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978-1-107-06151-4 - A Divided Republic: Nation, State and Citizenship in Contemporary France
Emile Chabal
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A Divided Republic: Nation, State and Citizenship in Contemporary France

This book is an original and sophisticated historical interpretation of contemporary French political culture. Until now, there have been few attempts to understand the political consequences of the profound geopolitical, intellectual and economic changes that France has undergone since the 1970s. However, Emile Chabal's detailed study shows how passionate debates over citizenship, immigration, colonial memory, the reform of the state and the historiography of modern France have galvanised the French elite and created new spaces for discussion and disagreement. Many of these debates have coalesced around two political languages – republicanism and liberalism – both of which structure the historical imagination and the symbolic vocabulary of French political actors. The tension between these two political languages has become the central battleground of contemporary French politics. It is around these two poles that politicians, intellectuals and members of France's vast civil society have tried to negotiate the formidable challenges of ideological uncertainty and a renewed sense of global insecurity.

EMILE CHABAL is a Chancellor's Fellow in History at the University of Edinburgh.

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Pour mon père, avec un peu de retard.

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and stimulation have made me who I am. Sadly, my father died as I was preparing the final manuscript. It is hard to think that he will not be here to celebrate the publication of a book that is a result of his love, cajoling, critical engagement and careful attention. But he knew I would dedicate this book to him and I hope he will still be proud of it.

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Note on translation

This is a book about language – and, above all, the language the French elites use to talk about politics. Inevitably, this raises the difficult problem of translation. The high drama of much French political rhetoric often sounds odd or mildly amusing in English. Phrases such as 'la République rentre dans l'Histoire' or 'l'avènement d'une fracture coloniale' are virtually impossible to translate adequately. For the sake of consistency, all translations from French in the main text are my own, even where existing English translations exist; I have not translated French text in the footnotes. I also provide explanations in the main text where a term seems to me of particular importance (such as *communautarisme* or *fracture sociale*). I nevertheless urge readers to treat my translations as provisional and imperfect. Obviously, I take full responsibility for any major errors.

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