

FACES OF FRANCE

The Barometer of Territories 2019

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In the past 20 years, France's social and spatial structure has undergone profound transformations.

In two generations, the number of higher education graduates has doubled, rising to more than 40% of those who leave initial education each year.¹

Jobs are increasingly concentrated in the heart of metropolitan areas², while housing is increasingly clustered in peri-urban areas.³

These transformations have created new divides, which now separate those who are doing rather well and have been able to take advantage of these recent societal developments, from those who feel left out and who feel like they are losing on most, if not all, counts.

While the fear of being declassified now seems to have pervaded all social categories, and while many French people share the widespread feeling of living in an unequal and unjust society, the Barometer of Territories explores the impact of these social and territorial divides on their commitment to the national narrative and the "willingness to unite France".

Is today's France a patchwork of opposing territories, or is it rather the sum of various socio-economic situations that go beyond the objectively perceivable territorial divides? How do the French people view the territory in which they live? Is it a space that allows them to carry out and develop their life project, or, on the contrary, a space that restrains them?

In other words, what should be attributed to economic and social factors, and what should be attributed to geography and the state's presence in French territories (land-use planning, provision of public services)?

National lessons

The Barometer of Territories analyzes today's France from both a sociological and a territorial perspective.

By combining data on private happiness, one's social connections, people's views on housing and the places they live in, sense of social justice, expectations compared to realities in terms of quality of life, access to public services and infrastructure, and the ability to project oneself into the future, **the Barometer of Territories sketches an unprecedented portrait of the French people, their territories and their country.**

The French people report a happy private life, very largely enriched by the small and not-so-small joys related to family and the close relationships they have built with people whom they know they can rely on.

- 73% of French people say they are happy (33% *very happy*).
- 67% report to be satisfied with the balance between their personal, family, social and professional lives.
- 75% are confident that they have people around them to rely on in the event of serious problems.

¹ Marie-Emilie Clerc, Olivier Monso, Erwan Pouliquen, « Intergenerational inequalities since baby-boom », Insee, July 2011, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/1373852?sommaire=1373855>

² Thomas Allaire, Jérémie Bureau, Anne-Laure Le Serviget, Thierry Pech, « *Le marché du travail dans les grandes aires urbaines en 2015* ». Terra Nova, February 2016, <http://tnova.fr/etudes/le-marche-du-travail-dans-les-grandes-aires-urbaines-en-2015>

³ François Cusin, Hugo Lefebvre and Thomas Sigaud, « The Peri-urban Question: A Study of Growth and Diversity in Peripheral Areas in France », *Revue française de sociologie*, n°57-4, 2016.

- And 61% feel they have chosen the life they are living.

In most French regions, **this private happiness is extended by the impression that it "feels good to live" in one's neighborhood, in one's commune, no matter the socio-economic realities** (66% find it "nice to live" in their neighborhood or city, and 59% consider that the place where they live is "rather doing well").

Yet this personal space is being hit hard by **the fall in purchasing power and the now prevailing impression of living in a society that produces relegation and exclusion.**

No matter their social, cultural and heritage capital, a majority of French people expresses the same feeling of injustice and are outraged by the inequalities that divide their country and weaken its development.

- 78% consider the current society to be unjust (including 28% very unjust).
- 63% are convinced that *social success in France is a foregone conclusion and largely depends on people's social origins.*
- 42% are convinced that the society in which their parents lived was a fairer society than the one we live in today.
- This injustice sparks indignations among French people: the gap between high and low salaries (37%) and social inequalities (29%) crystallizes most anger. Only 6% of the French people are outraged by the inequalities between territories (9%, the highest point, in isolated, poorly urbanized living areas, outside the influence of the major hubs. The inhabitants of these areas, who could presumably have been more likely to express anger at the withdrawal of public services from their homes, are, like most people, first and foremost outraged by the gap between high and low wages).
- And weakens consent to taxation: 34% consider taxes not to be worthwhile and 65% consider that they contribute to the system more than they benefit from it.

However, the fiscal pact has not been broken: 81% of the French people say they are willing to pay more taxes if it could contribute, in particular, to reduce poverty (36%), to improve the healthcare system (31%), to reduce pollution (23%) or to improve the education system (21%). The ability to demonstrate the effectiveness of redistribution, and its objective contribution to social well-being and to the ideal of republican equality, is therefore at stake.

- The purchasing power crisis divides France in two: half of French people (48%) barely manage to make ends meet, 35% of whom only manage to make ends meet by restricting themselves, and 13% of whom are forced to draw on their savings or borrow money. 37% have had a bank overdraft at least several times in the last 12 months, on average on the 18th of the month.
- This tension on purchasing power is concretely reflected by:
 - Repeated difficulties to fulfill basic needs (18% have had several difficulties in paying their rent or mortgage over the past 12 months, 21% in paying their electricity, gas or fuel bills)
 - Renunciations (50% delayed or gave up on healthcare in 2018)
 - And a sum of trade-offs (32% almost systematically seek the lowest prices when they go food shopping, and 50% when they buy clothes or shoes).

The crisis due to the fall in purchasing power and the representations of an unequal and unjust society undermine the French people's confidence and ability to project themselves into the future.

- Only 47% of French people are optimistic about their personal future.
- 45% think that when their children are their age, they will be less well off than they are, compared to 15% who think they will be better off.
- 70% are pessimistic about the future of the French society (including 26% very pessimistic).
- A small relative majority of French people only half-heartedly claims to believe that public actors have the power to change the world in which they live: 52% for the mayor, 49% for the President of the Republic, 44% for the President of the Region and 39% for the deputy. Companies are relatively unaffected by this uncertainty: 61% believe that they have the power to change the world in which they live.

Despite this social distress, the reference to France remains the most unifying pillar, far ahead of other French territories: 73% are attached to France, while 58% express their attachment to their region, 53% to their department, 52% to their city and 45% to their district.

On the other hand, French people feel quite distant from the European Union: only 34% say they feel close to it. Indeed, the European Union suffers from a deep disenchantment, fuelled by the now entrenched conviction that it is failing to control migration flows (51%), to protect their region from the negative effects of globalization (47%) and to participate in the development of the area in which they live (40%).

However, private happiness and social distress are modulated - either attenuated or amplified - by the relationship that French citizens maintain, whether willingly or not, with their territory and with social mobility.

The Barometer of Territories reveals the coexistence of four ideal-types of social and territorial trajectories among French people.

- **21% of French people are free from territorial and social constraints:** they have little territorial attachment, they carry out their life project without hindrance, or they have the socio-cultural means to overcome obstacles, seize opportunities and take advantage of changes in our society, such as the digitization of our personal, social and professional lives, the European Union or globalization (the "emancipated French").
- **22% make a firm choice to take root in their territory.** Happy to live where they have chosen to live, their personal bubble is a shield that protects them from social violence, yet without concealing it (the "rooted French").
- **25% are assigned to their territory and suffer from social and territorial inequalities** (the "assigned French"). They are stuck, both geographically and socially. They envision their future and that of their children with pessimism.
- **32% experience a strong tension between their aspiration to social and territorial mobility and the difficulty in emancipating themselves from their socio-economic situation and from territorial inequalities** (the "French on the edge").

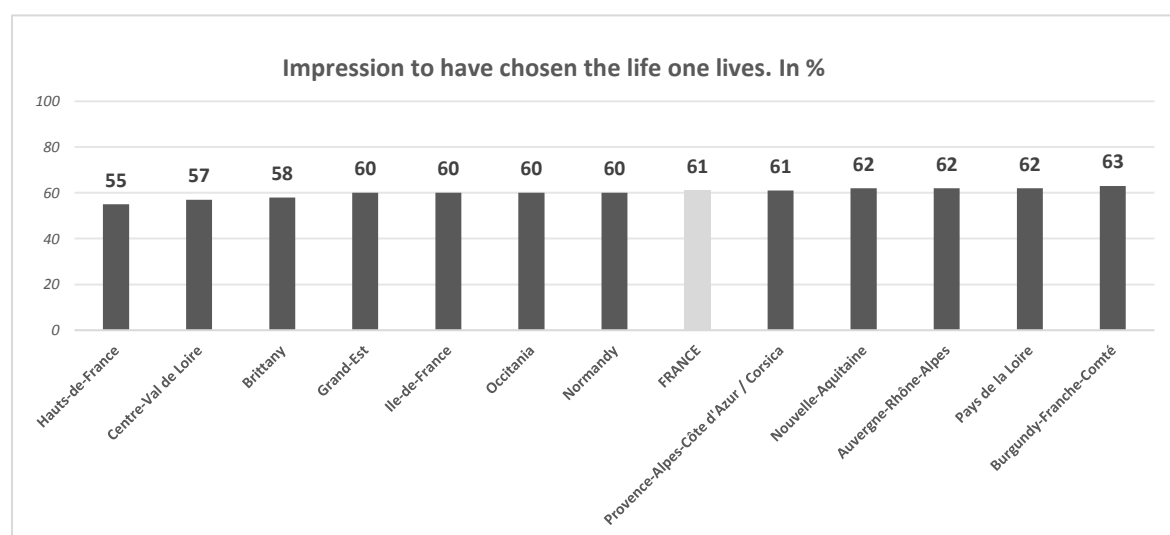
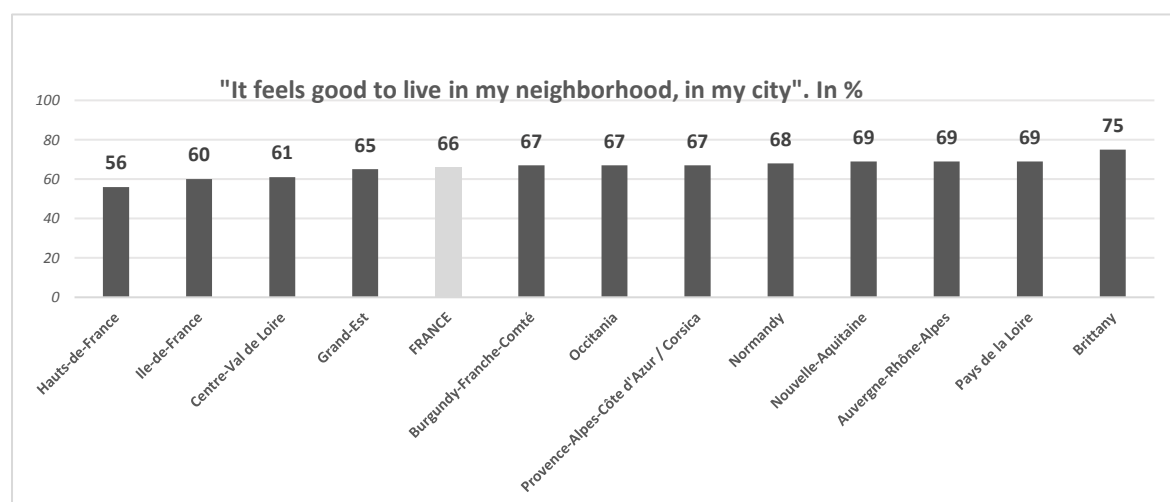
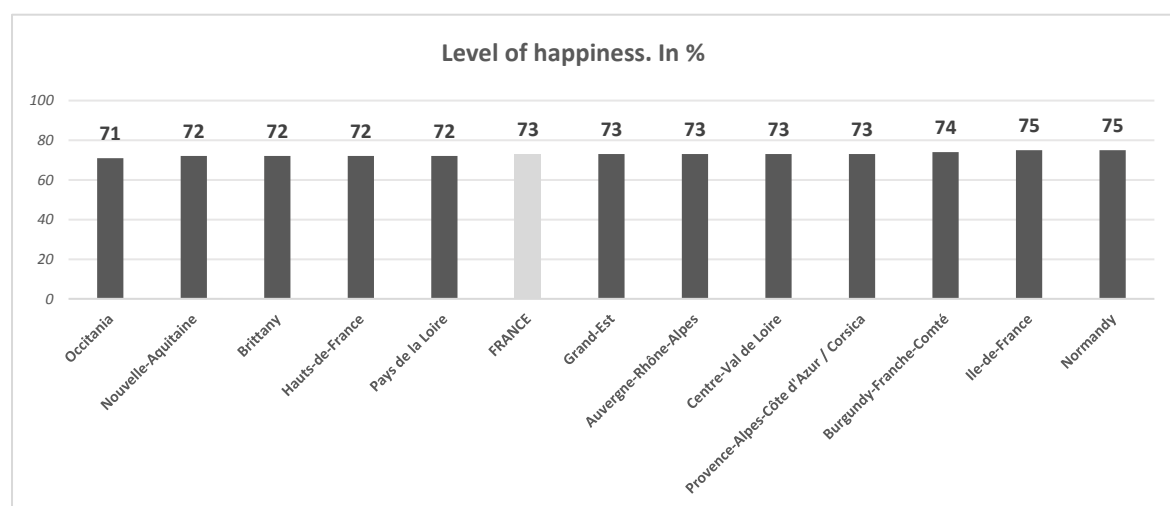
Individual fragility of French citizens is either dampened or amplified by the organization of territories, their socio-economic topography and the quality of public services. However, one major lesson of this Barometer of Territories is the crucial influence of one's perception of purchasing power and socio-cultural capital. **These factors are in fact more important than the objective features of areas where citizens live in (infrastructures, access to services, and so on) on their relationship toward society and toward their own life course.**

These four ideal-types of French people thus coexist and come across each other quite widely within the same territories (within the same administrative region, but also within areas which are objectively homogeneous in terms of public services and economic dynamism).

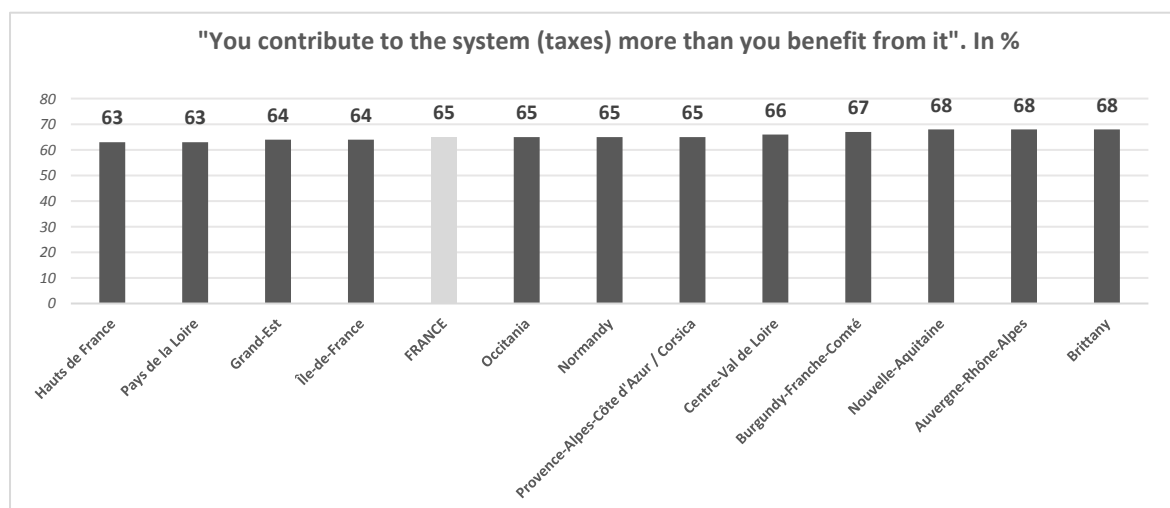
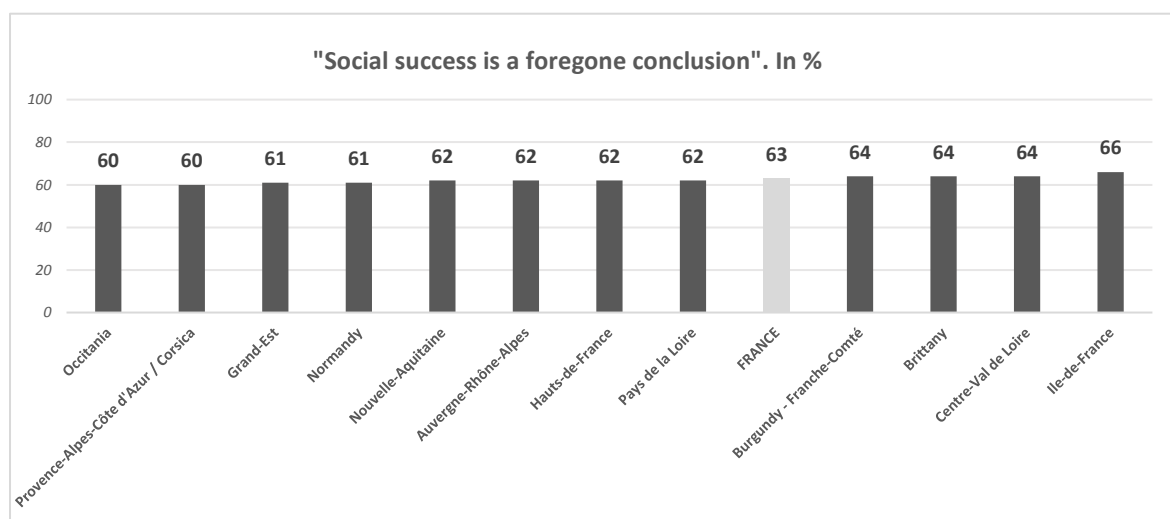
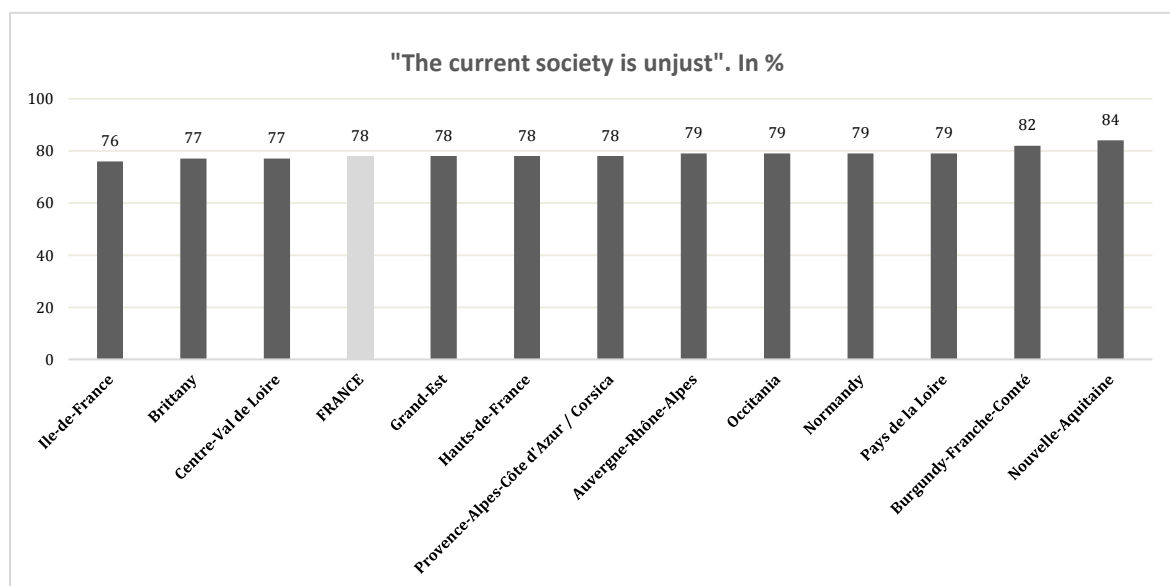
Therefore, the above results and their analysis sketch out the portrait of a France with several different faces. Yet these different faces express a common attachment to their country and, through this attachment, perhaps the aspiration to or the hope for a common destiny.

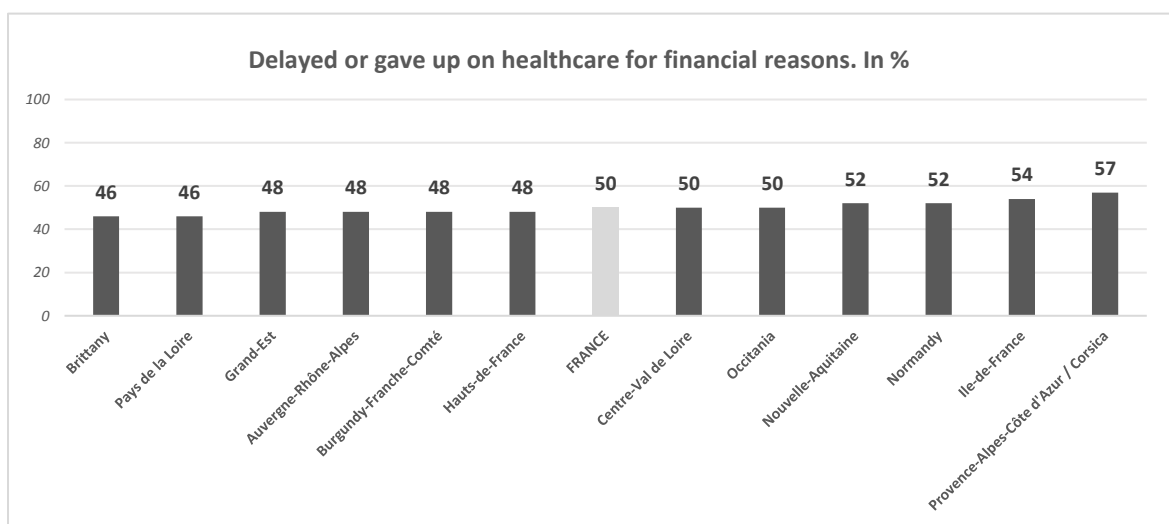
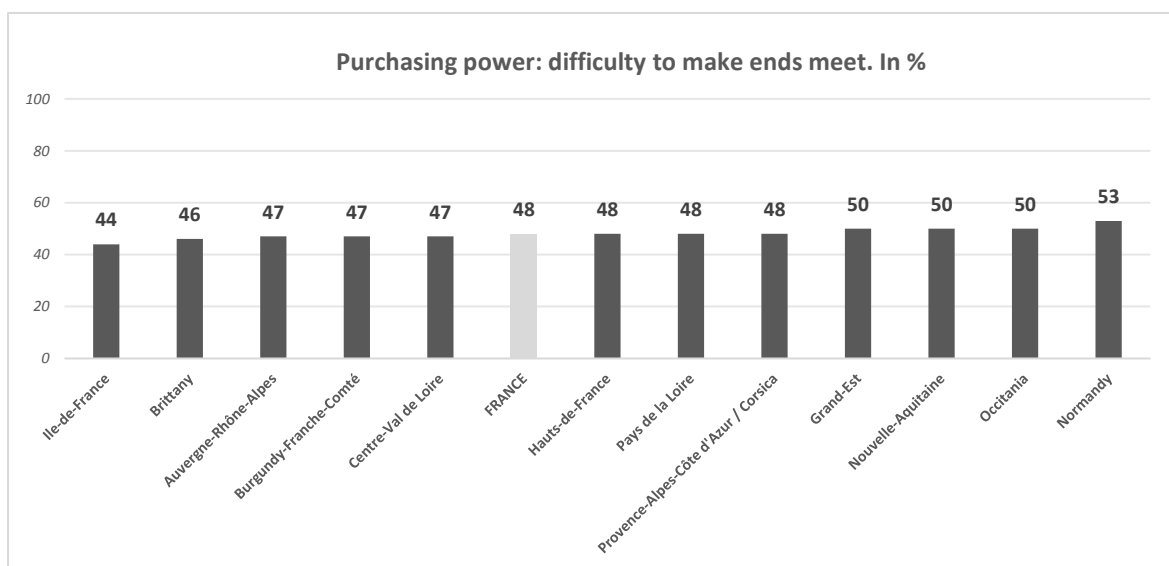
Key indicators compared by region

Private happiness:

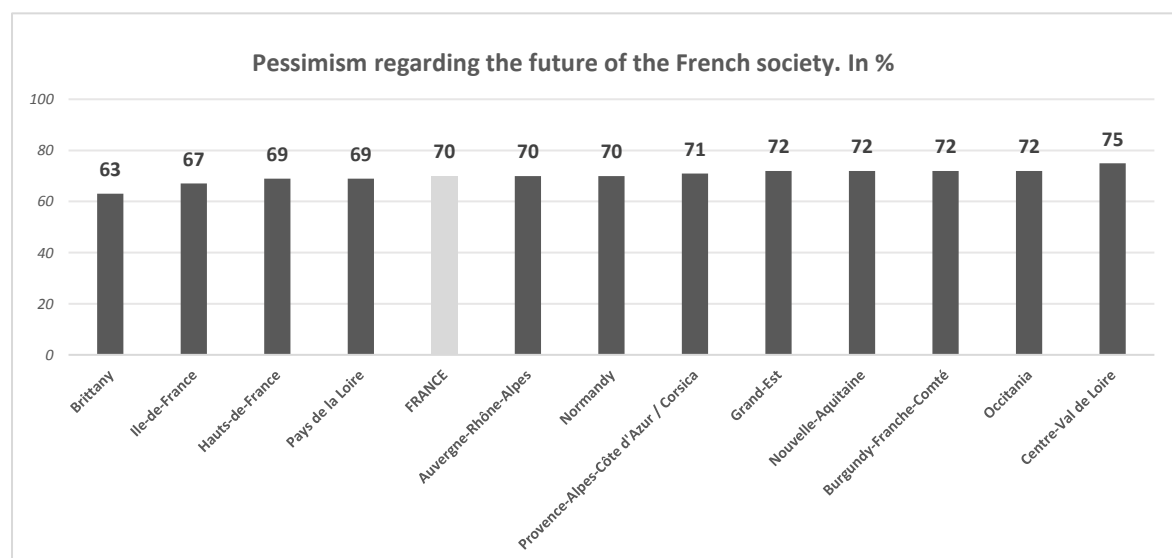
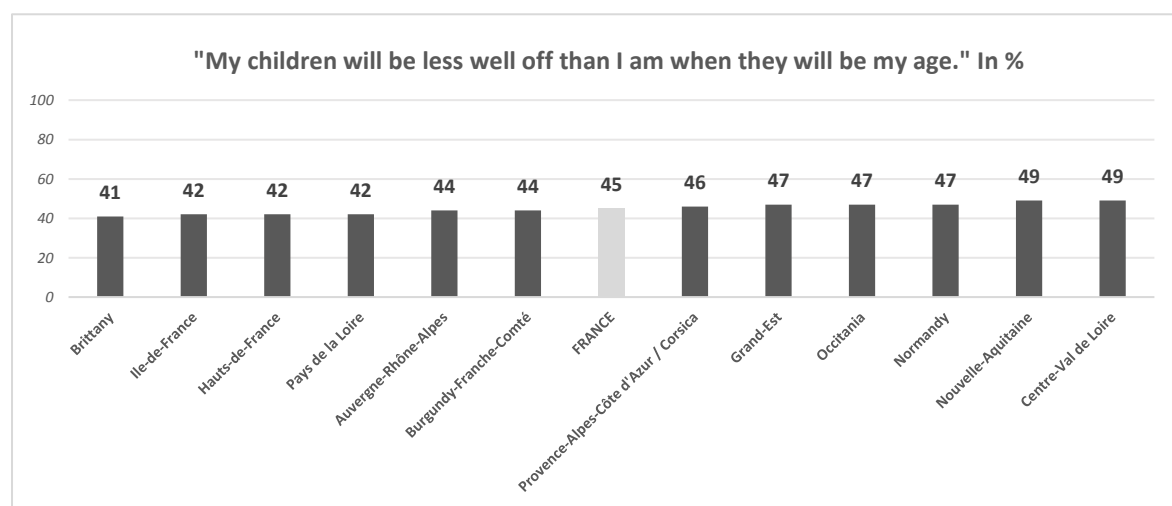
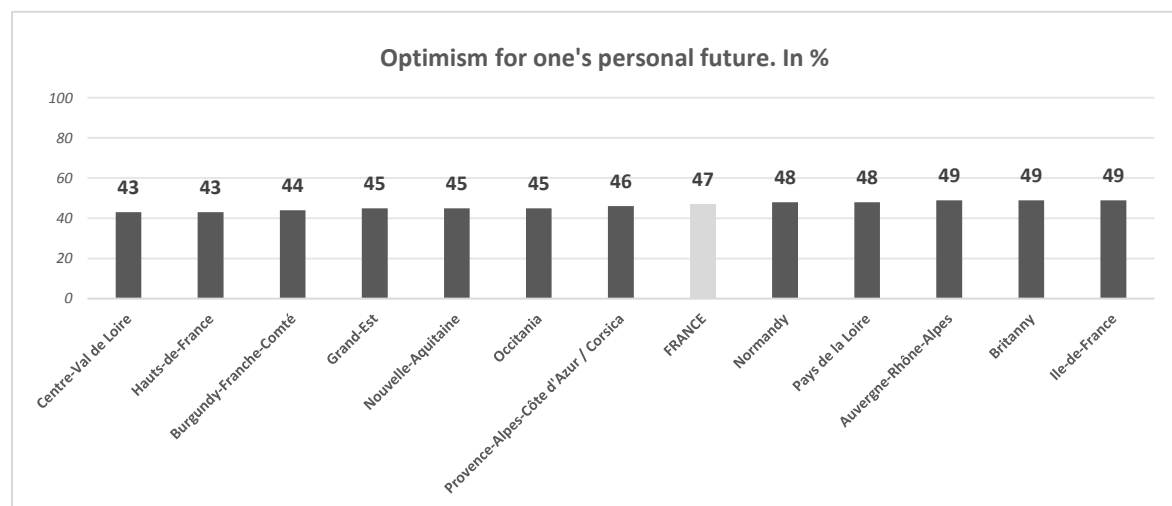


Social distress:

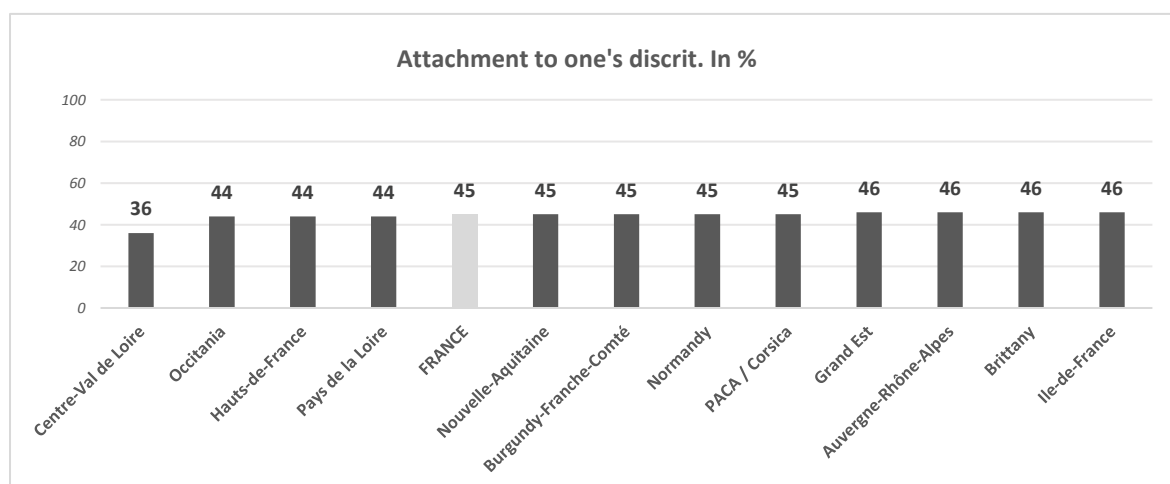
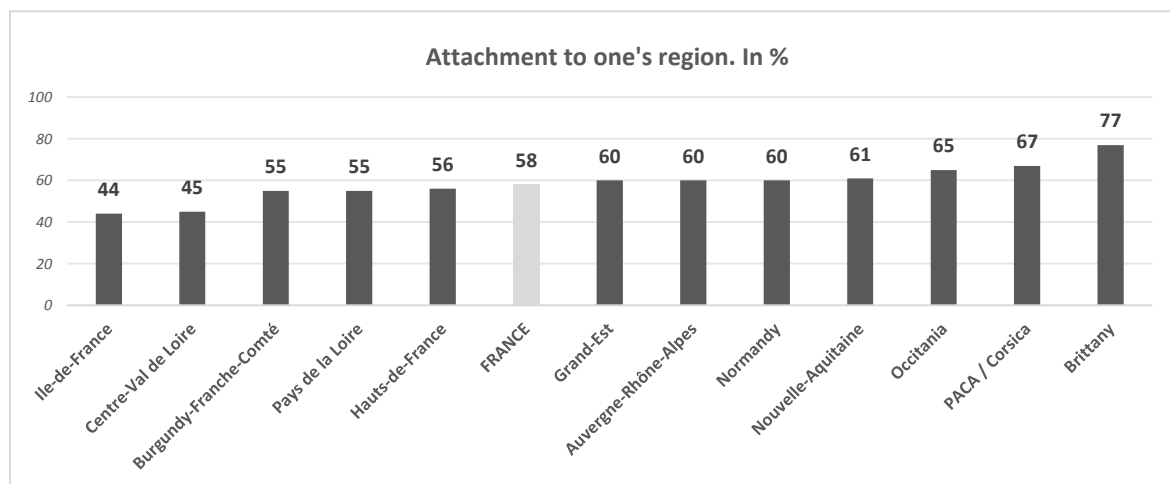
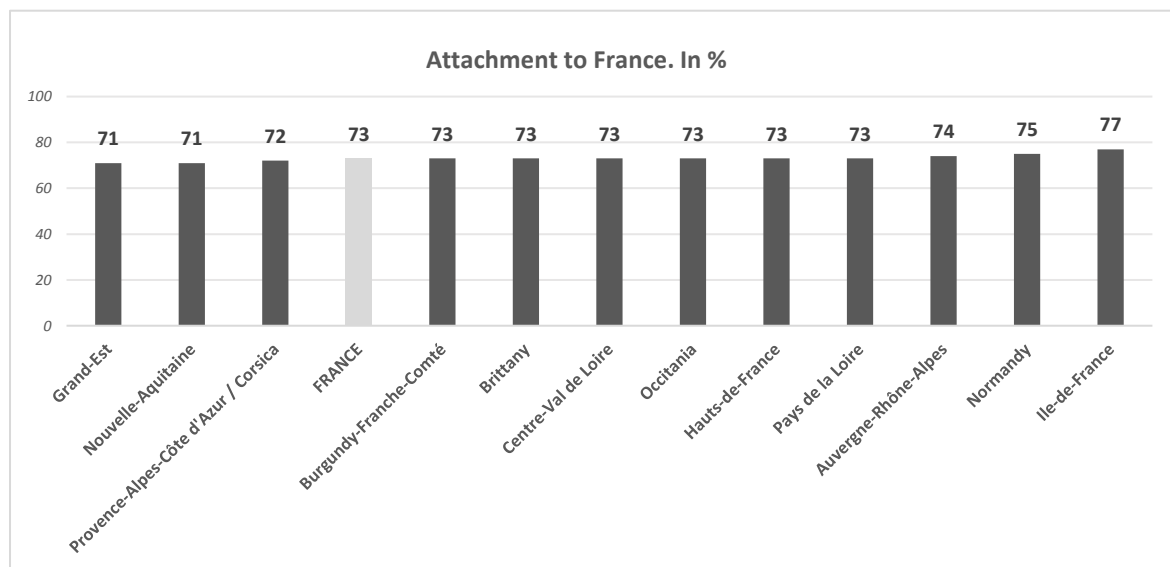




Fall in purchasing power and representations of an unequal and unjust society, weakening the French people's trust and ability to project themselves into the future:



Despite this social distress, the reference to France remains the most uniting pillar:



Method used for the "Barometer of Territories 2019" survey

Survey

A sample of 10,010 people, divided into 12 regional sub-samples of 800 individuals (1,200 in Ile-de-France) each representative of the resident population of each metropolitan administrative region, aged 18 and over. The regions of Corsica and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur were merged.

Sample selection

The representativeness of the sample was ensured by the quota method applied by region to variables such as gender, age, socio-professional category and agglomeration size.

Collection method and field dates

Internet survey between December 14, 2018 and January 8, 2019.

Questionnaire

The survey is divided into five sections: "Confidence and view of one's quality of life", "Social bond", "View of one's territory", "Relationship of the territory with the state and the European Union", and "Vision of society".

In total, the questionnaire includes 120 questions.

Margins of error

Confidence interval (with a 95% confidence level)											
Sample size	Results										
	2% or 98%	5% or 95%	10% or 90%	15% or 85%	20% or 80%	25% or 75%	30% or 70%	35% or 65%	40% or 60%	45% or 55%	50%
100 cases	2,6	4,4	6	7,2	8	8,6	9,2	9,6	9,8	10	10
500 cases	1,3	2	2,7	3,2	3,6	3,9	4,1	4,3	4,4	4,5	4,5
1 000 cases	0,8	1,4	1,8	2,3	2,5	2,7	2,9	3	3	3,1	3,1
2 000 cases	0,6	1	1,3	1,6	1,8	2	2,1	2,2	2,2	2,3	2,3
5 000 cases	0,4	0,4	0,6	0,8	1	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,4	1,4	1,4
8 000 cases	0,3	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1	1	1,1	1,1	1,1
10 000 cases	0,3	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	1	1	1

Note for the reader : for a sample of 10,000 people, if the result obtained is 25%, there are 95% chances that the real value be more or less located within a range of 0.9 points, and thus between 24.1% and 25.9%.