach, as Lang refused in principle the 'grand narrative' of *la culture cultivée* ('cultivated' culture) - a traditional and elitist idea - in favour of a more open, pluralist and democratic definition of cultural activity (Looseley, 1994, pp.119-30, 1995, p.44). Wachtel explains how for many people, Malraux's idea of democratisation and the *Maisons de la Culture* had turned into a kind of hegemony representing a repressive and narrow, Gaullist idea of society, whereas the Socialists took the democratisation ideal but absorbed it into a definition of cultural action that was more pluralist (1987, p.14). Lang's aim, notes Looseley, was 'to reconcile culture with its context, be it the State, society, or the economy and to emphasize the integral part it plays within everyday experience' (1994, p.121; also Wachtel, 1987, p.5). Thus his Ministry attempted to encompass culture in its broader, anthropological or ethnological sense, as it 'subsumes the arts, heritage and popular cultures in the customs, models and rituals and general way of life by which a given community expresses and represents itself' (Looseley, 1995, p.4). In particular, he seized the opportunity early on to present cultural activity as a means to 'the economic as well as spiritual regeneration of a France weakened by recession, inertia, and competition from US-dominated multinationals' (Looseley, 1994, p.121).

According to Wachtel (1987, p.54), the linking of economy and culture was crucial to Lang's attempt to lift the status of French culture in public opinion, by presenting it as a source of vital new jobs. The culture budget was significantly increased, and the new funds were

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46*A prominent example of the Socialists' attempt at more 'democratised' events was seen in the 'postmodern' parade for the Bicentennial of the French Revolution on 14 July 1989, in which Jean-Paul Goude created a mixture of African and French drums, jazz percussion, solemn marching and bright costumes (Lebovics, 1992, pp.192-3). Yet the parade was also in itself a possible celebration of French universalism (Leruth, 1998b). The significance of this event is examined in more detail by Kaplan (1993) and Leruth (1998b).
shared out between three areas: President Mitterrand's 'pet projects' of the *grands travaux* (major building projects and renovations such as the Louvre and the Bastille Opera); the incorporation of new cultural forms such as songs, cartoons and circus into an eclectic version of an officially-sponsored culture; and *le développement culturel* (cultural development), meaning financial help for new cultural activities in the workplace, trade unions and regions.\(^{47}\)

A particular beneficiary of the new policies was decentralisation, from 1982, which helped many provincial towns and regions to pay for renovations to architecture and archaeological sites, to develop new and better museums, to subsidise performing arts, and to develop more cooperation between partnerships of artists, the public, and the Ministry (Forbes, 1995a, p.259; Wachtel, 1987, p.95). Wachtel however (1987, p.75) points out that ultimately, the huge Paris projects required so much money that the decentralisation budget became the casualty.

The official recognition and funding of creative forms previously ignored by the State as commercial activities undeserving of help, such as cartoons, puppet theatre, fashion, pop music and videos, circus and cooking were part of the idea of *décloisonnement* or 'decompartmentalisation'. This signified the breaking down of barriers between art and the people, artistic disciplines, the amateur and the professional, but especially elite, high art and mass culture (Looseley, 1994, p.124, 1995, p.123; Wachtel, 1987, p.5). Thus it seemed that at last the State was acknowledging the importance of consumer or mass culture in an arguably postmodern, globalised society.\(^{48}\) Furthermore, Jean-Pierre Colin (1986), who worked within Lang’s Ministry of Culture, explains that the concept of 'difference' became a major focus of Socialist cultural policy during the early 1980s under Jack Lang, as new initiatives focused on groups previously excluded from 'Culture', such as women, regional groups, the young, homosexuals.\(^{49}\)

However these aspects of Socialist policy did generate debate and a good deal of opposition, as 'aristocratic' intellectuals' (Emanuel, 1994, p.147) such as Alain Finkielkraut and Marc Fumaroli, advocated a return to the policy of 'cultivated culture'. Such authors criticised

\(^{47}\)For a discussion of the *grands travaux*, see Norindr, 1996.

\(^{48}\)This is not say that the Ministry however abandoned its support for more traditional, 'classical' arts. As Wachtel explains (1987, p.93), democratisation signified widening the definition of culture, not completely re-writing it.

\(^{49}\)See also Giordan, 1982.
projects they described negatively as 'cultural supermarkets' and lacking 'cultural value' such as the construction of the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Eurodisney theme park (Looseley, 1994, p.128; Ruby et al., 1993, p.5). Fumaroli (1991) particularly attacked the general interventionist strategy that has characterised post-war cultural policy. Finkielkraut (1987) criticised the movement towards 'le tout culturel', that is, the kind of ideas advocated by Lang's ministry, which pledged to encourage the recognition and the practice of non-traditional forms of culture (Looseley, 1994, p.128; Forest, 1993, p.9). Finkielkraut suggested that such policy and thinking leads to a confused relativism of culture in which there is 'no difference between Shakespeare and a pair of boots' (1987, pp.149-51), thus regretting that the universalist ideal of high culture had now become one amongst many ideas about culture (see also Looseley, 1994, p.128; Forest, 1993, p.10; Peters, 1993, p.101). He also attacked multiculturalism and argued for the reinforcement of 'French identity' through culture, significantly at a time when France was experiencing considerable debate about the integration of immigrants into French society (Forbes, 1995a, p.260). Furthermore, Looseley (1995, p.118) and Colin (1986, p.55) describe how some government figures and party members were opposed to policies for regional and 'community' or ethnic cultures and languages, as they considered the 'Langian model of a national multiculture' (Looseley, ibid.), to be a potential threat to national unity. Both Lang and Colin's ideas about regional and multicultural policies are criticised by Looseley for remaining fundamentally Jacobin, i.e. based on traditional Revolutionary ideas: '[..] just as Lang thought of central-government policy as harmonising regional identities, so too does Colin view multiculturalism as an opportunity for the national culture to be redefined and survive; again, unity in diversity' (Looseley, 1995, p.114).

Furthermore, in considering the extent of changing views about culture and identity during the Lang era, we must consider more carefully the Socialists' perceptions of mass culture. It is interesting to recall the 1990 report from the Ministry of Culture entitled Les Pratiques culturelles des Français 1973-1989, which published findings of a survey of the cultural activities of French people, following on from previous surveys of a similar nature carried out in 1973 and 1981. In this report, the Ministry finally acknowledged the move away from traditional ideas of culture based on books, galleries and theatre towards an increased involvement with modern forms of audiovisual culture, and appeared more ready to 'consider cultural practice as falling firmly within the context of general patterns of leisure and sociability' (Rigby, 1992, p.7). However, whilst the Ministry may have acknowledged the
importance of television for example, it continued to denounce it in this report. Rigby sees the analysis in this document, whilst claiming objectivity and a scientific approach, as 'underpinned and directed by the idea that a regular pattern of going out several times a week in the evening to engage in a wide variety of leisure and cultural practices is the superior way of living a modern, open, mobile, flexible and fulfilled existence', whereas television is 'the contemporary form of the degree zero of leisure and cultural practice' (pp.10, 12). This view of Rigby's is indeed borne out by the report's negative descriptions of home-centred leisure such as 'le vieillissement culturel' (cultural aging) and 'le repli progressif sur le chez-soi' (increasing stay-at-home tendency) (Donnat and Cogneau, 1990, p.265). Furthermore, although the authors of the report acknowledged that nearly all social groups in France watch television, they still described it in negative terms as a barrier to participation in more worthy cultural pursuits outside the home: 'Le fait de souligner la propension plus faible des cadres supérieurs ou des Parisiens à regarder la télévision chaque jour ne doit pas faire oublier que les uns comme les autres sont néanmoins à plus de 50 % chaque soir devant leur petit écran'. (Highlighting the reduced likelihood of senior managers or Parisians to watch television each day should not make us forget that more than 50% of these groups, like others, are nevertheless in front of their small screen each evening) (Donnat and Cogneau, 1990, p.55).

So, although the authors of the 1990 report recognised the way in which nearly all categories of French people watch television (Donnat and Cogneau, 1990, p.55), they 'yet again [ ... ] pursued into a newly-defined field of leisure and culture the same preoccupations with patterns of distinction and difference, and, in so doing, once more helped to consign the working class to the same old position of cultural barbarism, and continued to perpetuate a negative idea of the cultural role of television in modern French society' (Rigby, 1992, p.13). My case studies of cultural policy in the 1990s will demonstrate how such undynamic attitudes continue in elite conceptions of identity in contemporary France. These conceptions are particularly striking in connection with new cultural forms found in 'new media' such as the Internet, which is considered in Chapter Six.

It has been noted that the Left had long had difficulties with facing up to the economic realities of the market-place in relation to culture, as they had tended to regard capitalism and the business world, in which cultural industries such as publishing and recording usually operate, as harmful to innovation and creation, and Lang himself voiced such an opinion early on in his ministerial role (1982, see Wachtel, 1987, pp.52-3). Yet on other occasions he seemed
to accept more mass-cultural, industrially produced forms of culture, operating in a market economy with no apparent public service mission (1981, in Looseley, 1995, p.123). Looseley comes to the conclusion that Lang's chief innovation, besides the raising of the cultural budget, was to face up to a development which the French State could no longer control or ignore, namely 'the rise of a civilisation of mass leisure in which culture was fast becoming a commodity, a prospect still shocking to the 1981 Left' (1995, p.240). So the State had to understand the economic importance of 'lower' cultural forms connected with the boom in audiovisual entertainment and information technology, together with growing spending on culture and leisure generally (Looseley, 1995, p.128). We must also take account of both the relationship between cultural policy and broader social activity in trends in the post-1968 era. For example, the groups targeted in the décloisonnement and développement culturel policies were, not by coincidence, the ones having made demands for social change following May 68 (Looseley, 1994, p.114). Thus political elites had to react to these groups' needs and different views of culture and identity. Wachtel suggests (1987, p.92) that as France became more modernised, educated and urbanised, with more money available for leisure, it was inevitable that people would place more value on culture. So we can suggest that French society had already changed, and argue, as Wachtel does (ibid.), that the policy effectiveness of the Socialist experiment was really a measure of prior public acceptance of the ideas behind it. The startling official recognition of cartoons and rock music then was arguably the acceptance of existing trends (Looseley, 1995, p.125).

Yet perhaps this assessment is too simplistic. Whilst it is true that policy changes are expected to partly result from changes in society, 'society' does not act or make decisions on its own. Groups may interact, making advances and retreats at different times in contested spaces such as culture and identity, with the result that power may shift between different, linked actors. An interesting example we might recall here concerns the defacing of copies of sculptures - 'high cultural' art - at the Louvre Metro station in 1992. Paradoxically, in the same year the Ministry of Culture sponsored a graffiti art exhibition containing a Metro carriage with the same type of graffiti which the rail authority was then spending 90M F per year removing (Looseley 1995, p.178). Such a situation suggests that different, competing attitudes towards the definition of 'culture' can coexist at any one time. We will see later on how this possibility continues to cause difficulties for French elite views of national identity, as Chapters Four, Five and Six examine how elite debate on the value of different types of cultural activities continues.

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Another problematic issue concerning attitudes to mass, consumer culture for the Socialists was the growth of foreign (mainly American) multi-national companies and their influence on French and international culture and identity. If French cultural policy under Jack Lang stands out due to his ‘populist’ style of honouring contemporary film-stars like Sylvester Stallone and Warren Beatty (ibid.), it should not be forgotten that this policy also included the defence of French national identity against the ‘domination’ of foreign imports (notably those from the USA) of a supposedly inferior quality, such as the Eurodisney park and the ‘Dallas’ soap opera (Ang, 1985, in Tomlinson, 1991, p.45; Kuisel, 1993, p.228; see also J.Hayward, 1994b, p.296). Lang, despite his stance on the acceptance of ‘low’ cultural forms synonymous with American-led mass culture, was no stranger to anti-American outbursts, attacking American culture on several occasions on the international stage and claiming that France led the ‘culturally non-aligned countries’ (see, for example, Looseley, 1994, p.122, 1995, p.77; Wachtel, 1987, pp.3, 9, 52-3; Forbes and Kelly, 1995, p.189; Forbes, 1995a, p.259). Yet Lang did inaugurate the Eurodisney park in 1992, which is indicative of the bizarre Franco-American cultural relationship discussed earlier. What his hostile moments did indicate was that both Left as well as Right were still capable of strong reactions against possible cultural ‘invasions’ and threats to traditional elite views of French identity as superior. I will demonstrate that such a view has gained support in the cultural debates in the 1990s in France, which will be examined in my case study chapters. Furthermore, I will show how Lang’s successors have attempted to develop the notion of France’s leadership of ‘non-aligned’ countries in global cultural issues, particularly within the francophone movement. This has happened at the same time as, since the Lang years, the political presentation of opposition to ‘Americanisation’ has been more frequently subsumed within fears about globalisation, as the term ‘mondialisation’ has become more important in the French economic and political vocabulary.

Returning to the assessment of Jack Lang, Looseley (1995, pp.240-1) suggests other signs of the Lang years following traditional elite ideas about culture and identity which informed earlier policies, pointing to the cultural budget and the economic importance of culture which had been highlighted under President Giscard in the 1970s, Lang’s renewed ‘democratisation’ of high culture seen in the grands projets, and a Gaullist obsession with
national grandeur (rather than cultural inequalities) which these suggested. Moreover, Looseley argues:

Indeed, a further continuity with the de Gaulle era is this perennial preoccupation, despite all the talk of diversity and eclecticism, with fostering a national culture, visible in a host of other ways: the insistence on maintaining the state’s role as harmoniser when the decentralisation laws were being implemented, the promotion of French mass culture in opposition to American, the stress on collective fun, and the idea of a national multiculture enshrined in the Goude procession (1995, p.241).

So we might conclude, as Looseley does (ibid.), that in many respects, the Lang administration did not really challenge the central tenets of cultural policy developed since the time of Malraux; rather, its rhetoric gave way to reasserting them and sometimes redrafting them. Furthermore, the Socialist years did not solve the dilemma of the State’s role as cultural prescriber and regulator (Looseley, 1995, p.243). The potential importance of this in the post-Lang years is raised by Looseley in the conclusion to his study of Socialist cultural policy (1995, p.244), as he wondered how Lang’s successors might resolve the contradiction between a State policy promoting the ‘grand narrative’ of a shared national culture and one trying to accommodate a new communications era ‘which is steadily isolating individuals within their private domestic space, unpicking the very fabric of community life’. This uncharted area is the subject of Chapter Six in this thesis, which investigates French political elites’ reactions to the challenges to traditional State views of identity brought by the development of the Internet.

The lasting effects of a possible shifting of views of identity, which may have influenced policies such as décloisonnement, also warrant closer consideration. Looseley’s study offers a preliminary assessment of the transition from Jack Lang, to Jacques Toubon’s Ministry of Culture in 1993. Looseley suggests that ‘a dramatic new approach’ to cultural policy did not look likely under Toubon, indeed, that the merging of the ministerial responsibilities for Culture and Francophone Affairs (relating to French-speaking countries and the French language) might indicate ‘not a redefinition of the cultural so much as a return to a more classical, Gaullist conception concerned with the “defence” of the French language and France’s international rayonnement’ (1995, pp.228-9).51 It is the contention of this thesis that

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51 Jacques Toubon took over from Lang in March 1993, when a Centre-Right, RPR-UDF government came to power. The significance of the merger of culture and francophonie is explored further in Chapter Three.
the assessment of Toubon and afterwards certainly does not constitute ‘a dramatic new
approach’, rather, a retreat in many ways, as the attitudes of policy-making elites towards
cultural policy frequently demonstrate a reversion to traditional, rigid conceptions of identity, as
opposed to an embracing of more dynamic and hybrid ones.

1.7 Conclusion: language, cultural policy and French identity in the 1990s
It is to this argument which I turn in my case studies, as I investigate developments in the 1990s
revealing such conceptions of identity, and their impact on cultural policy. The case study
chapters (Four, Five and Six) examine political debates around several cultural policy issues
having implications for the safeguard and development of French culture in various sectors.
These are the regulation and promotion of language, audiovisual broadcasting policy and the
Internet. These areas of cultural life may be regarded as symbols of French national identity, in
view of their role in the construction of a State-led vision of French identity, the volume and
range of State resources which have been devoted to them, and their visibility at an international
level.

Certainly, these areas of policy have seen an intensification of debate during the 1990s,
as models of French cultural policy-making based on State leadership have been called into
question by the effects of deregulation and privatisation, and more recently, digitalisation\textsuperscript{52} of
the media. Furthermore, political debate has focused strongly on responding to these, and other,
new challenges for cultural policy-making, which have implications for the traditional
conceptions of French identity held by political elites. These challenges are arising in a climate
which some theorists would describe as ‘postmodern’; where old certainties regarding
perceptions of identity are in question, as we see the collapse of the ‘grand narratives’ on which
identity as viewed from the Centre was previously based. Indeed, it can be suggested that the
whole of the post-war period, as described in this chapter, has been a series of watersheds for
the French political elite construction of national identity. We can point here to the breakdown
of traditional rural society, as France faced tensions associated with its comparatively late
conversion to modernity, such as anxieties over mass culture, technology and American
hegemony. Similarly, we might cite the end of Empire and the difficulties of decolonisation

\textsuperscript{52}A technique of transmitting signals using digital form, which computers understand, making communications
more rapid.
and the post-colonial legacy of immigration. The end of the *trente glorieuses* and the May 68 events could be described as a social watershed, followed by the economic watershed of the oil crises of the 1970s, the political upheaval of the post-1981 arrival of the Mitterrand/Socialist generation, plus the fragmentation of world structures at the end of the 1980s. All of these issues are examples of developments, which have encouraged, and continue to encourage, reflection on the meaning and future of French identity amongst the French polity and wider society. As the case study chapters will demonstrate, and as we have already reviewed in brief, contemporary challenges with particular implications for national identity and its relationship with cultural policy include, for example, fears over the increasing Americanisation of culture; the presence in metropolitan France of immigrant groups who may have different cultural and/or national identities; the globalised, digitalised communications market based on mass culture, and a changing post-cold war international order encompassing the continually evolving project of the European Union.

However this is not to suggest that the factors of uncertainty cited above are all interpreted by French political elites simply as threats to French national identity: there are instances where potential challenges for cultural policy-making are interpreted by French political elites as offering new opportunities for the development of French identity. Yet it is still the case that the view of identity which is presented through these opportunities remains a strongly traditional and rigid one, indicating the French State's belief in the continuation of long-established, inflexible myths about what it is to be French. So we see in the late twentieth century, the French elite imposition of a particular construction of national identity, revealing a suspicion of cultural hybridity and difference. This acts today on members of the same society just as it did under the period of the State-led drive for modernity from the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries.

In examining the policy themes and debates which provide the case studies in this thesis, the aims of my analysis are threefold. Firstly, I intend to unravel the unvoiced assumptions which may be present within the conception of identity found in the responses of French political elites to the contemporary cultural issues discussed. In doing this, the second aim of my analysis will be fulfilled, which is to demonstrate how the political response to the policy challenges, despite these being qualitatively new issues in some cases, are in fact rooted in the identity constructions of the past, thus offering further understanding of the relationship between French identity and cultural policy in the longer term. Finally, the analysis will
illustrate the tensions, ambiguities and contradictions inherent within the response of political elites to the contemporary challenges for French identity, and offer conclusions regarding the possible implications of such discrepancies, and the complexity of elite perceptions of identity.

Before presenting this analysis however it is necessary to explain the methods of enquiry used in my research, which I discuss now in Chapter Two; and to explore the centrality of language to elite conceptions of French identity in Chapter Three.
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY: THE CHALLENGES OF EXPLORING LANGUAGE, CULTURAL POLICY AND IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY FRANCE

2.1 Introduction

Having introduced the aims of the research in Chapter One, I now turn in this chapter to my choice of methodology, with the intention of explaining how and why I used particular research strategies. Through this, I also hope to draw out some of the challenges which arose from the attempt to carry out and write up a doctoral research project using qualitative methodology.

Whilst writing this thesis I have tried to keep in mind the notion that undertaking research involves a complex process of learning and discovery, different stages of which may advance at different rates according to the nature of the work. The contemporary organisation of postgraduate training and funding has also been an important influence, given the nature of a PhD as a training or apprenticeship in both research and communication skills to be completed within four years. Regarding the PhD process as a learning experience, together with ideas gleaned from my own practical experiences and a formal research training programme during the period of study, has led me to reflect on different methodological approaches, influences and difficulties. The nature of these factors, and the ways in which they impacted on my research, are explored below, together with a discussion of how the research was designed and carried out and how the research findings were achieved.

As explained in Chapter One, the aim of this thesis is to explore perceptions of French identity held by political elites in relation to cultural policy-making in the 1990s. In undertaking the research, my intention was, in broad terms, to examine political debates in the public arena about particular areas of cultural and linguistic legislation, where French elite concerns about cultural and national identity are revealed. I specifically wanted to investigate the question of whether - and if so, to what extent - visions of identity held by political elites in France might be changing in the light of recent challenges to French identity in connection with cultural policy-making. Observing the development of numerous initiatives and debates involving French policy-makers during the 1990s, which appeared to be concerned with safeguarding and developing the importance of French culture in various spheres, from the French language to film production, led me to the view that French identity was indeed challenged. With this in mind, I set out to investigate some of the areas of policy under
development in the 1990s, which may be regarded as symbols of French national identity, given their role in the construction of a State-led vision of identity and the range of policies and State resources which have long been devoted to them. I selected several of these areas of policy as case study themes for the thesis. These themes were: policy for the regulation and promotion of language, audiovisual broadcasting policy, and the development of the Internet.

The starting point for my research was 1989. This was a significant point for French identity, being the year of the bicentennial celebrations of the French Revolution of 1789. It was a time of national reflection on the meaning of Frenchness as established over the course of 200 years of Republicanism. 1989 also signified a time of international change associated with the end of the Cold War and the reunification of Germany. Both these events were significant for French identity as French political elites faced the break up of old divisions and alliances in the international order and the emergence of Germany, their long-time partner in European affairs, in a new, larger and more powerful form.

The case studies selected examine political debate and legislation occurring during the 1990s. Throughout this period there were various examples of an intensified political debate in France concerning national identity and cultural issues. I originally intended to examine the years 1989-96 as a discrete period, with 1996, as my ‘cut-off’ point, with my frame being governed by the Bicentennial of 1989, discussed above, and the death of the former President, François Mitterrand in January 1996. This event was of symbolic significance not only for French cultural policy - the Mitterrand era being perceived as a time of change and innovation in cultural policy, symbolised by the grands travaux (great projects) indicative of the status of cultural policy as one of Mitterrand’s domaines réservés (special areas of responsibility) - but also for the French Republic as a whole, in terms of the death of the first Socialist President, who had served for two consecutive seven-year presidential terms. The focus of the study is on the period from 1989 up to the start of 1997, although, with some spillover into the period beyond this, of Lionel Jospin’s premiership, which commenced in May 1997, after President Jacques Chirac, Mitterrand’s successor, had called a sudden general election. For completion, it was necessary to look beyond 1996, so I make reference to key developments since then where relevant to the analysis, particularly with regard to the Internet case study, which is the most contemporary issue covered in the study. However, I am not engaged in a comparative study of the different periods of presidencies and governments.
Finally, my chosen case studies ultimately focus in most depth on the period from 1993 onwards. This is because from this point, political debate on cultural issues and national identity intensified in the areas studied. In language policy, the *loi Toubon* of 1994 which attempted to limit the use of foreign ‘loan’ words in French public life paved the way for the elite targeting of the European Union policy-making sphere as an opportunity for responding to possible threats to French national identity related to the use of the French language. In the case of audiovisual policy, debates on American-led cultural imperialism surfaced during the renegotiation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the development of EU quotas and digitalisation. The arrival of the digital age, and in particular the Internet, generated debates about new threats and opportunities for French identity.

In examining the policy themes which would provide the case studies, the aims of my intended analysis were threefold. Firstly, I intended to unravel the unvoiced assumptions which may be present within the conceptions of identity found in the responses of French political elites to the cultural issues discussed. In doing so, the second aim of the analysis would be realised, which was to demonstrate how the political response to the policy challenges, despite these being qualitatively new issues in some cases, are in fact rooted in constructions of the past, thus offering further understanding of the relationship between French identity and cultural policy in the context of France’s history. Finally, the analysis was intended to reveal the tensions, ambiguities and contradictions inherent within the elite response to the contemporary challenges for French identity, and draw conclusions regarding the possible implications for the French State of such discrepancies, and the complexity of elite perceptions of identity.

The choice of qualitative research (based on an interpretative approach to data in non-numerical form) was largely determined by the nature of the research topic. This was because it would be difficult to use quantitative methods (using numerical statistical data and more traditionally ‘scientific’ approaches to produce objective knowledge), to attempt to investigate political perceptions of identity and culture. As the case studies will demonstrate, these are issues which often reveal contradictory and ambiguous responses, which quantitative methods such as numerical analysis or questionnaires would be unlikely to draw out effectively, and which are of enormous interest to the aims of the research project. With these thoughts in mind, the questions of importance when designing the study were as follows: What could qualitative methods show? How could the subject be investigated, using such methods? How could
appropriate data be gathered and then analysed, and what might be the limitations of the methods used to do these tasks? I give an account below of how I addressed these kind of methodological uncertainties and moved towards the final design of my research.

I decided that fulfillment of the aims of the research as stated above could only be achieved through the close reading of contributions to the political debates, or discourse, on French identity and the cultural policy areas in question. The case studies would themselves give an overview of legislation on the issues, reflecting the connection between language and cultural policy measures and elite concerns in the State management of French identity. However, it would be necessary to go beyond these measures, in order to uncover the true complexity of perceptions held by French political elites, as illustrated in debates around cultural policy. Detailed analysis of the discourse of political elites would reveal the deeper truths about this identity, demonstrating it to be more complex than may be apparent. For example, sometimes what we might expect politicians to say, but cannot be said, due to both practical and symbolic constraints of, perhaps, economic and trade policy, or the influence of history and institutions, or conventions about these, discussed in Chapter One, may have at least as, if not more, significance as what can be said. Political actors may in fact be quite limited in the production of their discourse, and I return to this point in section 2.2.1. For these reasons, following contextualisation of the cultural policy issues in France, I decided that each case study of my thesis would focus on the analysis of texts, which are part of the larger body of elite discourse on identity and cultural policy. At this point, I should explain what use my research made of the concept of ‘political discourse’, before charting the methodological issues associated with the construction of my corpus and its analysis.

2.2 The role of political elites and their discourse in this study

For the purposes of my study, I took ‘discourse’ in general terms to mean the whole body of discussion, which may be written or expressed orally, about a particular topic, to which an individual or group of individuals may contribute (which may be found on identity issues for example, in the form of opinion expressed by journalists, businesspeople, ordinary citizens). Within this wider body of discourse, specific instances of political discourse exist, that is, a subgroup of the wider discourse. This meaning closely follows the approach of Gaffney (1989, p.26), who sees political discourse as ‘the verbal equivalent of political action: the set of all
political verbalisations, and expressible forms adopted by political organisations and political individuals'. So, political discourse is distinguished from discourse in general in that it is the discourse of politicians and policy-making groups. Given that the focus of my study was to examine political perceptions of cultural identity, it was appropriate to consider legislation, statements and contributions to the debates made by political actors. By studying publicly exposed statements by political actors, the thesis analyses the arguments on identity informing the debate over a number of key issues in the field of language and cultural policy in contemporary France. Thus discourse is used as a means of access to these arguments; it is not in itself the object or topic of study, in the style of some ‘discourse analysis’ approaches in the social sciences (Tonkiss, 1998).

Analysis of political texts was, however, potentially one of a number of possible ways of getting to the heart of the research subject. For example, one possible method would have been to concentrate on analysing the policy provisions contained within legislative documents. I have included reference to these in my research as a means of providing a solid background to the context of policy-making during the period examined. However, it is necessary to go beyond such policy texts, in order to give proper consideration to the perceptions of identity and cultural policy which may inform policy-making as they are communicated by those in the public eye closely associated with cultural policy. To do this, we can firstly consider the resource consisting of examples of political discourse produced by individual politicians and groupings. Secondly, as outlined earlier, detailed analysis of political discourse in the context of debates on cultural policy is necessary to uncover the true complexity of political attitudes to the relationship between cultural policy and French identity. We might suggest that debates on cultural matters are almost a particularly French ‘art form’, given that they are a part of French cultural life and social life, and involve intellectuals, in a way that they are not in the UK for example (Kuisel, 1993, p.234; Rigby, 1991, p.1).

Furthermore, I did not undertake to interview individual politicians, since this method would be unlikely to yield communication of attitudes other than those already officially presented in existing examples of discourse such as legislative documents, press releases, media interviews and so on. In addition, interviews would self-evidently not involve the presentation of policy issues to a wider public at different times, and as such would not constitute contributions to a publicly aired debate on identity and cultural policy. Analysing what a
politician communicates in the setting of a research interview would establish a situation where the interviewee could choose what to say according to the questions asked and his/her willingness to expand upon particular points. This factor would make the interview method entirely unsatisfactory, given my intention of examining the ideas about culture and identity which are freely and ordinarily communicated to the public, whether through officially edited forms such as press statements, published extracts from parliamentary debates and conferences, or sometimes unedited forms such as live radio or television interviews. A secondary consideration was that it would also be extremely difficult to interview such a wide range of politicians as are covered in the texts collected and analysed, due to factors of access to and availability of all the figures within the time constraints surrounding the researching and writing-up of the project.

Another possibility would have been to interview particular advisors and civil servants who had worked with specific politicians, who would be likely to wish to remain anonymous. These are, after all, part of the wider definition of 'political elites', as I described in Chapter One, which may signify the most important State actors who take part in policy-making, including politicians and administrative elites. Indeed, it has long been recognised that there is a peculiar degree of overlap between the work of civil servants and politicians in France. Firstly, this is due to the nature of the French system of training such persons. As Suleiman notes, 'France has one of the most clearly established mechanisms for the creation of its elites of an Western society' (1978, pp.17-8). This is because the State forms its political elites itself, through a highly centralised higher education system and the administrative organs which it monopolises (ibid., also Suleiman, 1984, p.118). Particularly important is the ENA, or École nationale d'administration, a prestigious Paris academy established in 1945 to select and train candidates who would move into the most senior State administrative posts (Stevens, 1981, p.135-7; Wright, 1994, p.118). Yet being admitted to the highly competitive ENA has also meant the possibility of moving into not only prestigious civil service posts, but also private sector businesses, ministerial cabinets and open political engagement (Cole, 1998, p.105-6; Suleiman, 1978, p.25). Although the ENA and other top schools operate an open system of entry based on public entrance examinations, they have been criticised by many for perpetuating social inequalities and creating a new 'State nobility'.

1See Bourdieu, 1989, for example.
servants: every general election since 1958 has seen an increase in the numbers of députés (MPs) who are former ENA students (Stevens, 1981, p.137). Many leading politicians also passed through ENA. Prominent contemporary examples are Jacques Chirac, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Philippe Séguin on the Right, and Lionel Jospin, Michel Rocard and Jean-Pierre Chevènement on the Left (Suleiman, 1995, p.173; Thody, 1998, p.157). Cole describes (1998, p.106) how the ENA is a training ground for political elites in a broad sense, as it attracts the best and most ambitious students who form powerful networks which can help them to move between State administration, business and politics according to their ambitions. Also civil servants in France have tenure and the opportunity to take secondments to undertake political activity, safe in the knowledge that they can come back to their administrative posts, and are permitted to act as advisors to political parties and movements, or in think tanks (Ager, 1996b, p.105; Suleiman, 1984, pp.120-6). Further features of this system of interpenetration of political and administrative personnel are the nomination of top civil servants according to political criteria, the practice of substituting civil servants for party politicians in positions of political authority, and the more blurred lines between government and business, as a new breed of 'technocrats' grew up in the State planning and regulatory organisations, or nationalised industries (Cole, 1998, pp.105-6; Miliband, 1969, p.113).

Yet although there is a degree of overlap between the roles of politicians and administrative personnel, the latter are not the political actors or 'figureheads' who are seen by the public communicating policy concerns to the general public or to other politicians, and contributing to a debate to which the public can be exposed. Although civil servants may have a role in policy-making, and indeed in writing the actual speeches and declarations of a minister or leader, what a politician says in a speech or interview, releases in a press conference or writes in a newspaper article is generally perceived by various audiences, whether other politicians or the general public, both inside and outside of France, as consistent with the publicly-presented beliefs and policies of that particular politician, and those of the general direction of their party or political grouping, or even, in some cases, of the nation itself. As Drake (1995, p.140) argues, 'A leader's discourse is one of the tools of a political leader, since it is the dimension to his or her role most immediately apparent, and so most immediately susceptible to interpretation, comment and reaction'. Therefore, politicians, through their public discourse, are not only involved with policy-making, but also have a symbolic role as communicators of
policy on a national and international level. Besides this, we should not forget the importance of what a politician says about policy and how he or she says it, in terms of safeguarding his or her own political future. As Northcutt (1996, pp.58-9) explains, 'language and voters' ability to identify with language is one of the principal factors that mobilise support for candidates'. In view of these factors, I must qualify my earlier statement at the beginning of this section that 'political discourse is the discourse of politicians and policy-making groups', in stating that the contributions to political discourse discussed in my study are produced by policy-makers who are politicians, rather than civil servants. As I outlined at the beginning of Chapter One, the term 'political elites', therefore, is taken in this thesis to signify politicians involved in either policy formulation or debates on culture and its relationship with national identity. These may include both those within the ruling party in government, or those in opposition. This definition follows Pareto's conception of the elite as 'governing elite', composed of all political 'influentials' (1935).

2.2.1 Examining political communication in the French context

Having explained my reasons for using political discourse to examine the relationship between identity and cultural policy, I now outline some of the issues related to the study of political language. I particularly consider the context of the production of political discourse in contemporary France. Following this, I explain my corpus and the methodological questions arising from its construction and analysis.

In the general study of political language, Schäffner, Musolff and Townson (1996, p.9) argue that political discourse is a broad concept, covering 'internal discourse', which they describe as meaning politicians talking to other politicians, and the production of legislative texts during policy-making, and 'external discourse', which signifies politicians addressing the wider public, usually with texts which are argumentative or persuasive in nature. They also argue that the second aspect mentioned fits into a more general category of 'public discourse' which includes the language of media, together with advertising and any linguistic communication aimed at a non-specified group of addressees.

However, such a distinction is problematic for my approach looking at political language in the context of France. I examine texts which may be initially described as 'internal', which, whilst not necessarily aimed at the general public, for example those which
form the basis for discussions on policy-making at events which target a more limited audience, may ultimately be communicated to the wider public via citation in the media. Examples, in the context of my study looking at cultural policy in France, might include speeches at a workshop or conference organised by the Ministry of Culture, or other communications which are aimed in the first instance at government and civil service officials or specialists from a particular industry, but which may also subsequently be reported by the press, be made available on government web-sites, included within information packages at press conferences, or be distributed to interested parties as examples of policy initiatives and concerns of the Ministry. Such texts, therefore, cannot be exclusively 'internal'. Where sources such as circulars were unlikely to attract attention in the public sphere, I did draw on them to obtain background information about particular policies, and considered them relevant to my analysis of discourse if they were subsequently communicated to a public audience through the media.

Examples of 'external' discourse relevant in the case of my research, where politicians address the wider public directly, include several formats covering different kinds of discourse and attract varying levels of attention and audience. Press conferences for example, although they are reported on by journalists, may only allow speakers a short time to develop ideas. They are aimed primarily at media representatives and the wider international community (Gaffney, 1994, p.11). Speeches may be aimed at various audiences, and as noted above, may be reported in sections or as whole texts to a larger group of people by the media. In France it is common for the President or Prime Minister to address the nation (and the world) at particular points in the calendar, like New Year, or at times of special political or diplomatic importance, e.g. the national celebration of the French Revolution on 14 July. This is usually done by means of a televised broadcast, and involves a 'ritualised' setting such as speaking from the Elysée Palace, an event which in itself may involve the use of certain 'discursive conventions'.

Other examples of 'external' discourse can be found in French newspapers and magazines, which frequently feature persuasive articles written by Ministers and Deputies, or indeed the entire reproduction of a speech, which again permits the distribution of their discourse to a wider public. Similarly, television and radio interviews are aimed at a wide audience (perhaps wider), and the interviewee has the freedom to expand in a more spontaneous fashion than would be possible within a formalised press conference or declaration (Drake,

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2The official residence of the French President, in Paris.
Furthermore, speeches and interviews given in a more international setting such as at an event within France where many countries are represented, or at a Francophone Summit or European Union event, are positioned to attract possibly further attention on an international level, as the occasion is likely to be reported by the media in many countries. Even if statements or texts produced at these events are not widely reported, they may still be effective instruments of use to French political elites. This is because such speeches and interviews communicate policy and ideas concerning France and French identity, to international leaders and policy-makers in the first instance.

Moreover, it should be recognised that whilst certain instances of discourse may apparently be addressed to audiences within France, they may at the same time serve to create an identity for France which will be displayed internationally or externally as well as inside of France. This point is of importance in relation to my research since, whilst I am not engaged in measuring audience response per se, as far as my corpus of texts is concerned, the nature of the audience is nonetheless problematic as it is one of the conditions of production of a political text which may influence its orientation (Gaffney, 1989, pp.34-5). Gaffney argues that in reality, a political text which is studied may have 'an actual audience and a set of other audiences: journalists, political adversaries, the politically uncommitted' (and also political actors having various degrees of allegiance to the speaker). He discusses how the one-way nature, and ritualised settings, of a political text can lead the audience signified within it to undergo a shift in status, nature or attitude. Indeed, according to Gaffney, the attempt to influence or manipulate this shifting nature or status is 'one of the primary rhetorical devices of political discourse' (ibid.). This is because, as described above, a text may be communicated to different audiences beyond that of its original intention. This possibility may be recognised and acknowledged by the producer of the text, who can adapt his/her choice of words and forms of address accordingly. This could be seen to happen for example when a French politician addresses a national audience, but recognises that this address is then communicated at an international level by the media. Where relevant to my investigation of political perceptions of French identity, I will demonstrate how the audience within some of the texts I discuss may undergo shifts in nature and status, and how this may occur in a variety of settings.

The ritual aspect of political discourse assumes a particular significance in French political culture. This is due to the importance of presidentialism, and the personalisation of
politics, which has developed because of it during the Fifth Republic, which requires good performance in ritualised settings. I now examine these features more closely, as they form part of a set of references to institutions, texts and events that lie behind and continue to inform French politics. Moreover, presidentialism, and its resulting personalisation of French politics, are ways in which the institutions of the current French political system under the Fifth Republic have affected the role of discourse in French political culture.

Elgie (1993, p.1) explains how the development of the semi-presidential system in France has led to important political changes: ‘Since 1958 and the triumphal return of de Gaulle to the centre of the political stage, the presidency has become the focus of attention for the public, the media and the political élite alike. It is a much coveted institution.’ These changes made the president a figure of great symbolic importance, being particularly strengthened by General de Gaulle thanks to his 1962 amendment to the Constitution introducing the election from 1965 of the president by direct universal suffrage. However, Elgie notes that some of the claims about the ‘presidentialisation’ of the Fifth Republic are exaggerated, as France is still classified as a semi-presidential political regime, since a directly elected President coexists with a Prime Minister, and both have certain constitutional powers (1993, pp.7, 22-37). Yet the Fifth Republic’s encouragement of presidentialism, through its enhancement of the presidency, has resulted in the development of presidential leadership, and a presidential style of discourse as a resource of that leadership. This situation, it is argued by various authors, has led to the personalisation of politics in general under the Fifth Republic, encouraging a greater focus on the individual rather than the party. This feature has influenced various aspects of the French party political system, including the prime ministerial position, contenders for leadership and deputy positions for ministerial office and party positions (Drake and Gaffney, 1996, p.17).

Now, all political leaders in France, at various times and to different degrees, face expectations to speak and behave in accordance with codes and conventions of a possible presidential candidate (ibid.). This in turn has had consequences for the organisation of political parties, as they have had to adapt to the demands of presidential politics. As Cole (1998, p.141) explains, ‘the most successful parties in the Fifth Republic have been presidential parties, able legitimately to envisage the conquest of the regime’s greatest institutional prize, the presidency’.

At the same time, the backing of a political party has become essential for any politician to have a significant career; there is no room for the political loner (Suleiman, 1995, p.172).
Besides the development of the presidency, further enhancement of the importance of individual political personalities in France (and indeed other representative democracies), has been encouraged by the mediatisation of political life (Gaffney, 1991, pp.20, 25; S.Hayward, 1989). Moreover, as Susan Hayward notes (1990, p.25), it was France which ‘was the first West European country to capitalise on the ability of television to mediatise the political message effectively on a massive scale’. It was de Gaulle, who, as first president under the Republic he created, was the first political actor to harness the particular use of television for communication of the presidential message, and ultimately, image (S.Hayward, 1989, p.58, 1990, p.25; Guichard, 1985). Such a phenomenon, coupled with the demands of the presidential system cited above, has encouraged political actors to concentrate on the successful exploitation of ‘media events’, for example press conferences, debates, walkabouts, interviews, inauguration ceremonies and meetings. Their ability to perform well in public is frequently tested at ‘media events’, all of which facilitate close scrutiny in front of the camera, and the frequent use of television by French politicians to transmit long speeches at key moments (which are themselves frequently reproduced at length in national daily newspapers such as Le Monde). This is in contrast to the situation in the UK, where it may be argued that the culture of pressure to use the ‘soundbite’ is stronger.

So the effects of the mediatisation of French political culture under the Fifth Republic have, together with presidentialism, made the effective use of language ever more important for politicians in contemporary France. The failure of a politician to successfully adopt the ‘right’ discourse in the public arena is thus self-evident, and may be demonstrated in the case of a figure such as former Socialist Prime Minister Edith Cresson for example. Cresson’s abrupt manner and choice of over-familiar language in several unfortunate declarations served to do great harm to her personal image as well as to those of her party and government during 1991-92, and contributed to her removal from office (Wilcox, 1992, 1996).

In addition to the increased importance of language for politicians under the influence of presidentialism in the mediatised Fifth Republic political culture, the French electoral system

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3Ironically though, de Gaulle’s use of television may have contributed to his downfall, as, in the final years of his presidency, the 1965 presidential election campaign allowed French citizens to see other politicians in action, and showed them how the Gaullists now controlled all of the State radio and television monopoly (Thody, 1989, pp.144-5).

4I pick up this point again in Chapter Six.
arguably informs the role of political discourse in the French context, given that parties and politicians are continually involved in campaigning for elections, particularly the presidency. Gaffney (1997, p.277) explains how the five-year parliamentary cycle and the seven-year cycle of the presidency, at both times involving parties in the different roles of governmental and presidential party, have further enhanced the role of individuals (candidates and other figures), and increased the dependency of parties upon them. The system has also created a situation of permanent campaigning at various levels for different elections. Furthermore, the peculiar situation of cohabitation, that is, where the President and Prime Minister may at a given time be from opposing parties, may reduce the President’s real power, whilst curiously increasing his/her symbolic power, as his/her discourse is modified to portray an image of someone who is above the trials and tribulations of everyday politics and is concerned only with what is in the interests of France. This is in line with Max Weber’s notion of a ‘charismatic leader’, who is set apart from ordinary people through his/her endowment with apparently superhuman, or at least exceptional, powers or qualities (cited in Gaffney, 1989, p.19). Thus article 5 of the Constitution may become ever more important, which concerns the President’s role as arbitre (arbitor or guarantor) of the nation’s interests.\(^5\) Drake and Gaffney for example (1996, p.18), argue that this situation was effectively demonstrated during the cohabitation period of 1986-1988. So the presidential role as arbiter, at times enhanced by cohabitation, may act as a further condition of the production of discourse in the case of a president, or perhaps any présidentiable (politician considered or aiming to be considered a credible presidential candidate). In the analysis which follows I will draw upon any possible implications of these factors, where they help to illuminate our understanding of the construction of political perceptions of French identity.

More recently, however, the institutions of France’s political system have been subject to new influences, as political leadership now takes place at several levels, not necessarily within France. As Drake and Gaffney argue (1996, pp.26-7), French government is already complex given the existence of the various layers of State authority such as the presidency, the Prime Ministerial and governmental level and the numerous tiers of local government, in addition to the various influential lobbies and interest groups such as trade unions. Melucci (1997, p.68) notes the loss of authority at the top levels of decision-making of contemporary

\(^5\)See Milne, 1997, pp.24-5, for a discussion of this aspect.
nation-states, not just France, as interdependence and transnational economic and political forces take over. Now, European integration, in the form of the developing European Union, is, according to some viewpoints, perhaps the most significant force which affects French discourse in a national leadership context as a new resource to be drawn upon, and also as a constraint (Drake and Gaffney, 1996, p.26). Jack Hayward (1994a, p.27) too points to the example of François Mitterrand, who, as President, provided a good example of a politician who utilised European integration as a 'mobilising myth' to support his own domestic policy and leadership in times of difficulty. Even if Mitterrand’s policies were not always successful (whether at the domestic or European level), he still hoped to be remembered as a statesman who tried to help France secure a leading role in the 'New Europe'. This issue is of interest in relation to my study in the sense that discussion of 'Europe' can constitute a framework for French political elites to discuss issues of French identity and influence on the world stage (see also Schmidt, 1997a, 1997c). In conclusion to this section, I maintain that as factors relating to the institutions and traditions of French political culture such as those discussed have shaped and enhanced the role of political discourse under the Fifth Republic, then it is appropriate to remain sensitive to their effects when considering the texts examined in the corpus, or body of data, of this study. This corpus and its composition are the subject of the following section.

2.3 Constructing the corpus

2.3.1 Gathering the data

Following the initial stages of the research, consisting largely of a literature review (worked on in conjunction with a programme of research methods training), I established a working framework for the corpus of my study. I began to collect a variety of examples of contributions to the political discourse related to my selected case studies, on language, audiovisual and Internet policy, which I had selected for their importance to the political debates on French identity in the 1990s. These were taken from a range of sources, for example government or party-political official declarations and policy documents, transcripts of television and radio debates, transcripts of parliamentary debates, press articles and interviews and publicity/campaign documents. I also made use of secondary sources such as general press articles, European Union and European Commission documentation, academic articles and monographs, and sources on the Internet. These were particularly useful in identifying specific
events, legislation and debates which could be researched with the help of primary sources of official documentation and individual examples of political discourse related to the relevant issues. In this way, I obtained a wide range of documents for my proposed corpus. In the UK I also contacted relevant organisations in France, and the French Embassy in London, and conducted research based on Internet resources such as official web-sites, and journalistic sources held at various university centres.

Approximately nine months into the first year of the research (June 1996), I undertook a week's 'pilot' fieldwork visit to Paris, in order to assess the availability and appropriateness of additional sources of information in the light of the intentions of my research, to gather initial information in addition to that which I had already obtained, and to highlight possibilities for future targeting. During this fieldwork, I visited various centres, including some of the archives of government departments like the Ministry of Culture, specialist libraries on political science and European Union information, a government documentation centre (La Documentation française) specialising in electronic database searching, and other general libraries. My work was facilitated by some existing knowledge of certain centres gained from an earlier period of residence and study in France during my undergraduate degree. The visit also permitted introductions and recommendations to various other organisations and contacts useful to the research such as relevant Ministry of Culture officials. From this initial visit, I established some good sources of information for case study materials and continued collecting these.

I also virtually completed the collection of materials for a possible introductory chapter which I had in mind on the Bicentenaire celebrations of 1989 (Bicentennial of 1789 Revolution), which could be used to introduce issues of identity related to French history and its Republican political culture. Eventually I felt, following further consideration of this proposal, that the use of the Bicentenaire was not in fact essential, in view of the issues I proposed to relate to it being discussed elsewhere in the study, and the guidelines for the appropriate length of the thesis. I felt that I could refer to the Bicentenaire in the Introduction of the thesis, regarding its significance in relation to national identity, but that sufficient quantities of interesting material for examination were available which would stand up on their own in the form of the main case studies of the thesis. Following this fieldwork visit, I continued correspondence with contacts in France, by letter, fax, telephone, e-mail etc., building on work carried out during the first year and the findings of the June 1996 fieldwork visit, with the aim
of completing, as far as possible, the collection of data required by the end of 1996. This period of data collection culminated in a further fieldwork period of three weeks spent in Paris at the end of the year. My main sources of information derived from personal visits were archives and/or documentation centres at:

- the Ministère de la Culture (Département de l'information et de la communication or DIC; Département des études et de la prospective or DEP; Délégation générale à la langue française or DGLF; Département des affaires internationales or DAI)
- the Agence de la Coopération Culturelle et Technique (ACCT)
- the Fondation Nationale des sciences politiques (FNSP)
- Sources d'Europe (a European Documentation Centre)
- the Haut Conseil de la Francophonie (HCF)
- the Service d'information du gouvernement (SIG)
- the Centre National de la cinématographie (CNC)
- the Ministère des Affaires étrangères - Cellule de documentation de la Maison des Français à l'étranger
- La Documentation française (government publishing house, library and research centre)
- the Bibliothèque publique d'information at the Centre Georges Pompidou
- the Assemblée nationale
- various political parties

Searching by theme meant that I collected documents which contained substantial treatment of the subjects to be analysed, rather than every individual interview which may contain a sole sentence saying something fairly banal like 'France must fight the GATT agreements', in the context of another unrelated topic. Yet no research project can claim to have covered in detail absolutely all resources available in a particular field. Issues such as timing, resources available for travel and fieldwork, access to archives, variations in the quality, range and cataloguing of materials conserved by organisations, and the cooperation of staff working in areas of government and political parties, are factors which may influence a research project of this kind. Human error too may lead a researcher to miss certain items whilst spending long hours working in archives. In my case, I am confident that my organisation of my research schedule,

6The costs of fieldwork visits to France were generously supported by travel grants awarded by the Department of European Studies and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at Loughborough University.

7Documentation was also supplied to me during the course of my research, without personal visit, by sources such as the European Commission, the Mission de la Recherche et de la technologie of the Ministère de la Culture, radio stations like RTL, the Presidential press offices, the Direction générale des relations culturelles, scientifiques et techniques of the Ministère des Affaires étrangères, the Ministère délégué aux affaires européennes, the Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel, the Société civile des auteurs-réalisateurs, plus other individual researchers in both France and the UK.
and careful identification of the best resources available enabled me to cover a very wide range of material in my subject area.

A further issue I should comment on concerned my discussions of the precise nature of the research topic with the information staff I met and corresponded with in France. I was reluctant, at some points when meeting with or writing to officials, to expand upon the exact aims of my research and proposed analysis, especially in connection with debates about identity. This was because I did not wish to give the impression that my main aim was to criticise government or party policies and opinions in some way, even if I would ultimately offer some negative opinions resulting from my research findings. I felt that giving too much away might prejudice my treatment as a researcher, if some people felt I was likely to analyse policy and French elite opinion in a hostile way, perhaps from an ‘Anglo-Saxon’ or pro-American standpoint, being from the UK. I thought this could be a factor governing my reception, given the sensitive nature of some issues about French identity and its interaction with other cultural identities (for example in the context of debate about Americanisation of the French film industry). Hence I did not expand a great deal on my precise lines of enquiry, at times glossing over my exact interest in identity and simply asking for documents on particular policy themes. I also aimed to be careful not to offer any criticisms of French policies or opinions held by French political actors in conversation or in my correspondence, either openly or by choice of terms with possibly negative connotations (not, for example, speaking of ‘the protectionism of cultural industries’). This strategy then enabled me for the most part to read and sift a variety of documents in my own way and determine for myself, which, in my opinion, were the most interesting in terms of their discussion of identity (although, with regards to the material received by post, I did not have this freedom, as it was pre-selected). It is possible that my methods could be accused of being a little dishonest, in my attempts to disguise any of my own viewpoints on French policies or political opinions in my meetings with officials. However, I used the methods that I did in the hope of maximising access to a good range of useful material. Furthermore, I felt that it was important to investigate texts where ‘identity’ did not necessarily appear as a central theme or as a keyword according to archive classifications, since it would be interesting to see how it was developed by political figures on a perhaps more subtle level, in connection with policy issues. With the benefit of hindsight though, it is possible that my strategies did perhaps cause me to miss some material, which may have been
filed under a different heading not identified by the people I approached, on account of me not always being entirely precise in my requests. Yet a degree of aléatoire (chance) can always occur in the collection of data, perhaps more so in the case of qualitative data on subjects inviting such ambiguities and complexities as do identity and cultural issues. The researcher must recognise such factors and aim to make effective use of all sources where possible, charting problems which may arise and seeking alternative areas of information wherever possible.

In general, most officials I met with in the libraries and archives in Paris were very helpful in helping me to find the documents I was seeking. Where I did not find much in certain places, this was of significance for the research, since it frequently confirmed my previous suspicions regarding the usefulness of sources, for example some of the political parties whose resources were not always well-suited to assisting researchers. I had expected that in some cases, the majority of examples of discourse concerning certain issues would emanate from the governing party, and the opposition, at a given time. Some parties may not, for various reasons, whether historical, financial or ideological etc. or their lack of media coverage, devote time and resources to debate on cultural issues. My experiences of active research, particularly the fieldwork in France, confirmed that these suspicions were indeed the case. The smaller parties such as the Parti Radical and the Force démocrate were not, in my experience, geared up for receiving researchers who wish to plough through their archives, if indeed they had any true 'archives' available! Also several of the parties claimed that their paucity of information at the time was due to reorganisation of their headquarters. Another factor in my research using party resources was the need to deflect the parties' attempts to bombard me with propaganda, whether through packs of recent publicity posters or discussion. This was particularly the case with the Front National documentation centre, where the official I met with (although quite well-organised and helpful) was somewhat suspicious as to the nature of my research topic and enquired as to whether someone else or some other 'organisation' had chosen it for me, before offering a lecture on the merits of the FN as a political force. These issues meant that often I found that other sources such as the press, radio and television interview transcripts and correspondence were more satisfactory means for finding opinions and reactions of some of the political parties. However, despite some problems with the political parties, usually the specialists I saw could refer me to other centres who could help me, and I think that the long-
standing correspondence I had established with some of these people had a positive effect on the way I was treated once we met in person.

During the autumn stay in Paris, I had sufficient time available for what I wanted to do and was pleased that I managed eventually to exploit more sources than I had anticipated. Moreover, I was glad that I had delayed this period of work until the end of 1996, since having spent the autumn preparing the trip and gathering additional texts whilst in the UK, I had a much clearer idea of the best places and people to approach and the texts I needed than I would have had, had I attempted to continue the fieldwork in Paris earlier in the year.

By the end of 1996, the position was, briefly, that I had collected a workable corpus, subject to certain factors related to the existence and availability of materials from various sources, as outlined above. Following this, I continued additional investigation of some avenues back in the UK, using journalistic sources, Journal officiel publications, electronic databases such as Politique et société (La Documentation française, 1996), sources on the Internet, and further correspondence with contacts in France in organisations such as the government ministries.

2.3.2 Developing the corpus and research aims

I should explain at this point that at the time of undertaking my fieldwork the focus of my research had not undergone the finer tuning which would happen later.

My PhD research topic had grown out of an interest in identity issues in France developed throughout my undergraduate studies, particularly by my experiences of studying in France during 1993-4, when I became interested in issues related to the Americanisation of culture, and cultural imperialism, which I later began to investigate in a final-year dissertation. On beginning my postgraduate studies I wanted to develop these interests further and to investigate those questions of identity in France which seemed increasingly problematic, concerning debates (both political and in other spheres, e.g. the media), and policies concerning the possible protection of French culture in an increasingly global market-place, besides sometimes hostile reactions by some politicians and other sections of the community to the presence of different ethnic groups within France. In particular I was interested in questions relating to the possible consequences of globalisation and European integration for French identity and culture, whether positive or negative, and the reactions to these consequences by
In order to find a manageable way of approaching this complex subject area and to structure my research, I initially chose to investigate the possibility of there being a consensus existing across French political parties about French culture and identity. I was especially keen to consider what politicians communicate about identity, believing their opinions to be constructed according to certain recurring themes, ideas and images, which could transcend party boundaries. I wondered if certain myths concerning identity and the idea of French nationhood stemming from France's revolutionary and colonial past, and ongoing Republican political culture, might be reactivated by political elites in response to possible cultural challenges to their perceptions of identity of importance in the 1990s.

With this in mind, I began my collection of texts with the aim of collecting material to form a representative sample of the five main political formations in France - the Rassemblement pour la République (RPR), the Union pour la Démocratie française (UDF), the Parti Socialiste (PS), the Parti Communiste français (PCF) and the Front National (FN) - besides trying to include some of the smaller groups. As noted above though, I had expected that in some instances the majority of examples of discourse concerning certain cultural issues would originate from the parties of which had been in government and opposition, with rather less coming from the smaller parties, and I did in fact find this to be the case as a result of my research.

However, after gathering my data, and carrying out some sifting and analysis of the materials, I began to realise that the issues of culture and identity which I was interested in working on would be more profitably analysed within a somewhat wider framework than the question of cross-party consensus. I felt that this early focus was now constraining my investigation, in that it did not allow me to 'dig' deeply enough into the relationship between culture, cultural policy and identity as used by contemporary French political elites. Furthermore, I had begun to question whether finding a cross-party consensus on identity and culture would necessarily be so interesting or surprising, given France's post-revolutionary political history, the social transformation in the post-1945 period and the consensus of policy around the Ministry of Culture which I believed to inform all parties. On the other hand, this could be argued not to be the case, as a counter argument to this assertion might point to the idea of a guerre franco-française (war amongst the French) arising at various points in history.
when French society has been split along regular fault lines concerning some cultural and identity issues in the post-Revolutionary period. We might suggest here the Dreyfus affair, the split between Church and State and tensions around laïcité (secularity), the Vichy period, the Algerian war for example. However, with these considerations in mind, I redirected my focus towards the construction of political discourse on identity, and how this was related to cultural policy. I now aimed to analyse how issues which had come to the fore during the 1990s and examined in my case studies, had shaped discourse on cultural policy by French political elites expressing identity. Cross-party comparisons would no longer be the main focus, but could still be drawn on where appropriate.

Far from being a waste of time or energy, I believe that this development of the research focus was an important part of the learning curve which I followed in working on my PhD research. Looking at cross-party consensus provided a useful route into the investigation of my subject, and helped me to systematically exploit many sources of primary materials, which I then used to construct my final corpus for analysis and to refine my research aims.

Other implications for my research had arisen from my search for data in France. After the fieldwork, I began to rethink the structure of my proposed analysis, as I had found more material about some cultural policy issues, but less about others, than I had at first expected. Similarly, I began to see a number of ambiguities within the texts, which led me to reconsider my ideas about how to view different cultural issues, for example, whether as potential threats or opportunities for French cultural policy. I now recognised that the opinions expressed by political elites in the texts could not necessarily be split up into clear-cut categories, so I would have to rethink my structure of case studies. I will return to this point later when I discuss issues concerning writing-up the case studies.

Finally, the results of my fieldwork reinforced my opinion that there was a division between the issues of importance for French cultural policy during the period 1989-93 and the period 1993 onwards, which I had thought would be of relevance to the theoretical findings of the final research project. As I explained in Chapter One, the post-1993 period coincided with Jacques Toubon of the RPR succeeding Socialist Jack Lang as Minister of Culture, and also Francophone Affairs, and I outlined how it had been suggested that the arrival of Toubon might herald a return to a more classical, Gaullist conception of culture based on the defence of the French language and its rayonnement (Looseley, 1995, pp.228-9). My data indicated that the
post-1993 period included the most interesting and controversial issues in terms of French identity within a short space of time. The chapters which follow will discuss these issues, as I test the hypothesis that this period of cultural policy-making in France is coterminous with an embracing of fundamentally undynamic conceptions of identity on the part of political elites.

2.3.3 Selecting the final corpus

My case studies aimed to address the particular concerns of French political elites about culture and identity, the reasons behind these concerns and the reactions they provoke, which may or may not result in legislation. As outlined earlier, the study of political discourse can be used to help assess the nature of and responses to the various challenges to identity as they are perceived by such elites and presented in the public arena.

Given that my study aimed to consider - as far as possible - a representative sample of examples of discourse for each topic considered, and that preliminary analysis indicated that it would be neither appropriate nor possible to study in detail all texts collected during the course of the research, within the constraints of a thesis of standard length, I needed to construct the thesis according to the following model: each case study would include the detailed analysis and comparison of several 'core texts' chosen on the basis of (in all cases) wider consultation of a much larger body of material considered. Such 'core' texts chosen would be those illustrating significant or typical themes and responses, in terms of the debate presented within the case study; or those of importance with regard to the positions of their producers in the political spectrum where relevant to the case study; or those having prominence as particular 'moments' of the debate or issue. Besides these main texts chosen for deeper analysis, reference would be made where appropriate in the case studies to examples of discourse emanating from 'minor' figures or from 'satellite' texts considered to be of lesser importance in thematic terms, but from major producers, which would seem to invite analysis of a less dense nature.

The specific texts chosen for close analysis therefore illustrate important and typical responses, and are analysed and compared in terms of the dominant themes which they present.

As I argued at the beginning of this chapter, such analysis is essential to understanding the complex nature of the assumptions of policy-making elites about French identity and how it

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8 Concerning the preparation of this thesis according to the recommended lengths, I disregarded 5000 words which I considered a reasonable allowance for translations, since I had provided systematic translations for all quotations from French sources.
relates to the challenges of the cultural policy issues studied. Through comparing and unravelling the themes presented in the texts examined, I hope to offer an illustration of their complexity and illustrate that the overall conception of French identity held by French political elites is largely backward-looking and unchanging in the face of contemporary cultural challenges. In addition, I aim to draw conclusions concerning possible consequences of such a conception.

The choice of 'core texts' for examination was made according to the following criteria. These included the setting and timing of the event, which influenced its possible exposure and/or reporting, and the status of the producer of the text. However, the most important element in the interest of each text lay in its inclusion and development of central themes concerning French identity. A further factor considered was the possibility of including particular political figures throughout as appropriate to different cases, for example the interest in including discourse from a President, or perhaps a Minister for Telecommunications in the case of the Internet. I develop these issues further in relation to the particular factors relating to the case study areas in each chapter's individual exploration of the texts chosen for analysis.

The background to the main texts discussed is presented at the beginning of each case study, together with a discussion of their interest in terms of the analysis which forms the main focus of the case study. As will be demonstrated, they are all important texts in their own right, because of their development of key themes which enable the tracing of elite perceptions of French identity, and the illustration of points supporting my hypothesis as stated in Chapter One that such perceptions are undynamic. Before analysing this material, however, I should comment on my methods for actually analysing the data I had assembled into my research corpus, and some of the issues arising from this analysis.

2.4 Writing and analysis

As Drake and Gaffney have noted (1996, p.14), the study of language and discourse is problematic, since their 'scientific' study often leads to limited, mechanical results, such as those obtained by the quantitative analysis of Jean-Marie Cotteret and René Moreau for

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9 My case studies include extracts from the texts to support various points of discussion. Originally my intention was to include the entire texts as an appendix to this thesis, however a number of issues were raised regarding access and format. The copies were supplied by archives in a variety of formats, some of a long length and differing standards of printing and presentation, sometimes containing annotations and mistakes on the copies. A further issue concerned copyright, as most of my sources requested that I did not reproduce the texts in full.
example (1969, 1976). Richard Griffiths suggests (1991, p.xiii) however that words should not be examined only from ‘a philological or linguistic point of view’, preferring that they are ‘on the whole merely situated in their stylistic, social and political context’. Drake and Gaffney also argue (ibid.) that political language should instead be analysed in an ‘interpretative’ manner [my italics] in order to elucidate its effects and significance, although this is not to assert that a qualitative analysis is non-scientific. This approach is in line with the aims of my research, which is to consider the particular cultural policy themes and issues presented in terms of identity. Thus in my analysis, I focus less on linguistic characteristics than on the interpretation of the themes presented in the texts. This derives from the fact that I have chosen to study discourse in its broadest sense, as a collection of contributions to debates which illuminate our understanding of political attitudes about culture and identity, rather than as a set of texts deconstructed for their interest in terms of understanding an actor’s particular discursive style or approach to leadership.

Early on in my research, I made some attempt to utilise information technology in order to sift themes, and so facilitate analysis of my texts, but these proved both time-consuming and frustrating in terms of results. This was due on one hand to the difficulty of scanning and processing texts containing either foreign characters or newspaper column layouts, on the other to the fact that the necessity of physically reading the documents still remained (as I found when I considered using the Nudlst data analysis package).10 Whilst such computer-based methods may have their merits for certain types of project, I did not find them helpful in carrying out this research. Therefore the analysis was carried out in a manual fashion, involving reading, categorising and dissecting texts. Whilst this may sometimes be laborious, the nature of this project based on close analysis and deconstruction of discourse was such that the actual reading of the data for meaning, not simply frequency, was unavoidable and enabled a greater understanding of the content. Furthermore, the process of analysis gradually became easier and more rapid as familiarity with the construction of the texts, party and personal positions, recurring images and ideas developed. I found the use of charts, diagrams and various filing systems based on different key themes and hypotheses to be of assistance whilst working on my

10I attended an introductory training course on the use of this complex qualitative data analysis package. As a result I realised that using Nudlst required first reading the data and establishing an index system framework of subject headings for analysis. Furthermore, using such a tool could only identify key terms; it could not provide a more nuanced reading of the elaboration of themes according to different contexts and styles of discourse.
interpretations of the texts, as well as search techniques for data that are computerised such as databases like *Politique et société* (La Documentation française, 1996), and Internet sources.

In analysing my texts however, I became aware of certain limitations of my approach. In particular I became aware that meanings of texts can be 'made' as they are interpreted and re-interpreted by a researcher. The researcher is not innocent, passively absorbing and explaining data. Rather, I recognised that a researcher can select and use material for his/her own purposes, and in doing so may ignore (either by choice or inadvertently) certain aspects of the data which may be of greater significance than others. I say this since in gathering my examples of discourse, and then in collating quotations on individual topics, I went through my own process of sifting and selecting those sections of texts which I felt were the most interesting and significant, or which related best to the point I was explaining in my writing. Therefore, in this way, although the themes of the research came out of my data, it was I who decided which quotations were most relevant, and how they could be used to form my own narrative, through my own process of editing and selection. Atkinson and Coffey (1997, p.60) describe how no text can determine or constrain how it will be read. After all, 'reading is an activity, not the passive receipt of information'. Thus they explain how a reader 'brings to the text his or her stock of cultural knowledge, a knowledge (or ignorance) of similar texts, and his or her unique biography'. Similarly Hewison (1995, p.223), argues that when undertaking analysis, 'in saying something we are only reconstituting previous texts into a new text whose meaning is immediately remade by those who hear or read it'.

Another limitation was possibly my background as a British, not French, researcher. Despite having worked with the French language for many years, it is still possible that I may have misinterpreted or passed over certain meanings, particularly cultural references, which a French person may have noticed or indeed have interpreted differently. Also, my position as an 'outsider', yet closely analysing the texts, may have had a bearing in perhaps leading me to make too much of some points, due to my immersion in the analysis of the texts. Another person, not absorbed in such analysis, might bring a different reading to some of the texts. This point is noted by Gaffney in his analysis of the French Left's discourse under presidentialism,

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11See also Watson, 1997, pp.88-9, on this point. We might also think of Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' here. Bourdieu argues that day-to-day social life, as well as larger social institutions, are structured according to a set of 'structuring dispositions' or 'habitus'. The habitus, according to Bourdieu, is the product of past experiences, absorbed into the 'unconscious', and a set of dispositions brought by the individual to daily life which incline him or her to particular actions and reactions (Giddens et al., 1994, p.59; Krais, 1993, p.169).
The French Left and the Fifth Republic (1989), in which he argues that the conversion of a 'discursive event' (e.g. a speech, interview) into a text for analysis constitutes a distortion. He refers in the same vein to problems of interpretation in literary analysis, where he argues that 'any effective thematic elucidation will distort the narrative quality of the text' (p.35). Gaffney himself attempts to mitigate this problem however by analysing a handful of whole texts, whilst respecting their form 'in order that the ideas contained within it and signified by it - its connotations, allusions, the issues it raises and does not raise, the metaphors and other figures it uses and does not use - may be properly expounded and given weight' (p.36). Whilst I can appreciate the merits of this approach, I did not feel such a method was appropriate for my purposes since my study does not concentrate (as Gaffney's does) on the analysis of one text at a time, and is not as concerned with form and style. Rather, my analysis compares and contrasts different examples of contributions to discourse because it considers the themes raised within them, not necessarily the discourse per se, and the rhetorical/stylistic devices contained within it, to the same extent. A thematic approach, whilst flawed in some respects, was, I felt, essential to my attempt to illuminate and successfully reexamine the different opinions on identity and cultural policy held by political elites and used in relation to my chosen case study topics.

It is nevertheless important to note how the subjective influences related to the positionality of the researcher discussed above, can have an impact on the type of research in which I have been engaged. In spite of the uncomfortable recognition of these methodological difficulties, I believe that the alternative of merely presenting vast amounts of raw data in unanalysed and non-selected form would be unsatisfactory, since it would not offer an overall interpretation or argument and so could not really constitute a valid contribution to understanding of the subject of the research. It is important however to remain aware of these difficulties of research and writing, and so recognise the limitations of the research and the possibility of other interpretations of it which may be encountered through subsequent processes of academic exchange.

Similarly, I end with a comment on a few aspects connected with writing-up my analysis which had implications for the shape of my thesis as it ultimately emerged. In writing the case studies I became aware of the need to be wary of pre-conceptions in sifting the major themes presented in the texts studied, and of the need to be open to the importance of the points which may emerge from the analysis. For example, I had, early on, believed the Internet case to
be particularly concerned with France’s policy actions within the European Union, but it became clear later on that other angles of importance, besides this aspect, were also emerging. Another issue related to the structuring of analysis and writing was an early over-willingness to structure analysis around quite rigid chapter headings. After a while I felt I had been in the trap of letting myself over-organise the approach to writing the study, when it really was preferable to step back slightly and instead let the material lead what I would write about. In this way, I had to set aside some earlier ideas about what issues would be of most significance in relation to the different cases. As Michael Green argues (1997, p.201), research requires a process of writing, and many connections and insights can only happen through the process of writing. Such hurdles though, point to the importance of being aware of pre-conceptions in the research and writing process, and are, I feel, all part of the training connected to writing a PhD thesis.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the research methods which were used to undertake the research for this thesis, giving reasons for my choices. The methods I have used, based on the thematic study of political discourse via a corpus of texts concerning French identity as expressed in cultural policy, have hopefully allowed me to effectively investigate my research topic and discuss the findings from it. However, I am also aware of the limitations of this study, related to the difficulties of analysing and writing about political texts treating the debates surrounding identity. I have tried to indicate the nature of these problems in the course of this chapter as I have discussed the factors involved in the research process and the production of my thesis.

Regarding the outcomes of the research, I suggest that my approach leads to an interesting contribution to the greater understanding of contemporary French political perceptions of identity as expressed in cultural policy. I turn to the examination of these in my case studies, after the following chapter, where I contextualise the case studies in the form of a discussion of the French language and the role it has played in policy relating to identity formation and definition in France through the ages.
CHAPTER THREE: LANGUAGE POLICY AND FRENCH NATIONAL IDENTITY: FROM THE ANCIEN RÉGIME TO THE LOI TOUBON

3.1 Introduction: overview of language policy\(^1\) and identity formation in France

The French language can be considered as one of the very foundations of French national identity. This is demonstrated in the well-documented history of the French State’s manipulation of French. As Rupnik explains (1988, p.202), the French language is ‘much more than a means of communication at the service of a culture’. Indeed, ‘the language is the culture and any attack on it is perceived as a matter of honour affecting the personality of France, the unity of the State, the civilising mission, in short the national identity’. Ager too (1996a, p.192) comments that ‘linguistic change in this symbol is traditionally seen as decadence, as a form of illness and disease...’. Such a connection is so important that in contemporary France, statements which refer to this idea abound in political debates, as will be discussed in this chapter and in the case study on language policy in Chapter Four. It is this status of language as a symbol of French national and cultural identity which has kept it continually on the policy-making agenda, at times enjoying more prominence than others, depending on particular socio-economic and political circumstances. Whether to the fore or in the background, the presence of language as a cultural symbol can be demonstrated in terms of the scale of State activity surrounding it, and in the expenditure it attracts, as will be outlined below.

As I indicated in Chapter One, language was a powerful tool in the building of the French nation-state. Modern France was formed as a mixture of various ethnic groups, for example Catalans, Basques, Alsatians. A common, centrally-generated French identity could

\(^1\)The term ‘language planning’ is sometimes used in discussions of State involvement with language, and involves official instruction to define the status of a language and to define the nature of the language it involves (Ager, 1990, p.9). Language planning though has been more specifically linked with using the skills of linguists and others to solve problems of status and corpus of a language, and Phillipson explains how language planning theory has recently tried to include wider social, economic and political concerns, and to acknowledge the myth of objectivity involved in it (1992, p.86, with reference to J.V.Neustupny (1983) ‘Towards a paradigm for language planning’, Language Planning Newsletter, 9/4, pp.1-4; and H.Haarmann (1990) ‘Language planning in the light of a general theory of language: a methodological framework’, International Journal of the Sociology of Language, no.86, pp.103-26). Also Phillipson describes how ‘language planning’ has been described as ‘language policy’ (with reference to B.B.Kachru (1981) ‘An overview of policy and planning’, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, II, pp.2-7), due to dissatisfaction with previous technocratic approaches (p.86). Elsewhere though, ‘language policy’ is used to mean ‘language planning done by Governments’ (Tollefson, 1991, p.16, also Ozolins, 1993, quoted in Ager, 1996a, p.2). It is in this sense which I use ‘language policy’, to describe the action of governments regarding language, in the sense of a social or public policy (see also Ager, ibid.), but I acknowledge that this is linked to ‘language planning’ in the sense of action by linguistic specialists who may work with government. For further debates on this point, see Ager, 1996a, pp.2-3).
not be an ethnic identity, being composed of different groups. This meant that other bases for identity needed to be established, based on Republicanism, and its factors of linguistic and political identity, in the hope of creating a new community.

As de Certeau et al. explain (1975, p.9), the role of the monarchical State in the destruction of regional and ‘peripheral’ cultures by the systematic imposition of French language in public life is well recognised. Grillo (1989, p.29) notes that under the ancien régime, although there was no actual policy for linguistic unification, French was ‘the dominant language, the language of the powerful, and gradually infiltrated many areas of public life’. In 1539, article 111 of the Edict of Villers-Cotterêts by François I prescribed the use of French instead of Latin in laws and court judgements, thus enshrining French as the official legal and administrative language. After this, edicts following the annexing of newly-conquered provinces demanded, from the mid-seventeenth century, the exclusive use of the French language (see de Certeau et al., ibid.).

By the sixteenth century, Lyon was an important printing and publishing centre, with the first books in French being produced there, and the city serving as a cultural crossroads for Europe. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Paris and Versailles too were important cultural centres, and France had produced a great literature. Writers of the Enlightenment such as Rousseau, Montesquieu and Voltaire strengthened the status of French (Dictionnaire des lettres françaises, 1964, p.937; Gordon, 1978, pp.34-5; Phillipson, 1992, p.104). French was used within Europe by ruling elites, playing an important role in world politics. The French language then enjoyed a prestigious position on a global level as a language of culture and international relations (Gordon, 1978, p.35; J.Hayward, 1983, p.245, in Wilcox, 1998, p.27; Pomeau, 1991, quoted in Miguet, 1996, p.68). So French became the language of elites, necessary for civil service employment, military and church affairs for example, whilst the masses could not generally write, and spoke patois instead of the official French, whose usage was regulated by the Académie française. This body, formed in 1635, was charged by Cardinal Richelieu with giving French proper rules.²

²Today, the Académie is informally under the ‘protection’ of the French President, rather than being a direct government agency. It gives money for awarding literary and language prizes and provides recommendations and opinions to government on language issues and policy proposals, although it rarely initiates policy. Although the Académie française has powerful symbolism as a guardian of the French language, given its official duty to ‘purge and fix’ the language, it has been constituted with only one specific job, which is the construction of a dictionary. Its forty members, known as ‘Immortals’, meet to discuss this every Thursday afternoon for eight months of the year, the last full version appearing in 1935 and the first part of the current, ninth, edition, in 1986 (Ager, 1996a,
This situation of French being an elite language was changed by the revolutionary government, which in 1790 appointed Abbé Grégoire to prepare a report on language use within the French territory. Ford (1993, p.34) argues that the new Republic found linguistic plurality unacceptable because ‘a multiplicity of languages reinforced the superstitions and historical memory that the Revolution wished to efface’. Furthermore, ‘the language policies of the First Republic came to express the Revolution’s obsession with unity as well as its negation of its monarchical past’ (*ibid.*). Similarly, Grillo (1989, p.35) notes how, ‘for the Revolutionaries, diversity of language was associated with the old régime, with feudalism’, and how ‘linguistic heterogeneity was associated with a policy of divide and rule’. Ager too (1988, p.181), describes how at the time of the Revolution, French was regarded as the language of freedom, and hence the whole country needed access to it. Meanwhile, the Left thought regional languages had to be eliminated, as they were ‘the language of the serf or the aristocrat, or bigotry or of the past’. French on the other hand, symbolised equality, reason and democracy (Sanders, 1993, p.1). Because linguistic diversity was considered by the revolutionaries to be an obstacle to spreading revolutionary ideals and equality, linguistic uniformity had to be encouraged, through the teaching of French in primary schools (Judge, 1993, pp.12-3). This view was clearly demonstrated in 1794 when Abbé Grégoire’s report was presented to the revolutionary Convention, advising on ‘la nécessité et les moyens d’anéantir les patois et d’universaliser l’usage de la langue française’ (the necessity and the means of obliterating *patois* and of making the use of French universal) (*de Certeau et al.*, 1975, p.11). The report also claimed that six million French people did not speak French, whilst around thirty *patois* were spoken - although these figures are questionable (Grillo, 1989, pp.24-5). As a result the revolutionary government made several decrees, the most famous issued on 20 July 1794 (2 Thermidor an 2), stating that all public texts must be written in French. A linguistic *terreur* (revolutionary period of terror and repression) followed in France’s regions, particularly in Alsace, where the use of German was repressed (as described by Brunot, 1967, quoted in Grillo, 1989, p.38). French was no longer an elite language, as it was now imposed on the masses.

\[\text{pp.54-5; Marnham, 1994, p.29).}\]

\[\text{See de Certeau et al. (1975) for analysis of this report; also Grillo (1989, pp.31-6) for details on language and other revolutionary figures; also Balibar (1991).}\]

So, as Ford argues (1993, p.31) ‘the post-revolutionary nation came to mean a community of people sharing a common (pre-revolutionary past), a common culture, and a common language’. However, as Weber has maintained (1977, p.67), France remained linguistically diversified well into the nineteenth century, when as late as 1863, more than a quarter of the country’s population did not understand any French. A standardised, written French had to be imposed by means of institutional mechanisms such as the education system which became free and compulsory in 1881. French education began to use only approved dictionaries and grammars and to train teachers to punish children using regional languages and dialects (Ager, 1990, pp.220-1). In addition, since parish priests preferred to preach in the local language (considering it a way of preserving the Catholic faith), and defended local culture, regional languages were seen as a threat to the Republic as they had ‘become a political instrument through which the Church undermined national consensus’. Eventually, the State issued a decree in 1903 which banned Breton, Basque, Flemish and Provençal in religious instruction (Ford, 1993, pp.36-7). Weber (1977) sees such efforts to establish linguistic uniformity as part of the general republican mission civilisatrice (civilising mission) and State-led drive for modernisation carried out within metropolitan France, which involved the domestic centre ‘colonising’ the domestic periphery. As Phillipson notes (1992, p.101), a ‘key component’ of this mission has been the belief in the French language as inherently superior.

There were also further issues which had an indirect influence on spreading the use of French. Conscription, for example, had been established during the Revolution, and had a particular impact on language during the wars of 1870 and 1914-18, forcing young men to move away from their villages and to communicate in French. Likewise Napoleon’s centralising administrative and military reforms had included the use of French instead of Latin for national ceremonies and military academies, and required a knowledge of French for many public service jobs, even postmen, enforced through a system of nationwide written exams. Populations too began to mix across France through the influence of better roads and new means of transport like railways, which also brought new business between different areas, at the same time as newspapers and electoral systems were developing (Ager, 1990, p.220; Ager, 1996a, p.45; Armstrong, 1973, p.133; Szulmajster-Celnikier, 1996, p.44). The Third Republic was also a period of great colonial expansion, which saw the mission civilisatrice put into practice abroad, thus further aiding both the spread of French and the development of ideas and symbols of nationhood. The universality of French was nevertheless threatened by Great
Britain's expansion overseas, and French defeat at the hands of Germany in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 (Szulmajster-Celnikier, 1996, p.45). By the beginning of the twentieth century, Ford argues (1993, pp.31-2), 'the Republican nation came to be defined in both political and cultural terms', continuing that 'in no domain is this process of definition clearer than in the way in which the French language became an essential feature of French national identity'.

However, according to Judge (1993 p.14) and Szulmajster-Celnikier (1996, p.47), more recently, in the twentieth century, French political elites have returned to using direct legislation, such as decrees on spelling and grammar, faced with the new concern of the survival of French as a world language. Gordon (1978, p.7) describes such policies as a continuing French 'linguistic expansionism', in the form of national and official action. Thus the defence of French against English terms, and its continued diffusion in the world have been key policy aims. The wish to address such problems arguably dates from the Franco-Prussian war, after which several organisations were created to defend and develop the position of French, e.g. the Alliance française, founded in 1883, to provide teaching in French for adults outside formal educational structures. Judge suggests (1993, p.14, referring to Gordon, 1978), that these groups 'were also in keeping with the spirit of French colonialism and the fact that French has always played a part in foreign policy' (see also Brulard, 1997b, p.193).

3.2 Language policy in the twentieth century
During the twentieth century, the position of French as a world language has deteriorated rapidly, with, for example, French almost losing its status as an official language at a United Nations meeting in San Francisco in 1945 (see Judge, 1993, pp.14-5, 1996, p.30). Prior to this, French had begun to lose ground to English in most international institutions, after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 had signalled the transition from the use of French to English as the main language of international diplomatic relations (Thody, 1995, p.90; Wilcox, 1998, p.27). Szulmajster-Celnikier (1996, p.48), points to the defence of French immediately after the Second World War, attributing this to a loss of the French language's status linked to the Vichy regime, and also the increasing use of American-English words encouraged by the military and economic actions of the USA. The post-war period, as we saw in Chapter One, saw an influx into France of consumer products and culture, whose development brought many imported ideas and terminology from the USA. This coincided with the increased political, military and economic power of the USA (Brulard, 1997b, p.199). Consequently English terminology
became more widespread and English became increasingly important in terms of economic exchange and socio-economic mobility. As Wilcox notes (1998, p.28) 'The ready and widespread acceptance of foreign cultural influences by the mass of the French population implied a dilution of the specifically French identity which previous language planning measures had sought to foster'.

Partly in response perhaps, although also for reasons related to France's desire to regain world influence, policies for boosting French identity through the French language were begun in earnest after the war, significantly in the aftermath of France's wartime humiliation and loss of Empire (Gordon, 1978, p.56). When newly-independent, formerly colonial states gained access to organisations like the UN, they brought the concept of francophonie to the world political stage, thus enhancing the status of French as an international language (Judge, 1996, p.30). The idea of francophonie had appeared at the end of the nineteenth century in geographical writings on the typology of populations according to language use (Szulmajster-Celnikier, 1996, p.45). With the help of prominent figures such as Presidents Senghor (Senegal), Bourguiba (Tunisia) and Hamani (Niger), the movement set up various organisations such as the ACCT (Agence de Coopération culturelle et technique or Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation) and CILF (Conseil international de la langue française or International Council for the French Language), to back the aim of establishing a francophone community (Judge, 1993, p.15; Szulmajster-Celnikier, 1996, p.46). As Judge explains (1996, p.26), such leaders rallied around the francophone ideal for various reasons. For Egypt, Cambodia and Vietnam for example, French was regarded as the international language of non-alignment. In Tunisia, French was seen as a vehicle for modernity, and Québec saw the francophone community as an arena for international influence. Other countries simply saw

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7 The ACCT's name was changed to the Agence de la francophonie at the 1997 francophone summit meeting held in Hanoi (ACCT, 1997c).

8 Brulard suggests (1997b, pp.201-2) that apart from the UN, the francophone community is the only world-wide organisation including states from all continents, of different political inclinations and different economic development, but we might also consider the position of the British Commonwealth.
joining the movement as a route to operating at an international level in an official language, or to using French as a common language in what were often multilingual countries (Judge, 1993, p.15).  

Alongside the development of *francophonie*, Ager (1990, p.221) argues that French language policy this century has concentrated on the defence of ‘correct usage’ and limiting regional variations and the influence of foreign infiltrations. This has included the use of policies to regulate grammar, vocabulary and spelling, which has led to a situation where French spelling is distinguished from that of other romance languages by its considerable complexity and irregularities which are the subject of a certain national pride and debate (Szulmajster-Celnikier, 1996, p.47), and the *Académie française* continues to exert some influence on this matter through its collaboration with governmental bodies dealing with linguistic issues (Judge, 1993, p.12; Brulard, 1997b, p.193).

Numerous and quite vociferous pressure groups have worked to promote and defend the French language, such as *Défense de la langue française* (Defence of the French Language), founded in 1959, and the *Association générale des usagers de la langue française* (General Association of Users of French), set up in 1977. Numerous well-known books have expressed concerns that the French language is threatened by poor spelling and external pressures such as the excessive use of words of English or American origin in French. Examples are De Saint-Robert’s *Lettre ouverte à ceux qui en perdent leur français* (1986), which makes the case more seriously, but on similar lines to Etiemble’s more humorous *Parlez-vous franglais?* (1964).

The level of concern about the subject has been revealed in the number of letters in the press about the French language and protests to governmental bodies (Ager, 1990, p.223), as well as the numerous language books which exist and the popularity of Bernard Pivot’s televised spelling competition (Brulard, 1997b, p.194). Indeed, the twentieth century has seen several

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9 For further details on the founding of francophone institutions, see Judge, 1996, pp.27-9).

10 See Offord, 1993, for a detailed consideration of the role of ‘private organisations’ or NGOs in protecting the French language; also Ager, 1996a, pp.126-31; Wilcox, 1998. Under a law of 1901, associations are required to register and to be formally recognised by the State - although in return, State subsidies are given. This recognition allows the creation of quite stable policy communities, Ager notes (1996a, p.126).

11 Paris, Albin Michel. De Saint-Robert was a Gaullist politician, and headed the *Commissariat de la langue française*. His experiences as *Commissaire* are detailed in this book (see also Ager, 1996a, p.58).

12 Such books are in addition to a further body of work developed since 1900 on the general theme of the French language being in crisis, looking at education and research, knowledge of grammar etc. (Ager, 1990, p.236).
proposed reforms of the French spelling system. Many of the debates have taken place within the media and education sectors, and amongst intellectuals, an example of which was the debate over possible spelling reforms under the Rocard government during 1989-92, initiated by a group of intellectuals and supported by primary school teachers (Ager, 1996, pp.119-25; Wilcox, 1998, pp.91-2).

State concern about the future of French has led to the creation of various institutions devoted to the protection and promotion of the French language. In 1966, for example, De Gaulle created the Haut Comité pour la défense et l'expansion de la langue française (High Committee for the Defence and Spread of French), ‘expansion’ being later changed to ‘promotion’ (Ager, 1996a, p.56). This was under the control of the Prime Minister, which focused mainly on monitoring terminological developments affecting the purity of the French language (Judge, 1993, p.16). This was later modified in 1973, to form the Haut Comité de la langue française (High Committee for French), with the name change designed to reflect less neo-colonial aspirations, according to Ager (ibid.). The Haut Comité included three commissions focusing on the ‘quality’ of the French language, cultural influence abroad and cooperation with francophone countries (Judge, 1993, p.16). This body was then replaced in 1984 by the Comité consultatif de la langue française (Consultative Committee for the French Language) and the Commissariat général de la langue française (General Commission for the French Language). The role of the Comité consultatif was to examine general language usage problems at home and abroad, francophone matters and French policy for foreign language teaching, and to advise the Prime Minister on these issues. Meanwhile the Commissariat général was intended to follow on from the work of the Haut Comité but also to encourage public and private organisations to defend the French language and to coordinate work of various other bodies and terminological commissions (Judge, 1993, pp.16-7). The Commissariat also now included the Permanent Secretary of the Académie française, a change which saw the latter’s position strengthened (Judge, 1993, p.12). Also in 1984, President Mitterrand, who had pledged, on his election in 1981, to afford a higher priority to francophonie, created the Haut Conseil de la francophonie or HCF (High Council of francophonie), which aims to define the role of the French language and promote cooperation between French-speaking countries, and produces an annual report on the status of francophonie in the world (Brulard, 1997b, p.192; Judge, 1996, p.31). This, combined with the creation of a Secretary of State for Francophone Affairs, and the first of the biannual
'francophone summits' (of heads of francophone states/governments), both in 1986, suggested a new importance for the international dimension of French language policy from this period.

Further changes followed in 1989, after the Socialist party’s return to power the previous year, when the Commissariat général de la langue française was changed into the Délégation générale de la langue française or DGLF (General Delegation for the French Language) and the Comité consultatif de la langue française replaced by the advisory body Conseil supérieur de la langue française or CSLF (Supreme Council for the French Language). Judge (1993, p.17) argues that the new bodies were given more importance, in terms of more specific aims and a broader brief for the promotion and defence of French (see also Ager, 1996a, p.60). The DGLF’s role was redefined, being responsible for publishing the Dictionnaire des termes officiels (Dictionary of Official Terms), containing the findings of the terminological commissions which are approved by law and consequently prescribed for use in official documents (see decree 89-403, 2 June 1989, in Ager, 1996a, p.58; Brulard, 1997b, p.192). Also of significance in the decree of June 1989 was the removal of the 1984 decree’s mention of ‘les langues de France’ (the languages of France), suggesting a more prescriptive approach to policy, in the sense of the reference to a single French language rather than various regional languages within France (Judge, 1993, p.17).

Indeed, the French State’s desire for regulation in the area of language policy had already been demonstrated by Law 75-1349 of 31 December 1975 on the use of the French Language - the loi Bas-Lauriol - which referred to three areas where using French was to become compulsory. These were commercial and advertising contexts, to protect the consumer; in employment contracts, to protect the employee, and information given to consumers by private firms or public bodies, e.g. leaflets. The law also required the compulsory use of new terminology in all governmental documentation, contracts, education, and State institutions. The rule was that where a French term existed, it had to be used, with those breaking this requirement liable to be fined. Attempts were also made at this time to introduce a unified

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13The summits are held in different parts of the world in a pattern like that of the Commonwealth (Ager, 1996a, p.59).

14The DGLF was placed under the control of the Minister of Culture in 1996, which had controlled its budget since 1994 (Ministère de la Culture, 1996d, p.6).

15A décret (decree), and an arrêté (decision) are both ministerial orders, having force of law and appearing in the Journal Officiel (Ager, 1996a, p.177).
grammatical terminology, but the scope of the law was limited by European Community laws, and despite two government circulars in 1977 and 1982 (Ager, 1996a, p.156), its legislation was not really applied (Szulmajster-Celnikier, 1996, p.49; JO, 1994d, p.12). However, the law did highlight the perceived problem of encroaching domination from other languages, and was really aimed at defending French against these, most notably English (Judge, 1993, pp.21-2; Szulmajster-Celnikier, 1996, p.49). As Machill notes (1997, p.487), the fact that the loi Bas-Lauriol was passed unanimously by parliament, suggests the existence of a cross-party consensus regarding the desirability of the protection of the French language, and its continuing status as a symbol of French identity.

It can be seen then from this overview of issues that although various debates have come and gone, the French language has never been far from the policy-making arena, and that this policy involvement has been closely linked to the desire of political elites to protect and promote the French language as a factor of national identity. If we turn now to consider the 1990s, the period of the present study, we can see that the wish to protect, promote and regulate language is still very strong. During this period, the French language, as an area symbolising French national identity, has faced new challenges in areas related to State models of policy-making. These have concerned the use of French, the audiovisual media and more recently, the Internet. As a result, the French language has developed renewed importance in terms of the debates around the French policy-making agenda, taking place in these spheres. Both policy and debates have revealed that political elites regard the French language as the keystone of their conception of French national identity, and resist any threats which may undermine this. The case studies which follow this chapter will demonstrate how this feeling informs contemporary elite thinking on national identity and its relationship with several areas of policy on language and culture. Before looking at these areas, the following sections explain the background to language policy-making in the early 1990s which influenced these debates.

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16A circular is a notice of ministerial wishes and advice. Some circulars appear in the JO, but they are addressed to the relevant individuals and organisations. Civil servants though are expected to follow them (Ager, 1996a, p.177).

17The law was not properly applied by courts due to its lack of clarity on its provisions and sanctions (Ager, 1996a, pp.44, 156, 184). Also it appeared to clash with Article 30 of the Treaty of Rome, which banned measures which would restrict, or have the effect of restricting, imports amongst European member countries (Brulard, 1997b, p.195).
3.3 French language policy in the 1990s

During the 1990s, renewed interest regarding the protection and promotion of the French language was demonstrated by politicians and pressure groups. As Wilcox has shown (1998), groups like Avenir de la langue française or ALF (The Future of the French Language) undertook intense activity in support of the French language during the early 1990s. It was the ALF for example, who mobilised a group of intellectuals of various political persuasions to successfully propose a change to the French Constitution in 1992, recognising French as the national language. On 23 June 1992 an amendment to Article 2 of the Constitution was adopted, stating that 'la langue de la République est le français' (the language of the Republic is French). This served to make French the official language, but without reference to other languages used within the country. As Wilcox argues (1994, p. 277), the implementation of this legislation within the context of the Maastricht Treaty ensured that the article represented not only a symbolic reaffirmation by France of the importance of its national language, but also an assertion of French identity at a European level. This was because the amendment was made in the light of fears that further European integration promised by the Maastricht Treaty (Treaty on European Union) would lead to the increased use of English in a more integrated Europe (see Wilcox, 1994, pp. 269-70). Given the need to revise the French Constitution to enable the French government to transfer competencies to the institutions of the European Union, the opportunity was seized to incorporate into the Constitution a provision setting out the role of the French language, so that it could not be qualified by any European-level decision (Machill, 1997, p. 488).

During the debates in the Assemblée nationale, UDF (a Centre-Right party) deputy Alain Lamassoure highlighted how sovereignty was a key factor behind the language article: ‘au moment où nous allons ratifier un traité qui va décider de la disparition de la monnaie nationale au profit d’une monnaie européenne, marquer notre attachement à la langue nationale est un symbole fort et nécessaire’ (at a time when we are going to ratify a treaty which will...

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18 However, as we saw earlier, and as Debbasch notes (1992, p. 459), the absence of a constitutional specification relating to French had definitely not prevented the defence and promotion of French under the Fifth Republic through the work of various institutions.

19 As Machill (1997, p. 488), and Wilcox (1998, pp. 307-8) explain, the 1992 Constitutional amendment proved significant in 1994 in terms of the constitutional complaint against the Toubon law, since the Constitutional Council had to take account of the new article when assessing the complaint.
determine the disappearance of the national currency in favour of a European currency, marking our attachment to the national language is a strong and necessary symbol) (quoted in Wilcox, 1994, pp.272-3; Brulard, 1997b, p.199). However, supporters of regional languages and culture such as researcher Henri Giordan denounced the constitutional amendment as a nationalist reaction by French policy-makers to European integration (Libération, 4 August 1992). Furthermore, the French State indicated a continuing lack of respect for the diversity of regional languages when a proposal that the Constitution should declare that French was the language of the Republic, ‘dans le respect des langues et des cultures régionales de France’ (whilst respecting the regional languages and cultures of France) was rejected by the Sénat (Wilcox, 1994, pp.274-5). This was a disappointment to the regionalists, since Mitterrand, on election to the presidency in 1981, had declared his support for regionalism (see Ager, 1996a, p.46), and the Ministry of Culture had commissioned a report (Giordan, 1982) which commented on the need to address the marginalisation of minority languages and cultures. Similarly, another contentious issue was that originally it was proposed that the Constitution would state that ‘le français est la langue de la République’ (French is the language of the Republic). This was not possible as it met with opposition from other francophone countries which had come to believe in their co-ownership of French, and that it was no longer the exclusive property of the metropolitan republic (Judge, 1996, pp.26-7). As Wilcox argues (1998, p.308), whilst this incorporation into the French Constitution of a reference to the national language might seem just a symbolic recognition of French, like references to the Tricolore flag and the Marseillaise national anthem, the fact that French had long been recognised as synonymous with the idea of the French nation served to add weight to ‘this previously unwritten, but key ideological principle’.

Efforts by language pressure groups led to further policy developments such as the Law on the use of the French language, 4 August 1994, or loi Toubon (formally proposed by Minister for Culture and Francophone Affairs Jacques Toubon), which caused much controversy in 1994. The law sought to address the use of foreign words in areas of public life

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20The proposal was made by Henri Goetschy. During the Assemblée nationale and Sénat debates on the Toubon law in 1994, Goetschy also argued that the law might jeopardise attempts to preserve regional languages (Brulard, 1997b, p.193).

21A bill discussed in Parliament normally takes the name of the Minister who has been most closely connected with it or presented it, hence loi Toubon, loi Bas-Lauriol.
such as advertising and the media in France, through reasserting ‘the right of the French-speaking consumer, employee, researcher and the public at large, to be informed and to express themselves in French’ (Brulard, 1997b, p.195).\footnote{The ‘Rapport Renouvin’ of 1989 had already considered the economic and commercial uses and status of the French language: the 
\textit{Conseil économique et social} had asked Bertrand Renouvin, from March 1987, to look at this area (JO, 1989).} Therefore the law was designed to address the same problem that the previous loi Bas-Lauriol had failed to solve, as language campaigners had continued to note (Ager, 1996a, pp.183-4).

Ager explains (1996a, p.156) that the Toubon law was a redraft and strengthening of the 1975 law, which it also repealed. Contraventions of the 1994 law would be punishable by fines and imprisonment, determined through employment legislation or the application of the Penal Code. The 1975 law had provoked a number of court actions which led to some fines being imposed on organisations which did not obey its provisions for using French rather than English terms, but pressure for its replacement resulted from the recognition that the borrowing from English had not been stopped (p.183). It seemed that the consumerist approach to policy had not been sufficient, as Ager argues: ‘The net result of the feedback seemed to be that language policy should become something more than language policy: it should approach a general social policy to reinforce identity at home and image abroad’ (p.185). It was this approach which informed the thinking behind the Toubon proposal, as I will discuss below.

The passing of the loi Toubon and the debates surrounding it, amongst the French polity, concerning various aspects of French economic and social life, have been examined elsewhere (Ager, 1996a, pp.156-8; Brulard, 1997a, b; Machill, 1997; Wilcox, 1998). The issue warrants consideration within the present chapter, given its impact as a debate which brought linguistic and cultural questions strongly to the forefront of the political agenda. Moreover, the provisions of the law are of significance in the context of this thesis, as the legislation is integral to the whole language policy debate in France, having served as a point of reference for other language, and broader cultural, policy questions. As Machill notes (1997, p.480), the law offered increased legitimation for protectionist measures in media policy, some aspects of which are discussed in Chapter Five, which considers elite views of French national identity in relation to audiovisual media policy. Similarly, it had implications for language policy in relation to the challenges and opportunities for French identity presented by new technologies, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Six. The loi Toubon debates raised questions too about French
language policy in relation to the idea of 'Europe' and European identity. These became especially interesting in the light of France's EU presidency period in early 1995, particularly as regards the international focus of subsequent language policies, and also informed some aspects of audiovisual and Internet policy. These are discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Before examining these case study areas, a summary of the context, main events and debates surrounding the Toubon legislation follows.

3.3.1 The 'loi Toubon' and French identity

Wilcox notes, in her study of the role of pressure groups in language policy-making in the early 1990s (1998, p.29) that the decision to formalise the position of French through the loi Toubon, and through the constitutional amendment of 1992, are indicative of the failure of previous language planning measures, and that their defensive intentions suggest a problem of 'the French national self-image' or identity, which became increasingly evident in the early 1990s. She points to the political context of the Maastricht Treaty referendum held in 1992 and the renegotiation of the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) during the Uruguay Round talks ending in December 1993 (pp.297-8), as significant factors. The Maastricht issue, as noted above, raised fears amongst both politicians and the electorate, of the potential loss of sovereignty and identity for France through further European integration. GATT became a contentious cultural policy issue when the USA demanded that films, television programmes and other audiovisual products should be treated like any other goods, and therefore subject to the agreement. This, French policy-makers and creative artists feared, would jeopardise existing French protection measures for cultural industries and lead to an increase in the importation of English-language productions. Consequently, the French negotiators demanded an exception culturelle (cultural exception) clause. This debate will be examined in Chapter Five, which focuses on the presentation of political elites' perceptions of French identity in relation to audiovisual industries, but, in summary, much of the debate centred on the notion of a flood of further Anglo-American productions threatening the French language and culture, and ultimately, identity.

Wilcox suggests that 'the coincidence of the events cited above can be seen to have had a cumulative and mutually reinforcing effect on French perceptions of the threat which they posed', and that both issues 'were perceived less as specific issues than as a generalised threat to French prestige, economic prosperity, national independence and cultural specificity'. As a
result, the political climate was ideal for groups like ALF to press for reform of language capitalising on a national mood of defensive nostalgia (1998, pp.297-8). Indeed, the Balladur government was under constant pressure from the Far Right around the time of the Toubon law, especially the *Front National*. Therefore, Ager maintains (1996a, p.157) that the introduction of an apparently pro-French, anti-American law could have been intended to appeal to the xenophobic vote, whilst the daily newspaper *Libération* suggested the law was connected to hostility to foreign products (24 February 1994, quoted in Ager, *ibid.*).

These theories go some way to explaining the influence of the language lobby on the government. However the ALF were also able to influence policy by being very active at the intitiation stage of the policy process, through preparing documentation, meetings and debates for example. Also the group’s elite members were politically acceptable to the policy community, and although they were very critical of existing policy, were seen to be generally supportive of the status quo in terms of language and society, i.e. believing that the preservation of the French language was essential to national identity and integrity. Activists had valuable technocratic links with policy-makers, access to government institutions and knowledge of the policy process, and had been successful in seizing the political opportunity given by the debates on the Constitution in 1994 (Wilcox, 1998, pp.295-8). Furthermore, other francophone states looked towards France for leadership on the defence of French. The Toubon law was partly a response to the opinion of some of heads of state that France had not been doing enough to promote the French language, a similar situation to that of the 1992 constitutional amendment which was also supported by francophones outside France (Brulard, 1997b, p.196; Szulmajster-Celnikier, 1996, p.49). French political elites therefore needed to seize the opportunity to present France as a strong leader in the field of language policy. This factor has also been significant in terms of policy-making debates in other areas of language and cultural policy, which will be discussed in my case studies.

The ALF action which culminated in the passing of the *loi Toubon* began on 11 July 1992 with the publication of an *appel* or public appeal in a national newspaper (*Le Monde*, 11 July 1992). It expressed concerns about a possible link between the decline of the French language and French national sovereignty, and disappointment with the lack of defensive legislation for the use of French in audiovisual broadcasting and education. Following this, Pierre Bérégovoy’s Socialist government began to develop a proposal for updating the 1975 *Bas-Lauriol* law. Prior to 1992 and the influence of the pro-reform language movement, there
was no indication that the Socialist government intended to reform national language law, concentrating instead on initiatives related to *francophonie* (Wilcox, 1998, p.295). Now Catherine Tasca, Secretary of State for Francophone Affairs and Overseas Cultural Relations from April 1992\(^2\) proposed a law to include regulation of the use of the French language, focusing on areas such as science\(^4\), business, audiovisual broadcasting and international organisations, but the government’s term of office was nearly over and the draft was not taken any further, although Tasca had hoped that the proposal could be discussed during an extraordinary session of Parliament (*Le Monde*, 15 July 1992, 10 December 1992; Wilcox, 1994, p.275; HCF, 1994d, p.200). She organised an informal seminar on 4 December 1992 in Paris, at which around 50 invited, eminent public figures such as linguist Claude Hagège gathered to give their opinions on her proposal, which was filed at the *Sénat* office on 17 March 1993, although never debated (Secretariat d'Etat à la francophonie et aux relations culturelles extérieures, 1992; *Le Monde*, 10 December 1992).

Tasca’s bill was shorter and less comprehensive than the version suggested by ALF, for example in terms of its focus on regulatory legislation for the State, rather than individuals or private companies (for details, see Wilcox, 1998, pp.166-70). Interestingly, the bill contained no real statement on language as a means of maintaining cultural specificity, or as a fundamental element of French identity. Wilcox suggests (1998, p.170) that instead language choice had to be described in terms of human rights, since ‘by 1992, the terms “identité” [identity] and “patrimoine” [heritage] had become too closely associated with the doctrine of the *Front National* for the Socialists to risk actively promoting these concepts’. Yet in subsequent debates on language, culture and national identity, Socialist and other political elites were not so reluctant to use such concepts, as my case studies will demonstrate, a fact which raises questions regarding what factors might make various political elites adopt particular discourses at different times.

With the new Gaullist-Centrist government in power following the 1993 legislative elections, the incoming Minister of Culture and Francophone Affairs, Jacques Toubon, announced to the Council of Ministers on 2 June 1993 his intention to propose a law similar to

\(^2\)Tasca succeeded Alain Decaux.

the deferred Tasca bill. The profile of language issues had already been immediately enhanced by the change of governmental responsibilities: whereas Catherine Tasca had been Ministre délégué à la francophonie auprès du ministre d'État, ministre des affaires étrangères (Junior Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Responsibility for Francophone Affairs), Toubon was given the job of Ministre de la culture et de la francophonie (Minister of Culture and Francophone Affairs), which made language issues the direct responsibility of a full ministry. This, together with the combination of the responsibilities for culture and francophonie, suggested a potential return to a classical, Gaullist approach to language and cultural policy-making, as suggested by Looseley (1995, pp.228-9), and noted in Chapter One, and by Toubon himself.25

Just prior to the Francophone Summit held in Mauritius in October 1993, Toubon also issued a press statement in which he described his hopes for the new law, and the government's intention to develop the CSLF and DGLF as more effective policy-making bodies (Toubon, 1993r). The Toubon proposal was supported by various intellectuals and the pressure group ALF (Le Monde, 10 December 1992; Wilcox, 1994, p.275), and aimed to give French people 'le droit d'utiliser leur langue et de la faire utiliser dans un certain nombre de circonstances de leur vie courante et professionnelle' (the right to use their language and for it to be used in various circumstances of their everyday and professional lives), extending to key areas of information, education, audiovisual broadcasts, public conferences, employment and public services (DGLF/CSLF, 1994a p.1; HCF, 1994d, p.200). The main provisions of the law were that notices in public places should be in French, as should health and safety regulations, employment contracts, teaching and examinations (apart from foreign language teaching). Furthermore, all radio and television advertising should not use foreign expressions where equivalent French terms were in existence, and documents at State-subsidised conferences should be translated into French, not left in English, which was becoming more common especially in scientific research. The law also reiterated the constitutional amendment that 'French is the language of the Republic' (see Thody, 1995, p.61; also Brulard, 1997a, p.42).

Related language policy initiatives led by Toubon included the launch on 4 November 1994 of several discussion/focus groups on the future of the French language, which brought

together journalists, business people, authors, advertising and information technology specialists, who were to present results of their discussions to the CSLF (Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.15; announcement in JO, Sénat, 26 May 1994, p.1893, and JO, AN, 3 May 1994, 2nd sitting, p.1361). From November 1993, the Minister had also asked a group under the leadership of Jean-Louis Boursin26 to present proposals to develop the publishing of scientific research in French (Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.22; findings discussed by Toubon at 2nd reading of bill’s proposal, JO, AN, 13 June 1994, p.2887). A television publicity campaign called ‘Notre langue, parlons-en!’ (Let’s speak (about) our language) was run between 16 June-5 July 1994, including extracts from Bernard Pivot’s programme Bouillon de Culture (Culture Stock) shown on 25 March 1994 which had been dedicated to the language theme (DGLF/CSLF 1994a, p.4, 1994b, p.4). Action aimed at children and young people followed with a language competition organised by the Ministry of Culture and the DGLF in conjunction with Bayard Presse between 15 October-2 December 1994 (Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.14).

Wilcox notes (1998, pp.174-5) that by the end of 1993, when Toubon’s bill was submitted to Parliament, debates in France on immigration, citizenship reform and EU integration and enlargement had developed to a point where public opinion seemed more willing to accept more defensive language policy such as the proposed Toubon law, than had been the case in 1992. Language protection represented a potential way of stopping the perceived destabilisation of French society, particularly from foreign influence. So, although the Toubon proposal responded to ALF’s concern and campaigns since 1992 about the neglect of domestic language policy, the socio-economic and political climate at the time, and the Right’s interest in a francophone relance (relaunch)27 might have encouraged the French government to put forward proposals for reform even if the pressure group influence had not been there (Wilcox, 1998, p.176).

Indeed, as Thody (1995, p.62) and Brulard (1997b, p.195) discuss, although the main provisions of the law seemed to be about consumer and employee rights, political debates seized upon identity issues. Wilcox too (1998, p.265) explains that the Toubon bill was not overtly promoted by the French government as being about identity, but that this became the

26Professor of the Paris Institut d’études politiques, agrégé in mathematics and member of the CSLF.

27See RPR, 1993a and 1993b, for example.
main topic of debate for Parliament, as various suggestions were made about how to protect the French language. Political elites of various persuasions were involved in this, indicating a consensus about how important the French language is as a factor of French identity. The Right for example supported a proposal by the Sénat’s CAC (Cultural Affairs Committee) to add statements of principle regarding the role and status of French. Communist politicians supported this idea too, and openly referred to their wish to fight against Anglo-American cultural hegemony which they saw creeping into the French language, through the ‘Trojan horse’ of the audiovisual media.28

One of the key issues discussed concerned the freedom of the individual in relation to the French State, as discussions asked whether or not the use of official terms developed by government organisations could be imposed, especially in advertising and the media. This was of particular interest for the Socialists, whose protests about possible harmful consequences for the concept of freedom of speech effectively weakened the arguments of the pro-reform movement (Wilcox, 1998, p.309). Another contentious issue was the status of regional languages in France, particularly raised by figures such as senator Henry Goetschy (Centrist), who feared that the Toubon proposal represented further ‘linguistic Jacobinism’ (referring to the Jacobin motto ‘one nation, one language’) (Brulard, 1997b, p.195). Eventually a statement was incorporated into the law (Article 21) stating that regional languages must not be prejudiced by the implementation of the law.29 This point echoed debates around the 1992 constitutional amendment stating ‘the language of the Republic is French’.

Machill (1997, p.488) notes how, although the draft law found ‘broad agreement’ in the Sénat and Assemblée nationale, some perhaps unpredictable alliances formed during the debates. He explains how, following the first Sénat reading, the Centre-Right RPR and UDF, and the Communists all voted for the law on 14 April (see also Libération, 16 April 1994). Meanwhile the Socialists abstained, as they and the Communists also did on 1 July in the Assemblée nationale vote, although both parties argued for further regulations to be incorporated in the form of amendments (Machill, 1997, p.488; Libération, 5 May 1994). It has

28See Ivan Renar (PCF), in JO, Sénat, 12 April 1994, p.970.

29Les dispositions de la présente loi s’appliquent sans préjudice de la législation et de la réglementation relatives aux langues régionales de France et ne s’opposent pas à leur usage’. (‘The provisions of the present law apply without prejudice to laws and orders concerning the regional languages of France and do not prevent their use’ - translation from Ager, 1996a, p.167).
been suggested that the somewhat restrained political opposition to the law resulted from the opponents’ fear of being branded supporters of American imperialism (Le Monde, 31 July-1 August 1994a).

Despite some differences in the various views expressed, the parliamentary debates around the Toubon proposal revealed the strength of the political consensus about linguistic issues, notably ‘the principle of language planning as a means of maintaining the unity of the French nation-state, enhancing French collective consciousness, inculcating a sense of national pride, and assuring the continuation of the francophone community’ (Wilcox, 1998, p.303; see also p.265). Furthermore, the debates about terminological and translation issues had established the important role of the State as guardian of the national language (Wilcox, 1998, p.266). Indeed, these debates arguably represent one more example, or a reassertion, of this role.

3.3.2 The passing of the loi Toubon: its effects and aftermath

Following the parliamentary debates, the Sénat eventually passed the Toubon law on 1 July 1994, and, following an appeal made by some senators and deputies for the law to be amended (mostly Socialists - see Libération, 6 July 1994), the Conseil constitutionnel approved the law with the exception of two articles during its sitting of 29 July 1994. Referring to the provisions for freedom of speech, thought and opinion of the 1789 Déclaration des droits de l'Homme (Article 11) and the Constitution (Article 2), the Council disagreed with several articles and phrases of the law’s text, but particularly censured article 12, which demanded the use by individuals in social, commercial and intellectual contexts (including the media) of terms created by the State commissions de terminologie (terminology commissions) instead of foreign terms, and also the requirement for researchers receiving State bursaries to publish their work in French. Therefore the law could not demand that the use of French be imposed on private individuals, non-State organisations and private companies (Thody, 1995, p.72). However, the general requirement to use French remained, and was enforceable in the case of public services (see Le Monde, 31 July-1 August 1994b; Brulard, 1997a, pp.40-1). By this time, a Prime Minister’s circular had also appeared, reminding public employees of their duties with regard to the French language (the first such circular on this theme since 1977) (see Le Monde, 3-4 July 1994; Premier Ministre, 1994c). Finally, the loi du 4 août 1994 relative à l’emploi de la langue française appeared in the Journal Officiel, becoming law, without the two excluded articles (JO,
This was followed by a further decree, published on 5 March 1995, applying the law and defining sanctions which could be taken. (JO, 1995, pp.2-6). However as Ager notes (1996a, p.174), many commentators believed the Toubon law to be weakened by the Constitutional Council to the point of inefficacy, since the private sector and ordinary citizens could not be compelled to use official terminology, and the law did not clearly define what was meant by 'French', especially if regional languages are considered 'French', as Toubon stated. This problem left it to the courts to decide whether or not an offence was committed. Toubon himself was dismayed by this uncertainty, which he had wanted to avoid (Toubon, 1994n).

Nevertheless, the Toubon law, and its referral to the Constitutional Council, paved the way for future debate and action concerning language use in other areas which have become important (Wilcox, 1998, p.292). Machill (1997, p.499) explains how analysis of language policy illuminates our understanding of media policy in France, with protection still seeming to override other concerns. With regard to the audiovisual media, the Toubon legislation did modify the law of 30 September 1986 on audiovisual communication (no.86-1067), by adding Article 20 (1) enforcing the obligations of radio and television stations to prioritise the French language and francophonie, with the exception of specially broadcast programmes entirely in a foreign language and pieces of music. The law of 1994 now prescribed the compulsory use of French or translations into French in all programmes or broadcast advertisements. Legislation was also introduced making it compulsory for audiovisual media to broadcast a minimum of 40% French songs and music (Wilcox, 1998, p.289).30 As Machill argues (1997, p.503), 'The preparation and the passing of the loi Toubon reveal close similarities to the corresponding steps undertaken in connection with laws on the imposition of quotas for film and television productions. In spite of the change of government, this area of politics is characterized by continuity and almost identical discourse'. Such claims are considered in more detail in Chapter Five which examines audiovisual policy.

The debates on the use of French in specific circumstances of the media also mentioned the problems for the French language and identity presented by digital media. It was particularly feared that new technologies like the Internet would be controlled by the Japanese

30 Article 12-1 of loi no.94-88 du 1er février 1994, modifiant la loi no.86-1067 du 30 septembre 1986 relative à la liberté de la communication (JO, 1994a).
and Americans. Jacques Toubon's concern led to the appointment of André Danzin to investigate this area. New information technologies like the Internet have provided a relatively recent challenge to official representations of French national identity, and since the debates on the *loi Toubon*, have become a topic of increasing concern for the French government. This issue is considered in Chapter Six of the thesis.

Regulatory policy themes touched on during the political debates surrounding the *loi Toubon* were picked up again by Jacques Toubon's successor Philippe Douste-Blazy, who became Minister of Culture in 1995, following Jacques Chirac's election to the Presidency and the resulting ministerial reshuffle. For example a further circular regarding the Toubon law appeared on 19 March 1996, defining and effectively extending the field of application of the law, particularly in the areas of marketing of goods and services, the use of French in conferences, businesses and education (DGLF/CSLF, 1996b). French was now to be used as the language of written communication in businesses, where possible for conferences in France, as the language of teaching and the language of information at places open to the public.

Institutional changes occurred when the DGLF was placed under the control of the Ministry of Culture in 1996 and the creation of an *Observatoire de la langue française* was announced by Minister of Culture Philippe Douste-Blazy, which was to carry out research which would inform future Ministry policy. The first report of this body, under the presidency of Yves Berger, writer and member of the CSLF, focused on the use of French in the Atlanta Olympic Games of 1996 (DGLF/CSLF, 1996c, pp.1-3, 1996d, p.16). Meanwhile, a decree on 3 July 1996 established specialist commissions and a *Commission générale de terminologie et de néologie*, which was to work with the *Académie française* in establishing new terms and expressions (which should be adopted by public bodies and services and used instead of foreign

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32Under the reorganisation, Francophonie was now linked with the Ministère des Affaires étrangères, and French language came under culture, through the DGLF, which had been the Prime Minister's responsibility.

33Douste-Blazy, 1996h; Ministère de la Culture, 1996c. Also reported in Le Figaro, 21 March 1996.

34Yves Berger went to the Olympics as his first 'mission', to examine the status of French and to draw up recommendations for future events. Government financial aid was also given to help with translation and interpreting (see Ministère de la Culture, 1996c). President Jacques Chirac also spoke of his concern about the use of the French language at the Olympics (Chirac, 1996b).
words) (DGLF, 1996d, annexe 5, p.24; Ministère de la Culture, 1996g). Pressure groups saw
their role strengthened and legitimated as further decrees resulting from the passing of the *loi
Toubon*, gave State approval to five associations seeking to defend the French language through
prosecutions: *Défense de la langue française, Association francophone d’amitié et de liaison,
Avenir de la langue française, Conseil de la langue française, Association des informaticiens de
langue française* (DGLF, 1996a, annexe 4, p.23; Szulmajster-Celnikier, 1996, p.50; Wilcox,
1998, p.293). Other ministerial changes made reflected contemporary concerns, for example as
Alain Juppé’s government from May 1995 included a Secretary of State for Francophone issues
at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the return in May 1997 of responsibility for
Communication to the Minister of Culture following the election of Lionel Jospin’s Socialist
government.

At the same time as the announcement of these measures, Douste-Blazy also explained
the three major directions of his language policy, in a statement on 20 March 1996 to the
Council of Ministers, and an accompanying press conference (Douste-Blazy, 1996h; Ministère
de la Culture, 1996c). This declaration took place during a week of publicity and events
concerning French, called ‘*Le français comme on l’aime*’ (The French we love), organised by
the Ministry of Culture between 18-24 March 1996, around the annual international
*francophonie* day. Douste-Blazy announced that the main aims of government policy for
language were now as follows:

- guaranteeing the presence and spread of French, as the language of the
  Republic (including through the development of a multilingual ‘information
  society’, and through international organisations);
- maintaining the role of French as a language for international communication;
- safeguarding cultural and linguistic diversity in the world through the
  promotion of multilingualism.

The communication pledged to publicise terms which the *Commissions de terminologie* were
working on, through the internet server of the Ministry of Culture, and to set up an
interministerial group to examine global and interministerial aspects of language policy
(DGLF/CSLF, 1996b; DGLF, 1996a, annexe 2). As Ager notes, the announcement of these
aims suggested a concern with familiar motives of defending and maintaining the French corpus
- understood as the structure of the language - and identity (1996a, pp.4, 140, with reference to

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What was new however was the emphasis on 'multilingualism'. The theme of 'multilingualism' had been discussed before (e.g. Rocard, 1989b), but became increasingly important in the mid-1990s, as Chapter Four will discuss. This was because policies on language were being formulated against a background of increased government concern and activity surrounding the international standing of the French language and francophone ideals, mentioned during the Toubon proposal debates by various political actors. The debates surrounding these policies are the subject of the following chapter.

The general trend towards the growing internationalisation of communications, business and international affairs has led French political elites to look for means of bolstering the national and international status of French. In addition to concerns regarding the availability or otherwise of French-language audiovisual broadcasts and the effects of new technologies (discussed in Chapters Five and Six), increasing anxiety has been felt about the maintenance of the status of French in trade, finance, professional organisations, education and research, and international institutions such as the United Nations (Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.28; see also JO, 1994d; De Charette, 1995d).

Judge argues (1993, p.15), that in the 1980s, French policy began to turn away from the traditional promotion of francophonie alone, and to favour pluralism, in line with the idea that French and other languages can and should exist alongside one another, serving different, changing needs. Such a notion was also well suited to France's greater involvement with European integration, since as Judge maintains, 'the new philosophy in France today is that to fulfill the European ideal everybody should be given the possibility of being trilingual'. Moreover, concerns voiced during the 1990s over the declining importance of French as a world language, and the limited impact of measures like the Toubon law and radio quotas for French-language songs (see Chapter Five) in combating the domination of English in the media and various aspects of public and professional life, encouraged French political elites to turn increasingly to the advocacy of the idea of multilingualism within the European Union.


36 In 1993, the French government began 'une politique volontariste' regarding the respecting of French as an official working language in international institutions such as the United Nations, the training of civil servants and improved terminological help for translation purposes. In the case of the UN, France has been able to enlist the support of its francophone and G7 partners at various conferences and summits, but within Europe the rallying of French speakers working within the EU institutions has been necessary (Ministère de la Culture, 1997d, p.9).
So French policy began to encourage the learning and use of several languages, that is, ‘plurilingualism’ or ‘multilingualism’ to counteract the domination of English which may be confusing in certain contexts, as it is argued that its use becomes muddled (described as l’espéranglais - see Judge, ibid.). Such an idea is strengthened by the association of multilingualism with values of democracy, diversity and cultural enrichment (Szulmajster-Celnikier, 1996, p.53). Yet, as Ager comments (1996a, p.140), multilingualism proposed around this time did not extend to support for regional, immigrant or foreign languages to be used by citizens in dealing with the State, or any notion of rights for languages other than French. So the arguments used by French politicians in favour of the multilingualism and diversity they claim to defend sit awkwardly alongside France’s position as ‘the only EU member state to grant exclusive official status to one language without making any reference to the other languages spoken within the country’, such as Breton, Catalan or Alsatian (Wilcox, 1994, pp.269, 276-77; see also Giordan, 1992). As Phillipson notes (1992, p.106), an uncomfortable parallel for those defending the purity of French is that legal measures chosen to support French are similar to fascist action in countries like Italy, Germany and Spain, being based on ‘intolerance of dialects and minority languages within national borders, xenophobic national linguistic purity, and an expansionist urge externally’ (also Calvet, 1987, p.261, cited by Ager, 1996b, p.71)\textsuperscript{38}.

However, Minister of Culture Jacques Toubon had justified the 1994 loi Toubon by arguing that, rather than following its own interests, France aimed to defend linguistic variety for Europe as well, against the invasion of foreign words: ‘Nous ne sommes pas chauvins, nous qui préconisons le plurilinguisme européen’ (We are not prejudiced, we who are arguing for European multilingualism) (Toubon, 1994n).\textsuperscript{39} Other politicians also highlighted how domination of English in the free European market could threaten the French language.\textsuperscript{40} Official literature too had presented the Toubon legislation as a means of encouraging linguistic

\textsuperscript{37}See also Toubon, 1994e.


\textsuperscript{39}The Toubon law also stated in Article 11 that the command of the French language and of two foreign languages was a key educational objective (JO, 1994g; also Brulard, 1997b, p.204).

\textsuperscript{40}See Jacques Legendre (RPR), JO, Sénat, 12 April, p.951; Ivan Renar (PCF), JO, Sénat, 12 April 1994, p.969.
pluralism and diversity, rather than protectionism in the interests of France and other francophone countries (see, for example, DGLF/CSLF, 1994a, p.1; Balladur, 1994a; Ministère de la Culture, 1994b, 1994c). Toubon also argued that French language policy was needed as an antidote to the harmful effects of the free market and globalisation of the economy, as a justification for this proposed legislation in 1994. He claimed that there was a need for a revival of French language policy and *francophonie*, describing a post-cold war world; a ‘new world order’, susceptible to domination by ‘un seul modèle culturel’ (a single cultural model) of the free market (JO, 3 May 2nd sitting, p.1360; JO, Sénat 12 April 1994, p.950).

Encouraged by the success of the GATT negotiations of 1993, and the resulting increased politicisation of the francophone movement, language policy based on multilingualism has been pushed by French policy-makers, particularly since France’s presidency of the EU Council of Ministers in the first half of 1995, with the right to multilingualism within the European Union and beyond being often described as another aspect of the policy of ‘cultural exception’ achieved by the French/European GATT campaign (considered in Chapter Five). This policy theme has also played a significant role in France’s policy for language use on the Internet (examined in Chapter Six). These issues, and the French State’s development of its leadership of *francophonie*, will be discussed in the case studies which follow.

3.4 Conclusions

In conclusion, we can note Ager’s comment on how recent policies for the French language, exemplified by the Toubon law of 1994, ‘have reinforced its official and public character, stressed its unifying role across territories and social groups, and (have tried to) move towards greater regulation of the citizen in forcing him or her to use the national tongue in every domain of use’ (1996a, p.205). These, Ager suggests (1990, pp.9-10), are ‘status policies’41, and ‘tie the political community to the speech community, aim at social monolingualism, and regard (French) language as a right to be extended to all, denying any such language right to others within the political community’. This is evident in the French State’s reluctance to regard the diversity of languages ‘as a resource to be made widely available’, hence the traditional hostility

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41*Status planning* refers to official instruction defining the ‘status’ of a language, in terms of its official recognition and function, in contrast to ‘corpus planning’, carried out to define the nature of the language involved and to guarantee its quality (Ager, 1990. pp.9-10).
to regional and immigrant languages (Ager, 1996a, p.205). This tendency is still seen in debates amongst French political elites ongoing at the time of writing, regarding the possibility of signing the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages. This issue indicates continuing problems of language and its relationship with French identity for political elites, and the wish of some of them at least, to cling to traditional views about it, and is discussed further in Chapter Four.

Returning to the specific issue of the Toubon legislation, we can consider the following comment offered by Wilcox on the reasons behind the eventual dilution of the proposed law by the judgements of the Conseil constitutionnel on freedom of expression:

[... ] to suggest that language has a special role to play as a symbol of national identity is a very different matter to saying that its purity should be protected by law, particularly when there is no affront to public order or other contravention of positive (as opposed to natural) law, nor any constitutional obligation to protect the language (1998, p.311).

Yet what this thesis will show is that the special role of language as a symbol of national identity continues to spill over into many areas of debate on culture and identity, and thus informs French political elites' perceptions of identity. This suggestion that the French language has a 'special role' results in the rigid ideas of political elites, which in turn culminate in hostility to other influences. Elite attitudes to the French language are central to conceptions of French national identity and its relationship with policy on language and cultural issues, as discussed above. This link will be demonstrated in the following case studies of language and cultural policy issues. These chapters, beginning with language policy, will reveal how contemporary French elite ideas about national identity remain static and traditional in the face of increasing challenges.
CHAPTER FOUR: MEETING INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES FOR FRENCH NATIONAL IDENTITY - FRENCH LANGUAGE POLICY IN EUROPE AND BEYOND

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Three described how language policy in France has traditionally been driven by a wish to defend the French language against potential damage and loss of status in the face of growing internal and external influences upon it, in the hope of safeguarding the French language as a factor of national identity. A review of legislation and political debates in the 1990s such as those on the loi Toubon showed that this was still the overriding concern amongst political elites. The chapter also indicated how, during the 1990s, and especially during the period 1993-4 (around the time of the Toubon proposal), language policy became increasingly focused on the need to defend the French language at an international level, given the growing influence of English in business, the media, science and international relations, and other trends such as European integration and globalisation. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the effects of such international challenges to the French language on political elites’ perceptions of national identity, in the period from 1993. In this chapter, I will examine legislation and debates other than those concerning the loi Toubon, which had focused on the use of language within France.

As I noted in Chapter Three, the newly-titled French Ministère de la Culture et de la Francophonie¹ had, following the arrival of Jacques Toubon in March 1993, undertaken a commitment to a relaunch of francophone issues. Furthermore, following the passing of the loi Toubon itself, the Ministry’s policies began to reflect a more defensive attitude toward the French language. Moreover, it began to focus on further means of improving the national and international status of French, which led to the particular pursuit of openings for French language policy at a European level, alongside development of France’s leadership of the francophone movement. Debates surrounding these policy areas are the subject of this chapter, providing a case study of French language policy during the period following the loi Toubon. The chapter particularly examines French political elites’ efforts to develop language policy through the arena of the European Union, which, alongside other cultural policy areas of audiovisual policy and language on the Internet, also examined by this thesis, became especially important, as a result of France’s EU presidency in the first half of 1995. On the one hand,

¹This was the first time francophonie had been given full ministerial status.
European integration poses a threat in some respects to French political elites' attitudes regarding language and national identity, as I described in Chapter Three. On the other, this chapter will show that European integration has also presented new opportunities for the development and influence of the French language and its symbolism of French identity. Furthermore, there are links between the policies and discourse concerning language and European integration and the French pursuit of the francophone project. Elite debates reveal all of these views of European integration, indicating a continuing ambiguity in the French political response to the idea of 'Europe', to what building a more united Europe might mean, and how this could affect identities within it. Furthermore, there is a tension in French elites' turning towards Europe in language policy-making, since the reasons behind this may be both principled and pragmatic: we will see the possibility that French policy-makers could be motivated by principle, such as the belief that policies like multilingualism are important for the construction of Europe, or by the pragmatic possibility of the defence of France's own national interests.

I will argue that French language policy in the international arenas of francophonie and Europe, although presented in terms of a French struggle to defend diversity and cultural pluralism, in fact reveal elite thinking on language to remain dominated by traditional conceptions of French national identity. This claim will be tested, through an analysis of the discourse of French political elites concerning language policy in the 1990s and its importance as a medium for developing French identity. Firstly, I intend to unravel the unvoiced assumptions about identity found in the response of French political elites to the international challenges facing the French language. I will demonstrate how the political response to these issues, although confronting subjects of relatively recent debate such as the status of French in a post-cold war, and increasingly globalised, world order and the challenges of an enlarged, more integrated Europe, remains informed by constructions from the past. This chapter will give an overview of policy measures on the issue, reflecting elite initiatives concerning French national identity. Detailed analysis of discourse will illuminate the deeper truths about this identity, showing it to be more complex than may be apparent. For these reasons, the chapter will analyse texts which are part of the wider body of elite discourse on identity and the international aspects of policy-making regarding the French language. Given the new importance of language policy-making at the European level for French political elites, three texts selected for
detailed analysis are specifically concerned with language, identity and Europe. One of the four is a more general text treating francophonie. The selection and analysis of these is explained in section 4.2.1. However, I also refer to both legislation and debate connected with other aspects of language policy and debates in the international arena, such as on francophonie.

Before discussing the detailed analysis of texts on the French language and Europe, the following sections introduce the nature of international challenges for French and francophonie, and how they became significant in the cultural policy vision followed by French political elites from the mid-1990s.

4.1.1 France in the world: the extent of the challenges for the French language and francophonie in the 1990s

As I indicated at the end of Chapter Three, the French State's policy during the 1990s on language became more involved than earlier with responding to challenges at an international level. According to Haut Conseil de la Francophonie (HCF) figures, French is spoken by 2 per cent of the world's population, and is the ninth language in the world, with 160 million speakers (L'Express, 13-19 November 1997).² In particular, policy-makers have been concerned with the maintenance of the status of French as a language of international communication in organisations like the UN and the EU. At the UN for example, only a tenth of documents produced by the Secretariat are in French, and almost all computer programmes are in English (The Economist, 23 March 1996). This is because French policy-makers feared that French would lose out to an increased preference for English alone as a working language, which organisations may try to implement in order to cut translation and printing costs (Ager, 1996a, p.107). Back in 1991 and 1993 the HCF discussed this challenge for the French language in terms of the relative lack of international power exercised by francophone countries, and as part of a worldwide 'plot' against French and in favour of American (quoted in Ager, ibid.).³ This thinking in terms of a 'plot', its proponents argue, can be demonstrated by history, pointing to the Louisiana Education Act of 1880 removing French from use in schools, and the 1946 UN vote which narrowly kept French as both an official and working language. Apart from this, it is argued that such a plot is helped by the desire of many Canadians and Americans for Quebec

²The HCF figures showed that Chinese was first, with 975 million, followed by English, with 478 million.
to adopt English, British programmes for teaching English abroad and the political and economic power of the US. Furthermore, the specific threats to French in international organisations have been identified as resulting from its lack of use in informal meetings, in computer-based documentation and communications such as faxes, low stocks in libraries and documentation centres and its decreasing use by younger diplomats (Ager, 1996a, pp.107-8).

In response to this, French governments were, as Ager describes (1996a, p.109), reluctant to urge direct action to strengthen the diplomatic status of French as they feared possible retaliation from other countries. Instead, they tried to encourage officials in overseas embassies and international bodies to use French and to support francophone organisations. However, as I suggested at the end of Chapter Three, the 1990s saw French policy-makers seeking a more aggressive role in defending and developing the French language as a factor of French national identity at an international level, within the EU and other international organisations, and through French leadership of the francophone movement. The promotion of multilingualism within Europe had been discussed in the late 1980s-early 1990s⁴, around the time of the French presidency of the EU in early 1989, and the French-led promotion of European audiovisual industries, but became particularly significant in the period after 1993. From this time, language policies based on multilingualism were prioritised by French policy-makers in the policy arenas of both ‘Europe’ and francophonie, and were characterised as a further aspect of the policy of ‘cultural exception’ achieved by the French/European GATT campaign. This argued that ‘cultural goods’ or services should not be treated as any other goods in laws on world trade such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which was under re-negotiation in 1993 (returned to in Chapter Five).

The previous chapter also explained how the loi Toubon debates became linked to the need to defend French at an international level. It was noted how various politicians, and the official government literature on the issue, had justified the Toubon law as necessary for the defence of linguistic pluralism and diversity beyond France, and not only concerned with the defence of French identity in France. This was linked to the support of ‘cultural exception’ too. Both the ‘cultural exception’ theme and the francophone policy aspects of justifications for the French State’s language policy objectives should be seen in context as part of the general

⁴See, for example by Rocard, 1989b; De Beaucé, cited in Le Figaro, 16-17 July 1988; Decaux, 1990a, 1990b.
direction of cultural policy in the 1990s. The development of French language policy in the area of *francophonie* is itself linked to the francophone movement's continuing politicisation. This was encouraged by the GATT debate in 1993 and resolutions in favour of 'cultural exception', and a more political focus for the movement adopted at the October 1993 summit, through a resolution stating that the respecting of French as an international language should be a priority, assigned to the *Conseil permanent de la francophonie* (HCF, 1994d, p.506). The 1995 summit, in Cotonou (Benin) took this further, with the decision to create an elected post of Secretary General for the francophone movement in order to create a clearer, more visible political identity (Libération, 2-3 December 1995b; Le Monde, 6 December 1995). President Mitterrand also used the 1993 summit to speak about the 'cultural exception' issue raised by the GATT negotiations, and about problems facing the French language in international institutions. The resolution which was produced at the summit on the use of French in international organisations mirrored the demands made by *Avenir de la langue française* in its 1992 appel, which urged that French should be respected as a working language in the UN, and that adequate resources should be provided for translation and interpreting into French (Wilcox, 1998, pp.290-1).

Following the GATT campaign and the francophone summit of 1993, French policymakers seemed to gain a new confidence with regard to francophone cultural ambitions, strengthened by Jacques Toubon's role as Minister of Culture, and now also Francophone Affairs. Indeed, Toubon stated in an interview that the success of the 'cultural exception' campaign against American hegemony and cultural uniformity had allowed the French government to continue its desired cultural policy (Toubon, 1994c). The decree of 16 April 1993 concerning the duties of the new *Ministère de la Culture et de la Francophonie* stated that the Ministry should 'mettre en oeuvre, conjointement avec les autres ministères intéressés, les actions menées par l'État en vue d'assurer le rayonnement de la culture française et celui de la Francophonie dans le monde' (put into effect, jointly with other ministries concerned, action led by the State with a view to ensuring the spread of French and francophone culture in the world) (cited by Toubon, 1993u, as he referred to Malraux's vision of the need to spread and democratise French culture).

With the renewed confidence in francophone cultural action, French political elites became increasingly keen to develop cultural diplomacy around the world, as was highlighted
by Toubon’s programme of visits to the main francophone countries and hopeful candidates for admission between 1993 and 1995, with the aim of relaunching francophone cooperation (Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.2). Toubon described the international action of the Ministry of Culture and Francophone Affairs as providing a special meeting point for France and its various cultural partners, which allowed special partnerships all over the world, including with traditionally francophone regions like the Maghreb, also Europe (of the EU and beyond), South East Asia and even the USA and Japan (cited in Ministère de la Culture, 1994a). According to Toubon, the French State’s international cultural action was undertaken in response to the demands of overseas partners, thus presenting France as a leader in cultural policy. But he indicated that French cultural policy aims were still linked to a traditional view of culture being a vehicle for French identity abroad, or a mission civilisatrice, when he argued that, following the defence of: ‘cultural exception’, France had to assert its ‘ambition culturelle’ (cultural ambition), since culture should continue to carry French identity abroad.

Similar ideas were included in the justifications for the 1995 cultural budget, which was designed with the recognition of the important political role of culture in national and international terms in mind. The document presenting the budget gave examples of the Ministry’s strategy of active overseas expansion of cultural industries, such as French books\(^4\), audiovisual industries, new technologies for museums, and also stated that francophonie would be actively pursued in areas like Central and Eastern Europe and South East Asia. (Ministère de la Culture, 1994g). This vision was also discussed by Toubon in an Assemblée nationale debate on the cultural budget (JO, 18 October 1994, second sitting, p.5633), when he described how he had deliberately relaunched francophonie with 11 MF of extra funding. During this debate, he outlined the three major themes of his plans in traditional terms, echoing some of the ideas of Malraux which I outlined in Chapter One, as he spoke of building national solidarity around a democratised, plural and influential, ‘conquering culture’. Particularly striking in this statement was the use of ‘conquérante’ to describe culture, which suggested some kind of a cultural battle or mission. I will demonstrate how such imagery is significant in French political elites’ constructions of national identity in relation to the case study areas in this thesis, and will illustrate this first of all in my analysis of texts on France, Europe, language and francophonie.

\(^4\)New measures for encouraging exports of French books were announced in June 1994 (Premier Ministre, 1994d), and in a report by a working group of the Ministry of Culture (Ministère de la Culture, 1994f).
Francophone policies, and cultural policy generally, were described by political elites in government at this time as being forward-looking, since they were based on the struggle for diversity. The Ministry’s policy aims were outlined, still with reference to pluralism and the defence of ‘cultural exception’, in terms of looking overseas, ‘vers l’échange afin de s’enrichir de celui-ci et promouvoir nos valeurs’ (towards exchange for enrichment and to promote our values) (Ministère de la Culture, 1994g). However, besides the policies of francophonie, which reached all over the world, as we saw earlier (Ministère de la Culture, 1994a), French political elites in the mid-1990s were considering opportunities for, and threats to, their language and cultural policies which were found closer to home. The challenges to French national identity brought by problems related to language, whilst present in numerous areas and discussed in a francophone policy-making context, needed to be tackled at a European level. As President Chirac explained during a television interview at the Cotonou summit (Chirac, 1995e), promoting plurilinguisme or multilingualism, within the EU, would be an excellent means of re-establishing French within Europe, and also a good thing for francophonie. These ideas suggest that the aim behind the plurilinguisme goal of diversity is one related to French policy-makers’ own wish to bolster the position of French within Europe and the world. It is this policy theme which has become particularly important in debates surrounding French linguistic policymaking in the mid-1990s, and on which the rest of the chapter particularly focuses, as it considers the implications - both challenges and opportunities - for French language legislation related to European integration.

4.1.2 The European challenge for the French language and French identity

European integration has presented problems for French concerns about identity as expressed in language policy. In the 1990s, faced with the ongoing widening of the European Union and the reunification of Germany, French political elites became increasingly keen to protect the status of French in EU (previously EEC) institutions. In 1990, President Mitterrand was so concerned that he wrote personally to European Commission President Jacques Delors urging more respect for the French language within the EEC (Mitterrand, 1990b). Such anxieties were due to fears that further enlargement, encompassing countries such as those in Scandinavia and Central and Eastern Europe, which often prefer English or German as the normal language of international communication, may lead to increased pressure on translation and interpreting budgets, and the
further influence of English on the use of languages within EU institutions (Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.28).

Ager (1996b, p.167), and Miguet (1996, p.78) explain how French was extensively used in building ‘Europe’ in the sense of the institutions of the European Community and Union, drawing on French legal and administrative traditions. For a long time, French was the main language of the European Community institutions. Although all languages of the EU member states are official languages, French and English are the most widely used in practice. French, German and English are working languages of urgent and informal meetings. On the UK’s accession to the EEC in 1973, an agreement between President Pompidou and UK Prime Minister Edward Heath made the previous year did aim to help the status of French, through intensive training for senior civil servants (HCF, 1994b). However, since then, the status of French within community institutions has tended to be undermined by the popularity of English as a working language (Miguet, 1996, p.77). Some important Directorates have tended to use only English (for example external relations, science, research and development). Moreover, written answers to questions in the European Parliament in French dropped from 72 per cent in 1990 to 62 per cent in 1994, and English was the main language used for new programmes for previously Soviet bloc countries (Ager, 1996b, pp.168-9). According to a Eurobarometer survey in June 1996, European EU citizens questioned thought that English was the most useful foreign language to learn, ahead of French, German, Spanish and Italian (Sources d’Europe, 1996k). To counteract this, French policy-makers began to seek policies to improve and safeguard the position of French within the EU and the wider Europe, by focusing on the promotion of diversity through multilingualism, alongside policies to encourage French as an international working language beyond Europe. Moreover, besides promoting defensive strategies, French political elites argued that ‘Europe’ could offer new opportunities for the expression of French language and culture, for francophonie and ultimately, for French identity.

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6Miguet refers to a study by Marianne Gehen (no reference provided).

7Measures undertaken to improve the position of French in international institutions in the 1990s included a circular from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Culture in 1994 urging French officials to use French in international meetings (30 November 1994, cited in Ministère de la Culture, 1996c). The use of French was encouraged in groups like the International Civil Aviation Authority, and at events like the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games (see DGLF, 1996f; De Charette, 1996d).
4.2 The French language and national identity in Europe and beyond in the 1990s

4.2.1 Contextualisation of the texts chosen for detailed analysis

At the time of the main issues in question, between March 1993-May 1997, the Centre-Right RPR-UDF coalition were in government. This period of the 1990s includes the time when the language and Europe discussions became increasingly significant, in view of the debates around 'cultural exception', ongoing questions of European integration, the loi Toubon and France's presidency of the EU during the first half of 1995. It also includes the terms of office of two presidents of the Republic, with François Mitterrand as President in office in a situation of 'cohabitation' with the Balladur and Juppé governments, and Jacques Chirac being elected President in May 1995. Therefore the issue of French language policy as related to Europe is concerned primarily with the texts and policy of Centre-Right governments. Although the case study focuses on the policy and texts of a period of Centre-Right government, the analysis also considers the ideas of Socialist President François Mitterrand, and the input of Lionel Jospin's Socialist government which came to power in May 1997, which left President Chirac as a Centre-Right head of state now compelled to work with a Prime Minister and government of the Left. The case study, where appropriate, refers to data which allow the examination of possible continuities and discontinuities in policy, within the constraints of the limited time which has been available to draw comparisons.

I made the choice of texts for examination according to criteria which include the setting and timing of the event, which could have influenced its possible exposure and/or reporting, and the status of the producer of the text. The most important interest of each text, however, lay in its inclusion and development of central themes concerning French identity. A further factor, which I took into account throughout all the case study chapters, was the opportunity to include different political figures throughout as relevant to different cases. I present the background to the texts below, together with a discussion of their interests in terms of my analysis. As I will demonstrate, they are all important texts in their own right, because of their development of key themes which enable us to trace elite views of French identity related to language policy, and which illustrate points supporting my hypothesis that such perceptions are undynamic.

Two of the four texts chosen were speeches made at the tenth meeting of the HCF which took place between 22-24 March 1994 in Paris. The HCF, on its creation in 1984, was given
the task of determining and discussing key areas for action, and making recommendations, on francophone issues (HCF, 1994f). Usually, these events are attended by members of the HCF and invited experts on issues under discussion, although three workshops at the 1994 event were open to the public (HCF, 1994a). The conference is an internationally prominent event, hosted by the President of the Republic, who also chooses its theme (Judge, 1996, p.31), and the involvement of high-profile political figures attracts press coverage. The event's theme was 'La Francophonie et l'Europe' (francophonie and Europe), and included discussions on the future status of French in Europe in relation to other languages, multilingualism and francophone cooperation within Europe (HCF, 1994a). This conference should be situated in the context of the chronology of international events related to cooperation between francophone countries, and also more widely, with European partners, and debates on language policy. The HCF meeting for example took place just four months after the culmination of the 'Uruguay' round of the GATT negotiations which caused so much controversy over French demands for 'cultural exception'. However, the debates on the negotiations had led to an alliance between francophone and European countries concerning the resolution for 'cultural exception' passed at the Mauritius summit in October 1993. The HCF conference also happened shortly before the parliamentary debates on the Toubon proposals for the use of the French language, and eighteen months after the French ratification by referendum, by the narrowest of margins (51 per cent), of the Maastricht Treaty (Treaty on European Union). These factors, and the very significance of francophonie as a cultural, and also increasingly geopolitical, movement, together with the French government's enthusiasm for a revival of francophone policies, made the event likely to include important discussions on issues of French identity.

The first text is the opening speech of the conference, made by François Mitterrand in his capacity as President of the Republic (Mitterrand, 1994). Foreign policy/European affairs are traditionally questions of presidential concern and it is especially interesting to consider a contribution to the language and Europe debate by Mitterrand, as a president who had developed a personal vision of a more united Europe over forty years, particularly through his encouragement of Franco-German cooperation (Nelson and Roberts, pp.9-10). Mitterrand's interest in Europe was particularly developed in his second term of office as president, in line with his wish to go down in history as a great leader in the construction of Europe (Clark, 1992,
Francophonie too was a special interest of Mitterrand’s, and it was he who initiated the biannual summits in 1986, and also the HCF (Léger, 1996, p.260).

A further text from the HCF conference is a speech by Jacques Toubon, in his role as Minister of Culture and Francophone Affairs (1994e). Toubon played a specific role in language policy-making debates, in connection with his proposal under consideration at the same time in 1994 on the use of the French language, and language policies related to Europe and francophonie.

I include another text by Toubon, which was made at a press conference in Paris on 14 December 1994 to announce the French government’s plans for the forthcoming EU presidency from January 1995 (Toubon, 1994u). The encouragement of language policies based on ‘multilingualism’ was a key element of the cultural policy undertaken as part of this presidency period. This press conference was reported by Le Monde (Le Monde, 17 December 1994).

Finally, I consider a more general text on language and identity, which is a speech made by Jacques Toubon at a conference organised at the Assemblée nationale called ‘Alternatives à l’uniformisation - Trois espaces: francophonie, hispanophonie, lusophonie’ (Alternatives to uniformisation - Three arenas: francophonie, hispanophonie, lusophonie (= Portuguese speaking)) (1995m). Although not such a high profile speech as in the case of those at the HCF, this event enabled Toubon to develop ideas about language and identity around the world in more general, abstract terms, and therefore contains some very interesting material.

4.2.2 European integration as a threat to the French language and identity: fear of uniformity and the imposition of English

The development of the EU was firstly portrayed by various politicians as a threat to the French language because of the possibility of the increased use of English within EU institutions. Jacques Toubon, argued that it was English which was the language threatening to become the main European language of an enlarged EU, due to growing translation and interpreting costs (Toubon, 1995m). Although he hinted at possible German and Spanish demands for increased use of their languages in EU institutions, former Minister of European Affairs Alain Lamassoure explained quite openly in his speech to the HCF that the development of the EU

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would lead to the further dominance of English when he warned: 'L'élargissement de la Communauté renforcera le camp des anglophones' (The enlargement of the community will reinforce the English-speaking camp) (Lamassoure, 1994). Here, the choice of 'le camp', meaning a 'camp' or 'side' in the sense of opponents suggests hostility to English speakers, and a confrontation, or kind of battle. His speech also illustrated his arguments through listing a whole series of facts about the status of French as the main working language in different areas of EU affairs, but also about the growing use of English, for example its use in European Commission dealings with external countries. Consequently, Lamassoure spoke of the issue as 'préoccupante' (constantly worrying), and the need for French-speakers to remain 'vigilants' (vigilant) regarding the use of French in European Union institutions, his choice of adjective indicating a need for careful, rigorous monitoring of a serious problem.

Elsewhere, references to the threat of English were sometimes more subtly made. An example was that of Toubon, writing in the national daily newspaper Le Monde, indicated when he argued 'il faut savoir résister aux séductions des arguments en faveur d'une langue véhiculaire unique qui entraînerait à terme le ravalement de toutes les langues sauf une, au rang des langues locales' (it is essential to be able to resist the lure of arguments in favour of one working language which will lead to the swallowing-up of all languages except one, and their relegation to the status of local languages) (Toubon, 1994d). This negative reference to 'swallowing-up', almost 'devouring', is an example of a veiled reference to the growing use of English.

Another fear amongst French policy-makers about the French language, culture and identity in Europe was that other groups within the European Union wish to impose uniformity, and limit diversity, through European integration. Some of these fears had been voiced in connection with the debates on the loi Toubon, as the report of the group examining the proposed law chaired by Xavier Deniau (JO, 1994d) revealed when it complained of the European Commission's suspicion of language policy measures of member states, which it regarded as obstacles to the free movement of goods. The Commission was behind the use of article 30 of the Treaty of Rome to limit the use of the Bas-Lauriol law of 1975, as we saw in Chapter Three. However, in June 1993, French policy-makers claimed a victory at EU level for their policy agenda when their campaigns encouraged the European Parliament to vote unanimously in favour of a resolution affirming subsidiarity in linguistic matters and the right

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for European states to impose the use of their national languages within their countries. Since then, such texts formulated by the Commission allow decision-makers at national level to decide the choice of language (see Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.25; also Szulmajster Celnikier, 1996, p.53; JO, 1994d, pp.12-4; Toubon, 1994e). The parliamentary debates on the 1994 law in France had likewise included, besides the frequently cited ‘Anglo-Saxon plot’ to weaken French language and identity, protests of possible threats to French identity coming from European integration. Ivan Renar of the PCF for example had worried about French culture and identity being lost within ‘une identité européenne incolore et sans saveur’ (a colourless and flavourless European identity) (JO, Sénat, 12 April 1994, p.971) and Jacques Legendre of the RPR had warned that ‘une réglementation linguistique’ (linguistic regulation) could be imposed on France by the European Commission (JO, Sénat, 12 April 1994, p.951).

Such sentiments were addressed in more detail in discourse on the role of France and the French language in Europe. Politicians such as Jacques Toubon (Toubon, 1994u) warned of the risk of a general cultural uniformity resulting from European integration:

L’Europe doit avoir la culture de sa propre diversité parce qu’elle se caractérise par une diversité de cultures. Il faut savoir qu’il existait dans certains cas une tentation dans la construction de l’Europe de vouloir tout unifier jusqu’à l’absurde au risque de faire perdre à l’Europe une part de son âme. (Europe must have the culture of its own diversity because it is characterised by a diversity of cultures. It should be remembered that there has been a temptation in some cases of European construction to want to unify everything to the point of absurdity at the risk of losing part of its soul).

Here, Toubon showed his hostility to the European Commission, which he implied was taking the ideals of the free market too far and mistakenly saw obstacles to free trade in cultural and linguistic diversity. Toubon portrayed these qualities of diversity as characteristic of, or natural to Europe. His balancing of themes with the mirroring phrases ‘la culture de sa propre diversité’ and ‘une diversité de la cultures’ appeals to ideals of harmony. This is in opposition to ‘l’absurde’ which is threatened; the opposite of reason, of what is rational. The use of ‘âme’ too has a central role, appealing to traditional religious imagery, through threats of ‘tentation’ to follow a single culture. Through this image of the loss of a ‘soul’, Toubon made his statement more dramatic.9 Mitterrand too echoed ideas about the natural diversity inherent with European

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9Elsewhere, this image was used by Bruno Mégret of the FN, when he spoke of a corrupt form of American-English threatening the very soul of the French people (Mégret, 1993).
identity, as he argued that language training in EU institutions should be improved, so that European officials would be trilingual (Mitterrand, 1994). He claimed that: 'La pluralité fait partie de l’identité européenne'. (Plurality is inherent within European identity). These then are examples of French political elites interpreting European identity, when it can support their arguments about a threatened French identity, through referring to a pluralism which is endangered.

The passage from Toubon's speech cited (Toubon, 1994u) above continued with a criticism of the European Commission and the assertion that its policies implied a single language within Europe, not just a lack of cultural diversity in general:

A certains moments on pouvait lire dans certains textes émanant de la commission, dans des résolutions, des phrases comme ‘considérant la nécessité de faire émerger une culture commune’...

Vous comprenez ce qu’il peut y avoir à la limite, de presque totalitaire dans ce type de formulation. De la même manière certains ont développé explicitement ou implicitement l’argument selon lequel à Europe unie, langue unique.

(At some points some texts from the Commission have contained resolutions with phrases like ‘in view of the need to encourage a common culture’.

You understand what can be the ultimate, almost totalitarian result in this type of formulation. In the same way, some people have openly, or implicitly, developed the argument that a united Europe means a single language).

Here, Toubon suggests that the idea of the use of one language within Europe is encouraged by the European Commission, although he does not explicitly accuse the Commission of this, instead referring vaguely to ‘certain’. This in itself produces the effect of implying an unknown threat, which is more sinister, and is strengthened by the reference to totalitarianism.

Similar ideas were expressed at a press conference in March 1995, when the Ministry of Culture warned that following some of the ideas of the European Commission entailed supporting a single market based on a single culture (Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.25). This should not be allowed to happen through ‘le sacrifice’ (sacrifice) of European languages and cultures, whose existence is ‘une des conditions de l’exercice des droits de l’homme dans une République comme la nôtre’ (one of the conditions of the exercise of human rights in a Republic like ours). The choice of ‘le sacrifice’ to describe the effect of the use of a sole
language on European languages and cultures suggests a fatal and unpleasant outcome. The reference to ‘les droits de l’homme’ appeals to French history and the Revolutionary Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, and serves to remind the audience that it is after all the *French* language and *French culture and identity* which is at stake, not just any European cultures and languages.

In a similar vein, Toubon criticised the European Commission for normally using English in its dealings with external countries, and for regarding regulation of the use of European languages as bringing increasing costs and inconvenience, rather than as necessary for the respecting of European diversity (Toubon, 1994e). As before, Toubon referred evasively to European bureaucrats’ desire for uniformity in building Europe: ‘Il faut en effet reconnaître, et c’est inquiétant, que dans l’esprit de certains responsables européens, la construction de l’Europe passe par l’uniformisation. […]’ (We must recognise, and it is worrying, that in the mindset of some European officials, building Europe will come about through uniformisation […]).

From the references contained within the above examples to the European Commission’s discourse and policies on the desirability of a common culture, we can see examples of some opposition of French elites to ideas about the building of a more integrated Europe through a ‘European identity’. Such policies, whilst favouring a free market, have also aimed to create and strengthen cultural unity through policies such as those for audiovisual broadcasting, the ‘Campaign for a “People’s Europe”’ which envisaged the construction of European Community symbols such as flags, logos and documents like driving licences, plus the single currency and ‘European Year of’ campaigns (Shore, 1993, pp.787-91; Shore and Black, 1994, pp.285-8; Wintle, 1994, p.10). These policies are, as several commentators have noted, problematic in that the European Communities or Union have represented only a small minority of the various states, people and nations who would call themselves European (Wintle, 1994, p.10). Furthermore, it is difficult for anyone, French politicians included, to adequately describe what a European culture, civilisation or identity, or indeed what Europe, might be, since it could be viewed as a geographical, political or cultural entity (Heller, 1992; Shore, 1993, p.792; Spiering, 1996, p.104; Wintle, 1996).

Yet for French political elites in the mid-1990s, the key theme of debates on language within Europe, as well as specifically the EU and in other areas of cultural policy, as I will
demonstrate further in Chapters Five and Six, became the French promotion of diversity, through multilingualism, as opposed to uniformity.

4.2.3 Interpreting the fear of uniformity

Uniformity has several meanings for French political elites in the debates on language. In the discussions of Europe, it can be a term to describe the result of the increased use of English within the organisations of the EU, or it could mean cultural uniformity brought through European integration and suggestions of the development of a common European culture and identity being a desirable result of a single market. Besides this, it can mean a more general 'Anglo-American' source of cultural and linguistic uniformity. This was indicated back in 1990 for example by Alain Decaux, Socialist Minister for Francophone Affairs, who spoke of 'un sabir anglo-américain' (pidgin American-English); 'une langue hégémonique' (a hegemonic language) which he saw as threatening linguistic uniformity and, echoing McLuhan's earlier predictions (1964) creating a 'village mondial' (global village) of communications, threatening European cultural identity with its 'banalisation' or 'uniformisation' of culture (Decaux, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c). The use of 'sabir', which has pejorative origins, meaning a mixture of Arabic, Spanish, French and Italian used in the Middle East and North Africa, is significant, having racial connotations of an 'impure' language. Catherine Tasca too, Socialist Secretary of State for Francophone Affairs, echoed these ideas when she spoke of a great Anglo-American rival in the discussions on her proposals for language legislation in 1992 (Tasca, 1992c). Alain Juppé, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared that 'cet anglo-américain appauvri' (this degenerate Anglo-American/American English) threatened to become the language of international communication (Juppé, 1994). Juppé's use of 'appauvri' is a strong attack on American forms of English, as its meanings of degenerate, weak and impoverished are all negative, and have racial overtones. Here then are examples of more appeals to purity, in line with themes discussed earlier of a 'soul' being tempted by the use of English. What is more surprising though, is the way in which these references were remarkably similar to those in FN discourse on language and identity.10

French political elites' professed dislike of uniformity led the government to pursue

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10See Mégret, 1993, for example, who referred to 'le "pidgin" américain à prétention universelle' (the 'pidgin' American with its universal pretentions).
policies for linguistic diversity during its EU presidency of 1995 (Ministère de la Culture, 1995d). This was presented as achievable through promoting *plurilinguisme*, or multilingualism, which could help all languages, not only French. In 1994 for example an interministerial committee reported its findings on possible strategies for the future of French within a multilingual Europe (Mission interministérielle de coordination pour la présence du français en Europe, 1994). With the promotion of 'cultural diversity' as one of the four key objectives for the French EU presidency of 1995, the French Ministry of Culture made linguistic pluralism a priority for this period, with the aim that all member states should encourage the development of trilingualism in education and training, and proposed that the obligatory teaching of two foreign languages should be adopted as an intergovernmental convention (Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.27; Premier Ministre, 1995a, pp.7,42). This was in addition to accompanying measures for audiovisual policy, which are discussed in Chapter Five.

Mitterrand, presenting the French government’s programme for the EU Presidency to the European Parliament, justified the policies for multilingualism in terms of France’s awareness of ‘la rivalité des langues’ (the rivalry between languages), suggesting hostility and a struggle between languages (Mitterrand, 1995a). He also spoke of the wish to defend the smaller European countries, in addition to France, which lacked ‘la dimension géographique de quelques autres’ (the geographical dimensions of some others). Here, Mitterrand’s reference to ‘others’ who have ‘larger geographical dimensions’, suggests he was referring to the United States, where English, the main rival of the French language, is spoken, rather than simply the UK, which is after all a smaller country than France. He continued to say that other languages like Flemish and Dutch were threatened, and argued that everywhere, there was no other culture available apart from English and American culture. Toubon, in an interview with the British newspaper *The Financial Times* (Toubon, 1994s), explained his enthusiasm for promoting the learning of foreign languages in anti-American terms: ‘I’m a strong believer in learning foreign languages. What I don’t want is a language which would be neither a foreign language nor my own. I want French, English, Russian - but as languages, in the plural. I want the English of Shakespeare, not of Microsoft’. Here we see Toubon’s refusal to accept that languages may change over time, through their influence on each other. His hostility to ‘the English of Microsoft’ is quite openly anti-American, as it expresses an approval of, and clear preference
for, what is known, codified and part of a hierarchy or canon; a more traditional English of the UK (if that can be said to exist), not the USA. So again, as discussed earlier in the case of Decaux and Tasca, we see the linking by politicians of the threats to French and European identity; as coming from not only ‘Europe’, but also from America. There is a hierarchy of threats to French identity presented in political elites’ discourse; Europe is a threat, but the USA is still arguably the biggest threat.

As a result of the 1995 presidency of the EU, French policy-makers were able to secure discussions and resolutions on linguistic issues within the EU, at European Council meetings\(^\text{11}\), including playing a crucial role in formulating the conclusions of the presidency in Cannes in June 1995. Amongst these were the Resolution of the European Council on 31 March 1995, concerning the improvement of the quality and diversity of teaching and learning of languages in the EU; the Conclusions of 12 June 1995 of the Council, including the pledge to take account of the respecting of linguistic diversity and the promotion of multilingualism in all policies and community actions, including the teaching of European languages, consumer information, new communication techniques, external relations of the EU; and the Conclusions of 26-27 June 1995 of the EU Council meeting in Cannes, which highlighted the importance of linguistic diversity within the EU (Ministère de la Culture, 1996c).

4.2.4 Multilingualism and French universalism as alternatives to uniformity

Yet the policies for multilingualism conceal a kind of ‘universal mission’ being fulfilled by French elites in language policy. The true thinking behind the French policies for multilingualism in Europe is betrayed as being really about the promotion of French, above all other languages. This was demonstrated by Chirac for example, who claimed: ‘Une Europe où le français ne serait pas une langue forte, vivante, parlée, serait une Europe culturellement appauvrie.’ (A Europe where French is not a strong, living and spoken language, would be a culturally weakened Europe) (Chirac, 1995a). Again, ‘appauvri’ is used to indicate a negative situation of Europe as a weak, degenerate cultural entity.

The use of the EU platform for French elites’ policy concerns about language continued beyond the EU presidency period of 1995. We can see this if we consider later developments

\(^{11}\)Council of Ministers’ refers to meetings of ministers with particular areas of competence from all of the EU member states, and ‘European Council’ to normally twice-yearly ‘summits’ of EU heads of government.
regarding the implications of digital communications on French identity, in particular the position of the French language on the Internet, since French discussion and policy on language, cultural identity and the new communications technologies also adopted a strong European focus, as I discuss in detail in Chapter Six. Moreover, following the election of Jacques Chirac as President and the ensuing government reshuffle, Minister of Culture Philippe Douste-Blazy (Toubon’s successor) asserted that the promotion of multilingualism remained one of the three major themes of his policy for the French language, as mentioned in Chapter Three (Ministère de la Culture, 1996c). These ideas were supported by Hervé de Charette, Foreign Affairs Minister, when he declared that:

Je voudrais enfin rappeler l’importance qu’il y a à préserver l’image et l’usage de la langue française en Europe. Le maintien du français comme langue privilégiée au sein d’une Union européenne n’est pas une tâche si simple. Mais le représentant de la France estime pouvoir s’exprimer en français partout dans les réunions européennes. (Finally I want to underline the importance of preserving the image and use of the French language in Europe. Maintaining French as a favoured language within the European Union is no simple task. But the French representative judges he can express himself in French in all European meetings) (De Charette, 1997c).

Margie Sudre, Secretary of State with responsibility for francophone issues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on opening the European Centre for the French Language in Brussels for the training of EU officials, highlighted how French policies for multilingualism had encouraged the EU to carefully consider the issue of the diversity of languages, and stressed how the future of French as an international language depended on its status within the EU (Sudre, 1996c). "Following the Socialists’ victory in the legislative elections of May 1997, the Jospin government indicated a wish to continue such policies of promoting multilingualism and cultural diversity within Europe. Prime Minister Lionel Jospin demonstrated this, when he stated: ‘L’Union européenne dont la diversité des langues et des cultures fait en partie la richesse, peut jouer un rôle essentiel pour éviter une uniformisation des modes de vie et des pratiques culturelles.’ (The European Union, whose richness is partly due to its diversity of languages and cultures - can play an essential role in avoiding the uniformisation of lifestyles and cultural practices) (Jospin, 1997c). Here, Jospin’s words continue the French elite presentation of the EU as a place of rich and diverse language and culture, in opposition to

12This idea was also noted by Juppé for example (Juppé, 1994).
uniformity from unnamed, cultural others. As we saw earlier, such an idea is significant in the portrayals of French identity in debates on language, and linked to European identity (although what this European identity really is, is not clearly specified). However, French and European identity are described as being at risk from other identities which bring uniformity. These identities are not defined here, but as I have indicated above, include the English language and all things 'Anglo-Saxon' or even 'Anglo-American'. They also include an artificially constructed 'common European identity', which threatens to impose uniformity in the EU. As is the case here, sometimes what is not said is as significant as what is. This is because it is not always possible for a French politician to openly criticise the EU, the UK or the US for example, since such attacks may have harmful consequences for trade and political cooperation. Here, and in many other instances which I will discuss in relation to other issues in Chapters Five and Six, 'uniformisation' is a code to describe France's cultural enemies, as they are formed in the contemporary elite perception of French identity. The use of such 'codes' allows France's others to be constructed and reconstructed at different times, according to different conditions.

4.2.5 French elite resistance to languages within Europe, other than English

Yet, as we saw in Chapter Three, the arguments used by French politicians in favour of the multilingualism and diversity they claim to defend, are in opposition to the French State's lack of constitutional recognition for languages other than French which are spoken within the country. This lack of recognition is itself an example of an assertion of French identity at a European level, since the legislation granting the Constitution's exclusive reference to French was made within the context of the ratification of the Treaty on European Union (1992). Furthermore, the refusal to recognise other languages did not appear to be in line with the spirit of pluralism promoted by the Maastricht Treaty (Wilcox, 1994, pp.269, 276-7, see also Giordan, 1992).

This paradoxical situation can be attributed firstly to the French State's traditional lack of recognition for minorities. This was evidenced by the refusal to sign the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, of the Council of Europe (of 29 June 1992), which included measures for the protection of regional and minority languages and was rejected by France on 24 June 1992, that is, as Wilcox notes (1994, p.276), the day after the adoption of the
constitutional amendment in favour of the French language. Similarly, France had not been a signatory to a Council of Europe resolution in 1981 (24 July) which set out a definition of the term 'region' acknowledging the existence of dialects (see also Grau, 1992, p.106). As Machill argues (1997, p.495), such a policy is rooted in a thinking which denies the existence of identifiable minorities in France. This view is echoed by Brulard (1997b, p.204), who notes that whilst France may view itself as the defender of diversity, its linguistic policy 'reflects a narrow notion of national identity', given its traditional lack of interest in both minority and immigrant languages. This situation persists, despite claims to the contrary by figures like Douste-Blazy, who, when questioned in the Assemblée nationale on the validity of the French Eurovision song contest entry being by Dan Ar Braz, singing in Breton, answered that 'les langues régionales font partie intégrante du patrimoine national, que c'est un vecteur, essentiel, des cultures et de régions; or la culture des régions, pour l'Europe des cultures, est quelque chose d'important' (regional languages are an integral part of the national heritage, and this is an essential vector of cultures and regions; regional culture is after all an important feature of cultural Europe (Douste-Blazy, 1996p).

The problematic relationship which French political elites have with regional and minority languages was most recently evidenced (at the time of writing) by the constitutional row over the belated adoption of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, proposed by the Socialist administration following the legislative elections of 1997. After constant refusals, France had eventually signed the Charter in May 1999, but the following month, President Chirac refused a request from Prime Minister Jospin to allow the French Constitution to be modified to take account of the Charter. This followed the decision of the Conseil Constitutionnel that the Charter was unconstitutional, as it was contrary to Article 2, added in 1992 (discussed in Chapter Three), which stated that 'The language of the Republic is French' (The Observer, 27 June 1999). This disagreement is interesting as it suggests that some political elites, those in the Jospin Socialist government, could be willing to consider French identity in a more flexible way than previously. Jospin commented on the legislation that he had proposed in 1998, arguing that 'le respect et la promotion du pluralisme supposent que soit reconnue la contribution des cultures et langues régionales à notre patrimoine national' (the

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respecting and promotion of pluralism requires that we recognise the contribution of regional languages and cultures to our national heritage (cited in Libération, 1 October 1998b). Such ideas were also referred to by Catherine Trautmann, Minister of Culture under the Jospin government (Trautmann, 1998g). These statements suggested an acknowledgement of the more hybrid nature of contemporary French identity. Claude Allègre too, Socialist Education Minister, was quoted as controversially claiming that France's second official language was now English (The Guardian, 14 July 1999). Even more astonishing was Jospin's admission in a speech to Chinese students that the world needed a 'world language', and that it would probably be English in the future. Yet in the same statement, he reverted to a more hostile view of English and ideas about the superiority of French and the need for purity of linguistic identity when he added 'Let's take comfort. Being used by all, English will get a rough ride and lose its original beauty while Chinese and French will retain their purity' (quoted in English in The Independent on Sunday, 27 September 1998b). Jean-Pierre Chevènement, Minister of the Interior, a Socialist figure who is well known for his nationalistic Euro-scepticism, even argued that accepting the Charter would lead to the 'Balkanisation of France' (The Observer, 27 June 1999). So the debate continues at the time of writing. The issue indicates the fierce reactions, which legislation connected with language and identity can inspire in the French polity. It does indicate a possibility that some political elites are considering a less rigid view of French identity, yet it may also be the case that the French government felt compelled to pursue the adoption of the Charter due to the need to appear more modern and flexible, in line with other European countries. Chirac's refusal to allow the Constitution to be changed could be regarded as an example of his wish to assert his presidential authority at a time of unpopularity amongst the French electorate, and perhaps also as a sign of a wish to cling to aspects of French grandeur (greatness) and influence, and to develop his role in the francophone movement. He expressed a wish to do this in other ways too, for example in his aim to increase French influence in Latin American countries through language education and cultural action (The Economist, 26 June 1999; Chirac, 1996a, 1996c; De Charette, 1996c; Toubon, 1995m; Védrine, 1998c).

The disputes over the value of regional and minority languages in the French Republic may lead us to question French policy-makers' positioning of themselves as defenders of diversity within Europe. Indeed, the debates on language within Europe also indicate how
French political elites have used the European arena for policy-making and debate to advance traditional views of French identity based on a francophone 'universal mission'. I will illustrate this below, as I discuss how French elites have sought new opportunities for the expression of language and culture at a European and international level, as a means of countering perceived threats to the French language and identity. French policy-makers have increasingly advocated a new 'solidarity' of European language policy during the 1990s, since opportunities could be found for the expression of its language and culture within the developing European Union. Such policies, as I will demonstrate, were also linked to policies for language in other fields such as francophone policy-making. They became important too in the development of policy for the audiovisual and Internet industries, as the next case studies in this thesis will show, in Chapters Five and Six.

4.2.6 Opportunities for the French language and identity: linking the EU and francophonie

We have already seen how further European integration can be perceived by French political elites as a threat for the French language, and thus national identity. However, such threats can also be used by these politicians to introduce discussions of links between, and new opportunities for, the French language, francophonie and French identity.

Toubon for example, as well as outlining in detail his policies for multilingualism, used his speech to the HCF to broaden his discussion to general concepts of French identity as related to both Europe and the francophone movement. Toubon spoke on this occasion in characteristically evasive terms of mysterious figures - 'esprits' (spirits) - in both Brussels and France who believed that progress required uniformisation (Toubon, 1994e). Similarly, he argued that 'certains' (some people) and 'beaucoup de Français' (many French people), saw the European ideal and the francophone movement as opponents. Such people, Toubon claimed, were often members of successful, wealthy and powerful groups, suggested by the phrase 'aux franges les plus dynamiques de la société (on the most dynamic fringes of society), and preferred to belong to Europe as a kind of club of rich countries, rather than to the francophone community. 'Dynamiques' would normally be considered a positive value, but is countered by the 'franges', suggesting an exclusive group who do not care about French identity. His criticism of such views was strong, as the following extract indicates:

[ ... ] ils éprouvent parfois le besoin de dénigrer cette coopération francophone,
de réclamer l'abandon de l'Afrique pour mieux montrer leur adhésion à un projet qui leur paraît plus moderne; à certains égards, ils ont fondamentalement comme le sentiment pour être de vrais européens, de devoir expier le fait d'être français et d'avoir une histoire qui leur crée d'autres liens. ([... ] they sometimes show the need to denigrate francophone cooperation, to demand that Africa is abandoned in order to show more strongly their belonging to a project which seems to them to be more modern; in some ways, they really think that to be real Europeans, they must atone for the fact of being French and having a history which gives them other links.)

The use of negative verbs like 'dénigrer', and 'expier' - which is used negatively here, suggesting the religious need to compensate for sins - clearly shows Toubon's disdain for any idea of European integration threatening other factors of French identity connected with francophonie. But, Toubon continually argues in this speech that there should be no difficulty in reconciling 'Europe' and 'francophonie', since this opposition only exists in the mindset of those who believe that uniformisation leads to progress: 'Or rien n'est plus contraire au génie de l'Europe, au génie français, aux aspirations francophones que cette philosophie!' (Yet nothing could be further removed from the spirit of Europe and of France, from the francophone aspirations, than this philosophy!). Toubon reiterated this idea elsewhere: 'Parce que la politique de la francophonie et la politique de la langue française ne sont pas exclusives, la politique francophone et la politique européenne de la France ne doivent pas être exclusives.' (Since the policies for francophonie and the French language are not exclusive, French policy for francophonie and France's European policy need not be exclusive' (Toubon, 1994u).

There is a tradition of European Union aid for francophone countries, especially in the Mediterranean region (Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco etc.), for example through the Lomé Agreements, and France often acts as a voice for francophone Africa in the EU (Miguet, 1996, pp.85-9, with reference to Chaigneau, 1992; Sources d'Europe, 1996i). Indeed, my analysis of debates shows how various politicians have sought to emphasise the potential benefits of francophone-European cooperation, beginning with language issues, but widening their comments to other cultural issues and general political cooperation. Mitterrand for example, at the HCF, pointed out how over the previous ten years, both 'Europe' and francophonie had been moving towards common goals, through their attachment to the idea of cultural diversity, and argued that links between the francophone movement and Europe should be promoted through encouraging a feeling of belonging to two communities, for example via the European
francophone television channel, TV5 (Mitterrand, 1994). Much of Mitterrand’s speech was concerned with encouraging and rallying his audience at the HCF to undertake francophone action within Europe. He also suggested that spreading the influence of the French language could only result from a general spreading of francophone cultural influence, and through taking account of technological and economic change. So French speakers, Mitterrand argued, needed to ensure that they were present in forms which could be visible: ‘sur les lieux et sur les canaux qui permettront aux Européens d’apprécier la richesse et la diversité de leurs créations’ (in the places and on the networks which will allow Europeans to appreciate the richness and diversity of their [francophone] creations).

Also speaking at the HCF conference, Alain Lamassoure explained such a vision through arguments that European construction and francophonie could actually work in the interests of each other, as had been the case in the GATT negotiations:

Non seulement la construction européenne et le renforcement de la Francophonie ne sont pas incompatibles mais ils peuvent être conjugués dans l’intérêt de l’une comme de l’autre. Nous l’avons vu au moment des négociations du GATT, lorsque la France cherchait à faire prévaloir "l’exception culturelle": ce n’est que grâce à l’aide de ses alliés européens que la France a réussi son combat pour le pluralisme culturel, et au-delà, pour une certaine idée de la Francophonie prise au sens large. (Not only are European construction and the strengthening of francophonie not incompatible, but they can be combined in the interests of each other. We saw this at the time of the GATT negotiations, when France sought to encourage ‘cultural exception’: it is only thanks to the help of her European allies that France succeeded in her fight for cultural pluralism, and beyond that, for a certain idea of francophonie in a broad sense) (Lamassoure, 1994).

Here again, France is described as leading a fight, for Europe and for the francophone movement. Lamassoure’s reference to defending ‘une certaine idée de la Francophonie’ is significant too; as a reference to one of de Gaulle’s most famous lines, of his ‘certain idea of France’, it suggests an old conception of francophonie as an enigma, and something great and grand. This reference is present elsewhere too, for example in an RPR newsletter, which described the government’s vision of francophonie as follows: ‘à travers la politique francophone, c’est “une certaine idée de la France” dans le monde que le gouvernement entend défendre’ (through francophone policy, the government wishes to promote ‘a certain idea of France’) (RPR, 1994, p.11). So Lamassoure’s speech indicates how a traditional elite vision of
French identity as based on France's enduring special role in the world, and particularly in the francophone movement, is linked to French policy within the developing European Union.

President Mitterrand too stressed why the European project could be an opportunity for francophone identity: 'L'Europe est une magnifique occasion de faire valoir la spécificité francophone. Si les francophones sont actifs, ils montreront ce qu’ils sont capables de faire pour améliorer la communication et l'information dans les domaines qui sont les leurs.' (Europe is a magnificent opportunity to demonstrate francophone distinctiveness. If French speakers are proactive, they will show what they are capable of doing to improve communication and information in the areas which are theirs) (Mitterrand, 1994). The use of 'les leurs' (theirs) here indicates that Mitterrand believes francophones have a right to ownership of aspects of communication and information, and 'spécificité' is a positive term, which emphasises the special nature of the notion of francophonie. The phrase 'ce qu’ils sont capables de faire' (what they are capable of doing) also indicates his belief in the francophone abilities he is trying to encourage. Mitterrand used his speech to emphasise the future for francophonie within Europe, and to offer some ideas about language policy as a way to general cultural and political links. The following passage, for example, uses imperative forms of the verb to encourage his listeners to reflect, and consider the future, in which French speakers can work together in different linguistic and cultural areas, particularly within Europe:

Imaginez des formes de complémentarité entre coopérations francophones et coopérations européennes. Demandez des revues scientifiques européennes plurilingues qui accueillent des articles de Francophones non-européens. Réclamez des coproductions télévisuelles ou cinématographiques associant les Européens et leurs frères de langue des autres continents; celles-ci ne doivent plus être exceptionnelles. (Imagine complementary forms of francophone and European cooperation. Ask for multilingual European scientific journals which will accept non-European, francophone articles. Demand television and film joint productions bringing together Europeans and their brothers in language from other continents; these things must no longer be the exception.)

4.2.7 Francophonie, 'Europe' and a universal mission

The rest of Mitterrand’s speech (Mitterrand, 1994) from this point considered his vision of francophone-European cooperation in areas like policy for education, universities and training, for school textbooks, for health, finance and development funds. A partnership of businesses, he claimed, could be a further means of putting 'des solidarités européennes et francophones'
(European and francophone solidarity) to work, his choice of 'solidarités' adding to the picture he presented of harmonious cooperation. Mitterrand also proposed a francophone development fund, and then even broadened these points to include discussion of development and the spread of democracy:

Il n'y aura pas de démocratie sans développement vrai. Si des actions de solidarité à l'échelle européenne existent dans le domaine de la coopération juridique, il en sera de même à l'échelle francophone. Pourquoi ne pas conjuguer ces actions pour aider nos partenaires du Sud à se doter d'États de droit et de structures de vie démocratiques dans le respect de leur indépendance? (There will be no democracy without real development. If actions of solidarity in the European sphere exist in the area of legal cooperation, it will be the same in the francophone sphere. Why not marry these efforts to help our partners in the south to gain systems guaranteeing the rule of law and structures of democracy, whilst respecting their independence?)

Here, Mitterrand suggests that France's role within the francophone movement is one of facilitator of change, helping less developed countries in the southern hemisphere to embrace Western values of democracy. Yet the northern or Western concept of democracy is not entirely shared throughout the South, not even in some DOM-TOM, where norms of democratic behaviour are not always followed (Ager, 1996b, p.191). Even though such countries are called 'partenaires' (partners) now, the phrase 'à se doter d'États de droit [ ... ]' (to gain systems guaranteeing the rule of law [ ... ]) implies that the countries in question are gaining something positive, or 'endowing themselves' with a privilege. Mitterrand continued to talk about further action in a similar vein:

Européens et Francophones peuvent et doivent agir sur la scène mondiale pour défendre des valeurs communes. Nous avons évoqué le thème de l'exception culturelle, celui de la solidarité en faveur du développement harmonisé, celui des droits de l'homme, nous pouvons aussi songer à la défense de l'environnement - au Sommet de Rio, de telles convergences ont été observées - à la bioéthique. (Europeans and francophones can and must act on the world stage to defend our common values. We have invoked the issue of cultural exception, of solidarity for harmonised development, for human rights, we can also consider this for the defence of the environment - at the Rio Earth Summit, some links were observed - in bioethics).

Mitterrand does not actually say what the 'common values' are, nor could he ever, in reality,
and his reference to ‘cultural exception’ for example is a theme which French policy-makers, rather than francophone ones, initially pushed on to the international agenda, although francophones supported the campaign. ‘Droits de l’homme’ (rights of man) too, as noted earlier, is a phrase synonymous with French Republican identity, and a set of values exported in colonial times. So there is an ambiguous relationship revealed here between French political elites and francophone countries, in this discussion of the future for francophone-European cooperation. On one hand, it is the case that francophone countries have spoken out against uniformisation for example and supported French policies for language, and it might be so that they envisage further cooperation on many different issues, and with the EU. As Judge reminds us (1996, pp.37-8), a continuing problem for the French elite vision of francophonie is that France is so powerful, compared with its francophone ‘partners’, which are often countries who have a dependent relationship with France. Politicians in France still do not acknowledge this, as examples like these illustrate. The tone of Mitterrand’s speech, and his references to ideas for francophone projects still suggest a wish to continue to spread French influence on the international stage through the francophone and European arenas for policy and debate, and a wish to continue a leadership role in areas like development and education. This then is indicative of an uncomfortable relationship for French political elites with francophone countries. France cannot easily ‘abandon’ such nations, but the examples of discourse above reveal a tendency towards an attitude which is not clearly detached from a colonialist outlook, and France’s own power relationship with its so-called ‘francophone partners’.

These trends are also evident in the discourse of Toubon (Toubon, 1994e). Like Mitterrand, Toubon emphasised the links which France has with both Europe and francophonie, which are both ‘engagements profonds’ (deep commitments), and give French overseas policy ‘toute son originalité’ (all its originality), a phrase which uses a rather universalist tone to praise the special nature of French policy traditions. Toubon praised the French role in constructing European institutions, and the role of French as the main working language in the EU, together with French efforts to secure EU funds for French-speaking Africa. For France, Toubon argued, building Europe has come naturally, since many of the common ideals of the European idea or project originated in France. Yet equally, he stated, these ideas were applicable to the project of francophonie: ‘Participer à l’édification d’une communauté francophone vivante, c’est aussi, d’une certaine manière, rendre hommage aux formes fécondes dans lesquelles s’est traduit ce
meme message dans pres de cinquante pays.’ (Participating in the building of a living francophone community, is also, in a sense, paying homage to the fruitful forms in which the same message is sent out in almost fifty countries). Here, the use of the adjective ‘feconde’ is significant, suggesting that the ‘message’ or meaning brought by France to both the European and francophone projects is something positive, as it is fruitful, fertile or rich. Judge asks if France’s participation in the institutions of francophonie is really about a vision of ‘a transformed world’, or neo-colonialism? (1996, pp.33-4). Toubon’s imagery certainly reveals a tendency towards a neo-colonialist tone, portraying France as a leader and bearer of help and new life. Indeed, Toubon’s claims to want to reconcile potentially divided loyalties for France between its position in the European Union and within the francophone movement, suggest that they are rooted in a motivation based on a French identity of a kind of traditional mission, of France as a carrier for universalist cultural ideals. This is clearly revealed in Toubon’s summing-up of the French policy for multilingualism in Europe as follows:

Tels sont brievement resumés, les axes d’une politique, qui s’enrichira du fruit de vos travaux, et qui tend à réconcilier les messages français, européen, francophone qui ne sauraient trop longtemps diverger car ils sont des reflets différents de la même aspiration à l’universalité. (These are, briefly, the main points of a policy, which will be enriched by your work, and which aim to reconcile the French, European, and francophone messages, which will no longer diverge as they are different reflections of the same aspiration to universality.)

It was noted above how there is a tradition of French policy-makers seeking to gain aid for francophone countries through the EU, and it is true that there has been a dilemma over which France is most committed to, francophonie, or Europe. These were voiced for example in debates over a proposal to adopt a constitutional reference to the French commitment to the francophone movement (Le Monde, 8 February 1996). In any case, stronger economic links with francophone countries would be problematic as France is a founder member of the EU. Whilst French policy-makers have fought to gain preferential market arrangements for ex-colonies, and for the DOM-TOM, the primary economic responsibility for France is after all the EU, not francophonie (Ager, 1996b, p.190). According to Ager (1996b, p.190), the lack of preferential investment and economic relationships initiated by France for francophone

14Toubon included similar ideas in an article he wrote for Le Monde (Toubon, 1995o).
countries suggest that francophonie is a ‘toothless tiger’. This suggestion was echoed by journalist Stephen Smith’s report on the Cotonou summit in 1995, when he estimated that the real value of the francophone budget was only 2 F per head, in comparison with the cost of the summit, which was 200 MF (Libération, 2-3 December 1995b). Le Monde journalist Jean-Pierre Péroncel-Hugoz too noted the ‘décalage entre le discours et l’action de la France’ (the gap between the rhetoric and the action of France) concerning the francophone project, as he reported on the announcement of the cutting of 800 MF from budgets for overseas linguistic and cultural projects, despite President Chirac’s pledge three months’ earlier at the Cotonou summit that these funds would not be reduced (Le Monde, 24-25 March 1996).13

These limitations have not stopped French elites pursuing, in debates in the mid-1990s, a general vision of the French language and francophonie advocating a ‘universal mission’. As will be demonstrated in the section below, French language policy and francophone policy are frequently discussed in terms of francophonie being an identity which is an alternative to the cultural and linguistic uniformity which is spreading around the world.

4.2.8 Beyond Europe - francophonie as universal alternative to global uniformity

This idea of a francophone alternative was developed by Toubon (Toubon, 1995m), who defended his 1994 law on the use of the French language, arguing that it was an example for many countries to follow. He also said that it was attracting international attention for reasons beyond the problems facing the French language:

[ ... ] elle lance le message universel du pluralisme linguistique, elle ose montrer la voie du non renoncement et elle annonce, enfin, que la fatalité d’une langue unique pour le village planétaire peut être et doit être évitée.

Grâce à elle un grand débat est ouvert. Le débat identitaire. Le seul qui vaille, celui de l’homme, de son droit à la différence ayant pour corollaire l’obligation de respecter la spécificité d’autrui?

(... it launches the universal message of linguistic pluralism, it dares to show the way of non-renouncement [of language and identity] and lastly, it demonstrates that the inevitability of a single language for the global village can and must be avoided.

Thanks to this [law], a great debate has started. The debate on identity.

The only worthwhile debate about mankind, of his right to difference, with the

13Chirac did later announce a further 42 MF funding for francophone programmes at the Hanoi summit in November 1997 (Chirac, 1997d).
This passage is significant as Toubon makes reference to his language policy within France having goals which go beyond France, and are part of a ‘universal message’. Also he implies, as we saw earlier, that a sole language (English) is threatening to take over the world, in a ‘global village’, which is a frequent reference to globalisation of communications, and also to American-led cultural imperialism. But when he talks about respecting others and their identities as desirable, it is not clear how far he is prepared to take this. Towards the end of his speech too, Toubon used the imagery of a battle between large and small, strong and weak, to suggest that the three phonies could work together for a better world where identities are more respected: ‘[ ... ] où chacun se retrouvera et où chacun pourra vivre sa propre identité sans craindre d’être emporté comme un fétu de paille par le vent dominant’ (where everyone can rediscover and live their own identity without fear of being swept along like a wisp of straw by the dominant wind). Do these statements mean that Toubon believes that ‘Anglo-American’ identities should be respected as well? If so, they could indicate that he has a vision for a new French identity to embrace all cultures. Yet the rest of Toubon’s arguments show that this is not the case. Speaking of his decision to organise the conference to respond to questions about identity which characterise the end of the century, he described why he selected the former colonial powers of francophonie, hispanophonie, lusophonie:

[ ... ] j’ai lancé l’idée d’un colloque sur les trois phonies latines qui par leur dynamisme et leur formidable volonté de continuer à marquer le monde de leur empreinte civilisatrice peuvent, à mes yeux, constituer des alternatives fortes et crédibles à la tentation du modèle unique, de la culture unique et de la langue unique. ([ ... ] I had the idea of a conference on the three Latin languages which I believe, through their dynamism and their great willingness to continue to impress their civilising legacy on the world, can be strong and credible alternatives to the temptation to have a single model, a single culture and a single language).

This extract refutes any possibility of Toubon’s vision of identity accepting all cultures, as it again refers to a hostility to a single model, culture and language which by now we have seen to mean ‘Anglo-American’ for French political elites’ conception of identity. Furthermore, the admission that the choice of languages was made according to their capacity to have a civilising

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16On a similar note, a Ministry of Culture press conference also suggested that some other countries wanted to protect their languages from English (Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.26).
influence on the world is a quite blatantly traditional, and, indeed, colonialist view of languages and identities introduced by Toubon. Later in his speech, Toubon acknowledged that the three languages in question shared a past of colonisation and domination, but that these languages had become ‘des langues d’ouverture et de modernité’ (languages of openness and modernity), and that French had become a means of resistance and freedom for those colonised. He summarised this complex situation thus: ‘Comme vous le voyez, la relation entre la domination parfois sous ses formes les plus brutales et la langue est complexe et nous devons en interpréter les conséquences avec nuances.’ (As you can see, the relationship between language and domination sometimes in its most brutal forms is complex, and we must find a nuanced interpretation of the consequences of this). Toubon indicated in this sentence that he was aware of how the use of languages, and the symbolism attached to them, can change, as he noted how francophone countries which were once colonies of France later on embraced the ideals of francophonie, as a potential route to influence and economic links with other countries, as we saw in the previous chapter.

However, Toubon did not take this understanding beyond francophonie, as there is no reference to understanding how the use of English which is ‘imposed’ on people in the so-called global village might ultimately be welcomed by some people, and its use adapted. Toubon failed then, to fully appreciate the hybrid and changing nature of both languages and identities, as discussed in Chapter One. He also effectively dismissed the powerful legacy of colonialism when he added: ‘Je pense sincèrement que nous n’avons pas à rougir du passé qui a, les faits actuels en témoignent éloquemment, semé en réalité avec succès les principes fondamentaux de la démocratie et des droits de l’homme.’ (I really do not think that we should be ashamed of the past which, as current facts eloquently demonstrate, actually successfully spread the fundamental principles of democracy and the rights of man). So, after all, according to Toubon, it is not worth being too disturbed by the colonial past of disasters like French Algeria, because great nations like France, Spain and Portugal did do some good in spreading values of democracy and human rights. Interestingly, some of these ideas were echoed in a speech by the FN’s Bruno Mégret (Mégret, 1993). Furthermore, Toubon’s words suggest a belief in the ‘white man’s burden’, or the colonial idea that civilising ‘dark continents’ is a formidable but worthy task.17 The vocabulary chosen here contributes to this positive gloss too, with the choice

17The ‘white man’s burden’ is a reference to the famous poem by Rudyard Kipling (1898). See Moore, 1968;
of ‘éloquemment’, ‘succès’ and ‘fondamentaux’. The verb ‘semer’ too suggests something positive, something scattered or sown, like seed; something which is distributed and bears fruit, as we saw earlier with Toubon’s choice of ‘féconde’ when discussing his vision of francophonie. The message in this extract then is that we should not forget that, before France led the battle against linguistic and cultural uniformity, through an alternative francophone vision, it was ‘giving’ democracy to otherwise uncivilised, backward corners of the world, through colonialism.

Margie Sudre too, Secretary of State for Francophone Affairs (Sudre, 1995e), dismissed the reality of France’s colonialist past, and praised contemporary elite attempts at spreading a universal message through policies for French language and francophonie. In spite of her declaration that francophonie was primarily concerned with leading the way in the struggle for pluralism and diversity, and not based on a nostalgic vision of Empire, she stated: ‘Oui, le français a su d’une manière irremplaçable, toucher l’universel et servir l’humanité.’ (Yes, French has always known, in an irreplaceable way, how to touch what is universal and how to serve humanity). She also made reference to ‘toutes les langues qui ont construit notre humanité’ (all the languages which have built our humanity), which, she said, included German, Arabic and Spanish, but she did not mention English. She even admitted that the French language, together with history and geography, had made France larger than it was in reality, and that this heritage could not be denied. She referred too, as we saw other politicians do earlier, to ‘certains’ (some people) who regard French and its influence in the world as a hindrance; an antiquated and burdensome legacy, even though without it the world would be condemned to ‘un irrémédiable monolinguisme’ (an incurable monolingualism) (Sudre, 1995d).

Such an assertion, referring to English, through ‘monolinguisme’, implies that French is a gift which has saved the world from a curse of uniformity. She betrayed French elite aims of leadership of the francophone movement as clearly part of a ‘mission’ which could benefit the country’s international standing: ‘Oui, la francophonie nous élève au-dessus de nous-mêmes et met bien en lumière notre destin exigeant de grand pays moderne, généreux et pacifique.’ (Yes, francophonie raises us above ourselves and clearly illuminates our demanding destiny as a great modern, generous and peaceful country) (Sudre, 1995e). Elsewhere, she argued that promoting and defending the French language allowed France to carry values beyond those of the defence

Nederveen Pieterse, 1992, pp.78-9; Bruckner, 1983.
of French interests, thus defending the idea of a traditional French identity which is spread by the French language (Sudre, 1996a).

With the election of Chirac as President, and the new government under Prime Minister Alain Juppé in place, together with the new ministerial structure making *francophonie* part of a ministerial portfolio, francophone issues were described by Sudre as more significant, and a specific aspect of foreign policy (Sudre, 1995d, 1995e). The importance of spreading French and *francophonie* as a feature of foreign policy was again highlighted, by Minister for Foreign Affairs Hervé de Charette, who described how there was a great demand for France’s influence throughout the world, and much to do to extend the ‘rayonnement’ (influence) of the French language abroad (De Charette, 1995a).

The idea of there being a great demand around the world for French and *francophonie* was significant in both the debates and policy of French elites around this time. Not only was it voiced, as we have seen, as a general alternative to uniformity, but it was especially discussed in connection with particular regions, for example Asia. At the end of a tour of Indo-China, Jacques Toubon announced that he had never seen a region where the francophone message of universality and diversity was responding so much to a real need (cited in *Le Figaro*, 5 April 1994). But this ‘need’ was really a code for a still traditional view of French identity as something to be spread, through language, as Alain Juppé described the Indo-China area, along with central Europe, as ‘une fenêtre d’opportunités’ (a window of opportunities’ for the promotion of the French language (Juppé, 1994). Asia was encouraged as a priority by President Chirac for francophone action, and as an area for extending French presence and influence, as Hervé de Charette described (De Charette, 1995a). This policy, as part of the relaunch of *francophonie*, did have elements of continuity with earlier proposals, as in 1992, Catherine Tasca had pledged further investment for guarding the prestige of French against Anglo-American domination in science, and to encourage ‘la renaissance du français en Indochine’ (*Le Monde*, 15 July 1992). Tasca was struck by the presence of American publications and leaflets in English as well as the prevalence of English in French hotel chains.

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18 See also Sudre, 1995d.

19 See also Juppé, 1996b.

20 See also *Le Figaro*, 17 January 1996; Toubon JO, AN, 18 October 1994, second sitting, pp.5633, 5637 and Ministère de la Culture, 1994g.
and in advertising in Indo-China, and she said she was ready to help the people of Vietnam and Cambodia to keep a francophone 'rempart identitaire' (identity defence or rampart), building an image of an identity 'battle', with her use of 'rempart', in the face of 'l'uniformisation nippo-américaine' (Japanese-American uniformity) (Le Monde, 10 September 1992). But, in both Vietnam and Cambodia, younger generations are more and more interested in the English-speaking world and can resent being obliged to accept the conditions of French aid, as in 1993 and 1995 when Cambodian students protested about French-language education (Ager, 1996b, p.165; also The Economist, 22 November 1997). Resistance to French is found elsewhere too, such as in Morocco where French has been abandoned in favour of Arabic in official texts (Miguet, 1996, p.74), and the teaching of French is in decline in many African countries, as Stélio Farandjis, secretary general of the HCF, lamented in 1994 (Farandjis, 1994).

The general policy direction concerning francophonie and the promotion of French did not change in the transition to the Jospin administration, even though this did not include a minister for francophonie, only one for the perhaps more modern-sounding 'Cooperation' (Charles Josselin). Hubert Védrine, Socialist Foreign Affairs Minister, explained the overall approach as follows:

La présence culturelle française à l'étranger constitue un axe majeur de notre diplomatie et l'action menée par le Ministère des Affaires étrangères dans ce domaine vise essentiellement la promotion de notre langue, d'une part, la diffusion de notre culture, d'autre part. (The French overseas cultural presence is a major theme of our diplomacy, and the action undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this area basically targets the promotion of our language, on one hand, and the spread of our culture, on the other) (Védrine, 1997b).

4.2.9 Francophonie and identity after the cold war

A further important aspect of the debates on the vision of France leading a francophone alternative concerns the context of a post-cold war world. The end of the cold war in 1989 immediately encouraged the French Socialist government of the time to launch cultural action in the former central and eastern Europe and to encourage French language teaching. As Thierry de Beaucé, then Secretary of State for External Cultural Relations insisted, this was an important time for French cultural action: 'Il est important que la France soit là, tout de suite.' (It is important that France is there, right away.) (cited in Le Quotidien de Paris, 30 July 1990). More recently, the newest member of francophonie is Moldova, where very little French is
The francophone model was described in government documents and in debates involving political elites in the mid-1990s as existing in a new world order where American economic and cultural influence, or 'le dynamisme du modèle américain' (the dynamism of the American model) threatened to step into the breach left by the collapse of communism, and to impose itself on the rest of the world (Ministère de la Culture, 1994i). Such discourse advanced the argument that _francophonie_ was an attraction for new members, especially those emerging from Soviet domination and who were interested in the francophone movement in order to avoid American influence. _Francophonie_ could offer to these countries, Toubon suggested, 'une alternative à l'uniformisation culturelle et linguistique du monde' (an alternative to the cultural and linguistic uniformity of the world) (Toubon, 1995k). As we saw earlier, this idea of _francophonie_ as an historically non-aligned cultural and political force, and as an alternative to uniformity, became very important from 1993 onwards, together with the theme of _francophonie_ being more active and assertive as a political movement in conflict prevention, crises and multilateral cooperation. 'Uniformity' was frequently portrayed as being American-inspired or led, but not exclusively. Elsewhere, Toubon described the enemy as also having been a Soviet one, as he argued that in countries of central and eastern Europe, French had been used as a language of freedom, against totalitarian uniformity:

C'était pour nombre d'hommes un moyen de préserver leur liberté d'esprit, de maintenir leur faculté de penser d'une manière autonome et une façon parfois de résister à la russification forcée, laquelle ne faisait pas mystère de son intention de détruire leurs propres identités nationales afin de les fondre dans le moule de l'homo [sic] sovieticus'. (For many it was a way of preserving their freedom of spirit, of keeping the ability to think in an independent manner and sometimes a way of resisting enforced 'Russification', which made no secret of its intention to destroy individual national identities in order to cast them in the mould of 'Soviet man' [a pun on _homo sapiens_, or 'human']) (Toubon, 1995m).

Such a statement is extremely negative, as it refers to destroying, to moulding, to enforcement, and also uses 'moule' which can mean 'idiot', besides 'mould'. It is also a paradoxical

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21 This had also been suggested by Jacques Toubon during the debates on his law, as we saw earlier, for example in his contributions to the AN debate (JO, AN, 3 May 1994, second sitting, p.1360).

22 Margie Sudre echoed these ideas about a francophone alternative in a post-cold-war world, 1996b. See also Ministère de la Culture, 1994i.
assertion, regardless of its truth, when compared with the denial which we saw earlier, in the same text, of the reality of French colonisation, as well as the reality of the suppression of different identities within France following the Revolution, which Chapters One and Three outlined.

The emphasis in the discourse surrounding the policy theme of francophonie as an alternative was one of France as leader, as Toubon demonstrated in an article published in the national newspaper Le Monde (Toubon, 1995o), in which he again described France as leading the francophone movement in an entire cultural battle for diversity and freedom: France was ‘la mieux placée pour porter ce message, pour apporter cette réponse aux peuples qui veulent assumer un destin indépendant’ (the best placed to carry this message, to bring this response to the peoples who want to assume an independent destiny). This comment about enabling countries to ‘assume an independent destiny’ however does not acknowledge criticisms of policies of continuing ‘aid’ and ‘cooperation’ by the French State, which, as Corcoran suggests, are not ostensibly different from colonial arguments or doctrines which pledged to be missions of solidarity and charity. They still reveal a backward-looking, neo-colonialist, condescending attitude (1996, p.293, with reference to Girardet, 1972).23

Toubon’s article cited the francophone battle over GATT and the ‘cultural exception’ resolution at the Mauritius summit in 199324 as the turning point when the francophone movement went beyond language and culture and became political (Legendre, 1996, p.57). He also dramatically described using the French language and participating in the francophone movement as a way for countries to resist ‘une mondialisation qui, non seulement aggrave les inégalités sur la planète, mais lamine les spécificités culturelles et conduit au «suicide culturel»’ (globalisation which not only aggravates the planet’s inequalities, but erodes cultural individuality and leads to “cultural suicide”). He expressed similar ideas in the ‘Alternatives à l’uniformisation’ address, where he spoke of liberalism’s threat of uniformity in a post-cold war world:

L’ironie serait qu’au moment où les valeurs occidentales de démocratie, de liberté et de pluralisme sont en train de s’imposer sur l’ensemble de la planète, auxquelles nous sommes très attachées, que ces valeurs puissent en même temps


24The text stated November 1994, but this is a mistake.
susciter un esprit de conformisme et créer un mode de vie et de pensée uniforme, bref que le ‘politiquement correcte’ [sic] nous entraîne, si nous n’y prenons garde, vers un monde orwellien. (The irony is that at a time when Western values to which we are attached, of democracy, liberty and pluralism are extending around the globe, these values can at the same time encourage a spirit of conformity and create a uniform way of life and thought, in short, what ‘political correctness’ is leading us towards: an Orwellian world, if we are not careful) (Toubon, 1995m).

This extract reveals Toubon’s belief in the superiority of Western cultural and political values, but also his continuing fear of ‘uniformity’, which, as it is linked to the West and to values like so-called ‘political correctness’ - a code for denouncing left-wing action on inequalities - is likely to be connected to processes of Americanisation and globalisation. His words encourage fear through reference to ‘un monde orwellien’ too. He proposed to counter this through the francophone movement as an alternative to ‘l’uniformisation rampante qui se développe sous nos yeux’ (rampant uniformisation which is growing up before our eyes). This possibility is strengthened, Toubon claimed, since francophonie is not imperialist, and the French language can be a key element in resistance: ‘C’est-à-dire le meilleur antidote à l’uniformisation, le symbole de l’indépendance et le refus de la soumission au plus fort.’ (That is the best antidote to uniformisation, the symbol of independance and the refusal of submission to the strongest).

Later on, the fears about France’s position in a new world order became increasingly linked to concerns about globalisation, which began to be mentioned more clearly, in contrast to earlier references to the ‘global village’ which were discussed above. Josselin for example, noted the stakes of globalisation for francophonie in an article written for Le Monde at the time of the Hanoi francophone summit:

La Francophonie est l’une des dimensions de la politique extérieure de notre pays. Force est pourtant de constater qu’elle ne suscite pas dans l’opinion publique ou la classe politique l’intérêt qu’y attachent la plupart de nos partenaires. Paradoxe à une époque où sont si présentes la crainte de perdre son identité, la volonté des collectivités comme des individus de rechercher leurs racines, l’inquiétude, enfin, que globalisation ne rime trop avec uniformisation. (Francophony is one of the dimensions of our country’s foreign policy. Nevertheless, we have to face the fact that in France neither the general public nor the political establishment attach to it the same importance as most of our

\[^{25}\text{A reference to British novelist George Orwell, author of Nineteen-Eighty-Four (1949), a nightmarish vision of totalitarian society.}\]
partners do. A paradox at a time when there is so much evidence of people’s fear of losing their identity, of the desire of both communities and individuals to seek their roots and, finally, of the concern to prevent globalization too often meaning uniformity - translation provided by France-Statements English version) (Josselin, 1997c).

In this extract, globalisation, rather than factors like the fear of America, European integration or a new world order, is linked to uniformity and loss of distinctive identity, and defined as a major concern for francophonie and the values it represents. Josselin concluded that the francophone community, with France as leader, would not allow globalisation to condemn the world to ‘un modèle de pensée unique’ (a single model of thought, or approach). Alain Juppé too, when Prime Minister, claimed that the French promotion of multilingualism in the EU was right and essential not only because linguistic diversity was essential to European identity and the construction of the Union, but because ‘la promotion du plurilinguisme, comme le respect de l’exception culturelle, font partie de notre manière de nous situer face à la mondialisation’ (the promotion of multilingualism, like the respecting of ‘cultural exception’, is part of our way of facing up to globalisation) (Juppé, 1995d). At the HCF meeting in 1999, Chirac maintained that the francophone movement could enable all of its member countries, through working together, to ‘prendre le train de la mondialisation et du progrès’ (take the train of globalisation and progress), since globalisation was an opportunity (Chirac, 1999a).

These issues raised by globalisation, and its use as a blanket term to describe threats of uniformity threatening the French language and culture, rather than individually-specified factors which we have seen like the spread of English, Americanisation and European integration, became more prevalent in political debates towards the end of the 1990s. During this period, the concept of globalisation became more and more debated in general and absorbed into the vocabularies of politics and business around the world. In particular, it became important in debates on the consequences of new technologies for French identity, as debates on language and culture on the Internet illustrated. I discuss some of the particular challenges to French language and identity presented by new technologies in Chapter Six, in my case study on the Internet.

4.3 Conclusions

In summary, we have seen that French political elites have, through debates and resultant
accompanying policies in the 1990s on language issues, reacted to a number of challenges on the international stage to the French language as the foundation of national identity. The French language, and ultimately, French identity, are perceived as needing defence against the increased status of English, encouraged by the further political and economic integration of Europe, continued Americanisation, and globalisation. Furthermore, the challenges to the French language are linked to threats to the notion of *francophonie* as a culture and community, which represents an identity based on diversity.

My study of texts has showed how with these problems in mind, French political elites have sought to identify new opportunities for French policy on language. These are the European Union, and the geographically wider Europe, and international action through the francophone movement. We can see this in the continued references in the texts to issues concerning the need to defend and promote French, European and francophone culture through the promotion of the French language. Whether presented in terms of economic interest or of cultural liberty, the defence and exaltation of the French language is, as we saw in Chapter Three, clearly related to French political elites’ own long-standing agenda of concerns over national identity, particularly with regard to its fears of the dominance of English-speaking culture, and US-led cultural imperialism. This chapter has illustrated the continuation of a traditional conception of French identity based on such fears, which is described in political debates on language policy from the mid-1990s and the time of the *loi Toubon*.

Besides these factors, we also saw evidence of the effects of the ambiguous relationship which French policy-makers have with the institutions of the developing EU. Deep-rooted fears over the possible loss of sovereignty and identity are revealed in the hostility to the encouragement of a so-called ‘European common identity’ or ‘common culture’, and in the continuing difficulties for French political elites to cooperate with European legislation on minority languages. Concepts and ideals related to ‘European unity’ have long presented problems for French policy-making in general. The area of culture is no exception, and is an obvious site for conflict given the French State’s traditional close involvement with culture and identity issues. A further tension lies in the lack of agreement within the EU on what exactly ‘European culture’, ‘European identity’ may be, and how far it is desirable to develop this. However, as Shore notes (1993, p.783), ‘social identities crystallize most sharply in situations of opposition and conflict particularly when a group feels itself under threat’, which is certainly the
case for French identity as presented here by language policy-makers.

Having seen that French political elites identify various threats to the French language and identity and seek particular opportunities to address these at a European and global level, how can we explain the paradoxical situation of French policy-makers attempting to use trans- and supra-national institutions to address what are - whatever various actors may claim - essentially the national interests of France? Firstly, international cooperation and legislation are portrayed in the debates surrounding the issues discussed in this case study as opportunities for France to protect itself against cultural domination from more powerful sources like the USA. France, Europe and the francophone movement are presented as places where linguistic dominance is (or may be) challenged, through favouring an open identity based on cultural diversity, even though French politicians themselves wish to limit the influence of certain linguistic cultures such as those dubbed ‘American’, ‘Anglo-American’ or ‘Anglo-Saxon’. This is done when France is described as encouraging the input of and exchange with the languages and cultures of other European and francophone countries, whilst identifying the opposition to such a pluralistic vision as rooted in the spread of American-led ‘uniformisation’ or ‘monoculture’. This uniformity results from a kind of cultural imperialism, perpetuated by economic strength, and threatens even more through its influence in a more integrated Europe. This belief may be seen as part of the ongoing tension of attraction and repulsion which, as we saw in Chapter One, exists between France and the United States and English-speaking mass culture. However, French political elites, ever the cultural missionaries, frequently speak as if they are from the country which dares to speak out most strongly against linguistic and cultural domination, referring at various points to French ‘universal’ traditions and duty to criticise what is referred to as ‘monolingualism’.

Linked to this strategy as a response to ‘uniformisation’, there is an undercurrent of references to the positions of France, Europe and francophone countries in a post-cold-war world. France is often described as facing a new, uncertain era, as the international political and geographical landscape has changed so profoundly since 1989. In this possibly ‘postmodern’ time or condition, old sources of conflict and cooperation may have changed or even disappeared, with inevitable consequences for national identity. The end of totalitarianism under the Soviet Union, then, has given way in the minds of French political elites to an intensified cultural domination represented by the English language. This idea was taken up
again in debates on GATT and audiovisual policy, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Five. Yet besides the discussion of the threats related to the use of English and the diminishing influence of French within the world, it is suggested that many new zones may be found for cooperation and the traditional *rayonnement* of French cultural ideals, through policies based on multilingualism and *francophonie* as an alternative within Europe and around the world.

As French political elites have looked towards international legislation for the development of their language policy agenda, they have made attempts to rally support from neighbouring EU countries, and from other nations not as yet within the EU, but which may sympathise with an apparently 'European' or francophone identity based on ideals of diversity. At the same time, French political elites have interpreted the challenges concerning language policy from America and from European integration as offering new opportunities for the development of French identity. 'European culture' and 'European identity', like 'French' and 'francophone identity' are concepts which policy-makers are able to manipulate according to their own ends. The European Union and the francophone movement were adopted by French policy-makers as a platform for cooperation and alliance to act as a smokescreen for continuing State protection and promotion of the French language and identity in the global market-place. Moreover, the EU and the francophone movement could facilitate the promotion of France as a European and international diplomatic actor ready to defend cultural diversity against globalising forces represented by Anglo-Saxon cultural rivals, and also by an over-unified and integrated Europe, itself submerged by Anglo-Saxon rivals in the pursuit of 'cultural unity' and deeper integration. As Machill (1997, pp.495, 498-9) claims, French policy-makers have proposed 'European' language policy initiatives through the promotion of multilingualism in order to improve the legitimacy of French language policy. Machill also suggests that EU language policy has been regarded as an answer by French policy-makers to 'the increasing use of new information and communication technologies which render obsolete the classical instruments of French media policy' (1997, p.503). However, Chapter Six will demonstrate that EU language policy is in fact only one of a range of approaches which French political elites have adopted in order to respond to the challenge which new technologies have brought to State language and media policy.

In addition, French political elites speaking with a louder voice at an international level may also present a new diplomatic opportunity for wider influence, as well as for the relaunch
of European construction and integration. This may be of relevance in today’s international ‘postmodern’ climate, where France feels a declining influence, and an uncertainty regarding its economic and/or political ‘squeezing’ within the evolving EU. This leads French policy-makers to continue the project of the francophone movement as an entity of symbolic, rather than real, power.

So, in conclusion, this chapter has demonstrated how French political elites in the 1990s have attempted to challenge the cultural values of linguistic uniformity, perceived as inherent within the dominance of English and US-led mass culture, on a global level, through their self-presentation as leaders in Europe, and in the building of an alternative global vision: a kind of ‘third way’ (Giddens, 1998) of ‘non-aligned’ countries, demonstrated through efforts concerning cooperation with francophone nations. However, as this case study revealed, the various debates and policies apparently concerned with linguistic pluralism constitute part of the undynamic conception of French identity, linked to the long-standing, universalist crusade, even another ‘civilising mission’ for the protection and promotion of a French vision of language and identity, both within France and on the wider international stage. This has become subject to self-revaluation as the ‘French’ increasingly confronts the ‘global’, yet political elites have indicated a wish to limit the influence of other languages when it conflicts with their view of French identity, given the hostility voiced in the debates discussed, on European integration, the Anglo-American other and the refusal to accommodate minority languages and cultures.

Indeed, the references by French cultural policy-makers in the debates I have examined in this chapter to the new context of France and Europe in a post-cold war, more global era, together with references to the ‘global village’ and the actual use of the term of ‘mondialisation’, suggest that ‘globalisation’ was becoming an increasingly significant concern for French political elites in terms of language and identity debates in the 1990s. We might suggest that ‘globalisation’ is now perhaps encapsulating more effectively than ‘Americanisation’ the fears of French political elites about identity. Doubtless there are links, especially given the role of language and culture in the process of Americanisation, and now in the process of globalisation, as communication technologies continue to develop at a rapid pace and make certain different languages and cultures more readily accessible for some. Yet, as discussed in Chapter One, the seductive nature of Americanisation for France has long been recognised, whilst the notion of globalisation represents for many not so much a better world as
a threatening one of uncertainty and change, of 'shifting jobs and downsizing' (Taylor, 1997, p.20). For French policy-makers, globalisation and the 'global village' seem particularly to spell the risk of further cultural imperialism and domination being imposed upon France by market forces, bringing linguistic and cultural uniformity. In this sense, 'Americanisation' may have been subsumed within fears about globalisation, as the term has become more important in the French economic and political vocabulary. However, as we will see in Chapter Six with regard to the Internet and related new technologies, the increasingly globalised communications market has also revealed itself as an exciting prospect for French language and cultural policy relating to the defence and promotion of French identity. Before considering these issues though, the following chapter investigates audiovisual policy debates in France in the 1990s. The case study will show how language policy priorities were often closely linked to those of audiovisual policy. Furthermore, it will consider how French political elites reacted to challenges to their conceptions of French identity and the policy-making on the audiovisual industries which resulted from these, and, as in the case of language policy, how new opportunities were sought to meet these challenges, and to maintain an undynamic vision of French identity.
CHAPTER FIVE: FRENCH NATIONAL IDENTITY, AUDIOVISUAL POLICY AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IN THE 1990S - THE GATT DEBATE AND BEYOND

5.1 Introduction

The previous case study described the French political reaction to the international challenges in the 1990s facing the French language, and policy-making related to these. The responses of French political elites to these issues were shown to be motivated by traditional notions of French national identity. The purpose of the present case study is to explore the effects of a further set of challenges to these constructions of French identity. These challenges are concerned with policy for the audiovisual industries, particularly with reference to film and television. The French State has a tradition of involvement in the production, management and regulation of audiovisual culture. This may be seen in the State's regulation of French radio and television broadcasting under both State monopoly and free market conditions throughout the Fifth Republic, via the progression from the post-war dominance of the state-owned Radio-Télévision française in an era of censorship, to the embracing of privatisation during the 1980s, as described by Kuhn (1995). In addition, television, in particular, since its original harnessing by Charles de Gaulle as 'the instrument par excellence for putting across the presidential image and message to the greatest number of the electorate' (S. Hayward, 1989, p.58), has, as I explained in Chapter Two, greatly influenced the successes and failures of various politicians. This has contributed to the growing 'mediatisation' of political life and the ensuing enhancement of the importance of individual personalities in France (Gaffney, 1991a, pp.20, 25; S. Hayward, 1989).

Moreover, as I began to outline in Chapter One, the French State has regarded French audiovisual culture as a symbol of French national identity, and has attempted to defend this in the post-war period when mass culture was developing and bringing with it the influence of other cultures and identities from overseas. The French film industry in particular, given the existence of various government agencies designed to support film production and export, has since the debates on anti-American protectionism of the 1940s and 50s detailed in Chapter One, been held as a measure of the independence or otherwise of France's cultural and national identity (Looseley, 1995, p.27). Since the late 1980s, this area of policy-making has become more significant, with debates focusing on certain areas of policy towards audiovisual culture such as the protection and promotion of the French film or television product in what is becoming an
increasingly global market-place. Furthermore, audiovisual policy is, like language policy, as demonstrated in Chapter Four, an example of an area where these issues became increasingly debated in an international context in the 1990s. This has been linked to France’s alignment with other European and francophone countries whilst in opposition to various cultural ‘others’ such as the USA and other non-European countries, especially Japan (see, for example, Forbes, 1995a, pp.235, 260).

However, the renegotiation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1993 threatened both French and European Union policies for protecting audiovisual production, and generated considerable debate in France and throughout Europe, particularly concerning the problematic Franco-American cultural relationship and attitudes towards mass culture. These debates were significant in terms of identity issues as they synthesised perhaps the strongest anti-American reaction on the part of French political elites regarding European television and film industries (therefore including French production). As indicated in Chapters Three and Four, French policy-makers successfully appealed to francophone and European allies to demand a ‘cultural exception’, which would exclude cultural ‘products’ like films from the agreements.

Strengthened by the alliances made over the GATT issue, French policy-makers continued to promote the ideals they defended in the GATT debates, based on arguments for cultural exception. This happened alongside the development of policies to defend and promote the French language as a factor of national identity, and as a symbol of the ideals of ‘cultural exception’ and diversity, as explored in Chapter Four. Policy-makers adopted similar tactics, and arguments, in the promotion of their policy for the audiovisual industries. In particular, they sought opportunities at an international level for promoting their cultural policy objectives related to the audiovisual sector. This was significant in the European Union arena of policy-making, especially as a result of the French EU presidency of 1995.

This chapter will illustrate how, throughout the 1990s, the vision driving French policy for audiovisual industries was one based on traditional State-centred views of French identity held by political elites, particularly defined in opposition to long-standing cultural opponents like the USA. This was evident in debates concerning both the GATT issue, and policy and debates elaborated within Europe, as a geographical area and as the European Community, later Union. Furthermore, as I demonstrated in the previous chapter which examined language policy, French political elites sought to identify new opportunities for the defence and promotion of a
profoundly undynamic view of French national identity, through debates and policy on the audiovisual industries. These claims will be supported by the findings of my analysis, in section 5.2, of examples of key texts which are part of these debates, supplemented by reference to ‘satellite texts’ and legislation. The selection of the main texts analysed will be discussed in section 5.2.1, following further consideration of the background to French audiovisual policy-making and the issues affecting its relationship with French national identity in the 1990s.

5.1.1 Audiovisual industries and the French tradition of regulation

France began to use quotas for its film industry from as early as 1928 (Puttnam, 1997, p.153), and developed a strong tradition of protectionism, regulation and subsidy for film and television production from 1945. This, as we saw in Chapter One, has been connected to the desire of the French State to protect and promote French productions against more powerful producers like the USA, and also to the tensions surrounding the validity of mass culture. In the case of film, the Centre national de la cinématographie or CNC, has existed since 1946 as a public body for regulation and funding, and Unifrance Film has promoted French cinema abroad since 1949. Subsidies available to French film producers include the Fonds de soutien, SOFICA (Société de financement de l'industrie cinématographique et audiovisuelle) and CNC selective subsidy (Collins, 1999, p.208). Despite this, figures for French cinema in 1993 show that American films made up 57.7 per cent of cinema admissions, French films 34.2 per cent and other EU films 4 per cent. Figures for 1996 showed that French films had only 0.9 per cent of the American market (Le Monde, 12 December 1996). Yet the US's penetration of the French film market was lower than for the EU as a whole, and considerably lower than in the case of the UK. (Collins, 1999, p.205). More recent figures show that in the EU, the USA had 70 per cent overall of the film market in 1996, up from 56 per cent in 1987 (The Economist, 12 September 1998). The French film industry may still be the fourth in the world in terms of the number of films produced per year (CNC, 1994), yet it was estimated that during the last week of November 1998, French films had only a 9 per cent share of the cinema market in France, compared to 81 per cent held by American films, and 10 per cent by films from other countries (The Independent on Sunday, 3 January 1999; L'Express, 4 February 1999).

French television is less well supported than film, although public funding is still significant for the channels Antenne 2, Arte and FR3 (Collins, 1999, p.208). French television
channels must themselves invest 3 per cent of their turnover in French film production. Regarding content, Emanuel (1994, p.140) notes the long-standing dilemma over the ideal of public service broadcasting, and especially over the role of television. In the 1960s, confidential reports wondered what could be done about the low levels of viewing of 'cultural' programmes. From the 1980s, the debate focused on the effects of commercialisation, as the deregulated and privatised radio and television landscape brought concerns over poor quality and cheap imported programmes, most commonly from the USA. These increased as companies pursued a mass audience (Collins, 1999, pp.207, 209). Paradoxically, France has allowed massive liberalisation in the domestic television market, in contrast to what it has demanded in the European sphere. In 1994, only 48.6 per cent of programmes on French television were of French origin, with 14.7 per cent from elsewhere in the EU, and 36 per cent from non-EU states, of which the US provided 32.5 per cent. Nearly 40 per cent of programmes screened originated in anglophone countries. French regulation limits the number of films on TV and imposes quotas on feature films and viewing times. Also, 60 per cent of films shown must be of European origin, of which 50 per cent must be made in French (Mazdon, 1999, p.75).

Radio too has seen quotas introduced in an attempt to limit foreign influence. The Pelchat amendment to the loi Carignon of 1 February 1994 came into force in January 1996, and stated that French radio stations of a generalist and musical nature must devote at least 40 per cent of their airtime between 6.30-22.30 to French language songs (or French regional language). Half of these should be from new artists. This law was aimed particularly at commercial stations, especially new networks which had developed in the 1980s under the period of audiovisual liberalisation permitted by the Socialists. Public service stations like Radio-France already had a requirement to use French songs as over half of their general variety programming (Hare, 1997, p.74). Prior to the Pelchat/Carignon legislation, Jack Lang had considered the idea of radio quotas, but this had not been acted upon. Instead, a voluntary system of quotas was worked out by the CSA and individual stations, but not always followed (Machill, 1996b, pp.26-8). The 1996 law allowed enforcement through fines, even though this was criticised by the European Commission as contrary to European law on free movement of goods and services (Le Monde, 3 January 1996; Libération, 19 January 1996). The legislation was presented by the French government as being necessary to guard the French song against the effects of the mass market, and to ensure its influence, but radio stations protested that the quota would potentially
lead to uniformity and loss of listeners to satellite and foreign broadcasters (L'Événement du jeudi, 10-16 March 1994a; Le Monde, 19 February 1996).

In Europe, cinematic and televisual creations have often been perceived and portrayed more as a form of expressive art, rather than as 'products' to be marketed like any others. This idea has been particularly strong in France, where film has been a way of articulating identity. Puttnam explains:

For many of its practitioners, such a view of cinema is intimately tied to their ability to articulate a deeply felt psychological, cultural and even political sense of identity. Whilst recognizing that the best individual films are almost always firmly rooted within the particularities of a specific culture, it is also true that within Europe's film industry there has, on the whole, been a broadly shared vision of the function and purpose of cinema (1997, p.333).

Yet there are arguments to suggest that this 'tradition' is in fact an 'invented' one. The conception of cinematic creations in France as 'art' rather than 'products' may be comparatively recent, if we consider, for example, the development of the early French cinema at the turn of this century, led by the highly commercial outlook of the Paris company Pathé-Frères (Abel, 1995; Puttnam, 1997, pp.65-6). The notion of the film as artistic creation arguably developed later, during the 1950s and 1960s alongside the birth of the journal Cahiers du cinéma and the development of the auteur school of criticism which began to treat cinema as a serious art form, in the same way as novels and poetry. Indeed, the Nouvelle Vague (New Wave) of the 1950s was more of an aesthetic than an economic success, and did not provide the answer to the growing power of Hollywood (Puttnam, 1997, p.254). The 'auteur' film-maker was considered an inspired artist who put his/her personal stamp on the films, and gave the film its meaning. A law passed on 11 March 1957 classified the medium of film as amongst 'œuvres de l'esprit' (spiritual works), and recognised the director and writers as authors, rather than the producer. This was contrary to the situation in the United States, for example, where the idea of industrial copyright allowed the production company to be the 'author' of a film, and exercise ultimate power over its finished version (Jeancolas, 1997; Puttnam, 1997, pp.302-3). Thus the admission of visual culture to the hierarchy of 'legitimate' culture may be more recent than we might think, and the appeals to a 'tradition' of 'artistic creations', rather than to culture as products, can be employed defensively without real foundation (Shore, 1993, p.792). This is true in the case of contemporary debates on audiovisual policy amongst French political elites, as this case study
5.1.2 France, audiovisual regulation and the European Community/Union

Regulation of the *paysage audiovisuel français* (PAF, as it is called, meaning the French audiovisual environment) has become increasingly interlinked with policies developed within the European Community and European Union. French political leaders involved in the building of Europe since 1945 - that is, Europe in terms of the construction of the European Community/Union - have often spoken of the desire to strengthen cultural links between countries and to develop European cultural policies. These aims were reflected in France's request for the 1992 Treaty on European Union (the 'Maastricht' treaty) to include a 'Cultural Dimension' to encourage mutual respect and cooperation in areas of cultural policy through a legal competence, thus laying the basis for future European cultural legislation (Premier Ministre, 1992a; Shore, 1993, p.784). This was achieved in the form of Article 128 of the Treaty (CEC, 1992).

Audiovisual policy issues became particularly important in European Community policy-making during France's 1989 European Council presidency (Drake, 1994, p.48), when President Mitterrand prioritised the development of a Council of Europe programme known as 'Eurêka', which was designed to promote the distribution of European technology in the visual culture industries, for example high-definition television (HDTV). In November of that year, a major conference of European and EEC culture ministers was organised by France and held in the town of Blois, called 'Europe: Continent Culture' (Europe: Culture Continent). French Minister of Culture Jack Lang, in his invitation to this event, explained that French policy goals included building a 'cultural Europe': 'Le temps est venu de jeter les bases d'une Grande Europe de la Culture. C’est encore un rêve. Ce peut être une réalité de demain si les intellectuels, les créateurs et les responsables de notre continent sont capables de donner un souffle nouveau à la construction européenne.' (The time has come to lay the foundations of a great, cultural Europe. It is still a dream. It can be a reality tomorrow if intellectuals, creators and leaders of our continent can breath new life into European construction) (Lang, 1989c).

Around the same time, the French government began to give more attention to external television policies in general. Alain Decaux, Socialist Junior Minister with Responsibility for Francophone Affairs, was given the task by Prime Minister Michel Rocard of coordinating
television policies beyond France. Rocard explained to Decaux on his appointment the significance of this job: 'La télévision est devenue dans le monde un vecteur essentiel de diffusion des langues et des cultures. Or la France [...] reste encore insuffisamment présente sur les petits écrans du monde. [...] les actions menées le sont en ordre dispersé et sans stratégie d’ensemble..' (Television has become an essential carrier in the world for the spread of languages and cultures.) France remains insufficiently present on the small screen around the world. [...] the policies undertaken in this respect are disparate and lack coherence.) (letter from Rocard to Decaux on 18 March 1989, cited in Decaux, 1989a, and quoted in Le Monde, 21 March 1989; Decaux, 1989b). In July 1989 Decaux announced his intention to create a Conseil de l’audiovisuel extérieure de la France (CAEF - Council for French Overseas Audiovisual Policy), and presented a report on external policy for television on 26 July to the Conseil des ministres (Cabinet). This pledged 50 M FF extra funding for a five-year overseas television plan (Decaux, 1989b; Le Monde, 28 July 1989). It also highlighted the desirability of extending the TV5 satellite channel’s coverage, a policy which Decaux and his successor Catherine Tasca pursued.¹ The report’s introduction flagged the risk of European television viewers only watching American series on Japanese television sets, and of France and others who were ‘ouverts à la culture française’ (open to French culture) not being able to access French television programmes (Decaux, 1989a, p.8). It referred to the challenges for French audiovisual policy in the world market as ‘une bataille’ (a battle) and ‘un combat’ (a fight). This metaphor of a battle became increasingly important in the debates on audiovisual policy of the 1990s, as this chapter will discuss.

In the same year, the Socialist government was instrumental in the introduction of the ‘Television without Frontiers’ initiative, a European Community project resulting in a directive adopted in October 1989 which came into force in 1991. This envisaged the removal of all legal and technical barriers to the transmission of television programmes across the member states, so that no state could block broadcasts by cable or satellite originating in another state. The directive also established quotas stipulating the prioritising of the broadcast of ‘a majority’ of European programmes (article 4), and of 10 per cent of each broadcaster’s airtime to be reserved for independent European productions (article 5) (CSA, 1994, p.10). France had originally

¹Tasca took over in May 1991 as Junior Minister for Francophone Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and had responsibility for overseas radio and television policy.
wanted the Television without Frontiers directive to include a mandatory quota system as a means of defence against American programmes (Looseley, 1994, p.126; Le Monde, 5 April 1989), but the article dealing with quotas eventually adopted, Article 4, was not a legally enforceable quota, but a political aspiration, to be attained where practicable (Schleslinger, 1994, p.39). The French Communists criticised the Socialist government of being too weak in the face of the American cultural threat, and giving in to pressures from other countries' opinions voiced within the European Parliament, where the qualified majority voting system could defeat them (L’Humanité, 4 October 1989; Marest, 1991).

Nevertheless, the legislation was still arguably aimed at limiting American broadcasts in particular, in order to protect European identities from Americanisation, and attracted US opposition, on account of the directive’s potential conflict with international trade agreements such as the GATT (Le Monde, 8 September 1989, 5 October 1989b). Indeed, although Article 4 was not ultimately a strict means of enforcing quotas, Carla Hills, the US President’s special trade envoy, denounced the adoption of the Television without Frontiers directive as protectionist and discriminatory, and warned that the US would fight it through the GATT system (Le Monde, 12 October 1989b). Schleslinger (1994, pp.30-3) notes how there were cultural reasons for the anti-American direction of the legislation, as ‘the role of audiovisual media in constructing a European identity had been officially defined by counterposition to a culturally invasive other, namely the United States’. At the same time there were industrial reasons, as the Television without Frontiers project aimed to open up the market in order to create more opportunities for European audiovisual production in a global market. The goal of a European audiovisual space is also related to creating a European market, which can encourage the production of hardware and software, and thus confront the Japanese technological challenge. This issue has been particularly developed by French political elites in debates on new media technologies, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Six. Furthermore, obtaining agreement on the principle of quotas in the Television without Frontiers directive, even if they were not strictly enforceable, was crucial to French political elites’ own domestic policy objectives. Edith Cresson, Minister for European Affairs at the time, admitted that if the article on quotas had not been adopted at all, France could have been challenged in the European Court of Justice over the legality of its own quota policies already in existence, which could have been construed as contrary to free trade (Cresson, 1989a, 1989b).
Throughout the 1990s, French policy-makers tried to reinforce the strategy behind the Eurêka and Television without Frontiers projects through supporting further EU legislation, including the development of funds for film and television production within the EU and an increasingly vociferous insistence on the maintenance of quotas for European-generated material (Le Figaro, 1 November 1994; The Guardian, 4 April 1995; Forbes, 1995a, p.260). They continued to argue for stronger quotas in a new Television without Frontiers directive, given that Article 4 of the original text was not strictly enforceable. Furthermore, the French were dismayed that some countries having a more liberal economic climate and less concern about the importance of the European export market, such as the UK, interpreted the quotas liberally, and even allowed American Ted Turner’s cartoon channel to broadcast from their soil (Collins, 1999, pp.201-2; Les Echos, 2 November 1993). This issue is returned to in section 5.2.2 below.

Echoing their domestic policies of continuing subsidy\(^2\), French policy-makers became heavily involved with establishing and sponsoring the EU programmes MEDIA I (1991-95) and MEDIA II (1996-2000), which were set up to provide subsidies and support for European film and television production, and which were another response to the EU’s increasing audiovisual trade deficit with the United States.\(^3\) A more controversial issue concerned European policy on satellite television transmission standards, and was aimed at protecting and supporting the European television hardware industry. French policy-makers aimed to secure a single technical standard (D2 MAC) for high definition television (HDTV), but failed to secure a European Commission directive on this in 1993. This proposal too was motivated by fear of foreign domination in audiovisual industries. The French European Commission President Jacques Delors had justified the HDTV project in 1989 in terms of it being needed for competitiveness and cultural defence of the European Community against both Japanese technology and the

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\(^2\)See, for example, Premier Ministre, 1994g.

\(^3\)The EU’s audiovisual deficit with the USA has increased consistently since the mid-1980s and was estimated at 3500M Ecu in 1992 (7 billion FF, or $3.5 billion - see Sources d’Europe, 1996e; Le Monde, 16 February 1995). By 1994 this had increased to $3.72 billion (Le Monde, 16 February 1995), and between 1995-96 the deficit grew from $4.8 billion to $5.65 billion (The Economist, 12 September 1998). This is set to continue with the development of new television channels. However this deficit has not been equally felt by all EU member states. The UK’s deficit in the 1990s in film and television programmes has been more than balanced by net receipts from other film and television services, and the USA is, unlike France for example, a considerable audiovisual export market for the UK, with several English-language films doing well. For France, Europe is a major export market (Collins, 1999, p.205).
American programming monopoly (Grant, 1994, p.156). This campaign failed due to a combination of disagreement between member states, the procrastination of the Commission and the rapid progress of American digital television. This issue is discussed further in Chapter Six.

5.2 France, the GATT debate and European audiovisual policy-making in the 1990s

The controversy over protective legislation like Television without Frontiers continued to inform French and European Union debate on audiovisual policy and national identity as the 1990s progressed. This was most clearly seen in the GATT issue, where the United States' opposition to quotas clashed with fundamentally different French and European ideas about culture, identity and trade policy. The GATT debate, and its impact on subsequent legislation and discussions on national identity and the audiovisual sector amongst French political elites, are the subjects of the rest of this chapter. I examine these through the study of several key contributions to the political debates, whose selection is explained below in section 5.2.3. In order to appreciate the significance and context of these texts however, it is necessary to consider in more detail the events surrounding the GATT talks and audiovisual policy-making in Europe following the actual GATT agreement of December 1993. These are explained in the following two sections.

5.2.1 Cultural exception and the GATT debate

In 1948 23 countries cut tariffs on each others' exports under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT, which was the first multilateral agreement to reduce border barriers since Napoleonic times. Since then, there have been eight 'rounds' of global trade talks, involving more countries and designed to bring more liberalisation. The most recent, and most ambitious round was the Uruguay Round of 1986-93, which included new rules on trade in services, intellectual property rights like patents and computer software. This round also led to the establishment of the World Trade Organisation, or WTO, in 1995, as an organisation to act as arbitrator in trade disputes. Further agreements on telecommunications, information technology and financial services followed in 1997, and in 1998 the WTO had 132 members, with over 30 countries waiting to join (Allen, 1992; The Economist, 16 May 1998).

4Similarly, Delors argued that the Commission was justified in intervening in audiovisual production, and culture generally, because of its economic importance (Venturelli, 1997, p.91).
Allen explains that by the time the Uruguay Round took place, the GATT system as a means of preserving liberal free trade was being called into question:

The Round came at a time when the GATT system had been repeatedly challenged both by the development of regional trading blocs and by the proliferation of non tariff barriers to trade (NTBs), unilateral restrictive measures such as voluntary export restraints (VERs) and unilateral retaliatory measures such as anti-dumping-duties (1992, p.50).

The US and EC in particular had developed their own methods of dealing with export subsidies and dumping. Furthermore, whilst tariffs and quotas on industrial goods had already been multilaterally reduced, the US in particular began to worry about free and fair trade, or the lack of a level playing field, in new areas like services, intellectual property rights, investment and agriculture, which had not previously been covered by the GATT. The US wanted these to be covered by the agreement and suggested in the early 1980s that there should be a new round of GATT negotiations. This resulted in the Uruguay Round, so called because of the decision to hold it being taken at a GATT ministerial meeting in Punte del Este, Uruguay in November 1982 (Allen, pp.50-1).

The opinion held in France and other European countries that film and television are art forms, not products, fuelled much of the conflict between French and American political elites, and film and television professionals, over the GATT negotiations. The French side advocated a policy of une exception culturelle or ‘cultural exception’ for any ‘cultural product’, that is, that such products must be exempted from the GATT agreements. Without such a clause, existing protective policies such as Television without Frontiers would be jeopardised. Meanwhile, the United States negotiators argued against the continuation of quota restrictions, which they regarded as contrary to the notion of free trade. As far back as the original post-war GATT agreements, film had been a disputed sector between the United States and many European

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5The issue of agriculture caused more disagreement between France and the USA, as seen in French hostility to the Blair House pre-agreement of November 1992 on agriculture and oil seeds trade. This provoked threats that France would invoke the ‘Luxembourg compromise’, as in de Gaulle’s dispute with the EC over majority voting in 1966, and use its veto to refuse any EC policy which it considered harmful to its vital national interests (see Woolcock and Hodges, 1996, pp.317-9). The French principles involved in the Agriculture and Audiovisual policy debates were linked though, as issues on which French political elites did not want to compromise, as Alain Juppé, then Foreign Minister, demonstrated when he declared that the rapeseed quotas between their USA and the European Community were of ‘capital importance to France for economic, political and cultural reasons’ (The Week in Europe, 8 April 1993, p.1, cited in Collins, 1994, p.100).
countries. Individual countries had eventually been allowed to retain quotas. In the Uruguay Round, the stakes were higher, as both the US and European countries recognised that new technologies would soon make multimedia services like video-on-demand (VOD) and on-line television and radio services possible, hence opening a huge new market for audiovisual products (Puttnam, 1997, pp.339-40).

French policy-makers’ economic reasons for supporting the French cinematic industry, which, as we saw above, has a rather unbalanced import-export relationship with that of the USA, were clearly evident. Nevertheless, French anxieties concerning the cultural aspects of the GATT proposals seemed to be more firmly rooted in the traditional ambivalence of the Franco-American cultural relationship. Relations were not helped by revelations that the American CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) had been involved in trying to bribe French officials in order to obtain information about the GATT negotiations (Puttnam, 1997, pp.3-4). As noted in Chapter One, and as Chapter Four illustrated in the case of language policy debates, Americanisation is often held in suspicion by French political elites, who regard it as synonymous with an encroaching modernisation which can have both positive and negative effects (Morley, 1996, p.328). So behind the more obvious commercial battle lay the long-standing struggle between France and the United States for economic, political and cultural power (Gaillard, 1994, p.9).

The producer of the successful French film *Les Visiteurs*, Alain Terzian, summarised the situation arising from the United States’ stance on GATT and culture as one where ‘les intérêts vitaux de la France sont en jeu’, clearly linking economic factors with wider issues related to national identity (*Le Nouvel Économiste*, 3 September 1993b).

French political elites, and cinema and television professionals, campaigned vigorously for cultural ‘products’ like films to be exempted from the GATT agreement, through ‘cultural exception’. They had to do this through the European Community, which had given the European Commission the task of acting as its voice in the Uruguay Round negotiations. Within the European Community, French policy-makers did not find automatic agreement on their proposals for ‘exception’. Trade Commissioner Leon Brittan of the UK had favoured only ‘cultural specificity’, which was not as strong as ‘exception’, and the European Parliament voted

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6See also Forest, 1993, p.115; Kelly, 1995, p.3.

7Although the Commission did not have exclusive competence, as the Council of Ministers would have to approve the deal (Woolcock and Hodges, 1996, pp.302, 305).
for a resolution in favour of this on 14-15 July 1993. The French government reacted to this, through lobbying of other European countries and the Commission, led by the protests of Alain Carignon, Minister of Communication. Eventually on 30 September, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in favour of the stronger ‘exception’, and the wish of the Community to preserve and defend cultural identity (Le Monde, 16 July 1993, 17 July 1993, 17 September 1993; Le Film français, 23 July 1993; La Tribune des fossées, 1 October 1993). Then at the start of October, European ministers agreed on several points that distinguished cinema and television from other goods and services (Libération, 7 October 1993). The French campaign gained further support after appeals to the francophone movement, when the francophone summit at Port-Louis, Mauritius, unanimously adopted a resolution in favour of ‘cultural exception’ on 17 October (Libération, 18 October 1993). Finally, on 14 December 1993, the Uruguay Round agreement left out audiovisual industries for the time being, as agreement could not be reached (Godchau, 1995, pp.162-3; Le Monde, 16 December 1993a). The European Community, and especially the French, rejoiced over this, but the issue was actually postponed for future discussion, and a full and permanent ‘cultural exception’ was not secured in any written agreement. The audiovisual sector was still covered by the GATS (General Agreement for Trade in Services), where it had no special status. The Europeans however did not commit themselves to American demands for liberalisation measures, and retained subsidies, levies and quotas (Puttnam, 1997, p.343). Puttnam argues that the Americans’ acceptance of this was largely due to the fact that the Clinton administration, despite a strong Hollywood lobby against the French-led demands, could not allow the entire GATT agreement to falter over the issue of film and television, given the risk of producing an international trade war (1997, p.342). The impact of the strong political, and also professional, reaction to the United States’ wish to include ‘cultural products’ in the new GATT agreement continued to inform debate surrounding French political elites’ ongoing battle for the protection of such industries in the free market. This battle has become increasingly interlinked with issues relating to European and francophone partner industries. Such a relationship has arguably helped French cultural policymakers to utilise their European links to their own advantage, as the successful campaign over GATT encouraged them to seek support in the rest of Europe and amongst the francophone movement for their cause of defending audiovisual industries against the apparent cultural imperialism emanating largely from the USA.
Encouraged by the support they were able to gain during the GATT debates for their arguments in favour of *une exception culturelle*, French policy-makers used the French EU presidency of 1995 as an opportunity to push its cultural policy objectives onto the European agenda. For example, in its wish to ‘affirmer la diversité culturelle’ (affirming cultural diversity), the French government announced what it called ‘une politique audiovisuelle ambitieuse’ (an ambitious audiovisual policy) at the start of the 1995 presidency (Premier Ministre, 1995a). This, as we saw in Chapter Four, was in addition to policies for safeguarding French and European linguistic pluralism in the face of the threat posed by English.

Audiovisual policy was particularly important under the 1995 French EU presidency. A central aim was French influence on the revision of the Television without Frontiers directive, which began in 1994 and was concluded in 1997 (*Les Echos*, 12 December 1994). However, this legislation proved controversial as there was much division amongst the member states. France for example wanted stricter regulation of the audiovisual industries, whilst countries like the UK, Denmark, Sweden and Germany preferred more liberalisation, as they feared that more rules would limit choice, and restrict competition. French political elites claimed that they had stuck to their pledge to be defenders of cultural diversity in order to justify their demands. In an attempt to work towards a consensus, Commissioner Marcelino Oreja of Spain set out a proposal for discussion in March 1995. This proposal suggested that the ambiguities surrounding the 1989 directive’s article 4 guideline of quotas ‘where practicable’ should be removed. The French had argued for the closing of the loophole inherent in the phrase ‘where practicable’ that had previously enabled American films, comedy and soap operas to increase their market share, and given lawyers a field day in interpreting the vague guidelines (*The Guardian*, 28 March 1995). The Oreja proposal said that general television channels’ schedules should include at least 50 per cent EU origin programmes. Thematic channels such as film, documentary, cartoons, music could choose not to respect this quota if they invested 25 per cent of their programme budget in European production, and would have three years to achieve this level. The French government had wanted quotas to be strengthened, and a clause to allow television to be subject to the rules of the receiving, not broadcasting country, to enable channels like Ted Turner’s much criticised
TNT, broadcasting from the UK, but American-owned, to be subject to European restrictions. Oreja also suggested that European audiovisual competitiveness should be strengthened in the EU market by promoting European programmes, and stopping quotas after ten years. Furthermore, the audiovisual sector's profitability could be increased through adapting to new commercial and technological realities, especially through the liberalisation of teleshopping and the rules for advertising and sponsorship. Finally, Oreja proposed increased protection of children through effective application of rules on violent and pornographic material. However, the Commission's proposal did not include new interactive multimedia services, like VOD, which the French policy-makers had wanted. Oreja and Industry and Telecommunications Commissioner Martin Bangemann agreed that imposing heavy regulations on European multimedia services would effectively kill off the industry in its infancy (Franceschini, 1997, p.143; Le Figaro, 12 January 1994; The Guardian, 28 March 1995, 4 April 1995; Sources d'Europe, 1996e).

The French mobilised support in the European Parliament for their arguments, particularly aided by the Socialist group of MEPs. Debates focused not only on culture, but on the implications for jobs in the audiovisual industry, if European productions were not adequately protected (The Wall Street Journal, 15 February 1995; Le Monde, 16 February 1996; Le Figaro, 6 February 1995). Meanwhile, Hollywood lobbyists campaigned against these arguments and urged the European Commission to abolish quotas (The Independent, 2 February 1995). France became increasingly isolated within the Union, most other member states being against further tightening of existing legislation like quotas, although largely in favour of more supportive measures such as investment and telecommunications levies (The Guardian, 28 March 1995, 4 April 1995; The Independent, 15 February 1995; Libération, 23 March 1995; Le Monde, 16 February 1995). Around the same time however, the MEDIA II programme was also under discussion, and Germany, the UK and the Netherlands were against Commission proposals to double EU subsidies under this scheme (The Guardian, 4 April 1995). Germany even threatened to link its support for the whole MEDIA II initiative to its wish to liberalise quota rules (Le Figaro, 22 June 1995a). Eventually, French negotiators began to recognise that they risked the complete dismantlement of the European quotas system if their isolation continued (Le Figaro, 6 February 1996; Libération, 21 November 1995; Le Monde, 10 February 1995, 11 April 1995).
The revised directive, the text of which was agreed by the European Parliament’s Conciliation Committee and the Council of Ministers on 16 April 1997, was a disappointment for French policy objectives. The new directive re-confirmed the provisions of the 1989 directive on European works in article 4, and only maintained quotas for a further five years. New digital media services were still not included, and plans for a guarantee fund to encourage European co-productions were shelved (CEC, 1997; Franceschini, 1997, p.144; Le Monde, 13 June 1997).

Yet French political elites did not give up the fight to exert more control over new communications technologies, and indeed to harness them in order to disseminate undynamic conceptions of French national identity, as Chapter Six will discuss. Before this, the following sections will demonstrate how such views of identity were prevalent in the political debates on audiovisual policy surrounding the GATT issue, and following this, France’s EU presidency. These are illustrated through analysis of the texts introduced below.

5.2.3 Contextualisation of the texts chosen for detailed analysis
I chose the texts for examination according to criteria that include the setting and timing of the event, which could have influenced its possible exposure and/or reporting, and the status of the producer of the text. A further factor, which I took into account throughout all of the case study chapters, was the opportunity to include different political figures throughout as relevant to different cases. The background to the texts is presented below, together with a discussion of their interest for my analysis. As I will demonstrate, they are all important texts in their own right, because of their development of key themes which enable us to trace elite views of French identity concerning audiovisual policy, and which illustrate points supporting my hypothesis that such perceptions are undynamic.

A text by Jacques Toubon discussing the GATT issue, was written in his role as RPR Minister of Culture, in an address on 30 October to the ‘Rencontres cinématographiques’ (Film Forum), organised by the ARP (Association Auteurs, réalisateurs, producteurs, or Association of Writers, Directors and Producers) in Beaune from 28-30 October 1993 (Toubon, 1993cc). Subjects discussed at this event were the implications of the GATT

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*8A similar event was the ‘Assemblée des réalisateurs’ in Venice on 6 September 1993, at which Toubon also made a speech (Toubon, 1993n).*
negotiations for film and television, ways of improving the Television without Frontiers directive, access of young people to film culture, authors’ rights and commercialisation of European films in Central and Eastern Europe. More than 100 film-makers from 24 European countries attended, plus members of the film and television industries, and representatives of French audiovisual authorities and European institutions (ARP, 1994). The American GATT negotiators had been invited to explain their views, but refused (Le Monde, 2 November 1993a).

Although such events are immediately aimed at a specialist audience composed primarily of those involved in the cinema/television industries, the participation of Jacques Toubon, as French Minister for Culture, was naturally open to close scrutiny and reporting by the international media, given the context of the impending Uruguay Round of the GATT talks and French political elites’ concerns surrounding cultural issues in the agreements. Le Monde for example reported on Toubon’s speech, with significant quotations (Le Monde, 2 November 1993a; see also Les Echos, 2 November 1993). Such events represented a good opportunity for Toubon to offer his opinions on the talks and to secure the support of creative industries in other countries.

A text by President François Mitterrand represents one of the few major presidential pronouncements on the GATT issue, made during his acceptance of an honorary doctorate at Gdansk University on 21 September 1993 (Mitterrand, 1993b). Mitterrand did not become involved with the other aspects of GATT, such as agriculture, and only spoke about the ‘cultural exception’ issue after he was approached by audiovisual professionals and met them at the Elysée on 7 September (Le Monde, 23 September 1993b, 16 December 1993b; Le Figaro, 8 September 1993; Les Echos, 8 September 1993). The lack of contributions by Mitterrand may have been due to the President’s wish to appear above the general political wrangling of the negotiations, choosing to confine his key contributions to issues which directly concern French national identity such as culture, rather than more general economic arguments surrounding GATT. The speech was destined to attract coverage by the media, and hence wide attention in France and abroad, due to several factors. These included Mitterrand’s status as President of the Republic, his position at the head of the francophone movement in the midst of the political debate surrounding the ‘cultural exception’, and personal interest in both European integration and culture, noted in the previous chapter.
Furthermore, Mitterrand’s speech was the first time the President was to launch himself explicitly into the French political and professional crusade for a clearly demanded ‘cultural exception’, having previously only hinted at an intention to comment on the issue (Libération, 22 September 1993). Following this, he spoke about the GATT issue during his speech on 16 October 1993 to the francophone summit in Mauritius (Mitterrand, 1993e). The speech at Gdansk was made at an important time for the French GATT campaign, as it was made on the same day that Minister of Culture Jacques Toubon met European Commissioner Leon Brittan and EC GATT negotiator Christiane Scrivener in Brussels, to argue the French case for ‘cultural exception’, not ‘specificity’ (Libération, 22 September 1993). Meanwhile, Prime Minister Edouard Balladur had just announced on 20 September during a television interview on TF1, that he would go to any lengths to get the idea of exception culturelle accepted by the rest of France’s European partners (Le Monde, 23 September 1993b).

Interestingly, the location of the speech is in a city symbolising a history of conflict and struggle against totalitarianism, a background which Mitterrand perhaps thought would support his arguments against American cultural hegemony, although press reports at the time suggested that the Poles themselves were not expecting such a forceful statement on a particularly French concern (Libération, 22 September 1993). Le Monde noted how Lech Walesa, the Polish President, spoke to students following Mitterrand’s speech and argued that his own primary concern was not cultural imperialism from the USA, so much as economic hegemony from the European Community. He argued that Poland should be treated as a true EC partner and that the European Community should not use double standards in its trade relations with Poland (Le Monde, 23 September 1993a).

My analysis considers two further texts, by François Mitterrand, which were speeches made during France’s EU presidency of January-June 1995. This period was, as I explained in section 5.2.2, significant for French elite debates on audiovisual policy and French identity. This was due to France’s prioritising of cultural policy and arguments for European diversity and multilingualism, and the fact that the controversial revision of the Television without Frontiers directive was in progress.

The first text selected is Mitterrand’s speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg to present the programme for the French Presidency of the EU, made on 17 January 1995 (Mitterrand, 1995a). This was an important occasion, not least given
Mitterrand's interest in European integration and cultural issues. Mitterrand linked both of these interests in his speech, and explained how the priorities of the French EU presidency included culture and language issues, especially multilingualism, as discussed in Chapter Four (see reports for example in Le Figaro, 18 January 1995). Mitterrand also fulfilled expectations that he would speak about France's wish to save the quotas system in the pending Television without Frontiers revision, in the face of the hostility of some other member states to French demands. Three weeks earlier, France had launched its campaign to do this. Jacques Toubon had just met to discuss quotas with European film distributors at Avoriaz on 15 January and planned a meeting of EU Ministers of Culture in Bordeaux the following month to discuss the problem before the Council of Ministers were due to meet in April (Le Figaro, 17 January 1995).

The second text is Mitterrand's speech to a conference called 'Colloque sur l'avenir du cinéma: Le cinéma vers son deuxième siècle' (Conference on the future of cinema: Towards the second century), held in Paris on 20-21 March 1995, organised by the Ministry of Culture and the association Premier Siècle du Cinéma (First century of cinema). As part of this event, Mitterrand made his speech on the evening of 21 March when he hosted a reception at the Elysée. The conference brought together politicians and film-makers from France and abroad. Several Americans had declined the invitation to attend (Le Monde, 24 March 1995; La Documentation française, 1996). Mitterrand's speech covered the position of the arts in society in general terms, and paid particular attention to the determination of France to lead its European partners in defending the European film industry in a global market.

5.2.4 French and European identity: openness threatened by free trade

All of the texts emphasise the idea that France and 'Europe' are under threat in some way. France is presented as definitely part of Europe, although what exactly constitutes 'Europe' is not always clear; at times it refers to the EU, at others to a wider, geographical and cultural sense. Both Europe and France are suggested to be under threat from certain cultural 'others' who are profiting unfairly from the movement towards free trade; America particularly, although threats such as Japanese technology are mentioned too. The need for the defence of

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*Jacques Toubon made the closing speech at this event, on 21 March (Toubon, 1995n).*
French and European cultural identity is emphasised, together with the implication that it is France, which is leading the European fight for l’exception culturelle in the GATT negotiations and beyond. Furthermore, a threat is identified in the form of European complacency about trade regulations and protection of the European audiovisual industry. The way in which these arguments are presented is significant, as it demonstrates how French political elites followed traditional views of French identity based on old, familiar enemies, a desire for leadership and a refusal of hybridity.

For example, in justifying the French government’s position regarding the GATT agreements, Toubon argued (Toubon, 1993cc) that the issue concerning the French ideal of l’exception culturelle ‘ne se limite pas à l’identité, il est pour l’universalité’ (is not only about identity, it concerns universality). ‘L’universalité’, as we saw in Chapter Four, is a loaded word in the mouth of a French politician, suggesting links with the French Revolution and Jacobin, universalist conceptions of civilisation, which are worthy of distribution around the world. Indeed, Toubon suggested that other countries’ cultural identities were equally at stake. To critics of the government’s stance, he argued that French policy was based on openness to other cultures and ideas rather than a closed, defensive attitude, of which it may be accused: ‘notre combat n’est pas pour la fermeture, il est pour l’ouverture’ (our struggle is not about being closed off, it is about openness). Using the imagery of light, France, Toubon argued, only wanted to prevent the European cinema market from becoming the victim of an over-powerful monopoly. Rather than just protecting and shutting itself off from the world, France would prefer, he stated, to ‘[ ... ] maintenir ouverte la fenêtre qui permet d’avoir plusieurs points de vue sur le monde, et qui d’autre part, permet de recevoir des lumières différentes venant de sources différentes.’ ([ ... ] keep open the window which can allow several view points on the world, and which also allows us to let in different lights from different sources). The positive terms of ‘lumières différentes, venant de sources différentes’, and the imagery of the windows here stress the French spirit of openness again, and contrast with what GATT allegedly represents - ‘un système d’uniformisation’ (a system of uniformisation). Similarly, Mitterrand, in his speech in Paris, used the imagery of air to defend the creative tradition of French and European cinema. He began by saying that in the stuffy room where the reception was taking place, windows and doors should be opened to allow air in. Then he claimed dramatically:
C'est précisément d'air qui s'agit [sic]: il faut que l'air continue de circuler entre les créateurs et leurs interprètes, entre les industriels et ceux qui diffusent, qui font connaître les images, qui les font vivre, qui les font aimer et qui perpétuent tout simplement une tradition vieille d'un siècle, pour le siècle suivant et peut-être pour quelques autres. (Air is precisely what this is about: air must circulate between creators and actors, between industrialists and those who broadcast, who make the images known, who make them live, who make them loved and perpetuate a tradition older than a century, for the next century and for others to come) (Mitterrand, 1995c).

This is a positive image, based on something natural and essential to life, and here Mitterrand implied that without the continued exchange of ideas and cooperation between cinema professionals, French and European creative forces are risking a precarious position. Indeed, he described cinema as 'un art périssable' (a perishable art-form). Other images of beauty were used in this speech, and in the speech which Toubon made at Beaune (Toubon, 1993cc).

Toubon also argued that the success of various European film-makers, previously due to European support systems, was now jeopardised due to American-led demands for renegotiation of the GATT agreements. But, he claimed that France was really concerned about the promotion of the right for different types of cinematic products - French and European - to flourish in the world market-place: 'Notre combat n'est pas du tout un combat identitaire. Il défend la cause du cinéma français, du cinéma européen et du cinéma mondial.' (Our struggle is not based on an identity battle at all. It defends the cause of French, European and World cinema) (Toubon, 1993cc). This statement is somewhat contradictory, since the French film industry is doubtless a cultural symbol, and furthermore, given the existence of various government agencies designed to support French film production and exports as described earlier in this chapter, is frequently held as a measure of the independence or otherwise of its cultural and national identity (Looseley, 1995, p.27).

Yet in juxtaposition to this conception of French identity as being based on openness, beauty and pluralism, there was a strong current of feeling against the Other illustrated in the debates on audiovisual policy and identity. As Chapter One explained, for every 'us' in identity, there has to be a 'them'. The description of this in the debates on audiovisual policy illuminates the familiar nature of the old enemies invoked, and a conflictual model for humanity, which still inform political elites' visions of French identity. Attacking the Other, for French elites, is a means of helping to define why French identity is different, and
superior.

5.2.5 A French and European battle for identity

This attack is firstly developed through the military metaphor which is present throughout all of the speeches, with frequent references to the notion of a battle or struggle against 'le rouleau compresseur' (steamroller). As Collins notes (1999, p.212), there is a tradition of French audiovisual policy-makers and commentators resorting to such imagery. Such a metaphor is arguably inherent in traditional constructions of French identity, given the Republican 'story' of the defence of identity against a threat, which is a military 'other' first and foremost. Examples such as the words of the Marseillaise, the military format of the 14 July celebrations, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Napoleon and Charles de Gaulle as a Resistance hero may be considered here. The theme of a battle is strong too in a speech on cultural protectionism and GATT by Bruno Mégret of the Front National (Mégret, 1993), who spoke of 'une véritable guerre culturelle' (a real cultural war), alongside a similar economic war taking place at the end of the twentieth century, a kind of armageddon or collapse, suggested by the strong images of 'un véritable Tchernobyl culturel qui se prépare' and 'l'éclipse culturelle' (the cultural eclipse), referring to a vision of a pathetic, threatened people, who risk losing everything if they do not react to the threat to their culture. This idea was also invoked by Prime Minister Edouard Balladur of the RPR during the GATT debates, who warned of the end of European cultures if quotas and other support mechanisms had to be abolished (Balladur, 1993c). Toubon referred to impending decline for France (Toubon, 1993dd), and to a battle, on numerous occasions during the GATT episode (e.g. Toubon, 1993n, 1993s), as did several PCF figures, who regarded the GATT issue as important in their general war against capitalism (Marest, 1994a; Ralite, 1993a). Mitterrand too spoke in similar terms as he claimed that 'Ce qui est en jeu, c'est l'identité culturelle de nos nations, c'est le droit pour chaque peuple à sa propre culture, c'est la liberté...'

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1° Schleslinger (1994, p.33) notes that military metaphors of a 'cultural war' have also been used elsewhere in Europe, for example by German film director Wim Wenders.

11 He referred to writer Henri Gobard's book La Guerre Culturelle: logique du désastre (1979), which warned of Europe becoming a zone of American occupation, to support his portrayal of identity under a terrible threat.

12 A reference to the nuclear disaster at the Chernobyl plant in the USSR in 1985.
de créer et de choisir nos images’. (What is at stake, is the cultural identity of our nations, it is the right of each people to their own culture, it is the freedom to create and choose our images) (Mitterrand, 1993b).

Like Mégret who warned of slavery (Mégret, 1993), Mitterrand argued at Gdansk (1993b) that a society which abandoned its means of representation to others would be ‘une société asservie’ (an enslaved society), and he repeated these ideas of domination in his speech to the francophone summit (Mitterrand, 1993e). At Gdansk, he concentrated on threats and the need for protection (Mitterrand, 1993b). He praised the European film industry, and argued that Europe had been both rich in cultural heritage, and successful in the nurturing of creation, of arts and ideas, and of national identities, alongside competitiveness, but that now this faced threat. The theme of two sets of opposing ideas about culture and identity continued, as Mitterrand argued against the resultant ‘assimilation’ (assimilation) by Europe of American culture, presenting older ‘valeurs fondatrices’ (founding values) of Europe as in opposition to ‘le mercantilisme, le pouvoir de l’argent’ (mercantilism, the power of money), as he appealed to the notion of Europe as a ‘vieux continent’ (old continent), in opposition to a ‘Nouveau Monde’ (New World, meaning America), which he blamed for trying to crush the EU quotas system, thanks to its obsession with ‘le principe de libre concurrence’ (the principle of free trade). He reasserted these ideas in his speech to the European Parliament (Mitterand, 1995a). At Gdansk, Mitterrand clearly presented the need to act over the GATT issue, arguing that whilst identity is threatened the need for cultural self-determination must be reasserted. He portrayed this as a European issue, in terms of images of ‘les créations de l’esprit’ (creations of the spirit), which cannot be just goods like any other. Like Toubon, he urged the defence of ‘le pluralisme des oeuvres et la liberté de choix du public’ (pluralism of works and public freedom of choice) (Mitterand, 1993b). These statements echoed the words of Mégret too, who argued against GATT whilst appealing to a nostalgic vision of an ‘old’ Europe, as he spoke of the unequal balance between American film productions and ‘le cinéma de notre vieux continent’ (the cinema of our old continent). However, it is probable that Mégret did not have the same conception of Europe in the present day as did Mitterrand, even though Mitterrand himself did not clarify

13 The reference to a ‘vieux continent’ was used elsewhere, for example by Alain Carignon, who was Minister for Communication during the GATT debate (Carignon, 1993d).
his own definition: the FN have been renowned for their opposition to the EU, and Mitterrand, for his enthusiasm for it.

5.2.6 French identity and the rejection of consumerism

The way in which French and European identity and culture were opposed to the values of free choice and mass culture promised by free trade was further developed by Toubon (Toubon, 1993cc). He argued that contrary to popular opinion, the GATT question was not about a French debate over the quality and marketability of French audiovisual output. He insisted that ‘la logique du consommateur’ (consumer logic) should not be the only model to be followed, since what is not always popular, can still be important. He situated this argument in a framework of a revolutionary tradition, as he declared: ‘Par définition, l’oeuvre d’art est allée le plus souvent à contre-courant, elle a été contestataire, elle a été minoritaire quelquefois même, révolutionnaire’. (By definition, a work of art has most frequently gone against the grain, it has been challenging, it has sometimes been in the minority, even revolutionary). The implication of Toubon’s statement here is that what is popular, and in the majority, cannot be art and cannot be challenging and valuable. This assertion refers covertly, to foreign films which dominate the European market, most notably American ones.

If consumer logic had been consistently applied, Toubon argued, then many works of art which today are part of the ‘patrimoine de l’humanité’ (humanity’s heritage) would not exist. Furthermore, following consumer logic leads inevitably to the end of French cinema and cultural policy. To protect against this, Toubon insisted, the European system of protection and quotas was vital, ‘pour qu’entre le fort et le faible, il reste une liberté pour le faible’ (so that between the strong and the weak, there can be some freedom for the weak), again referring to a metaphor of battle.

Linked to this, was Toubon’s claim that France did not seek to act in an anti-liberal manner; that France in fact espoused liberal values in the sense that it favoured freedom of choice and openness, whilst more powerful players in the audiovisual market sought to impose restrictions and anti-competitive rules:

Autrement dit, le libéral, c’est nous et les anti-libéraux, ce sont ceux qui défendent le monopole et voudraient l’étendre! La bataille que nous menons, elle se livre pour l’ouverture et non pas pour la fermeture, pour l’espace et non pas pour l’enfermement’. (In other words, we are the liberals, and the anti-
Toubon tried to claim that he spoke for 'the people', that he knew what was right when it came to the GATT question. He spoke of 'les enjeux profonds cachés derrière cette affaire' (the real, hidden stakes behind this business), as he stressed his responsibility of being responsive to the concerns of citizens, whilst aware of what corresponded to the mysterious 'intérêt général' (the general good). He reflected on the strength of opinion in France which suggested the significance of the GATT issue:

Il y a aujourd'hui, dans cette affaire, et pas seulement en France, un indiscutable phénomène d'opinion. Et s'il y a un tel phénomène d'opinion, c'est que les gens se rendent compte, confusément, inconsciemment, que les enjeux vont bien au-delà de cette négociation du GATT, dont on leur rebat les oreilles, à juste titre, tous les matins dans les journaux et tous les soirs à la télévision. (Today there is an undeniable wave of opinion about this issue. And if there is such a wave of opinion, it is because people realise, although with confusion, and unconsciously, that the stakes go beyond the GATT talks, which justifiably bombard them every morning in the papers and every evening on the television).

The fact that 'the people' recognise the stakes of GATT in a state of unconscious confusion, according to Toubon, suggests that he believes ordinary citizens are not fully capable of understanding such important issues; they can only have an instinctive reaction. Such a patronising view enabled the Minister to present French policy as responding to an urgent, deeply felt need, and to speak on behalf of 'les gens' who he has constructed as a nation in his speech. Later on, he declared that the French cause for 'cultural exception' was popular in France, and in the whole world, because people do know what they want, and it is supportive of French policy: '[... ] les gens ont envie de pluralisme et de participation. Ils ont envie de pouvoir dire leur mot et non pas d'être écrasés par un rouleau compresseur.' ([... ] people want pluralism and participation. They want to have their say and not be crushed by a steam roller).  

Again, Toubon's words dress up a limited perspective into a universal

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14 He reiterated this argument several times, for example at the Franco-Italian summit in Rome in November 1993 (Le Figaro, 27 November 1993a; and during the debates on the Television without Frontiers revision (Toubon, 1995j)).

15 See also similar arguments in Toubon's reply to criticisms by directors Martin Scorcese and Stephen Spielberg,
perspective, of what ‘the people’ believe. The latter naturally oppose the ‘steam roller’, which became a common metaphor in debates on audiovisual policy, to describe American cultural hegemony. Mitterrand too referred to a ‘rouleau compresseur’ in (Mitterrand, 1993b, 1995c), when he argued that Europeans did appreciate their own national films and television programmes, and that the policies of aid and protection were not depriving viewers of what they wanted, but of giving that back to them.

The arguments of both Toubon (Toubon, 1993cc) and Mitterrand (ibid.),\(^\text{16}\) were interestingly supported by Mégre of the FN, who argued that ‘la culture d’un peuple’ (the culture of a people) cannot be negotiated, but must be provided with ‘les moyens nécessaires à sa renaissance’ (the necessary means for its renaissance) (Mégre, 1993). He presented concrete propositions for such measures, some of which were little different from those supported by the RPR ministers criticised in the same speech, concerning stricter audiovisual quotas and protection of the French language for example. However his arguments for protection of the European audiovisual industries were particularly strong, and used familiar racial biology arguments referring to cells, which keep out what is harmful, and let in what is good, as we might expect from someone of a party favouring protectionism in general. But whilst repeating Toubon’s ideas about the dangers of following a materialist consumer logic, Mégre went further, insisting that 70,000 French jobs were directly threatened by ‘cette invasion d’images’ (this invasion of images). He claimed that measures like Television without Frontiers had not been tough enough in imposing quotas on the import of American images into Europe, and furthermore, that the Americans had been able to benefit from the ‘laxisme anglais’ (English laxness) of the UK, which had acted as a ‘véritable porte-avion des images américaines en Europe’ (a real aircraft carrier for American images in Europe). ‘Laxisme’ is a term often used by the FN to indicate too much liberalism, leading to decadence and harm. The idea of the British ‘porte-avion’ echoed a familiar anti-American and British argument used by de Gaulle, that the UK had been a kind of ‘Trojan horse’ for American influence in Europe. The choice of ‘porte-avion’ to describe this suggests a huge vehicle bringing in planes, in a military style invasion of mass culture. On the mainstream Right, Balladur showed signs of agreement with this, worrying in an interview that the world

\[^{16}\text{Also mirroring Mitterrand's words at the Mauritius summit (Mitterrand, 1993e).}\]
broadcasting market was showing 'un certain type de civilisation' (a particular type of civilisation), referring to America (Balladur, 1993c); and Toubon warned of the possibility of Americans like Ted Turner bringing investment in European production, but that this was also another Trojan horse for American influence (Toubon, 1995b).

Further agreement was demonstrated when, besides arguing for protectionism for economic reasons, several political elites explained why the stakes of GATT regarding culture and identity were even more important. Culture could not be reduced to the level of economics, because it concerned the survival of French identity, the French people and the French nation, he argued throughout his speech. Like Mitterrand and Toubon, and the Communists elsewhere (e.g. Marest, 1994a, 1994b; Ralite, 1993a), Mégret argued that people exist in more than purely economic terms, since man is more than 'un homo oeconomicus' (an economic being), rather 'un être de culture et de spiritualité' (a cultural and spiritual being) (Mégret, 1993). Mitterrand also explained, when he criticised the idea of applying economic liberalism to cultural output: 'On ne peut pas jouer comme cela avec la nature créatrice de l'être humain, la livrer aux seuls rapports de force commerciaux'. (We cannot play like that with the creative nature of humans, delivering it to mere commercial forces) (Mitterrand, 1995c). Mitterrand said that it would be foolish to deny the existence of such forces, but that they must be fought against in the debates over European audiovisual policy, and attacked those who did not recognise this.

5.2.7 The special nature of French identity, in opposition to its Others

The notion of French identity being special, and even superior to other identities, was a significant theme in the debates on audiovisual policy.

Mitterrand (Mitterrand, 1995c), appealed to notions of France as a country with a great and long cultural history, when he explained why France wanted to 'be itself': 'Nous voulons que soit prise en compte la façon de penser, de réagir ou de sentir des Français, issus eux-mêmes d'une lente fabrication des siècles'. (We want the way of thinking, of reacting and feeling of the French, themselves the product of a slow building process over the centuries, to be taken into account.) He developed this, saying 'Nous voulons qu’un pays, la

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17 This echoes the reference Toubon made to 'Soviet man' in his arguments on identity and language, discussed in Chapter Four.
France, qui a su exprimer, parmi les grands pays du monde, tous les autres arts fondamentaux, qui s'inscrit parmi les modèles de civilisation, puisse, d'autant plus qu'il s'agit d'un art populaire, dire ce qu'il a à dire'. (We want France, a country among the great countries of the world and ranks amongst the models of civilisation, and which has known how to express all major arts, can say what it has to say, even more so in the case of a popular art.) So Mitterrand appeals to memories of *grandeur*, of France having an important culture, and argues that this must be expressed through media like film. His view of French identity still regards American culture as an imperialist enemy, as he returns to the theme of the GATT debates of 'le rouleau compresseur qui voudrait soumettre à une sorte de forme de colonisation de l'esprit les autres pays du monde' (the steam roller which wants to submit the spirit of other countries of the world to a kind of colonisation). Although Mitterrand did not use strong language directed against particular ethnic groups, some of his ideas were similar to those found in FN discourse on culture, in the way that he appealed to an innately superior French cultural heritage and inherited identity, and criticised America. Mitterrand continued this theme, lamenting the fact that French films were not often translated in American cinemas (where dubbing is more common), arguing that the richness of French language and film culture, with all its history, creativity and inventiveness, should be a source of pride, a century on.

Concerns for the economic imbalance affecting the French and European audiovisual industries we saw earlier did not disguise various political elites' dismay at the 'invasion' of European culture by aspects of an alien lifestyle, of films and products which are vehicles for American publicity, ripe for assimilation by Europeans. Toubon's successor Philippe Douste-Blazy spoke of the corruption of the French vision of justice, and children through American influence. Douste-Blazy denounced American television's influence on children in a speech during an *Assemblée nationale* debate on the revision of the Television without Frontiers directive:

J'ai ainsi l'exemple du fils d'un ami, qui demandant une voiture de police, s'attendait naturellement à recevoir une voiture de police américaine avec shérif marqué sur les portes. Combien de jeunes gens [sic] disent «votre honneur» au

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18See Mécret for example, 1993.

19Of the Centrist CDS (now FD), part of the RPR-UDF coalition.
président d'un tribunal, ou «je plaide coupable»? Les exemples fourmillent. (I have then the example of the son of a friend, who, asking for a police car, naturally expected to get an American police car with sheriff's badge marked on the doors. How many young people say "your honour" to the judge of a court, or "I plead guilty"? The examples are endless.) (Douste-Blazy, 1995b)

These ideas were remarkably similar to those expressed by Mégret (Mégret, 1993). In any case, French political elites saw no possibility of resistance to cultural images, rather, that the world was conditioned by what it saw in cinema, video, advertising and television images, all invading from across the Atlantic. Their view of identity then follows the 'hypodermic model' of cultural imperialism described in Chapter One, which posits that the strong American culture can crush everything in its wake, and consumers cannot do anything but absorb this.

Elsewhere, mass culture, the opposite of 'French' culture and identity, was denounced in racial terms by Jacques Toubon, who characterised the powerful monopoly dominating French and European cinema in a derogatory manner, as 'le monopole nippon-américain' (Japanese-American monopoly) (Toubon, 1993cc). Such a model of domination, appealing to old fears about the supremacy of Japanese technology and American production, was little different to the one developed at length in FN discourse on culture and GATT, predictably, given the FN's open dislike of enemies like the USA. The FN's Bruno Mégret for example (Mégret, 1993), likened the American film 'Jurassic Park' and its related merchandise to a commercial invasion from the East, as well as from the USA, referring to the film's dinosaur characters which apparently were everywhere, invading France. Mégret, as we might expect of a politician from an openly extreme-right party, used language more strongly based on 'race'. His references to far eastern countries were to those which have been at times regarded as 'Asian tiger economies' to be emulated on account of their economic success, but at others, a potential 'yellow peril' to be feared, sometimes on account of communism. These ideas appeal to the FN audience, who would expect to hear particular 'enemies' denounced by Mégret. Toubon however, as a government minister of a mainstream party, could not continue in such an extremist vein, even if he alluded to similar arguments, and returned to them in other contexts, as Chapter Six will demonstrate.
5.2.8 France, Europe and the challenges of a new world order

As I suggested earlier, a further theme in the debates on audiovisual policy and identity made reference to the position of France and Europe in a new world order; facing further uncertainty and potential domination after the end of the Cold War, and globalisation. These echoed ideas raised by political elites in connection with language, as explored in Chapter Four, therefore I offer just a few examples here of how they were discussed in connection with audiovisual policy.

Toubon interpreted ‘uniformisation’ as signifying the power of American cultural influence, which may be brought about by globalisation, when he asked ‘Allons-nous vers un seul monde? Un monde unique?’ (Are we moving towards one world? A unified world?), wondering if ‘un seul modèle culturel’ (a single cultural model) could be imposed by the power of the market. He suggested a situation of passing ‘de la mainmise soviétique au monopole américain’ (from Soviet tyranny to American monopoly), revealing a Gaullist vision of France constantly caught between two opposing ‘blocks’ (Toubon, 1993cc).

Mitterrand too argued that the issue raised by GATT was not one of setting up ‘les cultures d’Europe’ (the cultures of Europe) against ‘celle du Nouveau Monde’ (that of the New World, i.e. America again), but the wish to preserve ‘l’idée universelle de la culture’ (the universal idea of culture) against market forces - this phrase is also significant as it again implies a ‘monoculture’ emanating from the USA. He too made reference to a new form of totalitarianism threatening Europe in the form of American economic power, rather than Soviet military might (Mitterrand, 1993b). These statements were found in FN debates too, as Mégrret suggested in colourful terms that France was facing a totalitarian threat brought by mass culture from America; dramatically referring to ‘ingurgitation culturelle’ (cultural swallowing) of ‘essence totalitaire’ (totalitarian fuel), suggesting a takeover, and poisoning, of France by American culture (Mégrret, 1993).

On another occasion, at the height of the GATT tensions, Toubon referred directly to ‘mondialisation du marché’ (globalisation of the market), which he linked to American aggressiveness and cultural homogenisation. He argued that France needed a more proactive international cultural policy, since it had a responsibility for the civilisation it had inspired (Toubon, 1993ii). Mégrret too referred to globalisation, as he spoke of ‘une agonie de la

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20 See also Toubon, 1993n.
culture' (the death-throes of culture):

It is true that global geopolitical changes have led to new concerns, to a complete questioning of old references, but also, given the lack of opponents to it, the triumph of consumerist ideology founded in the United States, and which from now on could invade the world (Méret, 1993).

This is a clear reference to fears of US-led imperialism, which could also be interpreted as part of globalisation. But, urged Méret, the 'agonie' (death-throes) of culture must encourage a fight, since the very word's origins are linked to this meaning.21

So several politicians of different political persuasions employed arguments related to the effects of what could be termed 'globalisation' on cultural identity, and indicate feelings of uncertainty and suspicion regarding world structures following the end of the cold war in what may be described as a 'postmodern' condition, in which old sources of conflict and co-operation may have changed or even disappeared, with inevitable consequences for national identity. Fears of a more globalised market-place in particular, were developed in debates on new media and information technologies like the Internet, as Chapter Six will discuss.

5.2.9 Opportunities for protecting and promoting French identity through European audiovisual policy

Besides the considerable attention given to the notion of threats to French and European identity, Mitterrand and Toubon presented Europe as a site or source of opportunity for France to gain future influence for its own audiovisual policy agenda, through the GATT issue and arguments for European protection mechanisms.

Europe was firstly described as an opportunity for protection. Although Mitterrand and Toubon all criticised some aspects of European policy as being too weak, we saw earlier that they demonstrated their support for the French agenda of protection, when they argued that the laws such as those represented by the European quota system are necessary to allow the weaker players in the market some degree of freedom. Furthermore, we have seen that in

21Referring to the link between the Greek agônizesthai and the French lutte.
contrast to the strongly protectionist stance adopted by the FN, Mitterrand and Toubon concentrated on promoting an image of Europe and France as places favouring an open attitude towards diversity represented in audiovisual policy, even though they, like FN politicians, wished to limit the influence of some cultures. As noted earlier, Toubon and Mitterrand, due to their political status as mainstream political and State actors, did not have the freedom to express the same range of extreme views, even if they shared some of them. They also needed to be careful to retain the support of their partners in the EU.

Toubon and Mitterrand tried to rally the support of their audiences, which included France and other EU countries, and those belonging to a wider Europe. They advocated co-operation in production, marketing, and the establishment of distribution networks, thus creating an economic alliance against US domination. So, a European market-place offers an opportunity for defence - both immediately and in the future - against America's 'invasion'. Moreover, refusal to fight together was suggested to spell disaster for Europe. To support this argument, the need for a 'Europe des cultures' was highlighted, as both Mitterrand and Toubon, as more pro-European integration than Mégret, urged a kind of cohesion in terms of cultural identity, highlighting the validity of the aims of the Maastricht Treaty, especially in an increasingly globalised market-place for audiovisual culture and cultural 'products' in general.

At Beaune, Toubon emphasised the future for European policy, following GATT and the agreement of an exception culturelle clause, describing his ideas for production and distribution concerning film and television in the world market place. Highlighting the theme of 'liberté', Toubon urged Europeans to act, to safeguard the future, since only the inclusion of a 'cultural exception' clause could make a difference, together with stronger policies for European audiovisual products (Toubon, 1993cc). Both Mitterrand (Mitterrand, 1993b) and Toubon (ibid.) used a kind of 'slippage' between the 'discursive characters' of France and Europe in their statements, made possible since 'Europe' was not clearly defined. When first introducing his discussion of the GATT debate, Toubon indicated his personal contribution to policy-making with phrases like 'je plaide' (I plead) and 'je milite' (I fight), and proclaimed '[ ... ] je souhaite réaffirmer nos objectifs, je veux dire ceux du Gouvernement dans la négociation' (I wish to reassert our objectives, I mean those of the Government in the negotiation), suggesting that he is speaking of the French policy-making position. However,
it became less clear to whom he was actually referring as ‘nous’, as he widened his discussion to include the protection and promotion of European audiovisual industries as well as those of France. He declared: ‘Cette affaire du GATT doit être pour nous un tremplin pour nous permettre d’aboutir à la réalisation d’une politique européenne audiovisuelle, assortie du principe de la préférence communautaire’. (This GATT issue must be a springboard to allow us to implement a European audiovisual policy matched with the principle of community preference).

Toubon followed a traditional belief in trade based on ‘preference’, which, as Messerlin explains (1996, p.296), was a policy France continued after 1945 when as a founder member of the EC, it promoted the idea that European Community trade policy should be based on a system of ‘preferences’, or really, discrimination against those countries not so preferred. When France joined the Community, it had dreams of making a comeback on the world stage through leading a new large political power, whereas countries like Germany and the UK saw the Community as a step towards world trade liberalisation. By the 1990s and the GATT dispute, the situation was quite different, as Germany was larger, the UK was stronger and independent Nordic countries were involved.

Toubon argued that the GATT issue affected the whole of Europe as a geographical, historical and cultural entity, besides the political institution of the European Union, when he stated ‘Et “européen” ne veut pas dire uniquement communautaire. Cette affaire dépasse le cadre des Douze.’ (And “European” does not only mean European in the sense of the Community. This issue goes beyond the level of the twelve member states.) The EU is used as a kind of ‘leader’ institution, itself led by France, as Toubon attempted to rally other nations in Europe. Mitterrand too, when discussing GATT, suggested that only France, amongst other European countries, dared to speak out, as he urged ‘[ ... ] j’en appelle aux créateurs et aux responsables des États de notre continent: on ne construira pas l’Europe sans une conscience européenne’ ([ ... ] I say to creators and State officials around our continent: we will not build Europe without a European consciousness). Here, the use of ‘on’ leaves open the question of who exactly Mitterrand envisaged as building Europe now and in the future - it could mean a variety of people, for example Mitterrand and German leader Chancellor Kohl, French EU commissioners, French governments, French voters, voters in other countries (Mitterrand, 1993b).
Perhaps due to his presidential status as a politician more removed from the actual level of GATT negotiations, or by virtue of his role as a president, preoccupied with traditionally presidential key questions about the concept of European integration, Mitterrand spoke (ibid.) in abstract terms, arguing for 'une conscience européenne' (a European conscience) towards the end of his speech. He too advocated European construction through cultural cohesion, citing 'l'esprit de résistance', 'l'esprit européen' (the spirit of resistance, the European spirit) and the rather mystical ideal of the necessity of a European 'conscience'. Whilst it is not quite clear what such a 'conscience' might be, its juxtaposition with historical references to 'la tradition du Moyen-Age' (the tradition of the Middle Ages) and 'les philosophes des Lumières' (the Enlightenment philosophers) inspires reflection on the history of the ideal of 'Europe' (Mitterrand, 1993b). There are similar appeals too to a 'vieux continent' in FN discourse (Mégret, 1993). Like Toubon, Mitterrand implied a Europe wider than the EU, reinforced when he cited 'l'exemple de Gdansk et de la Pologne' (the example of Gdansk and Poland) and said 'notre continent' and 'Rassembler l'Europe, toute l'Europe, autour de ses valeurs fondatrices... ' (Rallying Europe, all Europe, around its founding values), indicating a wider appeal to the 'rassemblement' of countries of Europe in a geographical/cultural sense besides those of the existing European Union. The sense of history is helped further by his reference to the city of Gdansk as a site of struggle22, as he said 'au nom de l'esprit de résistance et de l'esprit européen que symbolise cette cérémonie' (in the name of the spirit of resistance and the European spirit that this ceremony symbolises), and by his appeal to mystical 'valeurs fondatrices', a vague term suggesting the universality of French identity (here disguised as European identity) (Mitterrand, 1993b).

Whilst Europe's 'spirit' may have survived wars and totalitarianism before the end of the Cold War, Mitterrand claimed at Gdansk that this was now threatened by the domination of economic power and the advance of technology, led by America's drive towards increased liberalisation of the world audiovisual market-place. Comments like Mitterrand's emphasise the whole of Europe being affected, rather than just France. These statements develop the portrayal of France as a victim, through invoking Europe's cultural past: France is within a Europe dominated by American influence, but will rise again, and find new glory. However,

22 Although this may seem ironic in retrospect, since even symbols of struggle have become multi-layered in a post-cold war economy, where shipyards have now closed down.

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much of the past which is being appealed to, is arguably mythical, since no account is taken of the harsh reality of the Europe of the Second World War for example. The creation of present day ‘Europe’ was, after all, inspired by the necessity to form an alliance due to military threats. Given France’s comparatively recent experiences of war, and the centrality of the military metaphor in the Republican construction of French identity, the conception of ‘Europe’ assumes a great significance. Yet the vision of Europe which is discussed in French political discourse can really only look to the pre-wars era, or to developments since 1945, in order to avoid re-invoking painful and divisive personal experiences. Thus a Europe beyond war must be referred to, which Mitterrand did when he spoke of the Middle Ages, the Enlightenment and the Maastricht Treaty (Mitterrand, 1993b).

5.2.10 François Mitterrand’s vision of a ‘cultural Europe’: further opportunities for promoting French identity?

Mitterrand developed these ideas further during the French EU presidency of January-June 1995, when he had more scope to expand upon his ideas for building a cultural Europe, a theme which he particularly linked to both language policy, as discussed in the previous chapter, and audiovisual policy. In his speech at Strasbourg (Mitterrand, 1995a), Mitterrand argued that in the aftermath of the GATT agreement, Europeans must not rest, because the cultural aspects of European construction required more attention. He explained the relevance of audiovisual policy to this goal as follows: ‘D’abord, pensons au domaine audiovisuel. Nous savons bien que la conscience, l’imaginaire, le savoir sont de plus en plus formées par l’image et qu’il n’y aura pas d’Europe sans image européenne’. (First of all, let’s think about audiovisual policy. We know well that conscience, imagination and knowledge are increasingly formed by image, and that there will not be a Europe without a European image). Discussing the role of France and the French presidency in the European audiovisual market, Mitterrand argued that France would fight for better funding of programmes like MEDIA, for resisting liberalism, and strengthening quotas. In encouraging the European audiovisual sector, he argued that he was not in favour of protective measures, since he, like Toubon, did not wish to deny ‘l’apport considérable et souvent remarquable des cultures venues d’ailleurs’ (the considerable and often remarkable contribution of cultures from elsewhere), suggesting that he welcomed the influence of other identities. But, he still
favoured some form of protection, since the European public should not be denied the right to see the work of their own creators: 'Il [= le public européen] ne peut pas en être privé par des décisions arbitraires, prises ailleurs, ou par la logique aveugle d’un marché aveugle.' (They cannot be deprived of it by arbitrary decisions which are taken elsewhere, or by the blind logic of a blind market.)

Here, Mitterrand's statement indicates that he still preferred 'European' identity to one which comes from outside of Europe - 'ailleurs' - the countries which may not share the French ideals about audiovisual culture. He also criticises the EU decision-makers here, who follow the law of the market to extremes. This is similar to the arguments discussed in the examination of debates on language policy in Chapter Four. A further criticism by Mitterrand included in this speech was that EU financial aid to cinema, the most popular art-form of the century, had been insufficient, and had failed to create a true European audiovisual space. So European integration again can be an enemy of French elite ideas about culture and identity, if integration goes too far and European citizens are complacent about the need for cultural protection.

Mitterrand also used occasions like his Strasbourg speech (1995a) to widen his subject and speak about his ideas on Europe and identity in more general terms, not only those related to audiovisual policy. For Mitterrand, it was essential to encourage a development, or renaissance of European identity as part of his general vision of European construction. Europe had to be understood better, and appreciated, by Europeans:

Il faut que les Européens aiment l'Europe. Pourquoi aiment-ils leur patrie? Parce que c'est leur foyer et c'est leur horizon, leur paysage, c'est leurs amis, c'est leur identité. Si tout cela devait manquer à l'Europe, et bien il n'y aurait pas d'Europe. Or nous sentons bien qu'elle est au bout de notre main si nous savons l'avancer avec assez d'audace, mais parfois aussi de prudence. Je le répète, l'image n'est pas naturellement le seul terrain de construction de l'Europe des cultures. Afin de fortifier notre approche, redécouvrons les lieux et les objets de nos mémoires communes. Je souhaite que soit conçu et mis en œuvre un vaste projet de développement de ces lieux de mémoires européens. (Europeans must love Europe. Why do they love their homeland? Because it is their home and their horizon, their countryside, it is their friends, their identity. If all that were lacking in Europe, there would be no Europe. We really feel that it is within our reach if we know how to move forward boldly, but also at times carefully. I repeat, the image is not the only means of constructing a cultural Europe. In order to strengthen our approach, let's discover the places and objects of our collective memories. I want a great project of developing these
European sites of memory to be put into effect.

So Mitterrand's words appeal to building the future of Europe, a cultural Europe, through references to mystical ideas of memory, of European history and shared values. He also said that building Europe required teaching about Europe to schoolchildren and citizens, building cooperation through exchange and twinning arrangements and universities, thus continuing his personal vision of a united Europe. He also mentioned France's important policies for multilingualism in the EU. Building Europe though was still, for Mitterrand, closely linked to his ideas about French identity based on traditional notions of France as a strong leader, as a European country with a special 'destiny'. He argued that the EU should help eastern countries to compensate for the cultural effects of isolation in which they had lived under communism, and proposed a European foundation for culture. Through such policies, it could be shown that European construction did not mean to 'effacer' (wipe out) nations' identity, but to strengthen it. According to Mitterrand, 'l'Europe des cultures' was 'l'Europe des nations contre celle des nationalismes' (Europe of nations, rather than that of nationalism).

Such a statement by Mitterrand, given his well-known interest in European integration, and belief in France's role within a more united Europe, may suggest a more forward-looking view of French identity, one refusing prejudice and inward-looking ideas about French superiority. Yet Europe is still a means for France to reaffirm its identity, even through a relaunch of European construction along seemingly more open lines. By seeking a leadership role in the new 'cultural Europe', and by urging EU support for its goals on audiovisual policy, French elites can still be accused of seeking to defend traditional notions of identity. This includes continuing their hostility to other identities, through involving a widening Europe. Confirming this, Toubon explained how it was so important to continue audiovisual protection in Western Europe in order to provide an example to Russia, Poland and others. Otherwise, these countries were likely to go down the road of allowing too much private enterprise and American influence (Toubon, 1995b). Just as an extremist like Mégret appealed to the rediscovery of the roots of French identity, so too did other, mainstream political elites like Mitterand and Toubon, through invoking the history and culture of Europe.

This conclusion is further supported by examination of Mitterrand's arguments in his
speech in Paris in March 1995, where, away from the EU machinery and the diverse audience of some opponents present in the European Parliament, he could employ even more traditional arguments about French identity and the audiovisual sector (Mitterrand, 1995c). Here, he concentrated on appealing to ideas about the greatness of the French cinematic tradition, and France as the birthplace of 'cet art majeur' (this major art-form) and, as discussed earlier, to the notion of France as a 'model for civilisation', and Europe as a 'vieux pays' (old country). Continuing the military theme seen in the GATT debates, Mitterrand spoke of 'une bataille', calling for 'mobilisation' in Europe in favour of policies like quotas, and criticised other countries in Europe who had been complacent about the audiovisual threat from outside Europe, of so many images being imposed on them. He urged audiovisual professionals and politicians to be optimistic, and to believe in the tradition of European cinema, as he was counting on them to do so. Yet, he insisted that France was still prepared to continue the fight for audiovisual culture in Europe, and act as leader. Toubon followed this argument too, when he claimed that France understood the true stakes of the GATT issue (Toubon, 1993n). The reason for Mitterrand's commitment to European integration, though, was the need for France to find support: 'Mais si elle est seule, comment fera-t-elle? C'est d'ailleurs la raison pour laquelle je suis un européen si engagé. Seuls, nous sommes un pays de quelques soixante millions d'habitants, environ, pas tout à fait: qu'est-ce que c'est, par rapport à l'humanité toute entière qui s'éveille aujourd'hui?' (But if it is alone, what will it do? That is the reason I am such an enthusiastic European. Alone, we are a country of some 60 million inhabitants, roughly, not quite: what is this, in relation to the whole of humanity in existence today?) Such a declaration indicates that Mitterrand acknowledges the position of France as really a medium-sized power, which cannot have much influence in world affairs on its own, and requires allies, especially in the globalised audiovisual market which is so dominated by the USA.

Yet, how far should we be convinced by Mitterrand's claims of needing European support, based on his apparently honourable intentions for building Europe? His arguments are not entirely convincing if we consider the presentation in the same speech, and his statements elsewhere, to a romantic, nostalgic idea of French identity invoked by his references to 'notre richesse' (our richness), 'notre façon de voir et de sentir, notre langue' (our way of seeing and feeling, our language), to the need to be proud and to fight against
Mitterrand retains the view that European culture - and by default, French culture - is superior, when he argues:

Or l'Union européenne est aujourd'hui une structure politique capable de supporter la comparaison avec toute autre: quelques trois cent cinquante millions d'habitants, le premier commerce du monde, quelquesunes des premières industries, une capacité créatrice. Et cette Europe-là, on dirait qu'elle a peur d'elle-même, ou qu'elle se place en état d'infériorité par rapport à d'autres formes de civilisation, qui sont pourtant généralement nées d'elle. (The European Union today is a political structure capable of supporting comparison with any other: some 350 million inhabitants, the major market of the world, some of the major industries, a creative capacity. And this Europe, we could say, is scared of itself, and places itself in a state of inferiority compared to other forms of civilisation, which are however, generally born as a result of it).

The reference by Mitterrand to 'other forms of civilisation' refers in a derogatory manner to the USA, which he implies is not a true 'civilisation', and the claim that other civilisations are in any case the result of European civilisation, is a blatantly universalist statement indicating a deeply-felt belief in the superiority of European culture and identity (Mitterrand, 1995c).

So, this section has demonstrated that the opportunities for debate on audiovisual policy in Europe taken by French political elites have been used to re-assert traditional notions of French identity, as well as to defend French audiovisual productions for economic reasons. Ultimately, French elites' involvement in audiovisual debates in Europe expressed a wish to use 'Europe' to present such visions. Not without significance did Alain Juppé argue that the French government sought during the GATT negotiations to defend 'une certaine idée de l'Europe, solidaire, démocratique, décidée à affirmer son identité (a certain idea of Europe, of solidarity, democracy, determined to strengthen its identity) (Juppé, 1993e). This reference to 'a certain idea' as we saw in Chapter Four, relates back to de Gaulle's mystical discussions of French identity, and the present chapter has demonstrated how the promotion of French identity as special and superior, in the face of the challenges of a globalised audiovisual market, was encouraged by political elites in audiovisual policy debates in the 1990s.

5.3 Conclusions

French audiovisual productions are regarded as symbols of national identity, and creative art,
and thus require continued protection in an increasingly globalised market-place, where traditional cultural opponents like America find increased influence.

Indeed, the themes of continued fears of Americanisation and the problematic French elite relationship with mass culture accompanying this, which, as we saw in Chapter One, have characterised the entire post-war period, were strongly present in the French political debates on identity and audiovisual policy in the 1990s. Further fears related to American cultural power and the globalisation of communications were also present, concerning Japanese and eastern technological domination. The significance of all of these themes has intensified as issues of world trade liberalisation, the liberalisation of communications in an expanding European Union, and debates on European cultural integration have become more important, in a world order no longer dominated by bi-polarisation.

In reacting to these challenges, French political elites demonstrated continuing, undynamic notions of French identity, based on the belief in the inherent superiority of French identity, a refusal of more hybrid identities which may result from audiovisual consumers' potentially more reflexive response to American mass culture, and a reassertion of hostility to traditional cultural enemies. As the examples in this chapter demonstrated, political elites from within and outside government, and from political parties of various persuasions, indicated all of these attitudes, although they did not always have the political freedom to express them fully. What is not said, and what is more subtly alluded to, is still significant. This meant that Mitterrand and others appealed to more acceptable essentialist ideas about the tradition and beauty of French, and sometimes European, identity, even if some of their beliefs had something in common with the more extremely expressed anti-American views of the FN, who denounced their enemies in strong terms of biological and racial theories of inferiority. Furthermore, Toubon, Mitterrand and others from the mainstream parties could not openly and easily advocate strong protectionism against particular cultural forces, and had to concentrate on the French opposition to over-liberalisation and consumerism, yet welcoming of pluralism and diversity, openness and European preference, to allude to the same cultural enemies they shared with the Far-Right.

As in the case of language policy, French political elites looked towards international cooperation and institutions beyond France, particularly within Europe, to address their national interests and support their arguments for defending and promoting French and
European identity through audiovisual policy. The texts discussed illustrated how, again, 'Europe' was used by political elites in different ways, as the EU was appealed to at times, and at others a wider Europe in a geo-cultural sense, encompassing new opportunities for cooperation and rayonnement. Furthermore, Chapter Five illustrated further examples of French political elites presenting themselves as understanding the true issues concerning identity and audiovisual policy, attempting to speak for other European countries and to denounce those who did not fully support French objectives. They did this, as in the case of language, through policies and debates concerned with themes of diversity and pluralism, and the defence of European identity, in opposition to uniformity threatened by the non-European other. Yet, as the statements of Mitterrand in particular revealed, new opportunities offered by French involvement in defending European identity and building the notion of a cultural Europe, remained arguably a disguise for French political elites' own traditional agenda of the promotion of French leadership and the defence of static conceptions of French identity as superior and special.

However the arrival of the digital age of communications in the 1990s began to make the continuation of this agenda more problematic, as it brought with it a fresh set of challenges for audiovisual and cultural policy-making in general. Broadcasting, telecommunications and computing technologies converged, allowing faster communications systems based on digital networks of multi-functioning equipment. As a result, the same system could carry telephone, computer data, radio and television signals using digital form, or the form which computers understand. The prospect of these new services promised to change broadcasting as a mass medium, and its consumption, as technology could offer more individual, interactive use, or demassification. Such a revolution was identified by French political elites in the mid-late 1990s as posing significant challenges to the traditional model of State-led regulation of technology and communications like audiovisual broadcasting, and the State construction of national identity. Dismayed by the rapid technological progress made by other countries like the US and Japan, the failure to secure a European standard for HDTV, and to include multimedia services in the revised Television without Frontiers directive, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, French political elites became even more concerned about the identity issues raised by digitalisation, in particular the prospect of

\[\text{For a discussion of this in relation to television broadcasting in particular, see Hare, 1999.}\]
further, and easier, diffusion of American culture (for example, Douste-Blazy, 19951, De Charette, 1997b).

This area has been a concern of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin’s Socialist administration elected in May 1997 and in power at the time of writing. The remit of the Ministry of Culture was broadened to include Communication once again, reflecting the new technological environment and a potentially increased desire to regulate. Alain Juppé’s government had abolished the post in May 1995, according to President Chirac, in the interests of giving the media more freedom (Le Monde, 23 May 1995). The new Minister of Culture and Communication, Catherine Trautmann, launched a public consultation on the digitalisation of television (Ministère de la Culture, 1999f, 1999j). Although she indicated a willingness to be more flexible in the area of radio quotas for French songs, following a period of consultation (Ministère de la Culture, 1999k), she expressed concern about the prospect of more Americanisation in the digital age on television, on several occasions (Trautmann, 1998d, 1999a). This encouraged both Trautmann and Jospin to pledge their continued allegiance to the cause of defending the principle of ‘cultural exception’ for audiovisual production wherever possible (Jospin, 1997a; Trautmann, 1998a; Ministère de la Culture, 1998g). They particularly sought to do this during the negotiations in 1998 concerning the AMI (Accord Multilateral sur l’investissement, or Multilateral Agreement on Investment) of the OECD countries. This was another example of a trade issue where French policy-makers were largely isolated, as they had complained since the talks began in May 1995 that the agreement would threaten French and European support for audiovisual production, and that this would be even more problematic in an era of rapid technological change. Such disagreements look set to continue, as Trautmann for example has revealed her concerns about the next round of WTO trade negotiations planned for 2000 (1998d). Alongside these fears, the objective of leading a stronger cultural Europe through audiovisual policy has remained important for the Socialists (Trautmann, 1997a; Jospin, 1997a).

A further challenge to elite notions of identity brought by digitalisation in the 1990s was the development of the Internet. The following case study, Chapter Six, examines the special challenges of the Internet’s development, and French political elites’ response to these.
6.1 Introduction

The case studies in Chapters Four and Five have explored the reactions of French political elites to challenges to traditional notions of French culture and identity in the areas of language and audiovisual policy. The purpose of the final case study is to analyse the effects of a more recently acknowledged challenge to elite constructions of French identity. This is in the area of information technology, and particularly the development of the Internet. The Internet is an important and powerful method of communication, given its many possibilities for interactivity and use in conjunction with other existing media on a global scale for rapid exchange of both text and images. These possibilities make it an exciting, positive attraction for French political elites, in terms of possible economic, cultural and educational benefits. It also offers opportunities for strengthening and spreading French cultural values and national identity. This attraction may be viewed as a continuation of the post-war cult of modernity, with French elites still wishing to make France a world leader in technology, seduced by the technological success of role models such as the USA. Yet these possibilities, together with the decentralised and transnational nature of the Internet also mean that it presents enormous difficulties for regulation. In this respect, it is an example of a technological development which poses a challenge on an unprecedented scale to traditional French models of media and technology policy-making based on State control and protection. At the same time, this means that the Internet can also challenge French policy on culture and language, and the undynamic visions of identity which this has traditionally developed.

This chapter will argue that the birth of the Internet, whilst having led to calls for its development within France, and supporting investment by the State, has provoked a negative reaction on the part of political elites which suggests a still traditional and undynamic conception of French identity. This vision looks more frequently towards references - not altogether surprisingly, but nevertheless, problematically - located in the history, structures and institutions of the past, than it does to the future. This claim will be tested, through my analysis of the discourse of French political elites concerning the Internet and its importance as a medium for expressing French identity.

Firstly, it is intended to unravel the unvoiced assumptions about identity found in the
response of France's political elites to the Internet issue. The second aim of the analysis will thus be raised, which is to demonstrate how the political response to the advent of the Internet, despite being a particular moment in time associated with the arrival of a qualitatively new problem, is in fact rooted in constructions of the past. Thus I offer an understanding of the issue in the context of France's history.

This chapter will give an overview of policy measures on the issue, which reflect elite initiatives for French identity. Detailed analysis of discourse will reveal the deeper truths about this identity, demonstrating it to be more complex than may be apparent. For these reasons, following contextualisation of the Internet issue in France, the chapter will analyse texts which are part of the larger body of elite discourse on identity and the Internet. The selection of these texts is explained in section 6.2.1

6.1.1 The Internet in France: a threat to French identity?
The emergence of qualitative changes in the area of new technologies - the so-called 'digital revolution' - is significant for French identity in the 1990s. Hare (1999) and Thatcher (1997, pp. 181-2) provide detailed discussion of how changes in the area of 'high technology' in the late 1990s, combining developments in computing, telecommunications and broadcasting, 'converge in the new digital communications media' (Hare, 1999, p. 309), which allow improved transmission of information in digital form, through texts, pictures, graphics or sound. Thus the same communications system may be multi-functioning, with radio programmes, for example, being transmitted by the Internet and personal computers (PCs) receiving digital TV signals. Debates have grown up in France around issues related to the effects of digitalisation on television and radio broadcasting, cable, satellite and multimedia services, as new patterns of more individualised consumption may be emerging (Hare, 1999, pp. 312-7) and anxieties have surfaced regarding issues such as access to and exclusion from the new 'information society'. In this context, particular concerns have focused on the rapid development of the Internet and its relationship with French identity.

Political debate on the Internet in France came to the fore under Prime Minister Edouard Balladur's administration of 1993-1995. In October 1994 an important report was presented to Balladur by a working group led by Gérard Théry, pioneer of the French Minitel electronic information system (Théry, 1994). This report stressed the need for greater public investment and initiative in digital information technologies in the face of strong international competition.
(notably from the USA and Japan), to secure France's future technological and cultural survival (see also Jubert, 1996). The following year, the government decided to aim to connect all French households to the ‘information superhighway’ by 2015 (Dauncey, 1996, p.88).

Simultaneously, the governmental focus on identity issues was developing, as Jacques Toubon’s Ministry of Culture was becoming increasingly concerned about the presence - or lack of it - of French language on the Internet, in comparison with the preponderance of English language, especially American, services. Early Internet service-users encountered difficulties in finding non-English language web-sites and search engines, and in using accents or non-Latin characters in e-mail messages. As Dauncey (1997, p.72) notes, the accessibility in France of American web-sites written in English, together with the competition the French telecommunications industry faces against American services and software, has presented a challenge to French ‘exceptionalism’ in terms of culture, language, technology and public policy. This aspect of the Internet’s development was felt by political elites to have potentially harmful consequences for French identity and its protection and promotion. In particular, Toubon himself expressed his fear of Anglo-American imperialist domination, accusing the United States of seeking complete freedom to dominate the global multi-media and new technologies market. At the same time, however, the Minister stressed his feeling that the Internet could represent for France, and Europe, not a site for battle but a great opportunity for an equal partnership (Toubon, 1994f).

What is particularly significant about this statement is the way in which Toubon referred to the Internet issue in terms of a battle or fight, with the consequent need for mobilisation. Such a military metaphor runs throughout the discourse of French political elites on identity and the Internet, and is analysed in more detail elsewhere within this case study. Furthermore, Toubon did not specify exactly what elements of ‘France’ would be affected, for example the economy, education, culture, business. Neither did he define what he meant by ‘Europe’ (ibid.). This aspect of Toubon’s statement indicates an evasive quality employed throughout the political discourse on the Internet, and is considered closely later in the case study’s detailed analysis of texts. These elements are significant parts of the totality of concerns about French identity and the Internet which developed under Toubon and his successors. These translated on one level into numerous conferences, ministerial working groups and discussions which took place during the mid-1990s, within France and the European Union; and on a more global level regarding the prospects for French language, culture and consequently identity, in the new
information society. The precise nature of these concerns, and how they illuminate our understanding of elite perceptions of French identity, will be addressed fully below.

However, the challenges presented by the information society and, indeed, the ongoing digitalisation of communications in general as perceived by French policy-makers, are not confined to anxieties about identity. Technological developments may also pose threats in more specific economic and legal terms for French policy-making elites, who have traditionally favoured State regulation and protection of industry, including the communications industries, but who are now confronting a more globalised world economy, which functions largely on the basis of the values of the free market. Some of these issues may helpfully be outlined here, in order to establish the appropriate context for our consideration of how the Internet may present particular challenges for French identity, and specifically that of the perception of and response to these challenges by political elites.

6.1.2 The French State and communications technologies

Diana Green (1988, p.124) argued in the mid-1980s that 'For the French, developments in the field of Information Technology constitute a revolution, analogous to the discovery of steam power.' She went on to assert that 'the information revolution is often referred to as the Third Revolution', a statement which is regularly borne out in the discourse of French politicians on the Internet.¹ The term 'Revolution', when used by a French politician, can never be neutral. It suggests violence and war, threats to the nation and the need for mobilisation, in a country which has regularly looked to revolutionary means and a revolutionary vision of the social and political domain in order to renew itself. The use of 'Revolution' therefore indicates the significance of the Internet in psychological terms as part of a distinct struggle and process of change for political elites in France.

Revolution or not, developments in information technology have implications for French political elites, who feel uneasy as new technologies impact on competition rules, and jeopardise the traditional role of the State as a regulator (Dauncey, 1997, p.72). Thus French policy-makers' anxieties about IT may on one level be considered in terms of the 'traditional antipathy for market forces' of many French governments (Green, 1988, p.125). This is set against the post-war background of the quest for the modernisation of industry and technology,

¹See, for example, Chirac, 1995c, 1996c; Juppé, 1996b.
and the wish to develop prestigious industries on a national scale. In the telecommunications, information technology and broadcasting fields, the efforts of the French State to develop strong nationally-based industries intensified from the 1970s. These efforts resulted from fears surrounding the precarious state of French industry following the oil crises of that decade, exacerbated by large-scale investment in electronics by competitors such as Japan. These issues were of particular concern to President Giscard d'Estaing. Recognition of these problems led to the famous Nora-Mine report of 1978 on industrial policy to modernise France's IT sector (Green, 1988, p.127; Dauncey, 1996, p.87).

Thatcher (1997, p.179) describes how, before the 1980s, the telecommunications sector in France (as in other EC member states) was dominated by a public telephone operator (PTO) which was publicly owned and joined with the postal service in a government posts, telephone and telegraph department, the Direction Générale des Télécommunications (DGT), which became France Télécom from 1988. Thatcher goes on to explain (1997, p.180; see also Green, 1988, p.126), how, in the manufacture of equipment for high technology sectors, European PTOs and governments supported 'national champions', which were generally privately owned, such as GEC/Alcatel in France. Such 'national champions' enjoyed effectively guaranteed orders thanks to a closed public procurement process, and were protected by the establishment of specific national standards which acted as a 'non-tariff barrier' against foreign firms.

After the election of the French Socialist government in 1981, further State interest in IT development can be attributed, in part, to its possible strategic applications (telecommunications and defence areas), in which French governments sought a leadership role. Furthermore, anxieties surfaced over a 'technological gap' between Western European countries and traditional economic rivals such as Japan and the United States, dominant respectively in the manufacture of audiovisual equipment (televisions, hi-fi, video recorders and satellite receivers) and programme production. Such concerns were compounded by fears of declining competitiveness and the need for further modernisation which could lead to growth and job creation (Green, 1988, p.128, 132). Therefore, as Thatcher (1995, p.246) explains, during the 1980s, France Télécom was used as an instrument for policy aims besides those of running the

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2 In this respect, the European Commission, under Frenchman Jacques Delors' presidency, later highlighted the need to develop the 'information society' in the European Community, in its 1993 White Paper on 'Growth, Competitiveness and Employment', and the following year, a group headed by Commissioner Martin Bangemann was invited by the member states to present a report to the European Council, which recommended measures for improving information infrastructures (Balle, 1997, p.677).
telephone network. It was involved, for example, in the management of so-called 'grands projets' such as high definition television, the 1982 'Cable Plan' to develop household links to a national optical fibre network, the restructuring of the telecommunications industry in newly nationalised groups, and the Télécel plan which aimed to implement practical applications of IT usable by the public, most notably the widening of the usage of 'telematics' multimedia information services like the Minitel videotex information system, which received considerable State backing during the early 1980s (see Green, 1988, pp.129-31; Dauncey, 1997, pp.72-4). Furthermore, France Télécom provided revenues for non-telecommunications purposes, such as supporting French electronics firms (Thatcher, 1995, p.246). President Mitterrand, seeing opportunities for cooperation with European Community partners, pioneered the development of the 'Eurêka' programme, which was designed to promote the distribution of new technology within the European Community, including developing broadcasting industries such as high-definition television (HDTV).

However, since the 1980s, the increasing deregulation and globalisation of communications and broadcasting, together with the ongoing liberalisation of the world economy, have presented problems for any traditionally dirigiste (centrally-planned) model of economic management. We can note for example the experience of France's broadcasting industries during the 1980s, which saw technological innovation and the withdrawal of the dominant State, laying the foundations for new commercial exploitation which contributed to the undermining of the legitimacy of the public service model of broadcasting, with the deregulation and privatisation of the French radio and television industries (see, for example, Kuhn, 1995; Hare, 1999, pp.308-9; Venturelli, 1997). Competition policies encouraged by the European Union's Single Market, and the more general acceptance of the role of the market, have also favoured liberalisation (Dauncey, 1997, p.72; Thatcher, 1997, p.192). In the case of information technology, such issues are particularly contentious for French policy-making elites as this sector has undergone rapid development, and also because other competitor nations are perceived as so much stronger than France in terms of the provision of both the development of access to hardware such as PCs and the development of specific services such as those on the Internet.

Thatcher (1997, pp.179-81) indicates how from the 1970s onwards, traditional industrial policies in Western Europe began to meet with strong transnational forces which transformed the management of high technology. These concerned technological and economic change,
international regulatory reform (of an area before the 1980s subject to regulation only at the national level), and new ideas about competition (see also Dauncey, 1997, p.73). The main effects for high technology policy throughout Europe are identified by Thatcher (1997, p.181) as follows: powerful incentives for further competition in services and equipment supply; pressure for concentration and internationalisation; and an increase in the importance of the appropriate supply of services and equipment. Against this background of a more globalised, competitive market, the French State has needed to move away from a policy of picking national champions and a dirigiste approach in the communications field, which, as Schmidt notes (1997b, pp.236-7), it has felt compelled to do in terms of industrial policy in general, in order to promote national competitiveness. Yet Schmidt also highlights (ibid.) how French governments have not completely stopped trying to influence business and industry, still showing signs of interventionism in strategic industries in the high technology and defence sectors, together with large or important failing industries, such as the 'monopolistic' public sector firms which had escaped restructuring and the opening-up to competition during the 1980s. Indeed, many French politicians such as former ministers Philippe Douste-Blazy (1996b) and François Fillon (1996b), claim that the deregulated market-place for electronic information is in fact distorted by the domination of a few large industrial groups, whose existence is supported by over-liberalisation and a lack of regulation. This is further demonstrated by the analysis within this case study.

Although not necessarily controlled by large groups, it is felt by all French policymakers that the Internet is a new technological development which particularly threatens the achievements of the Minitel system in the French domestic 'telematics' market. Being the subject of so much development and protection, as described earlier, the Minitel was in the 1980s, a 'symbol of France's industrial and social vision' (Dauncey, 1997, p.74). Since 1980, between a quarter and a third of French households have regularly consulted Minitel services (of which there are around 25,000). Service providers have not wished to see investment in services, equipment and the public service model of the Minitel wiped out in the rush to follow what some regard as merely a US-dominated trend (Dauncey, 1997, pp.74-6), although they may recognise the Internet's new advantages for 'interactivity, empowerment and creativity' (Dauncey, 1997, p.78). Recent figures point to France still lagging behind neighbouring countries in terms of PC-based services, with Minitel's promotion arguably a factor in this. According to an estimate by the Association française de la télématique (French Telematics
Association), between 900,000 and 1.2 million French citizens are connected to the Internet, as opposed to around 2 million in the UK and Germany (and more than 30 million in the USA) (Libération, 17-18 January 1998).

However, it seems that French policy-makers have been forced to concede defeat as far as the Minitel is concerned, as in 1997, Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin urged France Télécom to develop the transfer of Minitel services to the Internet (Jospin, 1997b; see also Le Monde, 28 August 1997). Jospin's comments were not entirely well received by communications professionals though, as demonstrated by Louis Roncil, president of the Syndicat national de la télématic (SNT or National Telematics Union) and head of AGI, one of the biggest French service providers, who declared his astonishment at the government's interference with industrial strategy, and urged further development of Minitel services, instead of the Internet, casting doubt on its usefulness for society (Le Monde, 28 August 1997).

Meanwhile, French policy-makers have suffered other disappointments in the regulation of digital communications industries, as evidenced for example in their failure in 1993 to secure a European Commission directive setting a single technical standard (D2 MAC) for high definition television (HDTV). Besides meeting with opposition from British and German television operators³, and being hampered by the slowness of the EC decision-making process, this bid was thwarted by being overtaken by the rapid progress of American digital compression techniques (Balle, 1997, p.729). Such a failure was of symbolic importance for France, since, as Schmidt explains (1997b, pp.236-7), the French State had looked towards developing a more interventionist European industrial policy (as opposed to a nation- and member-state-focused one), or 'a more market-oriented dirigisme informed by the lessons of the previous decade', in industries such as high technology. Similarly, Balle (1997, p.730), describes the abandonment of analogue HDTV in Europe (and in Asia) as highlighting the failure of State dirigiste policy in the face of technological change, the realities of the market and the true demands of the viewing public. He also points (1997, p.661) to governmental attempts in the 1970s and 1980s to impose the SECAM system as the French standard, which, he argues, proved misguided by the 1990s when the French electronics industry began to confront the arrival of 'multi-standard' television equipment and the opening-up of broadcasting territories.

³D2 MAC went against technological trends in the UK, which also followed more market-based ideas supported by the Conservative government and was influenced by a lobby of Japanese producers. The Germans meanwhile wished to protect their PAL Plus system (Cawson, 1995, pp.157-8; Thatcher, 1997, p.200).
Yet, as outlined at the beginning of this section, besides the issues related to the global economy and ongoing debates about economic liberalisation and regulation, changes in the communications sector have also raised specific anxieties related to French identity. These are particularly evident in the debates surrounding the effects of new technologies on the provision of information and broadcasting services in different languages, and the use of language within these services. These debates are significant for French policy-makers, given the importance of the French language as the foundation of traditional elite conceptions and constructions of French identity, as explored in Chapter Three. Furthermore, as suggested earlier, the Internet is one element of these new technologies which is posing particular challenges to French identity in view of its capacities for interactivity and multimedia use, whilst linked to a continually developing and widening, and essentially unregulated world network. Such capacities permit - in theory at least - access to and exchange with aspects of languages and cultures, found both within and outside of the geographical territory of France, which may deviate from those championed by French elites. The consequences of these possibilities for elite conceptions of French identity will be examined below.

6.2 The Internet's challenge to French Identity

6.2.1 Contextualisation of the texts chosen for detailed analysis

The period in which this case study is situated makes it an investigation largely confined to discourse produced by Centre-Right political actors, since the RPR-UDF coalition were in government between 1993 and 1997, the period when the Internet became more widely available. It was also a period straddling two presidencies, with François Mitterrand in office in a situation of 'cohabitation' with the Edouard Balladur and Alain Juppé governments, and then Jacques Chirac being elected in May 1995, replacing Mitterrand. President Mitterrand did not really address the Internet and new technologies issue. The subject was arguably still a fairly new issue of debate during his last months in office, and Mitterrand's silence on the issue may also be explained in terms of his concentration on other issues he considered to be more 'presidential', such as more loosely defined questions of foreign policy and European integration. Another possible factor concerned his limited policy-making input given the cohabitation situation. The period also included a period of significant European Union activity for French political elites as France held the EU presidency during the first half of 1995. This period saw Mitterrand offering some reflections relating to identity within his statements.
outlining the cultural policy aims of the presidency, including his ideas on language and audiovisual policy, as discussed in the previous case studies. One of these declarations did contain a possibly veiled reference to the Internet (Mitterrand, 1994), but, other than this, my research revealed no such statements specifically addressing the Internet issue. It is possible that Mitterrand was simply reluctant to become closely involved with a new issue so late in his term of office.

Although the case study is concerned primarily with the policy and texts of the Centre-Right government, some consideration is given to the contribution of Lionel Jospin's Socialist government which came to power in May 1997, leaving President Chirac as a Head of State of the Centre-Right compelled to work with a Prime Minister and government of the Left. My analysis, within the constraints of the limited period which was available to draw comparisons of the transition to a new government, attempts to chart any possible continuities and discontinuities in elements of elite thinking on identity and the Internet as shown in the Jospin government's management of the issue.

I made the choice of texts according to criteria, which include the setting and timing of the event, which could have influenced its possible exposure and/or reporting, and the status of the producer of the text. The most important interest of each text, however, lay in its inclusion and development of central themes concerning French identity. A further factor which I took into account, as in the previous two chapters, was the opportunity to include different political figures throughout as relevant to different cases. I present the background to the texts below, together with a discussion of their interest in terms of my analysis. As I will demonstrate, they are all important texts in their own right, because of their development of key themes which enable us to trace elite perceptions of French identity related to policy for the Internet, and which illustrate points supporting the hypothesis that such perceptions are undynamic.

The text from Jacques Toubon was a speech given in his capacity as Minister of Culture during a workshop organised by José Rossi, the Minister for Industry, the Postal Service and Telecommunications, and held on 7 December 1994 in Paris (Toubon, 1994t). This event was reported in Le Monde, with short statements from other participants such as Nicolas Sarkozy, then Minister with Responsibility for the Budget and Communication, and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur (who did not attend but offered a prepared contribution delivered by M.Rossi) (Le Monde, 9 December 1994). The discussions considered issues of importance for French industry such as the opening of electronic communications networks to competition and the
exploitation of fibre-optic cable technology. However, the most significant contribution at this event in terms of the present investigation of elite attitudes to challenges to cultural identity is Toubon's speech, given his capacity as Minister of Culture and Francophone Affairs, which addresses issues concerning the Internet and identity.

The second text from a Minister of Culture is an article written by Toubon's successor Philippe Douste-Blazy, which appeared in Le Monde on 9 February 1996 entitled 'Défis sur l'Internet' (Challenges on the Internet) (Douste-Blazy, 1996b). This was chosen as it is important to examine some of Douste-Blazy's output since he too was a key actor strategically placed at a time when issues like the Internet and the digitalisation of communications were becoming more important. During his period of office (under the Juppé government of 1995-97), he was thus a major figure in the debate and legislation surrounding identity and new technologies. Furthermore his text is an example of an article aimed at a national and international audience due to its publication in Le Monde, the national journal of record. The nature of the text, as a polemical piece included in a newspaper like Le Monde, additionally means that it is unusually dense in terms of the number and range of themes it addresses.

Another political actor connected to new technologies and communications is François Fillon, Minister for the Postal Service, Telecommunications and Space (successor to José Rossi under the Juppé government of 1995-97). The text considered in this case is a speech made by him at the twelfth meeting of the organisation the Haut Conseil de la Francophonie (HCF), which took place between 30 April-3 May 1996 in Paris (Fillon, 1996b). For the first time, the event was hosted by President Chirac, who personally encouraged the adoption of the theme for discussion, 'Francophonie and the Challenges of New Technologies' ('La Francophonie face aux défis des nouvelles technologies') (see ACCT, 1996b; L'Echo de l'Afrique, 9 May 1996). This conference should be situated in the context of the chronology of international events connected with cooperation between francophone countries, and also more widely, with technologies and media. The HCF meeting for example took place just prior to the Midrand conference (South Africa) on 13-15 May 1996, where the 'G7' industrialised nations (including France and Canada), along with about 30 others (amongst them several francophone countries), gathered to discuss 'development and the world information society'. The HCF event was also

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4The HCF had voiced its particular concerns about new technologies and the French language back in 1994 (1994d).
followed by a conference organised by the Internet Society in Montreal on 25-28 June 1996 (see HCF, 1996a, preface, p.5). It also developed themes discussed at the sixth biannual ‘francophone summit’ held in Cotonou (Benin) in December 1995, and took place whilst an interministerial group was carrying out work (March-June 1996) which culminated in a report submitted to Philippe Douste-Blazy and François Fillon (Mission interministérielle sur l’Internet, 1996).

Fillon’s contribution was made at the end of a workshop session devoted to considering the future position of French-speakers in the global information society. The general public were able to attend these workshops, but for the most part, the audience were composed of members of the HCF and invited experts on language issues or communications/media (see HCF 1996b; ACCT, 1996a). Probably the most technical of the texts, in view of the amount of information included about current and future policy measures, the speech still includes general discussion of a universalist and historically-based nature on French identity and the Internet. It is also interesting to analyse this speech, as it was made by a government minister who had an important policy-making interest in the issues with which this case study is concerned, and whose contribution to the discourse on identity is not covered elsewhere in this thesis in any detail.

Speeches by the President of the Republic, Jacques Chirac, were the final choices for the texts for detailed consideration. Chirac was selected for two reasons - firstly for the purposes of comparison with President François Mitterrand in this thesis, and secondly, as he was President at a time when the ‘information society’ was presenting France with so many challenges. Two texts are considered. Firstly, a section from the President’s speech on 2 December 1995 at the Francophone Summit in Cotonou, Benin, which was important as Chirac, in his first Summit speech as President of the Republic, highlighted the Internet/new technologies and identity problem (Chirac, 1995c). Secondly, Chirac’s opening address to the HCF meeting in Paris on 30 April 1996 is examined, due to the significance of his role as President hosting this internationally prominent event, which offered Chirac an excellent opportunity to gather support and exchange ideas concerning the challenges to French identity (Chirac, 1996b).

6.2.2 The scale of the Internet’s challenge: the uncertain ‘Digital Revolution’

The feeling that new information technologies present a particular challenge for French identity was effectively summarised by François Fillon (Fillon, 1996b). He argued that the whole of
francophonie as a cultural and political movement was challenged economically, technologically and culturally by what he called the digital revolution ("la révolution du numérique"). Throughout this speech, he continually referred to the technological changes taking place as part of a revolution, which he emphasised was above all a cultural one. As noted earlier, the use of ‘revolution’ by a French politician is a very specifically charged term, which does more than evoke images of great change brought about by struggle and violence. Indeed, the term ‘revolution’ is arguably constitutive of ‘Frenchness’ itself, and thus has powerful links with identity in the context of the cultural challenges posed by the Internet and digitalisation. The technological revolution itself, Fillon argued, necessitates the entire rethinking or reinvention of francophonie’s role, when he said: ‘Certes, cette révolution technologique nous oblige à repenser la manière dont la francophonie peut rester vivante et conserver sa capacité de rayonnement dans ce contexte nouveau, marqué par une mondialisation des réseaux d’échange culturels et économiques.’ (Certainly, this technological revolution forces us to rethink the way in which francophonie can remain alive and maintain its capacity for influence in this new context, marked by the globalisation of the networks of cultural and economic exchange). Dauncey (1997, p.73) has described the planning of the information society in France as an attempt to reconcile new forms of communication with Republican values held by the French State, of liberty, equality and fraternity, and the analysis in this case study reveals numerous, further references to such revolutionary concepts in the discourse on identity and the Internet.

Fillon viewed the stakes for identity in terms of the effective future presence of French language and culture on the new globalised, world networks which are part of this technological revolution. He suggested that this revolution needed regulation and control, using the verb ‘maitriser’, suggesting to master, manage, control and contain. In this way, possible risks could be avoided. These risks were portrayed by Fillon here as perhaps more threatening, since he did not clearly identify them. Adopting tactics of vagueness which we saw various political elites use in Chapters Four and Five, he merely referred to them as ‘certains risques majeurs’ (certain major risks). He also claimed that ‘managing’ the technological revolution was important as the new world networks had possible advantages to be exploited. He further highlighted the uncertainty of the issue by using a rhetorical question, thus inviting reflection: ‘[ ... ] saurons-nous, en effet, maîtriser cette révolution technologique, mais aussi et surtout culturelle, pour éviter certains risques majeurs et exploiter des opportunités nouvelles?’ ([ ... ] will we know
how to really manage this technological, but especially and above all, cultural, revolution, in order to avoid certain major risks and exploit the new opportunities?).

Other actors too spoke or wrote of the Internet as part of a new age of digitalisation, a ‘revolution’ with the capacity to change so many aspects of life. Douste-Blazy for example, described the importance of digitalisation as an entry into a new era. He explained that in this new age, the challenges of the new communications networks such as the Internet may threaten the future of the French language and culture (Douste-Blazy, 1996b). Chirac too (Chirac, 1996c), spoke of profound changes taking place in society, urging francophone ‘mobilisation’ to confront them, thereby resorting to a familiar military metaphor of battle and long struggle which is prevalent in elite discourse on French identity and the Internet, like that which we saw in the cases of language and audiovisual policy. He highlighted the Internet as a crucial issue for the preservation of French identity, when he urged: ‘Nous devons ensemble exiger et obtenir que chaque utilisateur des nouveaux réseaux puisse s’exprimer dans sa langue et préserver ainsi son identité culturelle.’ (We must demand and ensure together that each user of the new networks is able to express themselves in their language and so preserve their cultural identity).

Chirac also situated the coming of the digital age in the context of a series of previous challenges presented by processes like the agricultural and industrial revolutions, describing the ‘information revolution’ as a genuinely historic event: ‘ce phénomène majeur de notre temps’ (this major phenomenon of our time). However, the President emphasised the uniquely far-reaching implications of this particular ‘revolution’ when he explained that it abolished time and space, a suggestion which invokes feelings of the ending of established certainties and a vague, strange future where the position of identities may not be clear. This was a device used by Toubon too (Toubon, 1994t), with a reference to how the new technologies would throw into confusion (‘bouleverser’) so many aspects of life, of knowledge, of the organisation of work and relationships, and thus create a new society. Referring again to a revolutionary situation, to ‘la révolution multimédia’, Toubon offered his thoughts on the particularly uncertain implications of the interactivity and individualised control of communications offered by the digital era, in a passage which is particularly revealing of the Minister’s conception of French identity:

_Le monde qui s’ouvre devant nous et que nous nous donnons les moyens de conquérir est au demeurant complexe: nul ne peut mesurer aujourd’hui les conséquences exactes du bouleversement économique et social qui s’opère sous_
nos yeux; nul ne peut anticiper le type de culture qui sera la nôtre quand le service universel sera ouvert à chacun d'entre nous et quand nous pourrons, non seulement recevoir ces multiples informations, mais les modifier et les transmettre à notre tour. (The world which is opening before our eyes and which we are giving ourselves the means to conquer is, after all, a complex one: there is no way of measuring the exact consequences today of the economic and social disruption which is happening under our noses; no way of predicting the sort of culture which will be ours when this universal service will be open to each and every one of us and when we will be able not only to receive multiple pieces of information, but also modify and transmit them ourselves.)

Toubon's view of French identity here appears to be informed by old visions of battle and conquest, and of mobilisation to enter such a fight, as he considers the future of culture in the new digital services. His statement betrays a particular anxiety about the nature of information services which are interactive and widely available, and difficult to control, his central theme being concerned with conflict, arising from the difficulties of controlling the new services. In response to these concerns, Toubon rejects possible notions of freedom and empowerment, which some may find in the interactive capacities of the Internet and other multimedia services.

Such statements thus refer to a context of technological and social change, of reorganisation and uncertainty which has been created by new information technologies and their position in an increasingly globalised communications market-place. Indeed, as Chirac argued (Chirac, 1996d), the information networks which are currently developed in a limited number of countries, but which could spread around the entire planet, are part of a phenomenon which is both one of the causes and effects of globalisation. The challenge, he explained, is to make globalisation work to the benefit of all, although it is not clear whom exactly Chirac means by 'tous' in his statement. It could mean everyone in France, in francophone countries, or perhaps everyone who agrees with him about the need to re-consider the problems of a globalised communications market. He argued on another occasion that the situation is so remarkable since public authorities and states have played a relatively weak role in the development of new information technologies, and indeed, is made worse since 'personne ne dirige ni ne maîtrise cette véritable révolution' (no-one is leading or managing this genuine revolution) (Chirac, 1996c). This lack of order and control, as we shall see below, is one of the key contentions of French politicians and policy-makers regarding the contemporary information technology landscape and its implications for French identity.
6.2.3 The French language and identity in a global communications market: threats to diversity, and the difficulties of regulation

The particular concerns of French political elites over identity and the new communications technologies stem from these policy-makers' opinions that the French language, already in a weak position in terms of its presence on the Internet, is further threatened by the domination of foreign providers of services and manufacturers of software. This situation, it is argued, can only represent a threat to French cultural identity and the values of pluralism and diversity which this identity is deemed to espouse, as a defence against American hegemony. Notions of pluralism are not necessarily clearly defined by policy-makers, but, as the previous case study chapters illustrated, are nevertheless the keystone of much of the elite discourse on French identity and cultural policy.

Douste-Blazy for example suggested that too much information available on the Internet in English and from American sources was a problem for French culture and identity, due to the limited access to information in French, on French cultural or historical issues:

Quand on sait qu'Internet est anglophone à plus de 90%, et que si vous y pianotez Bonaparte ou de Gaulle vous aurez toutes les chances d'obtenir des informations venant de bases de données d'universités américaines, on pourrait conclure aisément qu'un formidable défi nous attend et que, faute de relever, c'est la pérennité de notre culture et de notre langue qui risque de nous échapper. (When we know that the Internet is more than 90% English-language-based, and that if you enter the names Bonaparte or de Gaulle you will have every chance of obtaining information from databases of American universities, we can easily conclude that a great challenge is before us, and, if we don't tackle it, the continuity of our culture and language is at risk of being taken out of our hands.)

(Douste-Blazy, 1996b).

Here, Douste-Blazy refers to the two iconic figures of Bonaparte and De Gaulle, both white males, military and Caesarean leaders, presented as representative of French identity. Bonaparte, with his aggressive strategies, and de Gaulle, with his ascension to power as the result of a virtual military coup, are names which may be invoked as metaphors for French elite territorial ambitions. This is not without significance, as such ambitions, in terms of cultural influence, are themselves threatened by the Internet. Elsewhere, Fillon accused American

service providers of having acted according to a deliberate strategy to reinforce their linguistic and cultural presence on the Internet:

En outre, plusieurs pays ont, parfois bien avant les pays francophones, compris l’enjeu que représentait la présence massive de leurs produits, de leurs langues et de leurs cultures sur ces nouveaux supports de communication. C’est ainsi que les acteurs américains ont investi en bon ordre le réseau Internet, d’ailleurs né outre-Atlantique. (Besides, several countries have, often well before French-speaking countries, understood the stakes of their huge presence in the new communications methods, in terms of their products, languages and cultures. This is why the Americans have invested so well in the Internet, itself born across the Atlantic.) (Fillon, 1996b)

This statement may perhaps hint at a ‘high-tech’ conspiracy theory, comparable to those historically discredited or otherwise obsolete myths, associated with the hatred of Jews, Communism, and most recently, Islam. Surprisingly, it recalls some of the ideas expressed in FN discourse on culture, about ‘mercantilism’ and fascist conceptions of a US-Jewish monopoly of capital (Mégrret, 1993). Fillon (Fillon, 1996b) continued to explain how this situation, deliberately brought about by the actions of the ‘Americans’, had led to the accepted use of English as a lingua franca on the Internet, which he unrealistically hoped would prove to be temporary. This theme of an ‘Anglo-Saxon plot’, which Chapter Three identified in the debates on the loi Toubon of 1994, is recurrent elsewhere in the discourse on identity and the Internet produced by French political elites. Alain Juppé’s comments on on-line information services can also be noted, as he accused ‘grands groupes anglo-saxons’ (large Anglo-Saxon groups) of having a world strategy for control (Juppé, 1996d).

In a striking example of cross-party consensus, the Communists also indicated their support for such ‘conspiracy theories’. An official statement (PCF, 1995a), by the party linked the Internet problem to the GATT issue. They argued that the Americans had been compelled to accept the idea of ‘cultural exception’ in the GATT agreements largely on account of the popular ‘mobilisation’ or feeling, mostly in France. However, the PCF claimed that the Americans were now attempting to get round the rules established by the GATT agreements, by ‘lançant une offensive sur les «autoroutes de l’information»’ (launching an offensive for the information superhighway - revealing more battle imagery). Like the politicians of the Right, the Communists also called in this statement for ‘une mobilisation’ to protect ‘la diversité et l’enrichissement mutuel des identités culturelles’ (the diversity and mutual enrichment of
cultural identities), arguing for national control of services and against international deregulation. Yet despite advocating enrichment of cultural identities, an apparently pluralistic statement, the PCF still described the American ‘offensive’ as a deliberate attempt at commercial and cultural domination in Europe: ‘Il s’agit par là de faciliter la mainmise de leurs groupes multimédias et des télécommunications en Europe et, par l’accentuation considérable de leur domination culturelle qui en résulterait, d’amplifier radicalement leur domination sur tous les aspects de la vie sociale.’ (It is about facilitating the control of their multimedia and telecommunications groups in Europe, and, by the considerable increase in their cultural domination which would result, of radically enlarging their domination of all aspects of social life.) Even if the PCF statement has an element of anti-Americanism more obviously rooted in anti-capitalism than perhaps those of French Right, the Communists’ thinking on the deliberate ‘invasion’ of French cultural identity by the USA is much the same, illustrating the considerable cross-party consensus on this issue.

Threats to pluralism and diversity are typically portrayed as coming from Anglo-Saxon producers, and especially from the actions of large and powerful American groups who enjoy an unfair competitive advantage. Douste-Blazy, for example, referred (Douste-Blazy, 1996b) to rivals in terms of their size, writing of ‘les grandes manoeuvres américaines entre les géants de la communication de l’informatique et des télécommunications’ (the great American manoeuvres between the giants of computing and telecommunications), and Fillon (Fillon, 1996b) spoke of large industrial groups which he described as ‘en particulier anglo-saxons’ (especially Anglo-Saxon). It is curious here that France, although objectively a relatively rich and large country, is presented by politicians such as Douste-Blazy and Fillon as small and under threat. This is a rhetorical device for gaining the support of their audiences, as they are urged to fear more powerful, external forces. Similarly, there is a focus on foreigners in these statements, as reference is made to ‘Anglo-Saxons’ and to America, using a typically Gaullist lumping-together of all things British and American in a vague racial and political composite of ‘Anglo-Saxon’, in opposition to French identity, which certainly has a traditional, instinctive appeal to some prejudices of the electorate.

Fillon (Fillon, 1996b) also cites the names of various companies such as Sony, Philips, Matsushita, Compuserve: here the suggestion is of successful multinational - as opposed to French - groups, which are cosmopolitan and not rooted in one place, perhaps even parasitic as they move location according to the most favourable operating conditions. Sometimes,
however, the actual source of the threats is unclear, and decoding of particular allusions is needed. Toubon for example explained that technological changes are happening regardless of whether they are wanted or not, urging 'mobilisation' in a military style once again: 'Que nous le voulions ou non, les changements sont là et si nous ne nous mobilisons pas, d'autres nous imposeront les réseaux que nous pourrions occuper et les contenus que nous pourrions déterminer.' (Whether we want it or not, changes are there and if we do not mobilise, others will impose on us the networks which we will be able to occupy and the programming which we will be able to determine) (Toubon, 1994t). He does not make clear here who exactly 'd'autres' are, but my wider consultation of the French policy-making discourse in this area suggests that Toubon is referring to the usual cultural and technical competitors: the US and Japan. Fillon is equally evasive at times, making vague references to 'c certains' (some people) who would like 'our' cultures to be trapped in a global information society as part of the process of cultural and linguistic uniformisation (Fillon, 1996b).

It is effective, and deliberate, for a politician to be so evasive. This is because what is unknown, the 'Others', an anonymous 'they', is more frightening than what is known and named. Furthermore, it is not possible for policy-makers to explicitly state that the Japanese or Americans are enemies, even though they may allude to them, when countries like these are involved with France both as strategic allies and as economic competitors in a free market. The influence of Japanese and American technology on economic and cultural activities in France is well-established and unlikely to disappear, as so many people own cars, televisions, personal stereos for example manufactured by these nations. Explicit attack would be politically disastrous, as former Prime Minister Edith Cresson found when she openly denounced Japan in 1991 (see Wilcox, 1996, pp.81, 84). Therefore more subtle allusions to threats are preferred by political elites, as Toubon used when he spoke of the need to reclaim the 'génération Nintendo', a statement which reveals a rather reductive view of Japanese culture, denying any literary or philosophical traditions of Japan and inferring that this culture is trivial, based on games and cartoons more than on 'high' culture of museums and art (the traditional elite perception of French culture) (Toubon, 1994p).\footnote{Toubon mentioned this reference to the 'génération Nintendo' on another occasion (Toubon, 1995f).}

Also in this speech, Toubon argued that French electronics firms and electronics training must be developed, since the history of new electronics companies is full of 'des ruptures et départs vers les promesses de Silicon Valley ou d'Osaka.
failures, and departures towards the promises of Silicon Valley and Osaka). This phrase seems to suggest that without suitable investment and training, companies may fail, or be swallowed up by foreign rivals, and French personnel will leave their firms, seduced by the offers of the American and Japanese competitors. Such statements hint at a retreat into long-established cultural hostility felt by French elites towards Japan and the USA.

The extent to which the State can manage all regulatory functions alone is a difficult question for French policy-makers, as recognised by former Prime Minister Alain Juppé who explained:

Mais n'attendez pas des pouvoirs publics une réponse définitive à tous les problèmes posés. Il n'est plus du rôle de l'État de tout réguler, de tout contrôler, de tout décider. En revanche, il est de son devoir de rester en état de vigilance permanente et de favoriser le plus possible l'émergence de règles d'autodiscipline. (But do not wait for a final solution from government to all the problems. It is no longer the role of the State to regulate everything, to control everything, to decide everything. Instead, it is its duty to remain constantly vigilant and to encourage the development of a system of self-regulation.) (Juppé, 1996d)

This claim, although apparently criticising the traditional French elite response of regulation by the State, does reveal, if we look more closely, that the basic reflex indicated by Juppé is still to look to the State as a cultural manager. The State is still, as we saw in Lamassoure's similar statement in Chapter Four, a guardian or a figure of battle in Juppé's vision, like a sentry, always on guard, 'en état de vigilance permanente' (in a permanent state of vigilance). Moreover, it has a 'duty' to do this. Here is evidence then of French elites still looking towards the State to manage and to regulate, according to a preconceived model, even in the qualitatively new situation or new world of digital media technology which is described.

Similarly, Douste-Blazy, whilst he stated his belief that the private sector must first of all develop services, 'en première ligne de cette bataille' (in the front line of this battle, again referring to a 'fight'), still explained that 'la puissance publique' (public power or authority) had a supporting role for the free market in the organisation and development of new information services (Douste-Blazy, 1996k). Elsewhere (1996b), the Minister argued that one of the errors of legislation would be to imagine that much is possible in the way of regulation and prediction, whilst changes are underway on a daily basis. Even so, he again advocated the role of the State in developing mechanisms for strengthening the French presence on the Internet, warning
against the abandonment of traditional measures used by the State to organise and regulate the media, like quotas and investment in production. He criticised the notion that these policies may be outdated, denouncing it as 'un modernisme de façade' (a false modernism). Indeed, Douste-Blazy argued against over-liberalisation in information technology, citing this as a factor which would weaken the French audiovisual and cinematic production industries and jeopardise the creation of new jobs, referring to the damage done by deregulation to those industries in other countries. Returning to the familiar military theme, which we saw in the previous chapters, of a battle to retain control of information technology, Douste-Blazy asked if the protection offered by State intervention could really be dropped, given the early stages of technological development, resembling a battle only just begun: 'Faut-il, en un mot, baisser la garde, alors que le combat commence à peine?' (Must we, in a word, drop our guard, when the battle is only just starting?).

This section has identified a dilemma for French governmental elites regarding the organisation of the new information services in the global market-place. Elite attitudes reflect a strong sense of the need to control, to regulate and protect Internet and multimedia services, in view of their position as important cultural and economic forces which may have significant effects on French culture and identity, despite some suggestions that the State cannot provide all the solutions. The particular policy ambiguities revealed in elite discourse on the Internet are explored more fully in the section below.

The problem of 'others' of various kinds imposing their languages and cultures on the Internet was also presented by French politicians as aggravated by the globalisation of communications. This in itself, they argued, encourages uniformity. François Fillon for example (Fillon, 1996b) described the globalisation of communication networks as the enemy of diversity, and inevitably synonymous with a monopoly of Anglo-Saxon language and culture. He maintained that this is evident in the near monolinguism which has been imposed de facto on the Internet. Such a situation is described by various political elites as harmful to democracy, liberty and the right to free cultural expression, not only in France but also in other French-speaking and non-English speaking countries, especially poorer ones, where access to the Internet may be limited. This is particularly noticeable in discourse produced for communication to francophone partners, and the reasons for this are discussed in section 6.2.6 below, which examines this discourse more closely.

This section has demonstrated the attitudes of French policy-makers towards identity as
expressed in language on the Internet to be informed by tradition, ideas of conflict and hostility.

The weakness of France as an economic and cultural victim is firstly described, but is then presented as exploited by the domination of ‘Others’ of foreign origin who impose their language and, ultimately, their culture on the Internet and other multimedia services. This is seen by French elites as an active plot, threatening the favoured values of pluralism and diversity, which are presented as prized by French identity. The process of globalisation is, policy-makers argue, exploited by the enemies of France in order to develop this domination. Thus French elite discourse suggests an underlying hostility towards ‘other’ identities which may be present on the Internet, indicative of a traditional conception of identity rooted in Gaullism, anti-Americanism and a negative, closed attitude. Having identified this conception of French identity, and the challenges to it perceived by French elites, the following section now considers how this translates into the discourse on policy responses to the problems of the Internet.

6.2.4 Policy ambiguities: regulation versus opportunity

As I highlighted earlier, one of the key concerns of French policy-makers regarding the Internet is the lack of control they may have over its use and contents. In particular, politicians attribute the relatively weak position of the French language on the Internet largely to the lack of effective regulation available to combat domination by more powerful economic forces which operate without hindrance in the free market. Douste-Blazy argued for example, that this lack of regulation made the threats to France even worse: ‘S’ajoute encore à notre trouble un vide juridique et déontologique apparent qui fait de ces réseaux des espaces de liberté, mais aussi des lieux où nos lois peuvent être contournées, niées, défies. La liberté de cet espace de création et de récréation doit être préservée.’ (Added to our confusion is the apparent lack of a code of legal and professional ethics, which makes these networks spaces of freedom, but also places where our laws can be distorted, denied and defied. The freedom of this area of creation and recreation must be preserved) (Douste-Blazy, 1996b.) In this passage, Douste-Blazy describes the French responses to the challenge of the Internet in a strange way, as ‘notre trouble’, evoking a bizarre image of an almost psychological illness, of disorder and chaos. This contributes to the building of an image of the Internet as a new, powerful and disturbing force which must be controlled. Likewise, the use of ‘un vide juridique et déontologique’ (a lack of a code of legal and professional ethics), reiterated elsewhere in the article, suggests that at present there is a
complete lack of measures which could have any possibility of controlling the Internet, which is contrary to what may be expected for a new ‘product’. The use of ‘un vide’ is a significant choice by the Minister, suggesting a terrifying void; something empty, unsolid and impossible to picture. The connotations of this word suggest that it is inconceivable, as it is so frightening, if there are no measures or laws available to control the Internet. It is also interesting that Douste-Blazy refers to a ‘vide déontologique’, as we might wonder how it can be clearly stated that there is no framework of values or code of professional ethics at all around the Internet. ‘Others’ such as the Americans, may associate the Internet with a framework based around libertarian ideals, of freedom of speech and expression. Even though French elites claim to value such notions, such a framework threatens the traditional role of the State as a cultural manager, if no form of regulation is in place.

The accumulation of adjectives in ‘contournées, niées, défiees’ is also of significance as part of a rhetorical device, as it involves three negative words. Particularly powerful is the choice of ‘contournée’, which implies something twisted, strange and unnatural. All of this allows the Minister to present the Internet as a sinister threat to French identity. The use of ‘liberté’ is important too, as the description of what is threatened. As we saw earlier with the word ‘révolution’, ‘liberté’, given its connections with French history and Republicanism, going right to the heart of French identity, cannot fail to be an emotionally-charged word when used by a French political actor. Thus an image is created of the Internet threatening something sacred and vital to French identity. Liberty has to be preserved, and the paradoxical implication is that regulation by public authorities is needed to do so.

Without safeguarding the new networks as places of freedom of creation, the Minister suggests that other less worthy values will be permitted to ‘invade’: ‘En revanche, peut-on admettre l’accès du plus grand nombre, par ces réseaux, à la diffusion d’idées qui sont inacceptables pour les tenants des principes de la démocratie, de l’Etat de droit, de la dignité de l’homme?’ (On the other hand, can we allow access of large numbers, through these networks, to the spread of ideas which are unacceptable to the guardians of the principles of democracy, of the rule of law, of human dignity?) Again, Douste-Blazy uses the cumulative effect of three powerful terms, all key elements in the construction of French identity since the Revolution: ‘démocratie’, ‘État de droit’, ‘dignité de l’homme’. A threat to these is indeed a threat to French identity. The ‘guardians’ of these principles are not defined; they could be several people or bodies here, perhaps the French State, the French people, French-speakers, the West, different
notions of Europe. The actual meaning intended does not necessarily matter, as the implication of Douste-Blazy is that the defenders of such noble values are naturally all of those who share them. Such people, it is implied, could not easily be French elites’ cultural adversaries such as the United States. This is because, whilst the Americans have political ideals based around similar notions, of democracy, dignity, freedom and the rule of law, they may, in the eyes of French elites, have forgotten these values in a commercial and cultural sense.

Noting the implications for the communications sector as a developing area where jobs are likely to be created, the Minister’s plea for French-style regulation continues throughout the article, as he argued against too much deregulation which could lead to a complete lack of control of the content of Internet services. He refers, in abstract, disturbing terms, and also returning to ‘liberté’, to negative aspects of the Internet which may exist without regulation: ‘Des exemples récents nous ont en effet montré que la face obscure de ces lieux de liberté d’expression existe aussi.’ (Recent examples have shown us that there is also a dark side to these spaces of freedom of expression). The phrase ‘la face obscure’ suggests a dark, evil force which must be fought against, which is a familiar, emotional reference found in various religious traditions, such as Christianity, with its opposition of lightness and darkness as ‘good’ and ‘evil’. For Douste-Blazy, the only means of defence against such a force can be State-led regulation, and the upholding of French traditions and laws, as he showed when he wrote: ‘[...] il nous faut trouver les moyens de garantir, sur notre sol, nos lois républicaines’ ([...] we must find the means of safeguarding our republican laws on our own soil). This statement suggests seeking refuge in the national territory, in a Republican and reassuringly French legal system, as the only conceivable solution or way forward. Thus the answers to the new problems posed for French identity by new technologies such as the Internet are found by French elites in a return to old, tried and trusted structures.

In relation to this, State action to safeguard and improve the position of French on the Internet has attempted first to build on the provisions of the 1994 language law developed by Jacques Toubon. In 1996 the DGLF issued a parliamentary report regarding the application of this law, which described the information society as a new opportunity for French and multilingualism, requiring urgent development (DGLF, 1996). In the same year, Prime Minister Alain Juppé issued a ministerial circular stating that the loi Toubon applied to any

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7Similar views are also expressed in another Douste-Blazy speech (1996n).
information communicated via Internet servers by public services or bodies (Premier Ministre, 1996d). Juppé then reminded ministers and secretaries of State the following March that the legal requirements for the use of the French language are applicable whatever technical methods of communication are employed (Premier Ministre, 1997). The Ministry of Culture has in addition highlighted the need for European Union citizens' rights to instructions and information in their own languages, as well as the need to respect the characteristics of each language, such as the correct use of accents on Internet sites and when using e-mail programmes (for example, Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.27; Libération, 22 March 1996). Regulation remained high on the government's agenda in 1996, with the establishment of an interministerial group which was to examine legal issues surrounding new communications technologies (Ministère de la Culture, 1996h).

Yet the question of whether or not legislation such as the loi Toubon can be effectively applied to the use of the Internet by organisations outside the public sector has proved problematic, as was demonstrated in 1997 with the legal fiasco surrounding the Georgia Institute of Technology in Metz, France. Two pressure groups brought the case against the French campus of the American university, arguing that the institution's exclusive use of English on its web-site was contrary to the provisions of the loi Toubon, which banned advertising not written in French. The case began in Paris in January but was thrown out in early June on a technicality, although the two associations concerned pledged to appeal, hoping to establish a test case which would prevent such sites being produced solely in English (Le Monde, 1-2 December 1996; Libération, 13 June 1997; The Guardian, 10 June 1997). The experience of this case, and regulatory measures by the French government, point to a continuing tendency towards prescriptivism on the part of the State and also interest groups, as we see a public struggle to exert control over rapidly-changing technologies which suggest future uncertainty as development continues.

Still, French political elites have attempted to find means of regulating the Internet beyond the methods available within France, particularly focusing on cooperation with European, and particularly European Union, partners and francophone countries. This

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*This referred to the text of article 2 of the law No. 94-665 of 4 August 1994 (la loi Toubon), also to the circulaire d'application of 19 March 1996, which noted the obligation to use French in all forms of communication, whether on paper or on screen (Premier Ministre, 1996a).

9 Défense de la langue française, and Avenir de la Langue française.
cooperation has included the promotion of the policies of plurilinguisme or multilingualism within Europe, as in the case of general language policy, discussed in Chapter Four, as measures to protect the French language and identity on the Internet. These policies were particularly important during the French EU Presidency of 1995. The lack of French-language material on the Internet has been linked by political elites to the relatively weak presence of all European languages, other than English, on the Internet. France and other European countries have been portrayed as geographical and cultural areas which are victims of monopoly powers threatening French and European identity. These concepts of identity however, are, in the same way as we saw in the previous two case studies, not always clearly defined, as their usage may shift according to the intentions motivating the discourse of political elites. The numerous references to the familiar themes of 'rayonner', to 'diversité' and 'uniforme', present in French political elites' discourse on the need to safeguard European languages and identity on the Internet, together with the denunciations of unwanted non-European influences, echoing those in the case of general language policy we saw in Chapter Four, indicate that the true intention of French policy is to use the concept of 'Europe' in appeals and policy, so that French identity can have a strong influence on the Internet. As Douste-Blazy explained, French strategies of multilingualism on the Internet are important for French political elites, as they offer a means for the French language to be protected (Douste-Blazy, 1996r).

Despite initiatives for European cooperation, and the promotion of 'European' diversity and solidarity on policy for the Internet, as suggested by figures such as Toubon, the European Union in particular does present problems for France and its linguistic objectives concerning the Internet. This was demonstrated in 1997, when the Minister for Foreign Affairs Hervé de Charette, echoing a similar complaint (mentioned in Chapter Four) made by President Mitterrand seven years' previously and thus demonstrating the extent of cross-party consensus on the issue, wrote to Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, complaining about the continuing domination of English within the EU, this time on Commission web-sites. He argued that this is, in fact, contrary to the apparently pluralistic language environment of the

10For further details, see, for example, Ministère de la Culture, 1995d, p.27; Ministère de la Culture, 1996c; DGLF, 1996a, ch.3, IV.1; Mission interministérielle sur l'Internet, 1996.

11See Toubon, 1994t, 1994b and 1995c, for examples of appeals to French and European identity (in the sense of both the EU and the wider geographical Europe), similar to those we saw in Chapter Four; also Mission interministérielle pour la présence du français en Europe, 1994.
institution, which is supposed to have adopted the principle of the equality of the 11 official EU
languages (De Charette, 1997d). As I explained in Chapter Five, French policy-makers also
met with disappointment in Europe with their failure in 1995 to secure the application of the
updated EU ‘Television without frontiers’ directive to Europe's multimedia video industries.
However they were able to organise international cooperation around policies for the Internet
and language issue on several occasions, through cooperation with other international
organisations like G7 and francophone partners, for example Quebec.

Meanwhile, it has been recognised by French policy-makers that the successful
development of Internet services by the French State may provide valuable opportunities for
safeguarding and extending of the influence of French language and culture on an international
level, and is argued to be crucial in terms of guaranteeing the future role of French as an
international language. Douste-Blazy, for example (1996n), declared that he did not wish to
spend time merely criticising the risks of cultural and linguistic uniformity posed by the global
information society, but wanted to talk about the optimism and confidence he had for the future.
This he described in positive terms, referring to the willingness of France and French-speakers
to seize the enormous opportunities offered by digitalisation. In particular, these opportunities
concerned the promotion of an information society which would respect ‘our’ essential values
(‘respecte les valeurs essentielles qui sont les nôtres’), adding that he especially referred to
cultural and linguistic diversity. What exactly these ‘valeurs essentielles’ might be is unclear, as
Douste-Blazy’s words have an almost mystical tone in this context, suggesting an appeal to
myth of whatever is ‘naturally’ French. The use of ‘our’ is likewise rather vague, suggesting a
deliberate attempt to include various, perhaps all, of the different sections of his audience, and
also reach beyond this towards the French citizens and the international community. ‘Our
essential values’ is a notion which may mean different things to different people, at different
times. As we saw earlier in Douste-Blazy’s reference to ‘les tenants des principes de la
démocratie [ ... ]’ (Douste-Blazy, 1996n), the effect of his words is to distinguish as enemies,
and exclude, all those who do not share whatever the values of French, and in this case,
francophone, identity are magically deemed to be. However deliberately vague Douste-Blazy’s

12See Mitterrand, 1990b.

13See, for example, DGLF, ch3 IV.1; Ministère de la Culture, 1996a, 1996j, 1997e, 1998b; Le Monde, 11-12
May 1997.
references to 'values' may be, his wish to safeguard cultural and linguistic diversity is clear. As mentioned earlier, this wish is a key element in the discourse of French political elites on identity and the Internet, being frequently employed in the statements of various actors, and translated into a central policy theme.

6.2.5 Promoting French identity on the Internet

French policy-makers have nevertheless attempted to go beyond regulatory measures, which may be seen perhaps as part of a negative reaction to technological change and as the envy of more powerful economic forces. Another kind of explanation is France's legal tradition of being a regulated and text-based State, where legal texts are prominent in the institutions of public life. As Dauncey (1997, pp.86-7) suggests, 'the “freedom”, “individualism” and “anarchy” of the Net perhaps pose more problems for France than for other societies less prone to obsessive constitutional definition of liberties and rights and to the complex legal regulation of audiovisual activities'.

Many political actors have argued that the Internet may represent a useful opportunity for the development and promotion of French identity, suggesting their openness to change and new ideas. Faced with relative weakness in terms of equipment and access to services which was noted in the introduction to this chapter (see also Douste-Blazy, 1996n), French policy-makers have encouraged initiatives for the use of the Internet and related technology: for example, in 1994, when the Ministry for Industry launched an invitation for bids to encourage projects in the public sector to strengthen France's technological development in the information society, closely followed by a second appeal to support the work of small and medium-sized companies in the multimedia industries. In an attempt to widen general access to services for households and businesses, the French government also asked France Télécom in March 1996 to establish tariffs which would allow access across France to the Internet for the cost of a local telephone call (DGLF, 1996a, ch.3, IV.2; Fillon, 1996b). However, as I now illustrate, the political responses to the opportunities offered by the Internet still conceal fixed, traditional thinking by elites on identity.

Fillon for example (1996b), explained how digitalisation, in conjunction with scientific vitality, management of technology and a strong attachment to identity ('une forte conscience identitaire'), might be used to serve the favoured ideals of cultural pluralism and multilingualism, citing possible advantages of the easier production of dubbing and subtitles.
which could be used to allow the more frequent choice of French as a language of television viewing. Besides traditional audiovisual media like the television, he also highlighted the infinite possibilities for the French language to be distributed on a global scale via the Internet, describing the new networks of the Internet as offering an unprecedented means of promotion and influence for the language and cultures of French-speaking countries. However, in referring to ‘la langue’ (language) and ‘cultures’ (cultures) of these countries, we may wonder if, Fillon necessarily means all of the cultures of ‘la francophonie’, as he claimed to his HCF audience, or rather, the culture represented by the ‘high culture’ traditionally promoted by the Ministry of Culture and other associated bodies within metropolitan France.

This is a significant question if we consider some of the measures undertaken within France to harness the possibilities of the Internet to promote French culture, and the discourse which accompanies them. For example, initiatives have encouraged on-line access to databases concerning particular aspects of French cultural heritage such as the Joconde art and museum database and the Bibliothèque nationale de France (national library), interactive galleries, a database on CD-ROM on the Panthéon monument, and multimedia training for artists at the national art academies (Ministère de la Culture, 1996c, 1998b; Douste-Blazy, 1996c).

The choice of ‘Joconde’ for the name of a database on French art and history is an interesting example of cultural appropriation, however, as the title of the famous ‘Mona Lisa’ portrait by Leonardo da Vinci, which, although hanging in a French national gallery, is nevertheless an Italian work of art. According to Douste-Blazy, the digitalisation of all of French cultural heritage is necessary, since the future cultural influence of France will develop through the use of multimedia (Journal du dimanche, 11 August 1996). Such measures and comments, promoting traditional ‘high culture’, are linked to a traditional idea of French identity and the ‘universal value’ of French culture, revealed in the discourse of policy-making elites on the Internet and new technologies and discussed below.

Douste-Blazy, for example, described the Internet as nothing to be afraid of, rather, a great challenge to be faced. Without confrontation of this challenge, he argued, the influence of French culture risks decline and the French language may lose its universal character (‘son caractère universel’). He argued that the new information networks represented an ideal site for showing French cultural heritage to its advantage, describing this heritage in high cultural terms of museums and libraries (Douste-Blazy, 1996k). Rather than relying on measures like quotas to regulate, he argued, it would be necessary for good quality programmes and services to be
produced by French and European multimedia industries to compete in the market-place of the new information society. This would allow ‘our’ culture to flourish, he maintained, although without defining this, in typical style (Douste-Blazy, 1996c, 1996m). The Minister also wrote (Douste-Blazy, 1996b), of the urgent need to distribute France’s cultural heritage, to prevent other interested parties (‘d’autres’ once again) from effectively stealing it, like archaeological treasures (‘trésors archéologiques’), although there is no mention of French appropriation of ‘treasures’ like la Joconde. Yet what Douste-Blazy consistently failed to address in such statements is whether his ideas for the promotion of ‘culture’ on the Internet are consistent with those which French citizens may have, as he spoke of government policies. An elite conception of French identity is thus revealed which is of a monolithic, dominant culture, univocal and static. Such a conception fails to take account of any possible contrasting eclecticism which may be found in identity or identities in France, as globalisation may be enhancing and contributing to any hybridity.

Similarly, Toubon (Toubon, 1994t) argued that the development of a French multimedia industry could be a means of growth and progress, and the best way of safeguarding ‘our’ economic power, cultural and intellectual independence, although without making clear what or whom ‘our’ referred to. It could have included France, European and EU countries, since Toubon talked about ‘European’ industry in this speech. Elsewhere, he mentioned the importance of the development of French multimedia in terms of the creation of jobs and wealth (Toubon, 1994b). He also spoke ambiguously (Toubon, 1994t) of his vision for the information superhighway, in terms of a ‘humanistic, plural vision’: ‘Comment faire de ce “peut-être” un “possible” qui corresponde à une vision humaniste et plurielle, librement choisie et non imposée par d’autres au nom d’impératifs économiques, techniques ou politiques.’ (How do we make this “perhaps” into a “possible”, which corresponds to our humanistic and pluralistic vision, freely chosen and not imposed by others in the name of economic, technical and political imperatives (no question mark in text, as a rhetorical question)). This is a curious statement as Toubon alluded to the possibilities for French identity on the Internet in vague terms, of a ‘vision’ which is freely chosen and not imposed by unknown ‘others’.

1Douste-Blazy claimed that an unnamed American company a few months’ previously, attempted to buy the rights to digitalise all works in French national museums. The truth behind this statement is not clear, but a report in The Independent (15 February 1995) claimed that the rights to the British National Gallery had been bought by Microsoft of the US, which was apparently interested in those of the Louvre.
However, his statement failed to acknowledge the paradox of his own views on identity. How can he be a true liberal, as he claims to be, whilst his own policies advocate State involvement? His words ignore the ‘impératifs politiques’ which these policies may represent in imposing their particular vision on Internet services by seeking to marginalise that of other cultural influences. His speech, in line with the references we saw earlier, argues in favour of ‘la vigilance et l’interrogation permanentes’ (constant vigilance and questioning), again using the military metaphor of a sentry on guard to emphasise the need for control of the Internet. To do this, Toubon said that methods of experimentation, observation and dialogue with the public will be needed, but he reminded his audience that, here, the State will still have an important role to play: ‘L’Etat y aura sa part et ce ne sera pas là le moindre de ses rôles.’ (The State will play its part here and this will not be the least of its roles). He also makes veiled references to the State’s management of culture when he talks of the role of cultural administration (‘l’administration culturelle’). This is somewhat contradictory given his references to the desirability of infrastructures and techniques developing in ‘un cadre libéral et déréglementé’ (a liberal and deregulated framework), in which free competition will prevail. Furthermore, it is ironic, given the historic hostility of the French State, with its ethos of a central, single vision, to real pluralism, whatever political elites claim about French identity defending diversity.

Like Douste-Blazy, Toubon does not consider the actual wishes of Internet consumers in France, despite his frequent, supposedly inclusive, references to ‘nous’ and ‘tous’, and his claim that the market should be led by a response to consumer wishes regarding multimedia products and services. These consumers might prefer an identity of ‘others’ or even an ‘Anglo-Saxon’ representation at times, given the economic and social utility of the English language in contemporary France. Toubon, however, evidently has a more traditional notion of French identity in mind when he talks about building a competitive multimedia industry which can conquer (‘conquérir’) external markets, and, when he talks about the possible export of French heritage, which is amongst the richest in the world, and the best preserved.

A similarly undynamic and backward-looking view was expressed by Toubon when addressing the question of the effects of new media technologies on relations between culture and the public (Toubon, 1994b). Toubon defined culture, as we saw earlier, in largely ‘high cultural’ terms as ‘les artistes, les oeuvres d’art, les musées, les théâtres, les cinémas, les cathédrales, les châteaux, les bibliothèques’ (artists, works of art, museums, theatres, cinemas, cathedrals, châteaux, libraries). Evident from his ideas was the fear of new technologies
threatening the role of the French State as a manager of culture and hence French identity, as he invoked a nightmarish vision of individualised, even selfish, cultural consumption, described negatively as 'un extraordinaire égoïsme' (an extraordinary selfishness). Toubon described such a situation as even more disturbing in view of the potential of the new digital, individualised services to undermine the objective of cultural democratisation as a route to national cohesion, often referred to in the discourse of French political elites and a feature of cultural policy since the time of Malraux, as I explained in Chapter One. According to Toubon's statement, such a future of the individualised use of new information technologies is problematic, as it does not match his conception of what a true cultural policy should be all about, that is, bringing 'high culture' to a wider audience. This policy theme was continued by Catherine Trautmann, Socialist Minister of Culture from May 1997 under Prime Minister Jospin, who aimed to democratise culture further by increasing Internet connections to great art sites like the Louvre and Versailles (Ministère de la Culture, 1998g, 1998h, 1999j). The real problem for French elites is that the interactive and individualised features of the Internet may threaten traditional French cultural policy aims which seek to unify citizens around a narrow and anachronistic conception of identity. Such responses indicate that French political elites do not follow through their initial rhetoric concerning new approaches to identity and cultural policy for the Internet.

However, Fillon (1996b) advised against giving in to the temptations of old attitudes of 'un repli identitaire' nostalgique et frileux' (a nostalgic, timid identity seeking refuge in old values) in favour of an awareness of opportunities which may be on offer for francophonie as a 'place' of cultural exchange ('un lieu de dialogue entre les cultures'), given that France already has experience of developing technologies such as the Minitel, and, moreover, that the Internet does not belong to anyone and does not have to be exclusively anglophone. Appealing to the francophone audience at the HCF, Fillon maintained that a strategy of development and cooperation could enable francophones to establish their language and cultural heritage in 'la modernité' (modernity). He described modernity as being accessible through digitalisation and the global communications networks. This statement appeals to well-established ideas concerning the cult of modernity in French political culture, mentioned in the introduction to 15Toubon made similar remarks elsewhere (1994t), as he considered the uncertainty of 'virtual reality'. Juppé too referred to a selfish, dehumanised society being encouraged by digitalisation (Juppé, 1996d).
this chapter. However, Fillon may be more nostalgic than his words indicate, since, despite his reference to technical details and ideas for change, he uses traditional French cultural references such as du Bellay's famous text on language, when he uses arguments like:

Il est souhaitable que tous les pays francophones développent des contenus spécifiques qui, dans leur langue d'origine ou dans d'autres langues, viendront enrichir de leur diversité l'offre de contenus et participeront, chacun à leur manière, de la défense et de l'illustration de notre identité culturelle - dans notre propre espace comme dans le reste du monde. Pour cela, la numérisation de nos fonds documentaires, artistiques, littéraires, etc. doit être une priorité pour l'ensemble des pays francophones. (It is desirable that all francophone countries develop specific services which, in their language of origin or in other languages, will enrich in their diversity the services offered, and each participate in their own way in the defence and illustration of our cultural identity - in our own space as in the whole world. To do this, the digitalisation of our documentary, artistic, literary resources, etc., must be a priority for all francophone countries.)

Such a reference, to the book Défense et illustration de la langue française (1549), is a subtle allusion to more traditional notions of French identity in terms of classic, literary definitions of culture, despite the mention of 'diversity', 'all francophone countries' or 'other languages'. This illustrates the importance of the French language in terms of the construction of an inclusive, potentially assimilatory identity, and of language as the thread of this identity most obviously threatened by cultural developments such as the Internet which may bring identities into conflict.

The commitment to mobilising support for working on the issue within the francophone movement was taken a step further in May 1996 at the twelfth meeting of the HCF held in Paris (30 April-3 May). At this event, as we saw earlier, various politicians (and invited experts) discussed their ideas for developing the Internet as an opportunity for the French language. Douste-Blazy for example argued in his speech (Douste-Blazy, 1996n) that actual content of services must be produced, rather than relying on translations of foreign (probably 'Anglo-Saxon') services into French, in order to prevent all languages expressing a single vision of the world. Chirac also urged (Chirac, 1996c) that production and distribution of French materials must be developed, through united action: 'Il faut produire et diffuser en français. Il faut unir nos efforts, multiplier les programmes, les informations, les échanges dans notre langue. Il faut valoriser la diversité et la richesse de nos patrimoines culturels, de nos littératures, de nos
It is crucial to produce and broadcast in French. We must unite our efforts, multiply the products, information and exchanges which exist in our language. We must add value to the diversity and richness of our cultural heritage, of our literatures, of our museums.) Chirac's statement reflects the familiar need to strengthen the diversity and richness of 'our' cultural heritages, literatures and museums (again quite traditional conceptions of culture as 'high culture', which may be presented as belonging to all francophone countries but may in fact mean those of France). His use of the verb 'valoriser' is interesting, which, as a word used in financial contexts, refers to the need to strengthen French culture commercially, and thus to increase its influence. Chirac also refers to the old battle concerning the position of French in scientific research and literature, arguing that the teaching of science and technology in French must be imposed on the new network. Furthermore, referring to francophone action concerning the Internet in Canada, Chirac notes how Canadian francophones have taken account not only of the threat to French in Canada, but also the opportunity which the Internet could represent for the spread and implantation of French, if its imposition on the networks can be achieved: 'la diffusion et l'enracinement de notre langue, pour peu que nous sachions en imposer l'usage'. This is an interesting point which, although it clearly refers to the lack of legislation to protect the use of French by new communications media, also indicates a kind of universalist wish to spread the use of French, indeed, to impose it, denoted by the statement 'pour peu que nous sachions en imposer l'usage' (if only we could impose its use). This is a feature of elite discourse on French identity, francophone policy-making and the Internet which is now addressed more fully in the section which follows.

6.2.6 The francophone 'mission' against uniformity

As this chapter has so far demonstrated, the usual complaints about cultural uniformity resulting from American-led imperialism are voiced by policy-making elites in France with regard to the Internet just as they have been in connection with other 1990s language and cultural policy issues, as I discussed in Chapters Four and Five. The Internet is regarded as another 'site' for the expression of French national identity and, as such, is too important to be left to the forces of the free market. Paradoxically, as discussed earlier, even politicians of an apparently liberal tradition support the intervention of public authorities in the management of the Internet. This is no less evident in the case of the discourse on identity, francophonie and the Internet offered in a context of francophone policy-making.
Chirac, for example argued that, whilst there are definite benefits which may arise in terms of social and professional links and cultural initiatives via the Internet, future generations of speakers of languages other than English risk cultural and economic marginalisation if nothing is done to improve the provision of non-English Internet services, search engines and navigation systems (Chirac, 1995c). Consequently, he urged a united effort on the part of the francophone community to improve the situation. He referred to the need to be conscious of the ‘dangers’ of the digital revolution, which could lead to the irreversible widening of the gap between rich and poor countries, as well as cultural uniformisation.16 Likewise, Fillon at the HCF (Fillon, 1996b), spoke of the need to stand guard or watch closely over, like a sentry as suggested earlier by Douste-Blazy (‘veiller’) the development of navigation systems and search engines, so that francophone web-sites could flourish and permit francophone countries’ entry into the digital world. Similarly, Chirac’s HCF speech (Chirac, 1996c), focused on the gulf between the North and South, which would result from the development of the information superhighway, without measures to correct (‘corriger’) the laws of the market. The choice of ‘corriger’ implies that the laws of the market cannot possibly work; that they are in fact flawed and at times harmful, therefore requiring an external correction or remedy. Fillon’s speech too described a need for ‘une solidarité’ towards the Southern francophone countries and a united front on the regulation of international standards, described in military style as ‘un front commun’. He explained the need for cooperation in terms of a duty, since dialogue and sharing in development are ‘le fondement éthique de la francophonie’ (the fundamental ethos of francophonie).

All of these examples indicate French elites’ wish to appear as leaders and defenders of identity on the world stage, as they speak of their efforts and willingness to defend weaker, poorer countries against the threat of cultural uniformity. Fillon explained how francophone countries possess assets such as the richness and diversity of their cultural heritage, yet they still need the help of the French State which can support their projects. He described the French government as leading the way, with a programme of voluntary help, yet such apparently helpful sentiments do not conceal the sense of a ‘mission’ for French elites to have an international influence, as he indicates the reasoning behind the help offered: ‘[ ... ]pour que notre pays, pionnier de la télématique, puisse affirmer sa présence sur les réseaux mondiaux de

16He reiterated this point on another occasion (Chirac, 1996c).
la communication et contribuer, à terme, au rayonnement culturel et économique de la francophonie.' […] so that our country, as pioneer of telematics, can assert its presence on the world communication networks, and ultimately contribute to the cultural and economic influence of francophonie). So, according to Fillon's statement, French governmental policies seeking to help francophone identity are really seeking to safeguard French identity in the sense of a metropolitan, less pluralistic one than that presented.

Chirac also noted how 90% of information transmitted via the Internet is in English. If French-language output is excluded from new media forms, the President claims, then 'our' future generations will be economically and culturally marginalised (Chirac, 1995c). Instead, he argued that 'la jeunesse du monde' (the youth of the world) must be offered 'des rêves francophones' (francophone dreams), which are expressed in films, soap operas (curiously presented here in spite of being a rather 'low' cultural reference), and these strengthen the cultural richness and creativity of all francophone peoples. The use of 'peuple' in the plural is significant here. The plural has probably deliberately been chosen in order to be acceptable in a francophone context where more than one country, and really, more than one identity, is addressed. It is not acceptable for Chirac to refer to 'notre peuple' in the singular, for fear of alienating his audience who may view this as meaning metropolitan French identity and nothing more, even if that is the real meaning. However, the use of vocabulary in 'les rêves francophones', together with the reference to films and soap operas, could be an attempt at a broader vision of identity, suggesting something fluid and in motion.

Yet, faced with possible 'uniformisation', Chirac maintained that production of material in French is so necessary that it is 'une question de survie' (a question of survival), urging Southern francophone countries to participate in this 'combat', returning once more to military imagery to gain support. His efforts to rally cooperation and help extended beyond francophonie, as he explained that other linguistic groups, besides francophones, were equally threatened:

Les hispanophones et les arabophones, tous ceux qui s'expriment en hindi ou en russe, en chinois ou en japonais, sont confrontés à la même menace que nous. J'appelle la francophonie à prendre la tête d'une vaste campagne pour le

[17]This figure was also mentioned by Douste-Blazy (Douste-Blazy, 1996b).

[18]This is echoed virtually word-for-word in the HCF speech by Chirac (Chirac, 1996c).
pluralisme linguistique et la diversité culturelle sur les inforoutes de demain. (Hispanic speakers, Arabic speakers, all those who express themselves in Hindi or in Russian, in Chinese or in Japanese, all are confronted with the same threat as we are. I call upon francophonie to lead a huge campaign for linguistic pluralism and cultural diversity on the networks of tomorrow) (Chirac, 1995c).

This is interesting as now the Japanese, denounced as cultural ‘invaders’ elsewhere in the elite discourse on identity and the Internet, are used in a pragmatic way by Chirac as potential allies. Francophonie is now an actor itself, leading the way for diversity, but this is another ‘smokescreen’ concealing the often-cited role of France itself as defender and leader, as illustrated in Chapters Four and Five.

Such an appeal was echoed in Chirac’s address to the HCF, where the President developed his argument as he stated that the issue extended even further:

Vous le voyez, le thème qui vous rassemble cette année représente un enjeu majeur pour l’avenir de notre langue, mais aussi pour la préservation de la diversité culturelle du monde, et donc pour la défense de l’humanisme, inséparable de cette langue française qui, depuis plusieurs siècles, en porte les valeurs. (As you see, the theme which unites you this year represents a great challenge for the future of your language, but also for the preservation of the cultural diversity of the world, and so for the defence of humanism, itself inseparable from this French language, which has transmitted its values for several centuries) (Paris, 1996c).

This is quite an ambitious, striking declaration, as Chirac equates French with humanism and vice versa, and invokes history, in order to justify his generalisation. The construction of the sentence, which takes past, present and future, helps the flow of his sentence, driving the listener forward through the argument. The use of by now familiar terms which are key themes in the discourse on French identity such as ‘humanisme’, ‘diversité’ and ‘valeurs’ indicates the universalist sentiments behind his defence of the French language on the Internet. These sentiments are themselves strengthened by Chirac’s easy shift from talking about France and francophonie to talking about the whole world.

He also highlighted in this HCF speech how the French government had taken up its duty to inform Southern French-speaking countries, especially in Africa (where access to the

Note that this Cotonou summit speech has been used as a point of reference in the development of debate by several government figures, for example Douste-Blazy (Douste-Blazy, 1996n), and Juppé, who used words very similar to Chirac’s (Juppé, 1996d).
Internet is often limited), of the significance of the conference’s focus, in advance of the Midrand discussions set for May of the same year. At the 1997 meeting of the HCF (Chirac, 1997a), the President alluded to a similar sense of a francophone ‘mission’, as he attempted to rally Asian ‘partners’, in the battle to impose French, Chinese, Hindi and Japanese on the information superhighway, in a fight against uniformity mirroring that undertaken by the French campaign for multilingualism within Europe. Once again, the sense of a ‘universal mission’ in Chirac’s thinking on identity is quite clear, as he used references to battle and to a struggle to support his rallying cry. The call extended beyond francophonie, as he sought the support of other linguistic and ethnic groups for his aim of ‘diversité’. The irony is that in calling for the imposition of French and other languages on the Internet, he fails to acknowledge the less appealing past of French elite ‘missions’ which included the bolstering of French at the expense of other languages which were crushed, both in the colonial experience abroad and in the Third Republic’s educational system, as explained in Chapter Three. Decoding of Chirac’s exaltation of the ‘mission’ for multilingualism in Europe suggests, as we saw in Chapter Three, that this policy betrays more pragmatic intentions for the protection of French, rather than a principled stand for the sake of numerous languages. Furthermore, we might wonder how the different groups mentioned can really be ‘partenaires’ (partners) of French political elites, given the criticism of their economic and cultural values which was discussed earlier in this case study, and in Chapter Five. It is evident that Chirac is attempting to cast his ‘universal message’ towards other cultural groups and identities, in the hope of supporting his own, quite traditional notions of French identity. The notions run through his statements during the three consecutive years considered, suggesting that as the elite debate on the Internet moved on, Chirac’s conception of identity remained largely unchanging.

Further examples can be noted, for example, Fillon (Fillon, 1996b), who, when speaking about the potential of the Internet in terms of the transmission of French language material, also referred to an objective of ‘spreading the word’ about French cultural values to a wider audience, which he said was possible through multilingualism in conjunction with digitalisation, which could be a remarkable tool for ‘la conquête’ (conquering) of a new audience, returning to the imagery of battle. Margie Sudre (Sudre, 1996d) similarly presented familiar arguments about the French government wishing to encourage cultural and linguistic diversity claiming that the information networks could become a bridge between developed and developing countries and thus create a more united world. Likewise, Douste-Blazy (Douste-
Blazy, 1996n), declared his support for creating 'des passerelles entre les langues et les cultures' (bridges between languages and cultures). His reasons for this though are significant in that they appear to refer to harmful influences which may otherwise develop, including an allusion to Islamic extremism, highly topical in the political climate of the 1990s: 'Nous savons trop que les espaces de pensée clos sur eux-mêmes sont propres à favoriser l'appauvrissement de la pensée elle-même, voire à conduire cette pensée vers les extrémismes et tous les intégrismes.' (We know only too well that spaces of closed, inward-looking thought are ideal for the impoverishment of thought itself, even leading this thought towards extremism and all forms of fundamentalism.) (Douste-Blazy, 1996n). The use here of the phrase 'tous les intégrismes' is a significant choice, as 'intégrisme' in contemporary French political culture is synonymous with only one form of fundamentalism, that associated with some forms of Islam. Douste-Blazy gave a similar inference elsewhere (Douste-Blazy, 1996b), when he warned of the need to avoid the new networks being spoilt of 'tarnished' ('témis') by abusive or exploitative extremism ('telle exploitation abusive, extrémiste'). Whilst not as clear as the HCF speech's statement, these phrases too, when used by a French politician, may refer to forms of religious extremism so feared in the French secular Republican system, encouraging perceptions of fear surrounding the potential use of the Internet. Moreover, it is problematic that Douste-Blazy claims an open, forward-looking outlook for the French and francophone identity he presents, whilst denouncing that of others as 'closed' and 'inward-looking', when previous close reading of elite statements has already shown a closed, undynamic attitude of the French elite conception of identity in terms of reactions to 'cultural invaders' of varying foreign origins.

So we can see, from this analysis of the elite discourse made in a francophone policymaking context, that traditional references to a universal 'mission' for French policy-making, to the defence of humanity and particular 'values' (not necessarily clearly defined), are made by various political actors in discussing French on the Internet, as they claim to be open and inclusive towards other cultures and identities. However, the motivations behind statements pledging support for North-South initiatives and those between developed and developing countries are questionable, as it may be argued that 'French' identity is the overriding concern of policy-makers, and not that of other francophone regions, given the influence of cultural initiatives developed largely from centralised organisations in Paris such as the ACCT, discussed in Chapter Three.

In addition, hostility to different groups, and the apparent willingness to cooperate with
those whose identities have been denounced elsewhere in the discourse on the Internet, support the contention that the French elite view of identity is still on the whole traditional and backward-looking, in spite of grand claims about looking to the future and seizing new opportunities for cultural exchange offered by a new cultural medium such as the Internet. As demonstrated by Fillon (Fillon, 1996b), the overriding policy concern illustrated in the discourse on the Internet considered in this section is along the lines of those we saw in Chapter Four: one of guaranteeing the continuation of the francophone (code for 'French') 'ambition' and 'universal message', whatever this message actually is: 'Je suis, pour ma part, convaincu que nous saurons - ensemble - nous donner les moyens de cette ambition et que nous saurons faire des futurs réseaux mondiaux de l'information un espace où la pluralité des langues et des cultures et le message universel de la francophonie auront leur place...' (I personally am convinced that we will together know how to give ourselves the means of realising this ambition and that we will be able to make the global information networks of the future a space where the plurality of languages and cultures, and the universal message of francophonie will have their place...).

6.3 Conclusions
To summarise, this case study has shown that French governmental elites have used various platforms for debate and policy-making on language and cultural identity issues as they are affected by the Internet and information technologies. Such opportunities have been sought within France, with European partners and EU institutions through cooperation with other francophone countries. The high degree of activity in terms of working groups, conferences and reports on the Internet and its challenges to the French language and cultural identity indicates the level of State concern regarding the issue, which has not diminished following the transfer to the Jospin administration.

A degree of ambiguity is revealed in French policy-making reactions to the Internet. Socialist Minister for Foreign Affairs from 1997 Hubert Védrine cited the Internet and companies such as Microsoft as factors creating a situation 'quasiment sans précédent' (almost unprecedented) of American economic and cultural dominance, whilst also recognising enormous possibilities for the French exploitation of the Internet 'pour nos entreprises, pour notre rayonnement' (for our industries, for our influence (Védrine, 1997a). The Internet as a symbol of modernisation and national prestige therefore seduces France, just as other symbols
of American culture and development have done in the past, as Chapter One described. As my analysis has shown, such objectives, together with the aim of harnessing the Internet as a carrier for particular aspects of French cultural identity, contribute to French elite discourse on the information society and the policy which develops from it.

The Internet appears to pose a particular challenge to identity in terms of its constantly evolving nature and the way in which it facilitates (for those who can access it) exposure to a theoretically unlimited range of information and activities on a global scale. As we have seen, the key concern running throughout French elite discourse and examples of policy for the Internet, is the need to tame and regulate the open communications market. This is explained by political actors in terms of the wish to safeguard French commercial interests, and to prevent cultural uniformity whilst encouraging diversity in the information society. Yet, the constant references in the discourse to the strengthening of the French language and ‘French cultural values’ on the Internet point to the priority for policy-makers as being one of the bolstering of one language and culture, despite claims of pluralism and openness to other cultures. This factor, together with policy-makers’ uncomfortable reception of the increasingly individualised nature of consumption evident in new communications technologies, where ‘consumers’ may choose from a variety of services encompassing different aspects of ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture, not necessarily of ‘French’ origin and perhaps not in line with that supported by official policy, would suggest that the Internet threatens certain traditional perceptions of French identity in that it may offer experiences indicative of a more hybrid definition of linguistic and cultural identity and indeed culture itself.

It is interesting that political actors whose discourse is discussed in this case study continually refer to France’s role as a kind of leader, able to fight for ‘universal’, ‘essential’ values of French and francophone culture, without explicitly addressing what these really are. Notions of the actions of cultural and economic competitors as harmful to Republican values of democracy and liberty, even ‘humanity’ are described in a similarly abstract fashion. The Internet is - as recognised by some of the figures in this case study - also synonymous with concepts such as the globalisation and delocalisation of communications and culture, which may further limit the influence of more traditional conceptions of public service broadcasting and information, as the effects of the demassification and individualisation of consumption are emerging (see Hare, 1999).

Such factors contribute to the scale of the challenge which the Internet presents for
French policy-makers and their traditional concerns about the protection of French language and French identity, which continue to inform debates and policy on various cultural matters. The 1990s, as discussed in the preceding case studies, have seen related controversies such as the use of French in public life as revealed for example in the loi Toubon issue, campaigns to guarantee the future position of French within international organisations, calls to improve the status of French within the scientific community, arguments for the exemption of 'cultural products' from the GATT agreements and France's efforts to protect and develop broadcasting and linguistic legislation within the European Union. Thus the debate on the Internet issue may be viewed as a further manifestation of French elites' continuing anxieties over the future of its identity, which remain on the policy-making agendas of successive administrations.

Yet, on balance, the Internet represents a strong challenge for French cultural policy-makers in terms of its constantly evolving nature, and its position amongst a whole range of new technological developments within the communications arena, which are, after all, emerging through the efforts of commercial enterprise of various national origins rather than through those of the State (see Hare, 1999, p.315). Thus the Internet remains new, uncharted and difficult territory which looks set to pose further problems for French elites. These problems range from the regulation of the Internet, as technology advances, to the difficulties of achieving French cultural policy objectives such as democratisation and the protection of 'French identity'. Moreover, the continuation of a 'top-down' policy approach imposing undynamic traditional conceptions of French identity held by elites which have been demonstrated by this case study may cause difficulties both in France and abroad. Firstly, such rigid views of identity may conflict with the preferences of some consumers within the French electorate, who may perceive their identity as more hybrid, perhaps in terms of identities, and thus may not feel uncomfortable with using Internet services supposedly imposing 'other' identities, including 'Anglo-Saxon' ones. Furthermore, the elite failure to respond adequately to and accept the range of identities from both within and outside of France which may be present on the Internet, may serve to alienate France's international trade and political partners through the presentation of an external image of France and the French State as hostile and backward-looking.
7.1 Overview

My study set out to explore the perceptions of national identity that were held by political elites in France in relation to the language and cultural issues prominent on the policy-making agenda in the 1990s. Elite perceptions of French identity represented an important field of research because of the long-standing role of the State, and political elites more generally, in developing and debating this key issue through policy in linguistic and cultural areas. In view of this, I conducted an analysis of elite visions of identity which were communicated in the political debates surrounding three case studies: language, audiovisual and Internet policy. These attracted considerable discussion in the public arena. I specifically aimed to consider if, and if so, to what extent, elite visions of French identity might be changing in the 1990s in the light of both the influence of new approaches to cultural policy-making pursued from the 1980s, and recent supra-national challenges to this policy. My case studies focused in most depth on the period from 1993 onwards. This was because, from this point, political debate on cultural issues and French national identity intensified in these areas. In language policy, the *loi Toubon* of 1994 which attempted to limit the use of foreign 'loan' words in French public life paved the way for the elite targeting of the European Union policy-making sphere, as an opportunity for responding to possible threats to French national identity related to the use of the French language. In the case of audiovisual policy, debates on American-led cultural imperialism surfaced during the re-negotiation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the development of EU quotas, and anxieties over digitalisation. The arrival of the digital age, and in particular the Internet, generated debate about new threats and opportunities for French identity.

As a means of exploring elite perceptions of identity in each of my selected case study areas, I focused on a close reading of several key statements, selected from the political discourse in these fields. The case studies themselves provided an overview of legislation on the issues, reflecting the connection between language and cultural policy measures and elite concerns in the State management of French identity. However, it was necessary to go beyond these measures, in order to uncover the true complexity of perceptions held by French political elites, as illustrated in debates around cultural policy. Detailed analysis of the discourse of political elites in the 1990s illuminated the deeper truths about this identity, demonstrating it to
be more complex than was first apparent. My analysis showed that the political responses to the policy challenges examined, despite these being qualitatively new issues in some cases, were rooted in the ideological constructions of the past. Furthermore, my case studies revealed many tensions, ambiguities and contradictions inherent within the targeted discourse, which I summarise below.

The conception of French identity which was presented in the debates on cultural and language policy examined in Chapters Four, Five and Six was firstly one based on opposition to other identities. The theme of a ‘battle’ was strong, as elites described French identity as under threat and requiring defending from other identities. This theme was associated with various Republican and Revolutionary references, to the idea of France in danger, but struggling valiantly. The other identities that threatened French identity were shown in the case studies to be based on old enemies in many cases. The strongest example was still American identity, closely linked to the French elite fear of mass culture and the spread of the English language. Thus supposedly American values of consumerism and ‘popular’ culture continued to be denounced by politicians in 1990s France. Yet the case studies demonstrated that these elites continued to have a contradictory relationship with American identity, as aspects of this identity continued to seduce them in the 1990s, just as in the immediate post-war period (see Kuisel, 1993). References to modernity, to progress, to meeting the challenges of globalisation, were all linked to the complex elite view of America as an enemy to be feared, but also a model to be emulated.

Another example of a traditional enemy, although not as commonly presented as the USA, was Japan. Japan was more subtly criticised, through its identification as a nation whose high degree of technological development helps to diffuse mass culture, and hence, American identity. References concentrated on the idea of a Japanese/American monopoly of culture and technology, which had been established through the presence of dominant industrial groups. This theme too was ambiguous, as French elites also illustrated that their fear of Japanese technological strength was related to their own envy i.e. their desire to make French technology catch up, and become more important in a more globalised market-place. Yet in the case of Japan, America and ‘Anglo-Saxons’ or ‘Anglo-Americans’, French politicians frequently retreated into complaints of conspiracies by these groups to implement ‘plots’ to gain cultural and economic dominance, which, ultimately, threatened French identity.

Another ‘battle’ over identity concerned France’s relationship with Europe, both in the
sense of the EU and the wider geographical notion of Europe. For French elites in the 1990s, 'Europe' could be both a threat to French identity, and an opportunity. Fears were highlighted about European integration, suggesting that the trend to use English more frequently in institutions of the EU for example, and the development of a single market, together with the removal of barriers to free trade and the idea of developing cultural unity or a common European identity, could all be harmful to the individual identities of the EU member states, most importantly, to French identity. Furthermore, criticisms abounded of other European countries which, French elites felt, failed to comprehend the challenges facing European identities. Such countries were accused of allowing more Anglo-American cultural influence to develop, through their opposition to French proposals for audiovisual regulation for example, thereby acting as 'Trojan horses', as De Gaulle complained thirty years previously. Yet many opportunities were used to rally other EU members as partners, and thereby to encourage them to follow the French agenda in areas of cultural and language policy which concerned identity. In addition, they appealed to non-EU states, in a wider Europe, for support in cultural matters. Yet my analysis has demonstrated how French elites' really sought cooperation within Europe, in whichever sense the term was used, as an opportunity to defend and promote French identity, above all. To this end, they continued to present traditional ideas of French identity as rooted within Europe, in opposition to non-European 'others' like the USA, together with a view of France as a leader for Europe, which would stand firm in the face of challenges to European identity. Despite attempts to conceal them, based on claims to be selflessly defending all European identities equally, these ideas were still prevalent in the discourse, and were uncovered by the analysis in my case studies.

A further challenge to French identity was identified, concerning change in world structures. This was particularly discussed in terms of the breaking down of old political structures after the end of the Cold War, and the globalisation of the media, and of business and markets. In relation to this change, elite debates illustrated tensions over free trade and liberalisation of economies, the re-alignment of nations, the development of even bigger multinational corporations taking possession of the media, and the growth of new technologies allowing more rapid and easier communications across continents. However, new information and media technologies, whilst objects of desire for French elites who do not wish France to be left behind in terms of technological development, pose new and potentially even stronger challenges to elite conceptions of French identity as they are so much more difficult to regulate.
than were previous terrestrial, non-digital methods of communication. Moreover, the
development of the global technology and information market has increasingly favoured the
diffusion of the English language and English-speaking culture. As this has happened, old fears
concerning Americanisation, for example, began to be voiced more frequently in terms of a new
totalitarianism, of the threat of a single world, of a uniform language and culture, and of
globalisation itself, as the term has become more prominent in the contemporary political and
economic vocabulary. However, as writers like Featherstone assert (1995, pp.13-4),
globalisation may not in fact, as French elites may fear, actually lead to cultural uniformity, but
to increased diversity, which these same voices would claim to welcome. Yet given the
apparent wish of French policy-makers of both the Left and Right to limit American cultural
influences and indeed hybridity, and to encourage a ‘top-down’ approach to cultural policy
based on their undynamic views of identity, these groups sought in the 1990s to impose their
own uniformity.

In opposition to challenges of the kind outlined above, French elites have, alongside
their use of references to a ‘battle’ of identities, promoted a vision of French identity as founded
on pluralism and the respect for diversity. This strategy was behind the policy themes of
plurilinguisme and exception culturelle which were debated and adopted in several areas of
French language and cultural policy-making in the 1990s. However, the case studies in this
thesis have identified the true vision of French identity to be largely a monolithic one, as
evidenced by the discourse on language and cultural issues examined, and the policies which
resulted from these ideas.

To defend this conception of French identity, and actively promote and extend its
influence, traditional appeals were used in elite discourse: to tradition itself; to the notion of
France as a great country, and a creative force; to abstract images of beauty, based on openness,
air, light and fertility; to myths about the unity of French culture and national identity; to the
encouragement of French unity based on military-style rallying; to the development of unity
with European and francophone partners, and even, at times, non-traditional partners such as
Japan, which may at times – for pragmatic or tactical reasons – be constructed as something
other than a cultural enemy.

The methods chosen to defend and promote French identity were traditional too. The
case studies identified them as looking towards the regulation and ordering of French culture
and language, and ultimately, identity. It was the State which was repeatedly called upon to
lead this, being still regarded as a cultural manager by French politicians, who continued to
draw on the legacy of Malraux and the dominant vision of the Ministry of Culture under the
Fifth Republic, based largely on the desirability of democratising high culture. Moreover, the
1990s vision of identity as expressed in language and cultural policy looks back even further
than the Fifth Republic, as it inherits the wishes to regulate, to codify, to monitor and to impose
particular cultural visions at the expense of others, which have been features of the State’s
activity in the areas of culture and language for many centuries, indeed prior to the ancien
régime.

We have seen this in the case study chapters, which illustrated that the State still
manages language use, through regulating spelling, imposing the use of French in various
circumstances, promoting it overseas, developing the francophone movement, or discussing the
merits of awarding recognition to minority languages. The State still manages audiovisual
culture, monitoring the French and European-created content and use of language in radio and
television broadcasting, imposing quotas, creating new regulatory bodies, and challenging
world trade systems, in what is still an uncomfortable relationship with liberalisation. In the
area of new information technologies, the State has attempted to act as ‘gatekeeper’, i.e. to
monitor the development of new interactive methods which encourage more individualised
consumption (of which French political elites are suspicious), to regulate the use of language on
the Internet, to call for French and francophone cooperation to develop new products and
services which are all, paradoxically, designed to preserve a fundamentally undynamic version
of French identity.

In all of the three areas examined, French political elites in the 1990s continued the
familiar arguments that cultural and language issues are too important to be left to the open
market; the free market cannot be trusted, and thus allowed to control these areas, as they are of
central importance to the continued expression and development of French identity. In this
respect, not only do discourse and legislation follow a defensive vision, but they also look to
identify new opportunities for the promotion of French identity, a tension that leads to
ambiguities evident in both debate and policy. Yet, instead of opting for a genuinely more
eclectic, pluralistic vision of identity, and of the future, which would be in line with a multi-

1Outside the scope of this study, we have also seen the involvement of the State in changing the rules on the use
of genders in the French language in response to many years of feminist-led pressure (see, for example, The
ethnic France, a developing Europe and a more globalised world, where consumers can select from a range of identities on offer in language and culture, my study of discourse in all three case study areas has illustrated that French political elites chose in the 1990s to concentrate on promoting traditional notions of French identity, despite referring to their wish to defend openness, diversity and cultural exchange.

In doing this, French elites used their claims for cooperation, and their appeals to European and francophone partners, to the presentation of European and francophone identity as alternatives in a world of uniformity, as a means of disguising their wish to defend French identity par excellence. My analysis has demonstrated that the true views of French identity promoted by political elites in the 1990s were as follows:

- that French identity is superior to other identities;
- that it rejects consumerism and mass culture, and hence the values of ‘other’ identities which are deemed inferior, in spite of claiming to support diversity;
- that it is to be shared and celebrated as special in the favoured arenas of Europe and francophonie;
- that it is based on inherited tradition, and on Revolutionary and Republican values and purity, rather than hybridity;
- that it is universal, and that its influence should be spread as far as possible, and indeed, that to do this is a fundamental duty.

By continuing to present and defend such a static vision of French identity in the 1990s, French political elites sought to find a means of encouraging a continuing French role in the world, through France as a defender of identity, and a leader of francophonie, of European civilisation, and of the EU countries, at a time when, in reality, France was a medium-sized power, facing diminished political, cultural and linguistic influence.

Yet French elites continued to show that they believed France could still meet the challenges to its language, culture, and ultimately, ‘Frenchness’, through its defence of and encouragement of French identity, and its leadership of other nations. In this way, French elites challenged the ongoing legacy of American influence on language and culture, on the economy, and on world politics – in the so-called ‘American Century’.

They challenged European integration if implemented in a way that they did not favour. They challenged those aspects of

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See Luce (1941), and my arguments on this elsewhere (Strode, 1999a).
free, global trade to which they were opposed, and attacked the 'selfish' use of new digital
technologies, which was outside their control in a globalised market whose regulation they have
so far found difficult. The overall message left by French political elites' efforts to counter the
challenges to their still traditional, unchanging views of national identity, was that eternal
France can still stand proud and firm, continuing to find new opportunities for its expression, in
spite of threats and change.

7.2 Contribution to wider fields of research

This thesis seeks to contribute to several broad fields of knowledge as they relate to France,
notably reflections on the nature of identity, cultural studies, and politics. By focusing on the
relationship between elite notions of French identity and cultural and language policy, the study
has further illuminated the special intersection of identity and policy in the French context. It
has provided a wide-ranging analysis of the continuing significance of identity in policy-making
and institutions relating to language and culture in contemporary France, through its original
approach closely comparing the discourse of political elites on French identity in the 1990s
across three different case study areas.

In broad terms, it offers a contribution to ongoing, interdisciplinary debates about
identity, and especially French identity, which have been significant in the late twentieth
century. More specifically, it builds on published work focusing on cultural policy under the
period of President Mitterrand and the Socialist government of the 1980s, notably that of
Wachtel (1987) and Looseley (1995), to provide an overview of policy priorities and
institutional developments during the 1990s. In addition to an interpretation and analysis of
discourse on identity, my study provides a record of events during the period covered, adding to
existing work describing French policy and debate on language and culture in the Fifth
Republic.

Moving on from the point where Looseley's study of the years of Jack Lang's Ministry
of Culture (1995) concluded, this thesis fills two gaps in the existing literature, firstly providing
a focus on the post-1993 period, and secondly, a detailed consideration of the centrality of
identity across a range of key policy areas and legislative periods. Thus it offers a general
assessment of cultural and language policy after Lang, especially of the terms of office of
Ministers of Culture Jacques Toubon and Philippe Douste-Blazy, together with a particular
examination of the relationship between these policy areas and questions of identity at this time.

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Chapter One noted some of Looseley’s conclusions as questions raised by the Lang era of policy-making, which were likely to be of interest in the post-Lang period. For example, Looseley’s question (1995, p.244) of how Lang’s successors might marry the seemingly opposed views of the State as promoting a ‘grand narrative’ of a shared national culture and simultaneously trying to accommodate a new communications era of more individualised consumption, was of particular concern to my case study of identity and the Internet. The findings of my work in this new research field confirmed that the State has still to resolve this dilemma, as successive Ministers and other political elites have identified the Internet as a problematic, potentially destabilising arena for their visions of culture and identity - but one which is a crucial target for continued regulation and manipulation according to specific identity goals - in a more complex era of communications. Furthermore, this thesis has confirmed Looseley’s preliminary assessment that ‘a dramatic new approach’ to, and a redefinition of, cultural policy-making following the transition from Jack Lang to Jacques Toubon did not look likely, and his suggestion that ‘a more classical, Gaullist conception’ could be on the horizon (1995, pp.228-9). Indeed, my study has illustrated how the development of cultural and language policy during the post-Lang period, and political debate surrounding this policy, represented an actual retreat, rather than a step forward, being guided by conceptions of French identity which reverted to traditional, rigid models, as opposed to embracing more dynamic and hybrid ones.

Beyond this, the present study contributes to the specific literature on language policy-making in France, building on Wilcox’s work (1998), which explored the particular role of language pressure groups in policy-making of the early 1990s, up to and including the loi Toubon, the work of Brulard (1997a, 1996b), Machill (1997) and Thody (1995) which focused on the loi Toubon, and of Ager (1996a, 1996b) which examined language policy institutions and francophonie. The research described within this thesis examined the period of language policy-making following the Toubon law, specifically offering an assessment of French language policy in relation to identity and European integration, and how this related to the French EU Presidency of 1995 and France’s ongoing leadership of the francophone movement.

Alongside this, besides highlighting the continuing importance of identity in French conflicts over trade issues, my research on the audiovisual policy debates relating to GATT and quotas more specifically illustrated the appeal by French political elites to shifting concepts of France’s European identity, as a means of pursuing their own identity policy agenda during the 1995 EU
Presidency. Thus the thesis is also a contribution to the area of French policy on cultural and language issues as it related to other arenas of policy-making and debate, such as the EU and the francophone movement during the period studied. Finally, the work adds to the literature on the second *septennat* of President François Mitterrand, providing special consideration of his role in cultural and language policy debates on identity and France’s involvement with European integration, and offers an initial assessment of President Jacques Chirac’s development of *francophonie*.

7.3 Project limitations and directions for future research

The findings of my research confirmed the original hypothesis that the conceptions of French identity expressed in language and cultural policy held by French political elites in the 1990s did not deviate from traditional views. This said, there are certain limitations to this study which should be mentioned, although I would argue that these are amply off-set by the fact that this study makes a significant contribution to research on the relationship between French identity, language and cultural policy in France of the 1990s.

It would seem necessary, however, to make a number of points regarding the confines within which this research project was conducted. Firstly, to return to issues noted in Chapter Two, there is the question of the degree of coverage provided by the thesis. As my methodology chapter outlined, issues such as access to archives, variations in the quality, range and cataloguing of materials conserved by organisations, and the cooperation of personnel working in areas of government and within political parties, together with time constraints and resources available for travel and fieldwork, are factors which influenced this research project. Human error too can lead a researcher to miss certain items when working for long periods on archive-based research such as this. Further issues related to the collection of a wide range of data which could have influenced my coverage of material were connected to the availability of sources from some organisations relevant to my study, most notably the inconsistencies I found when researching material conserved by French political parties. As a result of this, but also perhaps due to the lack of interest of some smaller parties in devoting resources to cultural and language issues, my study has focused on the opinions of figures from the mainstream polity in France. An opportunity for future research in the area of identity and cultural policy could

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3 Presidential term of seven years.
involve pursuing the opinions of political elites from smaller parties in more detail.

I would argue that my study has provided a valuable comparison of the ideas of the most significant figures involved with debates on identity and cultural policy during the period studied, taken from a cross-party sample, based on research into a wide-range of material of different formats. Furthermore, as I noted in Chapter Two, the nature of archive-based research related to points outlined above is such that any project of this type cannot claim to be completely comprehensive; there is always the possibility of some degree of chance or aléatoire occurring in the collection of data, perhaps more so in the case of a subject involving such complexities as identity and cultural topics. This point relates too to another limitation of the work, which concerns the selection of texts. It is true that some of the material was received without personal visits to archives due to constraints of time and funding (and also perhaps in the case of some of the material which did involve me personally accessing it, due to the filing systems already in place), was pre-selected. However, I am confident that I have made all efforts to compensate for this, through targeting my research strategies on a range of different organisations and archive centres, and through obtaining large amounts of information from secondary sources about particular issues. In doing this, I was able to take the necessary steps to obtain any material beyond that which was initially offered to me by my contacts in France.

Another limitation concerning the selection of material concerns the choice of data for detailed analysis and its interpretation. As I explained in my methodology chapter, the researcher is not innocent, passively absorbing and explaining data. Thus it should be recognised that in a project such as this one, the material is selected and analysed by the author, who has scope to choose aspects of data to privilege, and could be accused of misinterpreting some points, giving more weight to some at the expense of others. Whilst my study has aimed to provide an analysis which is as scientifically rigorous as possible, based on a wide-ranging sample which I believe to be representative of the body of opinion on identity expressed by French political elites, and on close reading and comparison of texts, it is still the case that research of this nature, based on thematic, qualitative analysis, may be subject to different interpretations by different readers. However, I believe that the range of material I have covered, and my comparison of the views of various political figures in three different case study areas spanning the 1990s, based on research carried out through many sources, provides a solid body of evidence to support the claims of my thesis.

A criticism of this study could also be that the research did not cover a broader
definition of political elites in France, according to those outlined in Chapters One and Two. My project, however, set out specifically to investigate the publicly-communicated opinions of political elites, i.e. the statements of politicians. In view of the often-politicised role of other elites in France, or civil servants and policy-advisors outside the party-political/government spheres, research into the impact of the ideas about identity held by the broader group of political elites might be worth pursuing in future research, which this thesis did not set out to cover. In addition, it would be worthwhile to consider the specific role of political elites of this broader category in relation to European Union policy-making on culture and language, particularly involving relations with other member states.

Because the Internet is a relatively new communications development, the potential period of study for this topic within the thesis was not as long as that of the audiovisual and language areas. However, the intensity of debate and policy activity around this issue meant that the analysis in this thesis identified a large body of material for exploration, and offered an assessment of an exciting period of the development of technology in France. This new area of research offers further possibilities for research, and I outline several potential directions for future enquiry here. What has been the response, if any, of different sectors of the population in France to the opinions and policies of French political elites on the Internet and identity? How far is State regulation possible, in practice? Do service-providers and consumers take real heed of elite concerns about French identity and the consequences of the development of the Internet? What are the implications for government, and for political elites more generally, of attempting to regulate the Internet, if the general public, and specific groups within it such as business, do not welcome this? To engage in research of this nature, it would be necessary to investigate the view of identity and cultural policy 'from the floor', and to examine the opinions of diverse groups, according to different variables such as age, class and occupation, ethnicity and gender etc. This line of enquiry was outside the scope of this thesis, but presents a valuable direction for further research on French identity and new technologies.

Finally, this research project could only offer an initial assessment of the period of cultural and language policy-making and debate in France following the election of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and the appointment of Catherine Trautmann as Minister of Culture and Communication from May 1997. This was due to the fact that the research set out to examine the years 1989-97, and that, at the time of its final writing-up (1999), the Trautmann/Jospin administration was still in office. Although this thesis has made reference to the input of
Trautmann and Jospin to debates and policy on language and culture, the constraints of ‘real time’ research mean that I do not offer a comprehensive account of this period. My research has found that from the debates analysed in the period 1997-99, the vision of cultural and language policy presented by French political elites, and more specifically by the Trautmann Ministry and Jospin government, was based on undynamic, traditional conceptions of French identity. However this thesis cannot claim to be conclusive in this area; therefore, a valuable area of future research would be the post-1997 period in retrospect, following the end of the current legislative term.

It would be especially interesting, for example, to examine the future development of the Internet, of policies for regional and minority languages, for cultural democratisation, and for reform of the *paysage audiovisuel français*, as they relate to identity, as these areas were noted by my case studies as being under development at the time of writing. Does the rhetoric of pluralism, for example, in the debates on the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, and the Trautmann Ministry’s wish to consult the public on proposals for audiovisual policy, mean that elite views of identity might be subject to change and re-evaluation on the eve of the twenty-first century? Further opportunities could include the development of French identity, language and cultural policy in the context of the continuing process of European integration. Related to this, the specific study of the Trautmann ministerial era could provide an analysis pertinent to wider debates about the nature of what it is to be French in the aftermath of the French World Cup victory of July 1998 by a multi-ethnic national team, which, for some, suggested a possible redefinition of French identity, as discussed by Dauncey and Hare *et al.* (1999). In view of the continuing centrality of French identity to political debates on culture and language policy, and to many other areas of policy and public discussion in contemporary France, I feel that this direction of research would be well worth pursuing.
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