



# ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CORONA CRISIS

– SEMINAR PAPER –

## **How did the pandemic and the French response to it influence the French political opinion ?**

**A focus on the far-right's political exploitation**

- A seminar supervised by Marcel Fratzscher -

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June 2022

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## Introduction

The pandemic has been and is still a real challenge for the different governments that have to manage health policies, economic choices, and social issues at the same time. Here I chose to focus on the french case that has some specific dynamics linked to this crisis. First, the country's presidential elections were in April 2022 so the campaign occurred during the pandemic. Then there were already a lot of criticisms before the pandemic towards Emmanuel Macron's policies from the most precarious, the students and the public sector employees, especially the public hospital workers. Finally, the citizens' political opinion is very divided and has evolved from the traditional moderate left/right opposition to the presidential majority against populism which is gaining more and more weight in France. That is why I chose to analyze the french points of view during the pandemic and their voting intentions.

To do so I will be reviewing a part of the literature both on the french opinion and the national policies during the crisis. I will also present my work on a survey ordered by the Foundation for Policy Innovation (Fondation pour l'innovation politique) and conducted by the polling institute OpinionWay on the electoral protest. I used The Citizens' Attitudes Under the COVID-19 Pandemic (CAUCP) survey too to construct an indicator of distrust towards institutions but this project offers less data so I preferred the other one.

I will present an overview of the French political context during a pandemic by reviewing the literature. Then I will focus on the concerns of the population, their use of media, and their voting behavior. Through this work, I will focus on the contestations against Emmanuel Macron's policies and the space left for the far-right parties.

## 1 An overview of the French political context and the health policies during the pandemic ...

### 1.1 The different parties and the last elections

Emmanuel Macron's election in 2017 was a turning point in French politics as it was the end of the historical alternation of Les Republicans (LR, right-wing) and the Socialist Party (PS, left-wing) that left their places to the center-right party of Emmanuel Macron (La République En Marche) and the far-right party of Marine Le Pen (Front National that became Rassemblement National). The main traditional parties have lost even more weight during the pandemic and an even closer Macron-Le Pen opposition occurred in April 2022. You can find a list of french parties in **Figure 1** from the far-right to the far-left (some parties might not be exactly in the right order depending on the economic or social scale but it gives an idea of the global spectrum). **Figure 2** also gives the political positions of the main parties involved in the 2022 campaign.



Figure 1: Main parties in the political spectrum

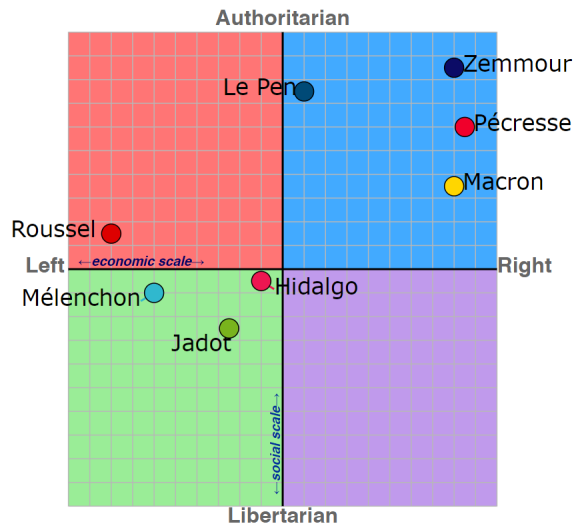


Figure 2: French political compass

Beyond the disappearance of the traditional PS/LR opposition, it is the disappearance of the left that most marks the French political horizon [Pozzi J.P., 2021]. Indeed in 2017 and 2022 the vote share of all left parties, moderate and far-left, is around 28%. But what is most notable is the breakthrough of the right and especially of the far-right. In April 2022 the far-right (Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour) represents 30.22 % of the vote share and it is up to 38 % when we sum the vote share of all right-wing parties. Moreover, even if Emmanuel Macron has always claimed he was neither left nor right-wing, most of his government choices and his policies are on the right side [Lefebvre R., 2021]. Also, the abstention rate was 22.23% in 2017 and 26.31% in 2022 which is a historical rate since 1969.

## 1.2 French politics before and during the pandemic

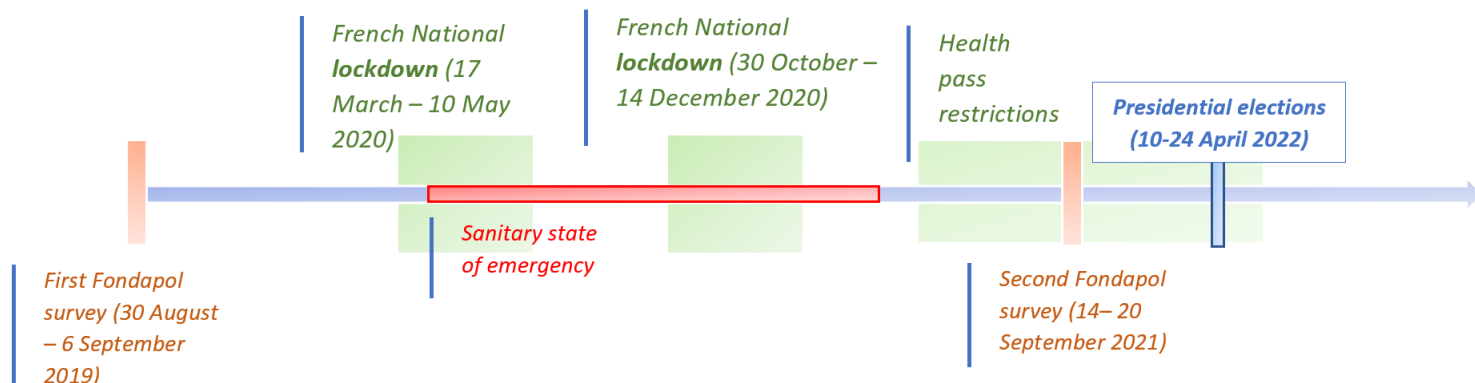
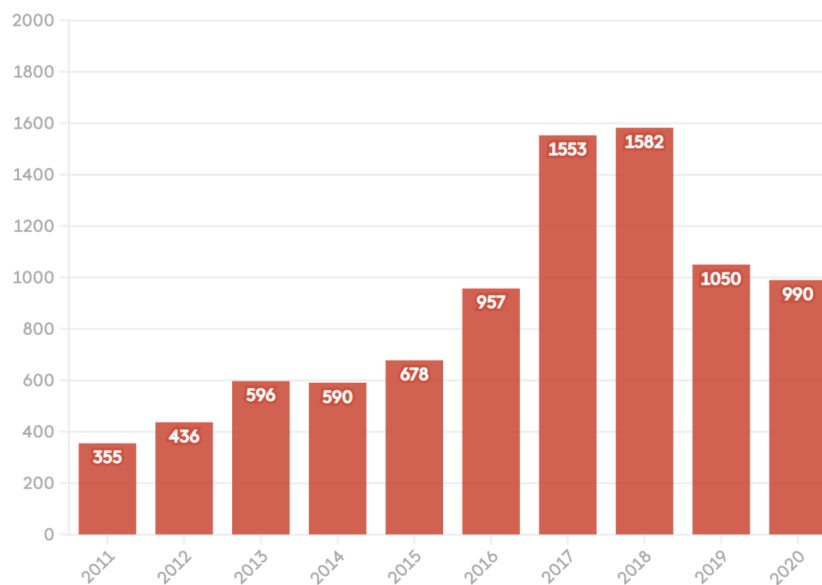


Figure 3: Timeline of the pandemic and the surveys I used

In France, the first three cases of Covid-19, directly connected to the Wuhan region of China, were reported on 24 January 2020, and the first fatality on February 15. As of mid-November 2020, France had one of the highest rates of prevalence in Europe, with more than 2 million Covid-19 cases. On the 12th of March 2020, President Macron announced in a speech that the Nation was ‘at war’, referring to President Hollande and the state of emergency after the terrorist attacks in 2015. This was the start of the sanitary state of emergency which allows the Prime Minister to take measures to protect public health during an epidemic. This state of emergency that has been used a lot in France since 2015 fueled the citizens’ criticisms of the lack of freedom since it gives exceptional powers to the President and the Prime minister regarding french security. Indeed after the terrorist attacks, it led to the presence of the armed military in public places, extended the right to bear guns for police officers, and regularly brought the topic of security to the forefront of public debate. This is important to understand the french concerns and divergences towards security and freedom.

After the two first lockdowns, France launched its vaccination campaign in December 2020 which raised a lot of concerns and protests. Indeed according to [Jeremy K. Ward, 2020], in 2020 almost a quarter of the French population would not get vaccinated against COVID-19 and the refusal was very associated with proximity to far-right parties and abstention. The same dynamic was renewed with the introduction of the health and vaccination pass in June 2021. This gradually restricts access to public places for non-vaccinated people. However, refusal towards vaccination decreased easily and 77.2 % of the French population were vaccinated in January 2022 then the pass was lifted. [French Public Health Agency]

Figure 4: Savings requested from hospitals each year  
In millions of euros



To further discuss the subject of healthcare in France, the country has a strong health system with universal insurance, a centralized regime with an important public administration, and a high number of healthcare professionals [Or Z., Gandré C., Durand Zaleski I., Steffen M., 2022]. However, just before the pandemic, the public health system had been affected by months-long protests and strikes by hospital workers demanding more resources. Indeed, Emmanuel Macron's government has imposed an intense austerity cure in hospitals, forced to make 2.6 billion savings in 2018 and 2019 (**Figure 4**). During the pandemic, the President said it was a mistake and also gave a bonus to the salaries of health professionals. However, they still denounce austerity and the government's mistakes that have pushed them over the edge.

To make an aside about the protests, there were other ones since Emmanuel Macron was elected. First, the movement of the Yellow jackets that started in 2018 and kept going until the first lockdown has characterized President Macron's term. This social movement is rooted in questioning fiscal policy, a feeling of declassification of part of the population, and neglect of part of the territories located away from the major metropolises - the "peripheral France" theorized by the geographer Christophe Guilluy [Guilly C., 2015] that subtitled his book "How the working classes were sacrificed?" - and a growing distrust of the functioning of French institutions. I will discuss this distrust of the institutions (see later **Figure 5**) but I have put aside the "regional effect", which is nevertheless very important in the analysis of French politics. There were also big protests about the pension reform that was announced in 2019. Other protests about climate change and feminism also occurred but more in Paris where youth are concentrated. Those topics are all main concerns that shape the political compass and voting behavior (see later **Figure 6**).

France was also unprepared when the pandemic hit (as most countries actually): there were not enough

masks or tests and some government members also were ambiguous about the seriousness of the pandemic and the importance of barrier measures. An investigation was opened in July 2020, during which the offices of Health Minister Agnès Buzyn, Édouard Philippe, and Sibeth Ndiaye were searched in October 2020. The court found 16 complaints admissible. The complainants' accusations are numerous: lack of foresight, negligence, breach of the duty of care, state lies, and refusal of medical care. In parallel to this investigation by the court, the Paris public prosecutor's office opened four judicial inquiries implicating the health authorities and in particular the Director General of Health Jérôme Salomon. That situation is unique and fostered the population's contestations as well as the legitimacy of opposition parties.

## 2 ... that led to political contestation from the opposition and civilian protests ...

### 2.1 Description of the data and the measurement of the public distrust

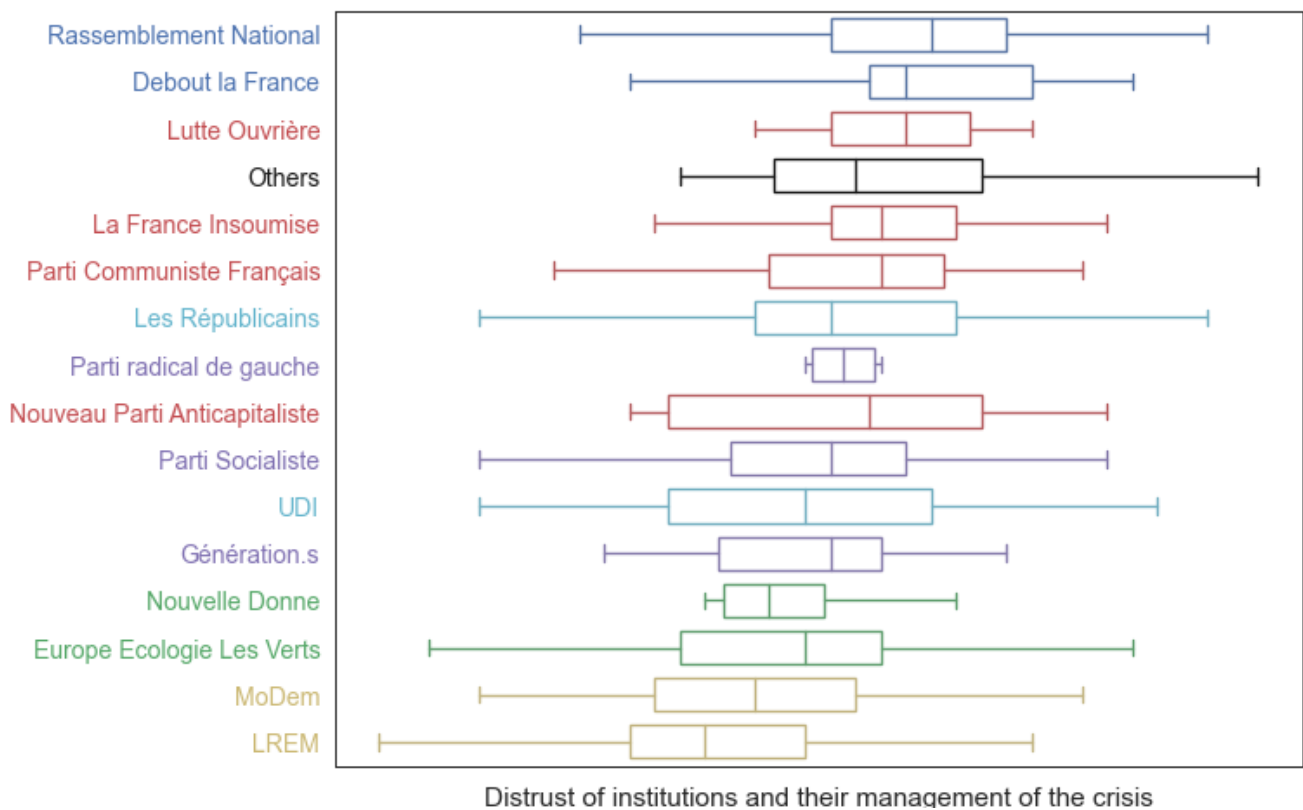
I used a first survey to measure the civilian distrust towards the main institutions in France and their voting intentions (**Figure 5**). The Citizens' Attitudes Under the COVID-19 Pandemic (CAUCP) surveyed public opinion throughout the Covid-19 pandemic in 11 democracies in 2020 [CAUCP, 2020]. I chose to focus on the french survey that represents 1,295 people from metropolitan France.

I looked at the following ordinal variables : *'Satisfaction with government's handling of crisis'*, *'Trust: Journalists'*, *'Trust: Scientists'*, *'Trust: The government'*, *'Trust: The mayor of your town/city'*, *'What is the probability that the government is hiding information from the French on the coronavirus epidemic?'*, *'What is the probability that scientists hide information from the French on the coronavirus epidemic?'*.

I computed the measure ***Distrust of institutions*** from the other variables above. I grouped this measure by the voting intention of the respondents. That way we can have another view of the political spectrum where the extreme parties represent the people who are the less satisfied about the institutions, especially since the pandemic. It is the far-right and far-left against the more moderate parties and Emmanuel Macron's party. Among the 1,295 people interviewed at the beginning of the pandemic, 55% were dissatisfied with the crisis management and 61 % were dissatisfied with Emmanuel Macron's actions. Therefore other political parties that usually were already not in the same political line benefit from positioning themselves in opposition.

For my further work, I used another survey that was conveyed in September 2021. Therefore more candidates had started their electoral campaigns and the health restrictions such as the pass were launched at that time. This survey gives a better insight into the impact of the pandemic on the French political situation. It was ordered by the Foundation for Policy Innovation and conveyed 5 surveys overall but I chose to focus on the last one that had the most various questions [Fondapol, 2021]. I only used once some data from their 2019 survey to compare some variables in **Figure 7**. In any case, I have data on 3,156 people from the metropolitan territory. People were chosen from the electoral lists and randomized in a way that respects the french representative proportions of the population.

Figure 5: Measurement of the distrust of politicians, mainstream media and science during the pandemic according to each party, ordered by mean



Source : CAUCP, 2021



## 2.2 Opposition positions in the context of an election campaign

Given that many French people are dissatisfied or even in total disagreement with the government's decisions and positions, political parties benefit from asserting their opposition. It makes sense that they have differing opinions if they have never been not close on the political compass. However, the direct criticisms and numerous spontaneous use of social media were obvious during the pandemic which was also the pre-electoral campaign time. The parties that had the more weight after Emmanuel Macron's La République En Marche (LREM) are Marine Le Pen's Rassemblement National (RN) and Jean-Luc Mélenchon's La France Insoumise (LFI). Eric Zemmour was also a prominent figure in the debates of the period. I have chosen to focus in this paper on the far right force represented by Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour. They embody the great rise of extremism in France, whereas before they were two demonized and unthinkable political figures. On the one hand, the Front National was founded in 1972 by former communists, former SS, and many neo-fascist members and has evolved into an anti-immigration and Eurosceptic party [Kauffmann G., 2016]. The party has also sparked outrage for hate speech, including Holocaust denial and Islamophobia but Marine Le Pen pursued a "de-demonization" since then. On the other hand, Eric Zemmour was a journalist and essayist when he decided to found his party during the pandemic as he gathered people around his ideas. Zemmour is well known for his controversial views regarding immigration and Islam in France. He has extensively supported the idea of the "great replacement", a conspiracy theory contending that France's native population will be replaced by non-European people [Norimitsu Onishi, 2021]. He was fined for incitement to racial discrimination in 2011, for incitement of hate against Muslims in 2018, and again for hate speech in 2022.

I aim to study the dynamics of the electoral behavior for those two parties, i.e the rise in power of Eric Zemmour's party and the strengthening and enlargement of the Front National (now the Rassemblement National). They both wrote numerous opinion pieces against Emmanuel Macron's decisions, targeting the disappointed, suspicious or even conspiratorial population.

In an interview end with Valeurs actuelles [Valeurs Actuelles, 2020], Marine Le Pen charges that the government is the "biggest purveyor of fake news since the beginning of the crisis" and the "main responsible for the loss of confidence in public statements". She also fuels some conspiracy theories by claiming that the virus had "escaped" from some secret laboratory. Eric Zemmour wrote an opinion piece in L'Opinion [L'Opinion, 2021] claiming : "I accuse Emmanuel Macron and his government of exploiting the health crisis, for example by putting on the table measures that are currently useless, such as the health or vaccination pass, for purely political purposes."

Throughout the article, I have studied the explanatory variables of voting for the two candidates with linear regression with clustered standard errors such as :

$$Y_{i,r} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{i,r} + \beta_2 M_{i,r} + \eta_{i,r} \quad (1)$$

$i \in (i_1, i_2, \dots, i_{3155})$  denotes the individuals of the 2021 Fondapol survey and  $r$  denotes the regions of metropolitan France.

$Y \in [1 : 10]$  measures the propensity to vote for Marine Le Pen, Eric Zemmour or both.  $X$  represents controls for individuals' observable characteristics and  $M$  individuals' political opinion characteristics.

I chose to adjust standard errors by region [Abadie A., 2017]. Indeed residuals and variables are correlated within regions. Most regions are associated with specific socio-demographic variations and a voting behavior. That way the clustering captures this variation that I will not analyze in this paper. In particular, the overseas territories are not represented in the survey and are very much associated with specific regional dynamics, so it would be very important to include them for a geographical analysis.

**Table 1** shows the effect of the opinion towards the main social movements on the far-right voting intention. We notice that obviously a good opinion the management of the crisis is negatively associated with voting for Zemmour or Le Pen. But what is interesting too is that the 'Antivax' effect is much higher than the 'Yellow Jackets'. While the Yellow jackets movement has lasted for two years and has brought together different parts of the population around various demands and the Antivax was more controversial, it is meaningful that the latter has a bigger effect. Indeed people have had time to position themselves as yellow jackets who were already more oriented towards Marine Le Pen so the effect could have grown and become anchored in the far right vote. The Antivax movement was much newer at the end end of 2021 and theoretically not associated with economic and social concerns so its effect could be marginal and spread across the different political parties. It is relevant to see that the Antivax variable adds information from the crisis management and the yellow jackets variables. Therefore, we can say that the pandemic has given rise to new issues and shaped new opinions that carry weight in the voting. That explains how and why the far-right parties grow.

### 3 ... from a population that feels left out by the politics ...

Furthermore many people not only disagree with the government, but also feel unrepresented in political debates and actions. Emmanuel Macron has been called the 'President of the rich'. That goes with [Traber D., 2021] that argues government listens more closely to those with higher status and more income and react more to their concerns.

It is striking when looking at **Figure 6** that concerns differ a lot depending on their voting intentions. It is worth noting that these statistics are about the question 'Which of the following problems should the Government address first?' and there are two other questions about their second and third concerns. As I said previously, Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour make immigration and the influence of Islam in France their main political line which is very much represented in the plot.

Moreover, we can think of other topics that are not well addressed and not much debated between politicians. Indeed environmental issues are much more present in the concerns of people who could abstain from voting or vote blank as well as people voting for the left party of Jean-Luc Mélenchon. It is interesting to focus on those two groups as there had been debates on various candidates for representing the left to far-left political spectrum and Jean-Luc Mélenchon gained votes as the presidential elections approached. In contrast, it had been sure that Marine Le Pen would represent the Rassemblement

Table 1: OLS Regression with clustered standard errors by region

	Far-right voting intention
const	0.7849*** (0.0931)
<b>Has voted vor MLP in the past</b>	2.8288*** (0.1070)
<b>Opinion Covid crisis management</b>	-0.1201*** (0.0230)
Could abstain from voting in 2022	0.0485 (0.0262)
<b>Opinion on the 'Yellow jackets'</b>	0.1294** (0.0459)
<b>Opinion on the 'Antivax'</b>	0.3551*** (0.0656)
Gender	0.1147* (0.0538)
R-squared	0.3899
R-squared Adj.	0.3887

**Notes:**

Standard Errors are robust to cluster correlation

Standard errors in parentheses.

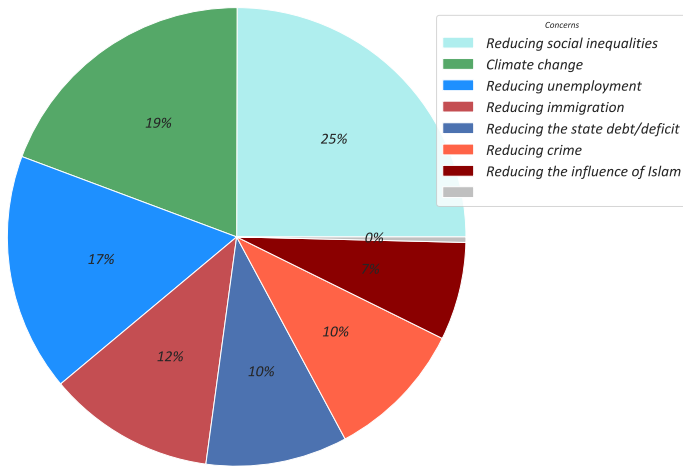
\* Significant at 10%, \*\* Significant at 5%, \*\*\* Significant at 1%

National and Eric Zemmour quickly won over his voters. Then we notice that the 'No vote' group is very close to Jean-Luc Mélenchon's electorate. On top of that, most abstainers are unlikely to vote for a far-right candidate because of their conflicting concerns. Thus we could describe roughly the voters in three groups: the ones agreeing with the President that probably don't feel very concerned by the many protests that occurred, the ones in disagreement with the President that focus on anti-immigration as well as Antivax movements, and the ones that are not quite sure for who to vote for and whose concerns are not quite the same as the other groups. We can try to define a little more the latter by thinking back about the main concerns of the protests. We can think of climate change, precariousness, racism, or feminism. Those are issues that have been little discussed by the candidates or not well addressed. Precariousness can relate to students or people with essential jobs for example. Yet those people have been heavily affected by the pandemic. Also, the pandemic has set aside those topics that then did not re-emerge during the campaign in most debates [Le Monde, 2022]. Looking at the evolution of the willingness to abstain before and during the pandemic among health professionals is outstanding, especially among the youth (**Figure 7, Figure 8**). In 2019, even though there were strikes and protests in the hospitals, the difference with the other professions was not very different. The increase of abstention in 2021 is most

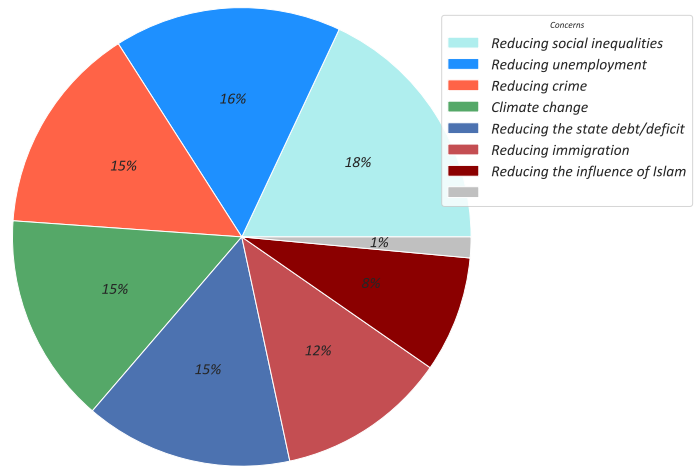
pronounced for those under 50 (groups 1.0, 2.0, 3.0), who are the most affected financially and physically in general (longer working hours, lower wages, lower positions). Thus even with the citizens' support, the upgrading of certain salaries among carers during the pandemic by the government, and the President's regrets from previous budget cuts, many caregivers do not believe either in the President or in other candidates to make a difference.

Figure 6: French concerns by political group

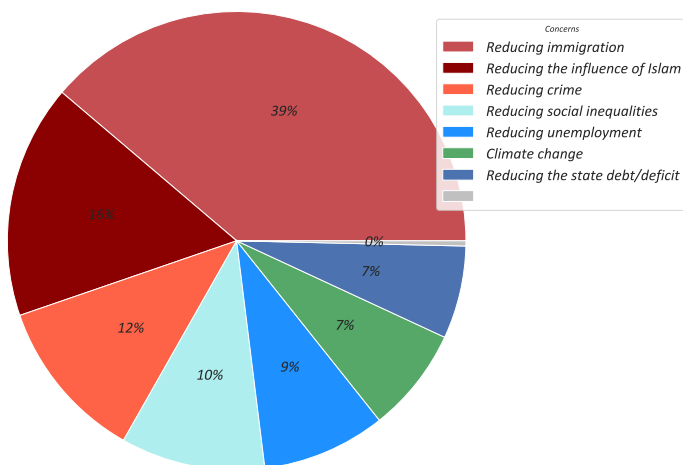
Concerns of the vote group : JLM 2022



Concerns of the vote group : Macron 2022



Concerns of the vote group : Far-right 2022



Concerns of the vote group : No\_vote 2022

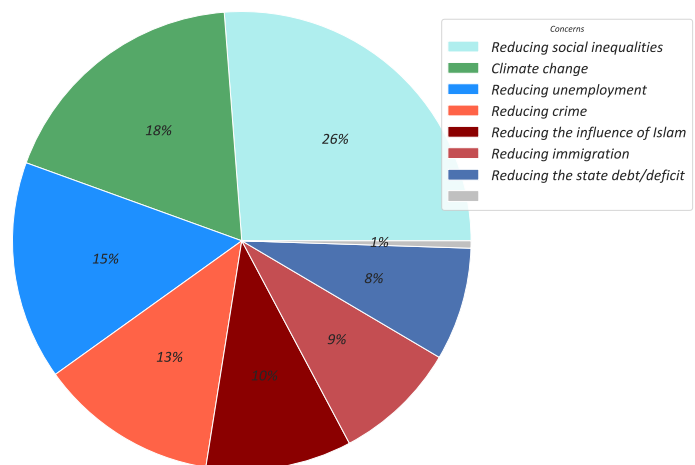


Figure 7

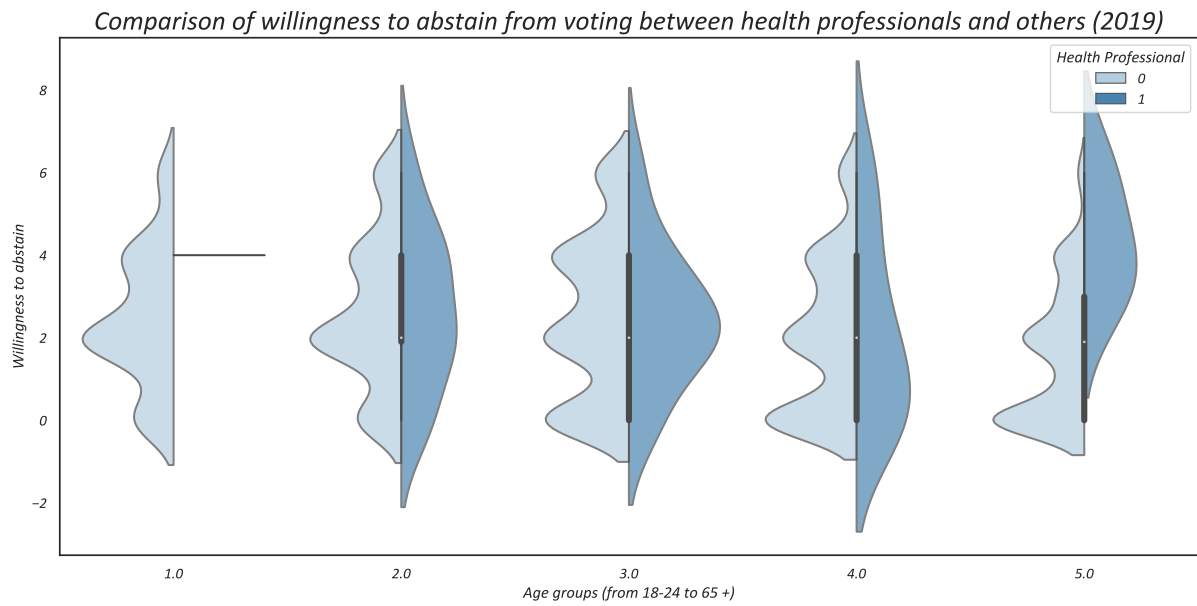


Figure 8



## 4 ... and that is influenced by various media ...

### 4.1 The unequal television coverage and the influence of some biased TV shows

The influence of the media was significant during the pandemic. Firstly, people had more time to watch television and use social media, and politicians and journalists used the media extensively to explain and comment on the crisis and government actions. This had thus extrapolated some bias in some media. One main example that had a real influence on voting is some news channels, especially CNews [The New York Times, 2021]. **Table 2** and **Table 3** show the television coverage of some candidates ordered by time. On both TV channels that are the main information channels in France, the presence of Eric Zemmour is striking and is largely noticeable in **Table 4**. The President and his government are also very covered which makes sense, especially during the time of health restrictions. **Table 4** also distinguishes the effect between voting for Marine Le Pen (MLP) and voting for Eric Zemmour, with and without the media effect. Thus we find that the media effects are significant and that the overall effects are quite different between Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour. First, we notice that supporting the Antivax movement has a greater effect on voting for Zemmour than disagreeing with the Covid crisis management or supporting the Yellow jackets which is not the case for voting for Marine Le Pen. Eric Zemmour has thus support that seems much more linked to the pandemic. Indeed we also notice that having voted for Marine Le Pen has a large coefficient but that does not explain everything. So people that did not vote for the far-right before (which was previously only represented by Marine Le Pen's party) could now. Also, the effects of media corroborate the theory that watching news channels such as CNews has a large influence on the voting intention for Zemmour. Moreover, we can note that the use of Twitter has a great influence on the voting intention for both Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour. This brings another dimension to the use of media and especially social media. In particular, the interaction term  $Age * Twitter$  (with Twitter being a dummie variable here) demonstrates that Twitter has an even larger effect on the youth among Twitter users.

Table 2: CNews' (Television channel) political coverage during September 2021

Intervenant	Appartenance	Durée
MACRON EMMANUEL	President	<b>12:21:59</b>
ATTAL GABRIEL	Minister	06:47:24
CASTEX JEAN	Minister	06:29:54
ZEMMOUR ERIC	Far-right candidate	<b>06:21:42</b>
SCHIAPPA MARLENE	Minister	04:08:38
MELENCHON JEAN LUC	Far-Left candidate	<b>03:35:16</b>
LE DRIAN JEAN YVES	Minister	02:45:34

**Source:** French Superior Audiovisual Council, September 2021

Table 3: BFM TV's (Television channel) political coverage during September 2021

Intervenant	Appartenance	Durée
ZEMMOUR ERIC	Far-right candidate (Reconquête!)	<b>03:28:42</b>
MACRON EMMANUEL	President	<b>03:27:42</b>
MELENCHON JEAN LUC	Far-left candidate	<b>02:35:09</b>
LE PEN MARINE	Far-right candidate (RN)	<b>02:19:12</b>
ATTAL GABRIEL	Minister	01:57:26
CASTEX JEAN	Minister	01:05:42

*Source: French Superior Audiovisual Council, September 2021*

## 4.2 The role of social media

Thus different dynamics are going on in the use of social media. But overall it has a very important role in today's communication and some platforms were largely used to interview candidates or to talk about the campaign. But one main event demonstrates this. Indeed as the environmental issues have been silenced during the campaign: out of more than nine hours of airtime, only sixteen minutes were devoted to the climate crisis (a third was devoted to nuclear power), ten seconds to biodiversity. Far behind security (1 hour 24 minutes) or immigration (50 minutes). To rectify this, some environmental NGOs organized the "Debate of the century" to interview the presidential candidates on those issues and that happened on Twitch [Le Monde, 2022]. We approached the channels to propose this debate, but they refused," says Cécile Duflot, former head of the green party EELV and current director-general of Oxfam. "Political journalists are not interested in the climate - it's too technical, too anxiety-provoking - and they are as much in denial as the politicians." Twitch is a platform "that reaches a young public, far from the traditional media, a public that generally abstains from voting", analyses Jean Massiet (the political journalist that presented the debate). "It's an opportunity for young people to come and see their candidates, to talk to them about the issues that interest them, they will be able to watch and comment on the program with a chat and say what they think about it". However, Emmanuel Macron, Eric Zemmour, and Marine Le Pen did not accept this invitation, six other candidates did. Yet, Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen were the two winners of the first round of the presidential elections. Finally, we can say that social media has a great influence today in politics but different dynamics are going on on the different platforms.

Table 4: OLS Regression with clustered standard errors by region

<b>Voting Intention</b>	MLP (1)	Zemmour (2)	MLP (3)	Zemmour (4)
<b>Has voted for MLP in the past</b>	2.2506*** (0.0717)	0.5681*** (0.0859)	2.2540*** (0.0716)	0.5837*** (0.0870)
<b>Opinion on the Covid crisis management</b>	-0.1197*** (0.0068)	-0.0552* (0.0249)	-0.1173*** (0.0067)	-0.0468* (0.0212)
<b>Could abstain from voting in 2022</b>	-0.0174 (0.0134)	0.0499** (0.0111)	-0.0163 (0.0142)	0.0508** (0.0126)
<b>Opinion on the 'Yellow jackets'</b>	0.0904** (0.0291)	0.0336 (0.0199)	0.0885** (0.0294)	0.0330 (0.0245)
<b>Opinion on the 'Antivax'</b>	0.1299** (0.0337)	0.1991*** (0.0385)	0.1365** (0.0354)	0.2054*** (0.0407)
Trust in the media	0.0389 (0.0377)	0.0473* (0.0185)	0.0523 (0.0381)	0.0731** (0.0163)
<b>Age group</b>	-0.0673** (0.0195)	0.0572** (0.0177)	-0.0980*** (0.0119)	0.0191 (0.0151)
Gender	0.0002 (0.0295)	0.1456** (0.0393)	-0.0064 (0.0262)	0.1652*** (0.0341)
<b>Usually watches CNews/BFM</b>	0.0816 (0.0478)	0.3199*** (0.0387)		
Usually uses Facebook	0.0484 (0.0277)	-0.0707 (0.0553)		
<b>Usually uses Twitter</b>	0.5352** (0.1387)	0.8550*** (0.1041)		
<b>Interaction Age*Twitter</b>	-0.1292** (0.0310)	-0.1776*** (0.0174)		
const	0.7381*** (0.0864)	-0.0717 (0.0997)	0.9047*** (0.0465)	0.1109 (0.0695)
R-squared	0.5023	0.1521	0.4981	0.1180
R-squared Adj.	0.5004	0.1489	0.4968	0.1158

**Notes:**

Standard Errors are robust to cluster correlation

Standard errors in parentheses.

\* Significant at 10%, \*\* Significant at 5%, \*\*\* Significant at 1%



## 5 ... resulting in more weight for the far-right parties.

In the end, if the contestation is high in France, Emmanuel was still re-elected president. However, as the legislative elections confirmed, there is a real breakthrough of the far-right in France. It is historical as they were not numerous enough last term to form a group but have now won a large part of the seats of the presidential majority. The left coalition gained a few seats too. Finally, these results can be explained in two dimensions. On the one hand, new protests have emerged and the discontent towards Emmanuel Macron was renewed with the pandemic policies. On the other hand, the far-right parties exploited well this discontent and were also privileged by the traditional media. Many people also vote to block one candidate or another. The 'useful vote' is also usually used to support a candidate that has more weight and will be able to block another one. Blocking historically refers to blocking the far-right and explains for some people why Emmanuel Macron still won the elections. However, people dissatisfied with the hospital policies, the environmental issues, the students' precariousness, or some economic issues were less convinced about the candidates. Some did finally vote for Jean-Luc Mélenchon that gained many votes in the end but struggled to get the left-wing politicians to support him. So the votes of the left-wing were mainly shared between him, the green party, and a lot of abstention. This was again proved at the legislative elections when 70 % of the 18-34 years old abstained from voting and people who voted for Jean-Luc Mélenchon for the legislative elections are the ones that abstained the most for the presidential elections. [Public Senate information]

Therefore we can say that during the pandemic the far-right succeeded in building a strong party and won votes among the abstainers and the disappointed towards Emmanuel Macron. Whereas the left parties did not succeed in joining their forces and convincing people to vote for them. That way the opposition is mainly led by the far-right. However most of the disappointed are still abstainers today.

## To go further

In this work I tried to cover the main topics that demonstrates the link between Emmanuel Macron's policies and the voting behavior during the pandemic. However, I have omitted some analysis. First, it would very interesting and relevant to do a geographical analysis of the pandemic. Especially the overseas territories should be included as they were very touched by the policies. Many people did not get vaccinated and the hospitals were in great difficulty in those territories. Also, they had a very low vote share for Emmanuel Macron.

It could be very interesting too to work on panel data if some surveys followed the same individuals during the pandemic. Or at least to work on the evolution of certain populations or regions.

Finally, further work could be done on the analysis of the policies by comparing them with comparable countries in Europe.

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