

# The Yellow vests (Gilets jaunes) movement in France: Background and analysis

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4.12.2020.

# Some previous studies

- Edwy Plenel. *La Victoire des vaincus. A propos des gilets jaunes.*
- Jacques Rancière. *Les vertus de l'inexplicable – à propos des "gilets jaunes", AOC.*
- Chantal Mouffe. *Pour un populisme de gauche.*
- Laurent Jeanpierre. *In Girum. Les leçons politiques des ronds-points*
  
- A moving target
  
- Question: In what sense is it a 'movement of the people'?

# Background

- 2017, Macron elected French president, majority in Assemblée nationale
- Anti-system, anti-party, symmetry with gilets jaunes
- Carbon tax, ecological transition
- Priscilla Ludosky, change.org, calls for a reduction in petrol prices
- 17 November 2018. Act I. (Facebook pages of the gilets jaunes)
- 280.000, roundabouts, motorway tolls, intersections
- 24 November 2018. Act II.
- Macron's intervention. Gives in on fuel tax, later minimum wage up by 100€, reduce social contributions to pensions... Problem with EU (budget deficit beyond 3%). Announcement of 'great national debate'.
- 42 directives of the people



LONGC JAMP

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LONGC JAMP





**1 GENERAL STATE** of the tax system. Amend the Constitution to prevent the State from taking more than 25% of the income of citizens.

**2 INCREASE** of 40% in the basic pension and social welfare programs.

**3 MASSIVE HIRING** increase in public sector to re-establish public services of the RGPP: trains, hospitals, schools, postal services...

**4 HOUSING** : Plan the construction of 5 million rent-controlled housing units through HLM to lower rents and reinvigorate the economy with employment. Impose severe penalties for mayors/prefectures that leave people on the streets.

**5 BANKS** : End the banking monopolies. Break up the 'too-big-to-fail' banks. Separate regular banking from investment banking. Prohibit taxpayer funded bank bailouts.

**6 DEBT ANNULMENT** : Cancel debts accrued through usurious rates of interest.

## II- POLITICS

**7 CONSTITUTION** : Rewrite the Constitution for the people and in the interests of national sovereignty. Implement referendums to vote on of popular initiatives.

**8 PROHIBIT LOBBYING** and vested interests from political decision-making. Permanent exclusion from the political life of any elective having a criminal record Put an end to the accumulation of mandates.

**9 FREXIT** : Leave the EU to regain our economic, monetary and political sovereignty. Respect the 2005 referendum result, when France voted against the EU Constitution Treaty, which was then renamed the Lisbon Treaty (at a cost of 50 million euros per year).

**10 TAX EVASIONS** : Clampdown on tax evasion by the ultra-rich. Recovering the 80 billion euros abandoned by the state each year to the CAC 40.

**11 STOP THE PRIVATIZATION** of public goods such as roads, airports, parking, trains (SNCF). Re-nationalization these services.

**12 RADAR AND CCTV** : withdrawal of unnecessary radars and video traffic monitoring which is nothing but a tax scheme disguised.

**13 NATIONAL EDUCATION** : Remove all ideology from the ministry of education, ending all destructive education techniques (globalist methodology).

ests. Seeing as the demands of some are far from sufficient to ensure a serious and perennial change, here is a non-exhaustive list with a guarantee of long-term results.

We are not naive, the plutocrats in power will do everything to prevent change, but it remains nevertheless essential to apply these proposals.

**15 MEDIA** : Break up media monopolies and end their interference in politics. Make media accessible to citizens and guarantee a plurality of opinions. End editorial propaganda.

**16 GUARANTEE THE LIBERTY** of citizens by including in the Constitution a complete prohibition on state interference in their decisions concerning education, health and family matters.

## III - HEALTH / ENVIRONMENT

**17 PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE**: Mandate a guarantee from producers that their products will last at least 10 years, and that spare parts will be available during that period.

**18 PLASTICS** : Prohibit the marketing of plastic bottles, glasses and other polluting disposable packaging.

**19 PHARMACEUTICALS** : Weaken the influence of Big Pharma on health in general and hospitals in particular.

**20 AGRICULTURE** : Ban GMO crops, carcinogenic pesticides, endocrine disruptors and monocrops.

**21 REINDUSTRIALIZE** France to reducing imports as well as pollution.

## IV- GEOPOLITICAL

**22 NATO** : End France's participation in foreign wars of aggression, and exit from NATO.

**23 FRANÇAUFRIQUE** : Cease pillaging and interfering, politically and militarily in Africa, which keeps Africa poor. Immediately repatriate all French soldiers. Establish relations with African states on an equal peer-to-peer basis

**24 IMMIGRATION** : Prevent migratory flows that cannot be accommodated or integrated, given the profound civilizational crisis we are experiencing.

**25 FOREIGN POLITICS** : Respect international law and the treaties we have signed.

These 25 proposals will immediately change the daily life of the French. The simple articles 9 and 10 of this charter can bring up to 130 billion euros per year to the public treasury. France is a rich country, its people



# Acts

- 1 December 2018. Act III ...
  - 13 April 2019. Act XXII.
  - ... continues
- 
- Macron gives in on plans on fuel, pensions, and the minimum wage
  - But not on scrapping the wealth tax or changing his position on law and order

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Participants that took place in demonstrations between November 24 and December 1, 2018.

Based on 166 questionnaires.

Face-to-face interviews, 28 questions, some of which open-ended, 15 questions dealt with the motivations of the participants, the reforms they desired, their preferred modes of action, and their relationships to politics, 13 with the socio-demographic profile

Typical profile: working or retired men and women, average age 45 (average for French population as a whole 41.4 years), working class or 'lower' middle class

83% use the automobile as a main means of transport (IFOP)

Age groups	%
18-24	6,2
25-34	22,7
35-49	27,2
50-64	26,6
over 65	17,3

Participants in questionnaire November-December 2018

Men 54%, women 45%

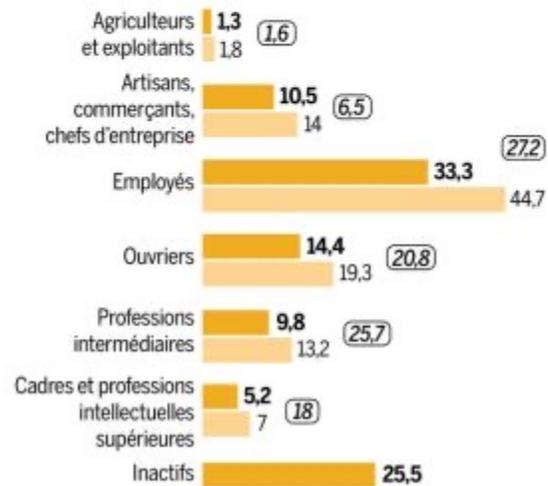
# Interviewed, socio-professional categories

Premiers résultats de l'enquête « Gilets jaunes »  
(équipe questionnaires), réalisée auprès de 166 personnes  
les 24 novembre et 1<sup>er</sup> décembre

## Répartition des personnes interviewées selon leur catégorie socio-professionnelle (en %)

- Ensemble des « gilets jaunes »
- Parmi les actifs chez les « gilets jaunes »

(xx) Rappel de la part dans la population  
active française en 2017



Individuals of modest income

Education	French population as a whole	GJ
university-level	27%	20%
high-school diploma	16,5%	29,3%
BEP and CAP	24%	35%

Income	French population as a whole	GJ
median declared household income	2100e	1700e
income of 10% poorest	519e	800e

# Political experience and opinions

- First mobilization 47%
- Have taken part in strikes 44%

Forms of collective action in which they already have taken part or in which they would be willing to participate: demonstration 81%, petition 69,4%, occupation of an administrative building 58,8%, tax refusal 5% (58,4% excluded this as a form of collective action)

# How they position themselves on the political spectrum

Sur une échelle de 1 à 7, vous vous définissez plutôt à gauche (1) ou plutôt à droite (7) ? (en %)

Ni de droite ni de gauche

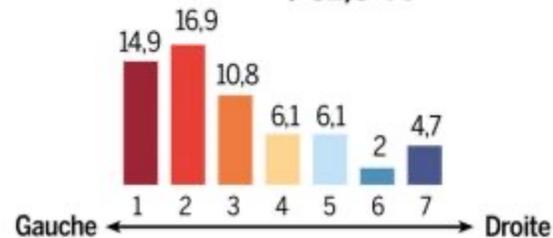
**33,1 %**

Ne se prononce pas

**5,4 %**

Se définit sur l'échiquier politique

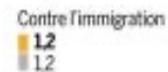
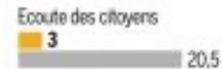
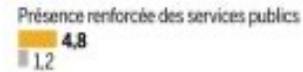
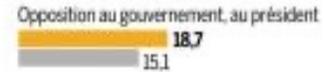
**61,5 %**



# Why are you demonstrating today?

Pourquoi manifestez-vous aujourd'hui ? Quelles mesures le gouvernement devrait-il prendre pour que vous trouviez que le mouvement est un succès ? (en %)

Motivations Mesures souhaitées



- "I want my children to have food on their plates in the last two weeks of the month, not just potatoes"
- "I can't afford housing, I live in a friend's outbuilding"

[https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2018/12/11/gilets-jaunes-une-enquete-pionniere-sur-la-revolte-des-revenus-modestes\\_5395562\\_3232.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2018/12/11/gilets-jaunes-une-enquete-pionniere-sur-la-revolte-des-revenus-modestes_5395562_3232.html)

# Opinions of individuals who have participated in the movement of the gilets jaunes (Kantar Sofres-OnePoint 21-25 February 2019)

- 36 % agree with the opinions of the RN (26% of the French population as a whole), 28% have already voted for the Rassemblement National (21% of the French population as a whole).
- 39% would like to see Marine Le Pen a candidate at the presidential elections in 2022 (33% of the French population as a whole).
- 30% think that Marine Le Pen would be "une bonne présidente de la République" (19% of the French population as a whole)
- 50% see European integration as a threat to French identity (31% of the French population as a whole, 70% of RN sympathizers), 40% would like to get rid of the euro and return to the franc (23% of the French population as a whole, 56% of RN sympathizers).



# To conclude

- A movement of the 'people'
- Working class, lower-middle class, people of modest income, the working poor. Abandoned by leftists parties (Socialists).
- 'intuitive complicity', economic discrimination,
- A challenge to social movement research
- Large size, strong presence of employees, first-time demonstrators, diversity of relationships with politics and party preferences,
- A challenge to the established political system (trade unions included). A counter-force (system politicisation). For the moment weak ties with banlieues or student activism but some close to RN (?).
- Technological developments, Facebook, Twitter... enable escape from intermediary institutions like parties, the media and trade unions.
- What will happen next? Absorb? Reject? VI Republic?