The city of Paris is representative of the competing political traditions in French history since the inception of the first monarchy; monuments, plazas, buildings give testimony to the journey towards the Fifth Republic. There is a correlation between the characteristics of the most popular sites in the city, their locations in either a western or eastern half, and voting patterns in the presidential election over time. The compounded effect of these correlations is a physical and electoral representation of a reconciliation of combative political development, and tells the story of a nation confronted with the living past.
Introduction
The City of Lights represents many things to many different people. Romance, tourism, fashion, high culture, artistry are easy representations of the city. However, the very sites that attract visitors to the French capitol tell a story of French political development. With three monarchies, two empires, five republics, the discerning of one clear political tradition is ambiguous and difficult. The nature of the presidency itself, its institutions, its practices and representations, and its place in French culture and society indicate its particularities, not only as a phenomenon in French history, but in European history and globally as well.

The presidential system of the Fifth Republic is, in essence and practice, reconciliation between the monarchist, bonapartist, and democratic traditions. Paris, the seat of political power, is a physical representation of that reconciliation. Much has been written on the city of Paris (sources), and how the act of commemorating, rebuilding, restoring, naming, destructing, or altering the many streets, statues, buildings, and plazas reflect attempts to promote different political agendas and certain interpretations of history. The French capitol is a 40.7 mile² mausoleum to great moments, individuals, and ideals in French history.

The changeability of names, the disappearance (or reappearance) of statues, commemorative plaques, and the mere lack of anything commemorative reflects choices on what to remember, and that memory is subject to the order of the day.

Paris might reflect ‘official’ attitudes towards history since the ancien régime, but there is still a certain element of continuity that is also reflected in the city’s planning and sociology. In an article exploring the recoding of Place de la Concorde, Danielle Tartakowsky remarks on how the western side of the city is punctuated by monuments of a militaristic, imperialistic, nationalistic nature, whereas the eastern side of the city has significantly more republican, fraternal, revolutionary monuments.

Although the lieux de mémoire have been recoded, rethought, and revisited over time, there are certain essential characteristics of the most well-known sites that connote one of the three traditions and related ideas: it is not a stretch to couple imperialism with monarchism for the western side, and leave the democratic tendencies for the eastern half of the city.

French Identity through Parisian Planning in Today’s Europe
An important characteristic that helps define the place of the presidency in contemporary France is that the president is the ‘Republic incarnate’ (Gaffney 2012). As the embodiment of not just the political regime, but French values and history, and above all, the French people, the president also
incarnates the aforementioned competing political history. Paris, as political power incarnate – if not perhaps stereotypically and exaggeratingly France incarnate – offers an opportunity to study how this reconciliation with the past is dealt with on a physical, more immediate level.

After having been in France during the presidential elections of 2012, it was clear that the way Paris votes has significance, whether as just a media curiosity, or some personal meaning for whomever is going to reside in the Palais d’Elysée for the next five years. Further prodding in Parisian election history illuminated a correlation between the west/east divide on the physical, monumental level, and the electoral level. The western side of Paris, typically richer, more established, more traditional, more conservative, votes majoritarily for the right-wing candidate. The eastern side of Paris, typically younger, traditionally more bohemian, with a higher immigrant population, more ‘liberal’ votes for the left-wing candidate with important stability.

The only data available that charts results from the second round of the French presidential elections of the Fifth Republic by Parisian arrondissement starts in the 2002 election. 2002, however, was a hallmark election and does not offer the best control for understanding this pattern, so first-round results (whichever candidate accrued the most support in an arrondissement is declared ‘winner’) are also used. In 2002, extreme-right candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen of the Front national eked past Socialist party candidate Lionel Jospin by 0.7% of the vote to make to the second round. The most recent election also marks an interesting departure: 2012 was the first time the candidate from the Socialist party won Paris all arrondissements counted together. Whether 2012 marks sharper turn left for the capitol city, or whether anti-sarkozyism triumphed and President Hollande was swept in to office on those means, only 2017 and succeeding elections can tell us.

However, by offering a visual representation of electoral, physical, ideological, and historical reconciliations of the past in Paris, contemporary attitudes to French presidentialism and French national identity are illuminated in a new light.

**Orienting East and West**

While it is certainly easy to cut a transversal line through the center of the city to delineate east and west, I chose to follow major streets and boulevards to make a more nuanced division of the city. My east-west divide was made through my own understanding of the city, and is therefore subject to my experiences there and how I understand the monuments and cultures to situate themselves by arrondissement or neighborhood.

Starting in the 14th arrondissement, or the southern (‘bottom’)-central part of the city, I follow Boulevard Raspail into the
6th arrondissement, across rue de Rennes, then rue du Four, down Boulevard Saint-Germain, then up rue Dauphine, then across Pont Neuf to the Right Bank. On the Right Bank, the divide continues along rue de l’Amiral de Coligny, which turns into rue du Louvre, onto rue de Montmartre, until it turns into rue du Faubourg Montmartre, right turn into rue de Maubeuge, up rue de Rochechouart, which turns into rue de Clignancourt, to the périphérique.

Monuments that I have highlighted to belong to the Western part of the city are the following:

- Place de la Concorde (8th arron.)
- Place Vendôme (8th arron.)
- Place des Pyramides (1st arron.)
- Hôtel des Invalides (7th arron.)
- Champ de Mars (7th arron.)
- Trocadéro (16th arron.)
- By necessity: Tour Eiffel (7th arron.)

The Eastern half includes:

- Place de la Bastille (4th arron.)
- Place de la République (10th arron.)
- Place du Panthéon (5th arron.)
- Place de la Nation (11th arron.)

**Image Sources**

**Place de la Concorde:**
- Images 1-3: Researcher (U12004), January 2013

**Place Vendôme:**
- Images 1-2: Researcher (U12004), January 2013

**Hôtel des Invalides:**
- Image 1: Researcher (U12004), December 2011

**Champ de Mars:**
- Image 2: Researcher (U12004), May 2012

**Trocadéro:**
- Images 1-2: Researcher (U12004), January 2012

**Place de la Bastille:**
- Image 2: Researcher (U12004), May 2012
- Image 3: Researcher (U12004), January 2013

**Place de la République:**
- Images 1-2: Researcher (U12004), January 2013

**Place du Panthéon:**
- Images 1-2: Researcher (U12004), December 2011

**Place de la Nation:**
Images 1-3: Researcher (U12004), January 2013

Martine Aubry
(no listed photographer for portrait)

Jacques Chirac
(no listed photographer for portrait),

François Hollande
(no listed photographer for portrait)

Lionel Jospin
(no listed photographer for photographer)

Ségolène Royal
(no listed photographer for photographer)
http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-8IfHAdXYhKc/T7oIFEGvA-I/AAAAAAAAXvS/HP8oWBFZrvk/s1600/Portrait%2BSe%CC%81gole%CC%81One%2BRoyal.jpg, accessed 17 February 2013.

Nicolas Sarkozy
(no listed photographer for portrait)

Electoral Results
The electoral data used come from “Open Data,” database available through paris.fr, the website of the municipal government of Paris. Open Data has data available since 2000, and the rest of the French governmental websites have not yet uploaded data from before that same year.

The maps represent the results by arrondissement from the past three elections: 2002, 2007, and 2012. Although this do not give the most expansive view of change (or lack thereof) over time, this data does illustrate the fixed nature of voting patterns in Paris.

I have mostly focused on the second round of the presidential election because the right/left cleavage is at it’s most obvious. The UMP (Union pour un mouvement populaire – Union for a Popular Movement) is the major right wing party, and the PS (Parti socialiste – Socialist Party) is the major left wing party. The candidates from these two parties are the ones that typically reach the second round. Therefore, it is a simple demonstration how the political cleavage correlates to the monumental
The first data in the set, 2002, is an aberration in and of itself. Known as the *coup de tonerre*, extreme-right candidate from the Front national, Jean-Marie Le Pen acceded to the second round over expected favorite from the Parti Socialiste and then-Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin. Therefore, the traditional breakdown between right wing (UMP/RPR) and left wing (PS) is disrupted. I used data from both rounds of the presidential election in 2002. In the second round, RPR/UMP candidate and then-President Jacques Chirac won all of Paris. In the first round, I color-coded pink and blue for the arrondissements where either Chirac or Jospin had the largest percentage overall of the vote. Coded that way, the pattern holds true.

I also included the results for the second round for the Parti socialiste primary, to demonstrate that the tendency to vote more conservative correlates strongly to the west, and vice versa for the east. In the second round of the PS primary, François Hollande was considered the more ‘conservative’ candidate, and Martine Aubry was considered more ‘liberal.’ The east/west pattern holds true again.

In the areas of the northeast part of the city, the 18-20th arrondissements, are home to the city’s largest immigrant population. Though one cannot feel a sharp contrast when crossing from East to West Paris and vice versa, there are areas of the city where the average person on the street suddenly changes, the types of stores changes, the language on the store signs change, and it is clear that you are in a different part of the city. That these parts of the city vote resoundingly Socialist might be a reflection of the staunch position the RPR/UMP have taken on "security" issues, immigration, laïcité and head scarf affairs, which target the very Muslim and African immigrants concerned in the 18-20th arrondissements. To further explore this question, however, it would necessary to explore the socioeconomics and cost of living differences between the outer arrondissements on the Right Bank and the center of the city to also understand why there are large immigrant populations in those areas. The linkage between Eastern Paris and republican values might not be the driving force behind the growth of these populations that challenge and enrich the very meaning of what is to be French today.

Data from the French presidential general elections used in this project can be found here:

And for the Socialist primary:
(journalist not accredited)
Conclusion
There is no better meter of a nation's understanding of its place in the world than its relationship with its past.

The political tumult that led to the birth of the Fifth Republic fell in the middle of a century that saw Europeans pitted against Europeans, and two World Wars that decimated the European infrastructure, the European people, and the European spirit. Moving beyond history, and then the turn to how to remember it has defined the European experience since.

The French relationship with its political past demonstrates the very nature of cognitive dissonance and careful recognition of the complicated moments. The presidential election, with its populist tendencies, its cult of the personality, its emphasis of the decisive power of the executive reflects different political philosophies that each saw their heyday since the French Revolution. That republicanism has become synonymous with what it means to be French indicates that one could argue that the democratic tendency has one. However, through the very layout of the French capitol, all three live in on in a pervasive undercurrent.

In contemporary Europe, where challenges of continental unity are sharply in contrast to national attempts at preserving and promoting lingering particularisms, France's close relationship with its past, and how something so physically fixed as Paris embraces the resurgence of the past in the present demonstrates an important example of resistance to a Europeanizing trend. Europe, as defined by the geographical limits the Atlantic to the Urals, is also a resting place of competing political traditions on a much larger scale. Though the general consensus in France is on democracy à la the Fifth Republic, such a reconciliation on the European scale, of political traditions, political culture, and national identity is an enormous task, and one that took France almost 200 years; we can hardly expect it all to fall into place in an obviously conciliatory manner. Therefore, we can hypothesize that Europe has to make peace with the persistent national questions in order to forge a unified entity with longevity.

Bibliography


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