

# The “Marine” Factor

## What the Lepenisation of French Politics Really Means

*Barthélémy Courmont*

Marine Le Pen, president of the French extreme-right party Front National, emerged on the political scene as not only the daughter and heir to Jean-Marie Le Pen, but a smarter and more seductive leader than her father. Her rise – just a few months before the 2012 French presidential elections – and impressive results in the first round signal that she is likely to play a significant role in French politics and change the traditional political chessboard. In this light, the concept of the “Lepenisation of minds,” formulated several years ago to describe the impact of the far-right party on politicians and public debates, becomes more relevant, with Le Pen’s ability to win over and convince voters going far beyond the ranks of her traditional supporters. What might be the long-term consequences of this “Marine factor”? Is the extreme Right, once demonised, becoming a “normal” political presence? And how might this affect other political forces? This article examines what may be the future direction of French politics under the growing influence of the “new look” extreme-right party.

*Keywords: France, elections, Marine Le Pen, Jean-Marie Le Pen, Lepenisation, Nicolas Sarkozy, populism, extreme right*

### Introduction

When he shocked the nation and discounted all surveys pointing in the opposite direction by reaching the second round of the 2002 French presidential election – having eliminated Socialist PM Lionel Jospin – Jean-Marie Le Pen certainly enjoyed the most exciting and successful



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moment of his political career.<sup>1</sup> But he also knew that he did not stand a chance of becoming France's new head of state. Indeed, his opponent, Jacques Chirac soundly defeated him two weeks later and assured his own re-election. With less than 18% of the vote (a similar result to his first-round score of 16.9%) to Chirac's improbable 82.1%, Le Pen, the leader of Front National, the extreme-right party he founded in 1972, revealed his limits. Although his first-round result was legitimately considered a political earthquake – especially for the Socialist Party, which could not reach the second round just five years after a notable victory in the 1997 legislative elections – it also proved the inability of Front National to win an election and lead the country and marked the start of the slow decline of the far-right party.

The 2007 presidential elections confirmed Le Pen's difficulties in appearing as a credible alternative to what he constantly described as 'the establishment' although he remained under very close watch during the campaign, mostly because of his previous performance.<sup>2</sup> With support barely over 10%, Le Pen saw his worst results in two decades and was knocked out of the first round, quickly overcome by Nicolas Sarkozy (31%) and Ségolène Royal (26%). He finished in fourth position, far behind the centre candidate François Bayrou (18.5%). Having lost at least one million supporters between 2002 and 2007, most of whom had rallied behind Sarkozy,<sup>3</sup> Le Pen was no longer the exuberant political leader he once was, but an old and tired man when he conceded that he would never run for president again. To many observers, Front National seemed to be in a moribund state when its historic leader announced his retirement after more than 50 years in the political arena. This feeling was reinforced with the designation of his daughter Marine as his successor. Seen as too young, too soft, not legitimate and embodying a nepotism which attracted criticism even from within Front National ranks, Marine Le Pen's ability to rekindle the party she officially became president of in January 2011, was at first poorly evaluated.<sup>4</sup> Her spectacular rise both within the party and at national level proved the contrary.<sup>5</sup>

Less than two months later, Le Pen was officially elected president of Front National and stunned pollsters by recording 23% of the vote in a hypothetical presidential first round - well above the best figures her father had achieved and virtually eliminating either the Socialist candidate or then president Sarkozy depending on the polls.<sup>6</sup> But

those opinion polls had proved wrong on many – if not all – past occasions. In addition, all candidates were still not officially known, and Le Pen appeared to be the only one confident she would be running in the election, her first major test at that stage.<sup>7</sup> However, repeated polls giving her around 20% of potential voters – coupled with the difficulties faced by Sarkozy – clearly indicated an unexpected renewal of the extreme-right party. Marine Le Pen was in a position to claim justifiably that history was repeating: she had hopes of reaching the second round of the presidential election in 2012, just ten years after her father’s performance.<sup>8</sup>

The official result of the first round of the 2012 election was both a defeat and a victory for Marine Le Pen. Coming in third, she did not manage to relive her father’s performance and finished far behind Sarkozy and François Hollande, who eventually won the second round to become France’s first Socialist president since François Mitterrand. Nevertheless, with a result close to 18%, Le Pen both outscored her father and attracted more votes than any extreme-right party candidate in a presidential election in France’s history.<sup>9</sup> While her father totalled 4 804 713 votes in 2002, Marine Le Pen reached an incredible 6 421 426. She could claim a serious victory based on her ability to raise the number of supporters of the extreme-right movement.

It is not just that Le Pen seems capable of hanging onto the support of the traditional far-right voters who loyally followed her father for several decades. Her aptitude for expanding the nationalist movement’s influence and spreading its ideas – with success never known by her father – is as impressive as it is alarming for her opponents. But how far can she go? At present, and as the results of the 2012 presidential election have proved, the chances of a Front National candidate winning a major election still seem extremely slim, and most observers would simply reject this as nonsense based on the precedent of the “Republican front” that secured Chirac’s re-election in 2002 when he benefited from the support of not just his partisans, but also the entire Left seeking to avoid a hypothetical Le Pen success. Even her ability to reach the second round remains debatable. As for the risk of the Republican front not being reproduced in a future major election, recent statements by François Fillon, the former prime minister under Sarkozy, suggest that this is confined to local elections: the Republican blockade will likely stay the norm at national level, especially when

it comes to the presidential ballot. Marine Le Pen knows this reality better than anyone. Therefore, the meaning of the “Lepenisation” of French politics lies in the “Marine” factor and her ability to transform what lately has become an old-fashioned and outdated extreme-right movement into a respectable but still radical political party.<sup>10</sup> Is she making these efforts to enable her to win a future presidential election? Not necessarily. In parallel with her own real ambitions, she clearly aims to pursue her father’s long-time battle: spreading the ideas of the extreme-right across the political classes and, if possible, the population. With her natural talent and a favourable political context, she might reach what always remained an inaccessible summit for the elder Le Pen: turning the party into an accepted and, by extension, respected political force.<sup>11</sup>

### The Emancipation of “Daddy’s Girl”

Since she officially became president of Front National at the Tours congress on 16 January 2011 with 67.65% of the vote,<sup>12</sup> Marine Le Pen has initiated a comprehensive makeover of her father’s political party, confirmed in the first-round results of the 2012 presidential election, and emerged as an unexpectedly mighty political figure.<sup>13</sup> But what is behind what some may see as the fast and striking emancipation of a one-time “Daddy’s girl?”<sup>14</sup>

Le Pen’s rise within Front National has been particularly impressive since it was certainly not as easy as it may seem and her name may at first suggest. On 05 May 2002, the day of her father’s defeat in the second round of the presidential election, Le Pen made a noted appearance in a TV debate, revealing publicly for the first time her abilities as a political leader. A month later, she reached the second round of a legislative election in Lens in northern France and then managed to take away more than 32% of the vote in a second-round showdown eventually won by a Socialist candidate. This significant result did not, however, score her any credit with party delegates, who voted her out of an important position on the central committee at a congress in Nice in April 2003. Totally overlooking what might be seen as clear party disapproval, and showing obvious signs of nepotism, her father chose her as the party’s new vice-president the next day. What appears to have been his last political fight – against his own supporters – was

an extremely risky manoeuvre that could potentially have accelerated a split in Front National, then already quite divided, and shown the impossibility of the extreme-right party staying united and surviving its founder's retirement.<sup>15</sup>

This was not enough to discourage the young lawyer, who since her early years had faced various problems linked to her father's notoriety, from bullies at school to attempts on her life back in the 1970s.<sup>16</sup> Being raised as the youngest daughter of an extreme-right leader surely helped to build the toughness she proved once launched on the political arena. As soon as she took control of the party, Marine Le Pen imposed her own style against all odds, as she later claimed in her autobiography.<sup>17</sup>

This new style at first surprised most observers, but it was driven right from the start by a clear strategy. While preparing for the 2012 presidential election, Le Pen shocked supporters by adopting a "Gaullist" position totally different from the one embodied by her father: Jean-Marie Le Pen may be one of the only contemporary French politicians – along with far-left radicals – who never claimed the Charles De Gaulle legacy. In her own words, Marine Le Pen solemnly believed that 'in the Fifth Republic, a presidential election is about a person's relationship with the country.' Her father, an Algerian war veteran and a lively opponent of De Gaulle in the 1960s, probably dreamt on several occasions of this 'relationship,' but never expressed such views, which would likely have alienated him from the most radical elements of his movement. But Marine did not seem to be tempted by the extreme Far Right. She calculated shrewdly that the most radical Front National voters would likely maintain their support for her in the absence of any substantial rival. This left her to focus on expanding her audience in more pragmatist spheres, which had always been resistant to the neo-fascist image of the extreme-right party.<sup>18</sup> During the 2011 May Day rally in front of the Jeanne-d'Arc statue – used by her father during the 1980s as an icon to defend French heritage – she made sure that extremist factions of the party such as skinheads were kept out.

The younger Le Pen has also punished those who appear to be the most conservative and extremist members of her party. Alexandre Gabriac, a young member of regional parliament, was summarily banned from Front National in May 2011 after being photographed giving the Nazi salute.<sup>19</sup> More interesting than the ban itself, however, was the

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fact that the party's new president took this decision alone and against the wishes of Jean-Marie Le Pen. She also investigated the case of Yvan Benedetti, one of the biggest supporters of Bruno Gollnisch (Gabriac too was in his camp), who had been her greatest rival at the Tours congress. Benedetti was blamed for an interview he gave in which he publicly admitted to being anti-Semitic. He maintains, however, that he was punished for his engagement by Gollnisch, and he is probably right to some extent. But potential opponents within the party like Gollnisch are not Le Pen's biggest threat. She is far more concerned with the Front National image than her father was, and major mistakes like those by Gabriac and Benedetti are therefore immediately sanctioned and used to convince a broader audience that the makeover of the party is a reality. Gollnisch, who declined an offer to be the party's vice-president after Marine Le Pen's victory, once faced charges himself after allegedly denying Nazi war crimes in an October 2004 press conference. He is generally perceived as more conservative and right-wing than the Front National president.

The differences inside the party are not, then, the biggest concern for Le Pen, and cannot be compared with the split the French extreme-right underwent in the late 1990s when Bruno Mégret left Jean-Marie Le Pen's party to start his own movement.<sup>20</sup> Marine Le Pen does not just want to clean out the top ranks of the party her father founded: she also believes she has a unique opportunity to establish a fresh new image for Front National. When she publicly stated that 'the [Nazi] camps were the height of barbarity,' she not only challenged one of her father's most controversial and criticised statements of the mid-1980s, but at the same time "un-demonised" Front National in the eyes of many analysts.<sup>21</sup> Her strategy insists that Front National cannot be considered racist and anti-Semitic if it wants to gain wider support and acceptance, and she will not hesitate to sacrifice those who continue to dispute her vision. Several party members besides Gabriac and Benedetti have been censured at different levels for their 'lack of discipline', according to Steeve Briois, the secretary-general of Front National. This is a clear message to anyone tempted to be insubordinate, and a totally new dynamic not just within the party, but also outside it since legal attacks have multiplied against those who criticise her actions and statements without showing proof or respect.<sup>22</sup> This tactic

of taking the offensive also radically differs from the approach her father maintained. Outspoken as he was, Jean-Marie Le Pen constantly faced accusations about his statements, but he rarely struck back and sued his opponents. Playing the role of the victim, he preferred to take a defensive stance, and his daughter has proven to be more reactive on this count.

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Marine Le Pen has certainly defined her own style, and although ultimately this does not seem to be enough to make her an electoral threat, it is contributing significantly to the new image of Front National she wants to promote. As the left-wing newspaper *Libération* once noted, she is undoubtedly different from her father, and that makes her far more dangerous. British newspaper, *The Guardian*, crowned Marine Le Pen simply ‘the most dangerous woman in France.’<sup>23</sup>

### A “Normalised” Political Party

One of Marine Le Pen’s biggest contributions to Front National over the years – most significantly since she launched a political career in her father’s footsteps in the mid-1990s and multiplied her media appearances<sup>24</sup> – has been her constant efforts to “normalise” its image.<sup>25</sup> As early as 2000, she became the president of *Génération Le Pen*, an association close to the party whose aim was ‘*un-demonising* Front National.’<sup>26</sup> Her clear intention was to transform a political force into a “normal” political party, and her more recent statements confirm that she still considers this mission a priority.<sup>27</sup>

The problem has been that Jean-Marie Le Pen’s legacy is extremely sensitive on this point, and the ideological influences of the party he founded, along with its messages, have worked to marginalise the whole movement.<sup>28</sup> Most of the elder Le Pen’s political career was based on his reputation for making repeated inflammatory if not downright offensive statements.<sup>29</sup> Although this strategy certainly served his anti-establishment image, and the stance of the rebel party seduced fringe groups in the population,<sup>30</sup> it also limited the capacity to attract more voters. For the vast majority of French people, Jean-Marie Le Pen’s provocateur stance was proof of his lack of policy arguments. Various interviews he gave to the media between the two rounds of the 2002 presidential election revealed his inability to propose decent

reforms, and he was chided and mocked on many occasions by various politicians (including Nicolas Sarkozy, as early as in the 1990s) for barking loudly, but not being able to lead the country properly.

Unlike her father, Marine Le Pen is quite comfortable talking about economics, and although her economic policy – which may be summarised as leaving the EU and abandoning the euro – is driven more by populism than any clear agenda,<sup>31</sup> she does manage to explain her exit strategy by pointing out the risks related to globalisation.<sup>32</sup> Her arguments remain controversial, but do not differ much from those advocated by a significant portion of Union for a Popular Movement (UPM) voters as well as some of its members. At the same time, she sounds versed enough in the social implications of globalisation to compete with anti-globalisation movements coming from the Left.<sup>33</sup> The rejection of the Lisbon Treaty after the 2005 referendum – while due to a variety of reasons – and widespread opposition to the euro prove how popular these positions can be.<sup>34</sup> Even so, in a rare analysis of Le Pen's political programme published outside France, UK expert Charles Grant pointed out that 'she has nothing to say about global governance, or what to do about transnational threats such as organised crime, climate change, proliferation or international terrorism.'<sup>35</sup> In that respect, the focus on the euro a few months before the presidential election clearly had the effect of hiding the lack of analysis she might be able to offer in other fields.

Opting for a populist stance rather than technical analysis, Le Pen believes that France needs to re-examine its membership of the European Union and NATO, and it should not make a dogma out of free trade. These views have had a significant impact on voters to the point that some UK-based journalists have wondered whether France has found its own Margaret Thatcher.<sup>36</sup> But more important than being the "new Iron Lady," Marine Le Pen sounds 'like a typical European leftist when she complains that NATO has subordinated French foreign policy to US imperialism, or when she points that many more people have died in Iraq since 2003 than in America on 9/11.'<sup>37</sup> More recently, she criticised what she saw as the pro-American stance taken by President Hollande on the Syrian issue, referring to France as 'the mistress of the United States.'<sup>38</sup>

Le Pen is also constantly formulating short statements that address what she believes to be the "new image" of her party. This is particularly noteworthy when it comes to economic and social issues. When she

claims that Barack Obama is further to the right than she is, and when she pretends to share a similar approach to the Socialists on social issues while being ‘neither on the Right nor on the Left,’ she puts her political engagement ahead of political parties, and seeks to end Front National’s identification as an extreme-right movement. Aware of her contribution to her party’s image, she even told British journalists that ‘there is a normalisation of our movement that is incarnated by my personality. The effect has contributed to making our analyses more credible.’<sup>39</sup> The pugnacity of her insistence on an anti-euro policy has certainly brought her some credibility, if not support, at international level given the current difficult situation within the Eurozone.

Marine Le Pen’s other secret weapon is her power to appeal to intellectuals and blue-collar workers at the same time.<sup>40</sup> Before the 2012 presidential election, several opinion polls indicated that she was by far the most popular potential candidate with working-class voters although the results ultimately proved Hollande and Melenchon’s success in this category. This is not a fundamentally new development for Front National, but rather the enhancing of an old dynamic with new potential to attract voters. Jean-Marie Le Pen previously benefited from massive support from these spheres, but Marine is also welcomed by some journalists and intellectuals who in the past refused to interview her father and now keenly entertain the idea that Front National should not be disregarded. The case of Robert Ménard, the founder and former secretary-general of Reporters sans frontières (Reporters without Borders) – who became famous for his opposition to the holding of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing – stands out. In a controversial book titled *Vive Le Pen* published on 21 April 2011 (exactly 11 years after the shock of the first-round presidential election), the journalist took to the defence of Front National voters.<sup>41</sup> He also criticised the way that Front National was constantly being pilloried by the media, arguing that it should be accepted as a normal political party. Seizing on a unique opportunity, the president of Front National publicly welcomed the book’s publication and during a rally on 01 May 2011 defended Ménard against those who vigorously attacked his positions.

Louis Aliot, who is at once the vice-president of the extreme-right party, head of Front National-affiliated think tank *Idées Nation* (*Ideas Nation*) and Marine Le Pen’s partner in private life, claimed at the start of the 2012 campaign that Front National was receiving increas-

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ing support from various intellectuals and policymakers who believed the party had changed and become respectable. Whether they did this openly (the most significant instance being lawyer Gilbert Collard, who eventually became a member of parliament on the Front National ticket on 17 June 2012) or not, the majority of those who approached Front National argued that they were neither fascist nor racist. In fact, the number of high-profile names, whether politicians, intellectuals or popular figures, who align with Front National remains far more meagre than Aliot suggests. But what was once a complete taboo is no longer off limits.

Marine Le Pen has also succeeded, as has been noted, in cleaning up the anti-Semitic image of Front National, and so won significant praise from various intellectuals. Under her supervision, the party publicly sanctioned activists such as Christian Bouchet, once a strong Marine Le Pen supporter and now accused of being anti-Zionist and pro-Iranian. The president of Front National was even invited by a journalist to appear on Jewish radio (Radio J), generating friction within the Jewish community about whether or not she could be trusted. Her ability to disrupt the anti-Semitic image of the party has probably been one of her biggest successes and certainly something her father would never have been capable of achieving.<sup>42</sup>

Although she is somehow quickly demolishing what he took five decades to build, Jean-Marie Le Pen has every reason to be proud of his youngest daughter. As he revealed after letting go of the party command, 'she is able to lead the party while looking outwards and making ideas accessible and appealing.'<sup>43</sup> In other words, she can be either Le Pen or Marine depending on her needs. But she can also be both of them at the same time. The two Le Pens disagree on some issues, and their styles are far from comparable, but Marine's strength has been her capacity to combine the supporters her father slowly built up with a new wave of activists who are attracted by the idea of a "Bleue Marine" coalition. The latter could cover a much larger audience than Front National ever was capable of.

## The Growing Appeal of the Far-Right

The fear of another "21 April" has driven both political strategies and the positions of the major parties over the past decade. The Social-

ists have pointed out the risks that differences among left voters could lead to fratricidal splits and weaken chances of qualifying for the second round of national elections. They need to decide whether the best strategy is to represent left-wing (including far-left) voters or attract centrists, who have emerged as a strong political force. Hollande notably faced the same dilemma back in the 2012 presidential campaign under pressure from the success of Jean-Luc Mélenchon's far-left movement. At that time, Mélenchon's immediate unconditional support after the first round proved crucial to the Socialist candidate's ability to unify forces on the Left. This gave Hollande the chance to expand his audience towards the centre.

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On the other hand, the Right underwent a major transformation after Chirac's re-election in 2002, leading to the prompt creation of a new party called Union for a Popular Movement. This heterogeneous party initially aimed to represent all the different sensibilities among right-wing voters – excluding those on the extreme right – in order to guarantee entry into the second round in any circumstances. This strategy was immediately revealed in the legislative election after Chirac's return, and it showed its relevance. Making good use of the new party, Nicolas Sarkozy achieved peak success by regrouping centrists and a portion of voters who previously supported Le Pen, but were seduced in 2007 by the UMP candidate and the possibility of seeing ideas transformed into action. Jean-Marie Le Pen's failure in his final presidential campaign was a direct consequence of this expansion of UMP and its appeal to the Right.

The proximity between the ideas of Marine Le Pen and those of a significant UMP faction remains problematic given her ability to broaden her group of supporters. According to several polls, up to 45% of Sarkozy's followers like her ideas. Once elected, Sarkozy quickly disappointed the far-right voters who had abandoned an old and waning Le Pen to join Sarkozy's majority, but soon criticised the French president's security and immigration policies and his image. More importantly, they blamed Sarkozy for supporting the euro at any cost, maintaining that the European currency is responsible for the deteriorating social situation. As noted, this position makes Marine the number one choice for working-class voters who do not believe promises from the Left and blame Sarkozy for the increased cost of living since he came to power.

Before the 2012 election, Marine Le Pen maintained that – in contrast with the situation in 2007 – Front National supporters were now so disappointed with Sarkozy that faced with the choice, many would even elect a Socialist over him this time.<sup>44</sup> In the circumstances, her strategy was to present herself as the best candidate to prevent the Socialists' return; the most efficient way to do this was to challenge Sarkozy on the platform he was elected on in 2007 while at the same time exposing disharmony within UMP. The greater the divisions in the French president's party, the more Le Pen would succeed in enlarging her audience. On this point, immigration policy was her most powerful weapon, and she ran her campaign on the issue long before the names of other presidential candidates were even known.

On 30 May 2011, the Front National leader sent a challenging letter to all 577 French MPs, in which she called for a public debate on dual citizenship.<sup>45</sup> Marine Le Pen believed (and still maintains) that this status – established in France since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – should be debated if not totally abolished. Most observers put the number of dual citizens in France between four and five million (there is no official data on the topic). Front National has contested these figures, arguing that the number of French citizens who also hold Algerian citizenship alone comes to between four and five million.<sup>46</sup>

Immigration expert Patrick Weil, author of *Etre français. Les quatre piliers de la nationalité* (*Being French: The Four Pillars of Nationality*), reminds us that historically the Far Right has always criticised dual citizenship.<sup>47</sup> But this time, Le Pen's party was not isolated on the issue since Droite populaire (The "Popular Right") – a right-wing movement iDrouMP – reacted quickly to Marine Le Pen's move and claimed responsibility for the debate. Three MPs from this movement, Lionnel Luca, Jean-Paul Garraud and Philippe Meunier, were invited to the Elysée Palace a day after receiving Le Pen's letter – a sign Le Pen's call had directly swayed the Elysée agenda. Henri Guaino, one of Nicolas Sarkozy's closest aides, also maintained that the topic of dual citizenship should at least be debated, echoing the wishes of both the Front National president and Droite populaire members. The newspaper *Le Monde* reported on the similarity between the arguments of Marine Le Pen and those of Droite populaire, calling this troubling. So too was a parliamentary report by UMP's Claude Goasguen which suggested that new French citizens should give up their original citizenship.<sup>48</sup> The Pa-

risian MP was finally forced to withdraw his support after a push from his party's secretary-general, Jean-François Copé amid political crisis. More worrying was probably the impact that Droite populaire had on Sarkozy's choices. During the presidential campaign, this met the even stronger influence of one of Sarkozy's most prominent campaign advisors, Patrick Buisson, originally a far-right hard-liner, who shaped most of the UMP candidate's tough stance on citizenship and immigration policy in the spring of 2012.

Behind the dual citizenship issue, the appeal of far-right beliefs and their impact on the direction of the UMP government raised concerns among UMP leaders. Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, then environment minister and recently the runner-up in the 2014 mayoral election in Paris, warned her party members not to be seduced by Marine Le Pen's charms, claiming that the new Le Pen was only a softer version of her father and propagating the very same ideas. Kosciusko-Morizet, who authored the book *Le front antinational (The Anti-national Front)*, which strongly criticises Front National, and later had an important role as a spokesperson in Sarkozy's campaign, responded to the attacks on dual citizenship, arguing that a person cannot abandon their native citizenship.<sup>49</sup> Several high-ranked government members, including Yves Jégo<sup>50</sup> and Eric Besson, then respectively the minister of industry and a former minister of immigration, followed suit, while others chose to stay silent. UMP was undoubtedly sharply divided on the issue, and once Sarkozy officially became a candidate for a second term, he was called on to clarify his position before the presidential election lest he appear schizophrenic or, worse, like he had been lured into taking an extreme-right position to ensure his re-election.<sup>51</sup> In that vein, a provocative piece titled 'Nicolas Le Pen' in the *Wall Street Journal Europe* in March 2012 attacked the French president's stance on immigration after he publicly announced his wish to review France's position in the Schengen zone if he was re-elected.<sup>52</sup>

Under the sway of Patrick Buisson during the re-election campaign, Nicolas Sarkozy tried to woo Marine Le Pen's supporters in the first round, coating his electoral platform with a distinct far-right finish. He proposed halving the number of legal immigrants allowed into the country every year and threatened to pull out of the Schengen free-travel zone unless Europe's outer borders were more tightly guarded.<sup>53</sup> He met with sharp criticism not only from the Left, but also from Marine

Le Pen, who claimed several times that the incumbent president was a liar whose record after five years at the country's helm proved his inability to arrive at an immigration policy that the extreme-right party would endorse. The debate over whether Sarkozy had become tougher than Le Pen on immigration grew prominent to the point that it poisoned the whole campaign, eclipsing other, arguably more important issues such as the economy and high unemployment.

The outcomes of the first-round election – from Marine Le Pen's success to the collapse of the centre – pushed the UMP candidate to take an even more radical approach. Trying to woo Front National voters between the two presidential election rounds, Nicolas Sarkozy spoke of Marine Le Pen as 'legitimate' and 'compatible with the Republic.'<sup>54</sup> He was condemned across various media,<sup>55</sup> while some top UMP leaders, such as former prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin urged the President to pay more attention to the 'humanists' within UMP.<sup>56</sup> Sarkozy's former minister of sports Chantal Jouanno admitted that though she would support the UMP candidate in the second round, she was extremely concerned by attempts to lure Le Pen supporters.

Sarkozy eventually failed in his re-election bid though he still finished with a respectable 48.4% – less than 1.5 million votes behind Hollande and a far better result than all polls had predicted. This score was largely explained by the support he gained from Marine Le Pen voters.<sup>57</sup> One of the most important lessons of the election was, thus, that Front National's success does not solely lie in the results themselves, but in the party's omnipresence during the campaign and especially between the two rounds.

But for UMP, the "Marine problem" did not end with the 2012 presidential election. The legislative election a few weeks later was even more crucial as local-level alliances with Front National proved decisive for holding onto a majority seriously challenged after Hollande's victory. Some Droite populaire members such as Christian Vanneste called for local allegiances with the far-right party against the Left. Faced with the loss of the legislative election, UMP co-founder Thierry Mariani evaluated the situation, concluding that 'opting to the right was not the reason for the defeat'<sup>58</sup> and suggesting further moves in that direction in the future.<sup>59</sup> For some observers, such a spectacular U-turn (if taken) after years of demonising Front National, along with

the losses in the 2012 presidential and legislative elections, could spell the end of UMP and its break-up into several smaller entities to the right of the political spectrum. On his blog, former prime minister Dominique de Villepin (2005-2007), a one-time candidate for the 2012 presidential election (he exited the race after failing to secure the mandatory 500 official endorsements needed for candidacy) wrote that 'UMP looks more and more like this party [that] we could say...asks good questions, but gives the wrong answers.' This was an allusion to what he saw as the Lepenisation of the party he had left some months earlier to create a political force of his own. It was a view shared by Yves Jégo.<sup>60</sup>

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The legislative election of 10 and 17 June 2012 drove home UMP's difficulties in reaching a clear and unanimous strategy on Front National. Though UMP was convincingly defeated, with the Socialist Party giving Hollande an absolute majority, it was mostly UMP's stance on alliances with Front National that posed a serious dilemma for the former majority party. This was certainly not helped by Marine Le Pen, who used the election as a chance to claim parliamentary seats for her party – for the first time since the 1986 election apart from a few isolated cases that were quickly overturned.<sup>61</sup> By forming a *Bleue Marine* coalition (an allusion to the navy blue colour usually used to depict Front National's results in the media as well as an obvious play on her first name), and capitalising on divisions among UMP leaders, she managed to win over several UMP candidates who had been tempted by alliances against the Left. Most candidates, however, rejected what has often been described as a 'pact with the devil.' Still, considering Jean-François Copé's struggle to rally his troops – and the adoption of a controversial "ni-ni" (neither-nor) approach, which meant no alliance with Front National, but at the same time no alliance against it – several cases revealed the cracks inside UMP. Most ridiculous was certainly the situation of Nadine Morano, a former minister under Sarkozy, who, in the lead-up to a difficult second round in her district, was the victim of a prankster who called her mobile phone pretending to be Front National Vice-President Louis Aliot. Broadcast on the Sud-Radio radio station, the conversation became a national sensation and was catastrophic for Morano, who had praised Marine Le Pen for her talents and admitted to sharing a lot with the extreme Right, before adding that her biggest fear was 'seeing [her] country turn into a new Lebanon,' a reference

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to Hollande's wish to allow foreign citizens to vote in local elections. Morano was ultimately defeated a few days later, but no sanction was taken against her at the level of UMP's leadership.

More recently, former prime minister François Fillon, an official rival to Jean-François Copé within UMP, has criticised the "ni-ni" approach by flagging the option in some circumstances of supporting a Front National candidate over the Socialist competitor in a local election second round; even if there is no UMP candidate in the race. The receptiveness to this position across the ranks of Front National – and also in Droite forte (The "Strong Right"), the most important and most right-wing movement in UMP, which inherited Sarkozy's November 2012 election strategy and calls for dialogue with Front National) - contrasts with the moderate Right's traditional refusal to consider cooperation. It also marks a stark difference from the era of Jean-Marie Le Pen's defamatory counter-attacks, which served to isolate the extreme-right party and shrink its chances of winning an election.<sup>62</sup> More generally, the divisions among Droite forte, Droite populaire, Droite sociale (The "Social Right") and Droite humaniste (The "Humanist Right") have reached a new level with several media sources reporting that the levee has broken between UMP and Front National just as Marine Le Pen predicted.<sup>63</sup> In the wake of the election, UMP needs to take a less ambiguous position regarding Front National, opting either for a clear alliance comparable to those seen in several other European countries over the last few years, or complete rejection of any dialogue and compromise with the extreme Right. Either way, and considering the divisions, this decision will have a crucial impact on the party's future, and at the same time, be of benefit to Front National, which will either be accepted as a respectable party, or gain support from new sympathisers.<sup>64</sup>

The fact is that the mainstreaming of Front National goes way beyond the positions expressed by some UMP members, whether or not they are isolated. According to a poll conducted by TNS Sofres on 31 May 2012, between the time of the presidential and the legislative elections, 51% of respondents considered Front National to be a 'normal party' (of whom 24% said it was 'totally normal' and 27% 'quite normal'), while only 42% did not see the party as a 'normal one.'<sup>65</sup> In another BVA survey on 12 September 2013, as many as 72% of UMP supporters claimed that they viewed Front National a 'normal party.' This figure puts UMP in an

extremely delicate position that not only harms its standing in local and national elections, but threatens its very existence. It also shows a radical change of public opinion about a party that until recently was considered untouchable.

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Courmont*

### **Conclusion: A Marinisation of Front National, Or the Lепенisation of French Politics?**

While the rapid rise of the current president of Front National may seem surprising, this is because one crucial question remains unsolved: what is Marine Le Pen's purpose considering that she will probably never get the support of the majority of voters and win a national election?<sup>66</sup> The answer lies in the phenomenon of "Marinisation," which could replace "Lепенisation," with far more effective results for the extreme Right.

Certainly, Marine Le Pen's "new look" Front National does not have much in common with her father's party when it comes to its public image despite the fact that its ideas and agenda remain largely unchanged.<sup>67</sup> She understands, however, how important image is in contemporary politics and how decisive some symbols can be for lending brand new legitimacy to a party. On this point, we may consider that she has already succeeded well beyond her father's expectations, turning a once untouchable, fascist-like movement into a respectable political party.

In parallel, Marine Le Pen has not only maintained her father's legacy of offering an anti-establishment alternative, but continues to grow this profile in spheres where Front National was never considered a credible voice. When she compares herself to British Prime Minister David Cameron<sup>68</sup> or refers to Joseph Stiglitz to justify her immigration policy, her aim is clearly to suggest an alternative way based not just on constant and in some ways irrational denunciation of goings-on under various governments of past decades – as was her father's custom – but on proposing solutions which sometimes appear no more radical than those from other parties. In this respect, *Droite forte* has been her best ally since the positions of this UMP arm are sometimes further to the right than those of Front National.

The biggest consequence of the Lепенisation of French politics, therefore, does not lie in the likelihood – still limited – that Front Na-

tional will reach the second round of a major election and claim power at national level. It is more about the impact on other parties, most notably UMP. Marine Le Pen's touch now appears more visible to the point that UMP's *raison d'être* appears determined by its stance on the Far Right. Un-demonising Front National's ideas seems an easier goal than un-demonising the party itself. Marine Le Pen understands this better than her father ever did, and this is certainly the key to her success.

The current political context is also clearly serving the younger Le Pen's strategy and boosting her credibility. Recent scandals involving allegations of sexual assaults by public figures – names range from former IMF director Socialist Dominique Strauss-Kahn to state Secretary of Public Affairs Georges Tron (UMP), who quit his position within François Fillon's government in late May 2011 – along with accusations by former minister of education Luc Ferry of participation in orgies, have fed Front National's constant arraignments of the establishment. Marine Le Pen was one of the first French politicians to castigate Strauss-Kahn after his arrest in New York, and she played a significant role in disgracing Tron. This position of defender of a more "moral" political class is a legacy of her father, but Le Pen senior was never in a position to claim to embody a "cleaner" generation of leaders. Although twice divorced, Marine Le Pen has more credibility as a figure of public decency, which will surely support her image in confronting the various scandals that undermine both the Socialist Party and UMP. Fighting corruption has also been one of the main platforms she has used to draw more supporters, and she can still exploit the fact that Front National representatives have never held any important position, unlike all the other significant political parties. Alongside the economic turmoil within the Eurozone, which has affirmed Marine Le Pen's arguments for an anti-euro policy, this has meant that Front National is now considerably more popular than ever before.

The question remains, however, whether the "Marine factor" will be a long-term phenomenon, or it will be obscured by a "Marine effect" which shows its limits and, depending on political measures like electoral system reforms, may be nothing but a 'paper tiger.'<sup>69</sup> The 2014 mayoral and European elections, and of course, the 2017 presidential and legislative ballot, will bring vital answers. However, in the lead-up to these important political events, Marine Le Pen has already succeeded beyond her expectations by turning Front National into the centre

of all attention and a reference point for all political parties – whether they are tempted by its ideas or terrified by the prospect of another 21 April – as well as ‘the hottest political party in the country.’<sup>70</sup> Having slowly transformed her party’s image, she has now become a factor that can influence France’s positions on major domestic and foreign issues.<sup>71</sup> In this way, Marine Le Pen is not only shaping the political debate in France, but also potentially preparing the political agenda for at least the next five years. As political expert Sylvain Crépon has pointed out, with Marine Le Pen, ‘the Lепенisation of minds is really beginning,’<sup>72</sup> and it is still difficult to evaluate its long-term impact. This will surely depend on several factors: First, of course, there are the actions of President François Hollande, and how they are perceived by the public. Second, there is the ability of UMP leaders to prevent their party from imploding. Finally, we have Marine Le Pen’s capacity to take the un-demonising of Front National even further by attracting notable new members and reaching the level of Hollande’s main opponent.<sup>73</sup> If her successes were unexpectedly great under UMP leadership, then the stakes appear even bigger under a Socialist government. As sociologist Alain Mergier has observed, ‘Front National is no longer at the margins of politics, it is becoming its centre.’<sup>74</sup> Reaching the centre and inevitably becoming a catalyst of French political life – once impossible dreams for Jean-Marie Le Pen – seem to have become the reality for his daughter’s party. This is a new paradigm in French politics.

*The “Marine”  
Factor*



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## Notes

- 1 See François Dufay and Charles Jaigu (2002), ‘Le Pen: histoire d’une revanche,’ *Le Point*, 25 April 2002. Available at: <http://www.lepoint.fr/archives/article.php/62394>
- 2 Le Pen’s 2007 presidential campaign is described in detail in Marc Fauchoux and Christophe Forcari (2007), *Le Pen. Le dernier combat*, Paris: Editions Jacob-Duvernet. See also Bernard Mathias (2007), ‘Le Pen, un pro-

- vocateur en politique (1984-2002),’ *Vingtième Siècle*, 2007/1 no.93, pp. 37-45.
- 3 See Nonna Mayer (2007), ‘Comment Nicolas Sarkozy a rétréci l’électorat Le Pen,’ *Revue française de science politique*, 2007/3 vol. 57, pp. 429-445.
  - 4 Some experts such as Jean-Yves Camus believed that while Marine Le Pen fared far better in the opinion polls than her father ever had, her support was limited if concerning. See ‘Marine Le Pen et le FN inquiètent à raison L’UMP,’ *AFP*, 12 December 2010.
  - 5 ‘The Rise of Marine Le Pen’ (2011), *The Economist*, 09 March 2011.
  - 6 The most cited poll appeared in the newspaper *Le Parisien*. See ‘Sondage - Présidentielle : Marine Le Pen en tête au premier tour’ (2011), *Le Parisien*, 08 March 2011. See also Sophia Bouderbala (2011), ‘French Far Right Spooks Rivals in Vote Poll,’ *AFP*, 09 March 2011.
  - 7 Various candidates were later declared officially; they included Eva Joly of the Greens and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the far-left candidate. Socialist representative François Hollande was named after a two-round primary held from 09 to 16 October 2011. Of the right and centre-right candidates, François Bayrou (MoDem) announced his intention to run a third time – after competing in 2002 and 2007 – in December 2011 while Nicolas Sarkozy (UMP) officially entered the race on 15 February 2012.
  - 8 Some analysts went so far as to suggest that Marine Le Pen could win the presidential election and speculated on the consequences. See the political fiction of Frédéric Deslauriers (2011), *Les deux-cents jours de Marine Le Pen*, Paris: Plon. See also Stéphane Bieganski (2011), *Marine Le Pen. Celle qui fait trembler la République!*, Paris: QI Design.
  - 9 For an account of the French Far Right, see James Shields (2007), *The Extreme Right in France: from Pétain to Le Pen*, New York: Routledge.
  - 10 For an historical perspective, see Jean-Marc Simon (2011), *Marine Le Pen, au nom du père*, Paris: Editions Jacob-Duvernet.
  - 11 The concept of the “Lepenisation of minds” has been highlighted and debated on various occasions, notably after Jean-Marie Le Pen’s electoral successes in an effort to explain new racist and populist tendencies and their impact on French society. It was first formulated by former (Socialist) minister of justice Robert Badinter. See Michel Soudais (2011), ‘Badinter contre Badinter,’ *Politis*, 02 October 2011. Available at: <<http://www.politis.fr/Badinter-contre-Badinter,15418.html>>. For more information about the concept, see Pierre Tevanian and Sylvie Tissot (2002), *Dictionnaire de la lepénisation des esprits*, Paris: Esprit frappeur and Pierre Tevanian and Sylvie Tissot (2006), ‘La lepénisation des esprits: Éléments pour une grille d’analyse du racisme en France,’ *La Pensée*, no. 345, pp. 47-56.
  - 12 ‘Marine Le Pen élue présidente du Front national avec 67,65 % des voix’ (2011), *AFP*, 16 January 2011. Before this election, several journalists showed interest in the emergence of the new far-right leader. See, for instance, Steven Erlanger, ‘Child of France’s Far Right Prepares to Be Its Leader,’ *The New York Times*, May 21 2010 and Robert Marquand, ‘France’s National Front: Will Marine Le Pen Take the Reins?’, *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 25, 2010.
  - 13 See Bernard-Henri Lévy (2010), ‘Maintenant, Marine Le Pen,’ *Le Point*, 29

- March 2010.
- 14 For a good recent account, see Patrice Machuret (2011), *Dans la peau de Marine Le Pen*, Paris : Seuil.
  - 15 See 'Marine Le Pen à la conquête du Front National' (2010), *Le Parisien*, 04 September 2010. Available at: <<http://www.leparisien.fr/politique/marine-le-pen-a-la-conquete-du-front-national-04-09-2010-1055321.php>>
  - 16 For a portrait of Marine Le Pen, see Caroline Fourest and Fiammetta Venner (2011), *Marine Le Pen*, Paris: Grasset.
  - 17 Marine Le Pen (2011), *A contre flots*, Paris: Editions Jacques Grancher.
  - 18 Caroline Monnot and Abel Mestre (2011), *Le Système Le Pen: Enquête sur les réseaux du Front National*, Paris: Denoël.
  - 19 'Alexandre Gabriac 'sera exclu''(2011), *Le nouvel observateur*, 25 March 2011. Available at: <<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/actualite/politique/20110325.OBS0274/alexandre-gabriac-sera-exclu.html>>
  - 20 See Paul Hainsworth (2000), 'The Front National: From Ascendancy to Fragmentation on the French Extreme Right', in Paul Hainsworth, Paul (ed.) (2000), *The Politics of the Extreme Right: From the Margins to the Mainstream*, Pinter/ Continuum, pp. 18-32.
  - 21 Quoted in 'Marine Le Pen: 'Les camps Nazis sont le summum de la barbarie''(2011), *L'Express.fr*, 03 February 2011. Available at: [http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/marine-le-pen-les-camps-nazis-sont-le-summum-de-la-barbarie\\_958673.html](http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/marine-le-pen-les-camps-nazis-sont-le-summum-de-la-barbarie_958673.html)
  - 22 Targets include several authors and analysts who published recent works about Le Pen as well as various newspapers and magazines. See 'Marine Le Pen ou la politique du prétoire' (2011), *L'Express*, 11 June 2011.
  - 23 Russel Shorto (2011), 'Marine Le Pen: Is This the Most Dangerous Woman in France?' *The Guardian*, 26 June 2011.
  - 24 For an account of the media coverage of Marine Le Pen in the media, see Julie Boudillon (2005), 'Une femme d'extrême droite dans les médias. Le cas de Marine Le Pen,' *Mots. Les langages du politique*, 2005/2, no. 78.
  - 25 Laszlo Liskkai (2010), *Marine Le Pen, un nouveau Front National?*, Paris: Favre.
  - 26 See 'Le Pen, quoi de neuf ? Marine!' (2003), *Le nouvel observateur*, 17 April 2003. See also Michèle Cotta (2010), 'La dédiable du Front National,' *Le nouvel économiste.fr*, 10 December 2010. Available at: <<http://www.le-nouveleconomiste.fr/la-dediabolisation-du-front-national-7246/>>
  - 27 Le Pen has stated notably that Front National is 'neither on the Right, nor on the Left.' Quoted in 'Marine Le Pen, la présidentielle et le brin de muguet' (2011), *Le Point*, 01 February 2011.
  - 28 For an account of Front National's ideology, see Peter Davies (1999), *The National Front in France: Ideology, Discourse and Power*, New York: Routledge; and Edward G. DeClair (1999), *Politics on the Fringe: The People, Policies, and Organization of the French National Front*, Duke University Press.
  - 29 For a comprehensive analysis of Le Pen's rhetoric, see Virginie Wathier et al. (1998), *Le Pen, les mots. Analyse d'un discours d'extrême droite*, Paris: La Découverte.
  - 30 See, for instance, Pierre Bréchon and Subrata Kumar Mitra, 'The National

- Front in France. The Emergence of an Extreme Right Protest Movement' (1992), *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 25, no.1, pp. 63-82.
- 31 On this issue, see Mathieu von Rohr (2011), 'Marine Le Pen's Populism for the Masses (Part 2: The Divide Between the Governing and the Governed),' *Der Spiegel*, 07 July 2011.
- 32 For an overview of Marine Le Pen's French franc policy and Euro exit strategy, see Willy Legrand (2011), 'Marine Le Pen pour le retour du franc français,' *Nations presse.info*, 14 February 2011. Available at: <<http://www.nationspresse.info/?p=123251>>
- 33 Andrea Bambino (2010), 'Marine Le Pen veut investir le terrain économique pour être crédible,' *AFP*, 09 December 2010. It is important to note that Front National's interest in globalisation arose quite late and after the party had already achieved some political success with a programme focused mainly on immigration. In his 1985 policies, for instance, Jean-Marie Le Pen did not refer to any risks of globalisation. It was only in the early 1990s, and particularly after the publication of Bruno Mégret's *La Flamme les voies de la Renaissance*, that the term "mondialisation" appeared in Front National's literature and a sustained campaign against globalisation began. For an account of Front National's anti-globalisation stance, see Harvey G. Simmons (n.d.), 'The French and European Extreme Right and Globalization.' Available at: <<http://home.alphalink.com.au/~radnat/theories-right/theory3.html>>
- 34 On Front National and populism, see Annie Collovald (2004), *Le "populisme du FN", un dangereux contresens*, Broissieux: Le Croquant.
- 35 Charles Grant (2011), 'Marine Le Pen and the Rise of Populism,' *Center for European Reform*, 20 July 2011. Available at: <<http://centreforeuropeanreform.blogspot.com/2011/07/marine-le-pen-and-rise-of-populism.html>>
- 36 Linda Palermo (2011), 'Marine Le Pen: Has France Found Its Own Thatcher?,' *The First Post*, 09 March 2011. Available at: <<http://www.thefirstpost.co.uk/76102,news-comment,news-politics,does-france-see-its-own-thatcher-in-marine-le-pen-france-presidential-elections#ixzz1ZhR39gCv>>
- 37 Alan Johnson (2011), "Morosité" and Marine Le Pen', *World Affairs Journal*, 14 March 2011. Available at: <[http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/new/blogs/johnson/Morosit\\_and\\_Marine\\_Le\\_Pen](http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/new/blogs/johnson/Morosit_and_Marine_Le_Pen)>
- 38 Quoted in Abel Mestre (2013), 'Marine Le Pen à Marseille: 'La France est la maîtresse des Etats-Unis'', *Le Monde*, 15 September 2013.
- 39 Quoted in Kim Willsher (2011), 'Marine Le Pen: Is the 'Devil's Daughter' Right?' 25 September 2011 Available at: <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/8786459/Marine-Le-Pen-Is-the-devils-daughter-right.html>>
- 40 In contrast, the success of Front National with working class people was one of Jean-Marie Le Pen's biggest triumphs, particularly after the collapse of the French Communist Party in the second half of the 1980s. A significant number of former members joined the far-right party. See David Bell and Byron Criddle (1989), 'Review Article: The Decline of the French Communist Party,' *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 19, no.4, pp. 515-536.
- 41 Robert Ménard and Emmanuelle Duverger (2011), *Vive Le Pen!*, Paris: Mor-

- dicus.
- 42 Peggy Hollinger (2011), 'French Far-right Seeks to Change Image,' *The Financial Times*, 09 February 2011.
  - 43 Quoted in 'Jean-Marie Le Pen: 'Marine est née pour être un chef''; (2011), *Le Parisien*, 16 January 2011. Available at: <<http://www.leparisien.fr/politique/jean-marie-le-pen-marine-est-nee-pour-etre-un-chef-16-01-2011-1229247.php>>
  - 44 The results proved Le Pen partly wrong: the majority of her supporters voted for Sarkozy in the second round although she announced that she would not personally endorse either remaining candidate.
  - 45 Two months later - on 14 July, France's national day - she also published an article on the same theme on the *Le Monde* website. Marine Le Pen (2011), 'La double nationalité heurte la majorité des Français,' 14 July 2011. Available at: <[http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2011/07/14/la-double-nationalite-heurte-la-majorite-des-francais\\_1548853\\_3232.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2011/07/14/la-double-nationalite-heurte-la-majorite-des-francais_1548853_3232.html)>
  - 46 See Ségolène Gros de Larquier (2011), 'Marine Le Pen voit double,' *Le Point.fr*, 21 February 2011. Available at: <[http://www.lepoint.fr/politique/marine-le-pen-voit-double-21-02-2011-1298032\\_20.php](http://www.lepoint.fr/politique/marine-le-pen-voit-double-21-02-2011-1298032_20.php)>
  - 47 Patrick Weil (2008), *How to Be French, Nationality in the Making* (trans. Catherine Porter), Durham: Duke University Press.
  - 48 Quoted in 'Claude Goasguen veut limiter la binationalité' (2011), *Le nouvel observateur*, 09 May 2011. Available at: <<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/actualite/politique/20110509.OBS2655/claude-goasguen-veut-limiter-la-binationalite.html>>
  - 49 Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet (2011), *Le front antinational*, Paris: Editions du Moment.
  - 50 'RSA: Yves Jégo (PR) dénonce une 'lepenisation' de l'UMP,' *Le Parisien*, 12 May 2011. Available at: <<http://www.leparisien.fr/flash-actualite-politique/rsa-yves-jego-pr-denonce-une-lepenisation-de-l-ump-12-05-2011-1446638.php>>
  - 51 Several observers warned that by taking far-right positions on immigration and citizenship, Sarkozy might be jeopardising the values of UMP. See Arnaud Leparmentier (2010), 'Sarkozy fait perdre à la droite républicaine ses valeurs' (2010), an interview with Patrick Weil, *Le Monde*, 03 August 2010. In this interview and elsewhere, Weil stressed what he called the 'extremisation' of Sarkozy, referring to the latter's efforts to attract Front National voters.
  - 52 'Nicolas Le Pen' (2012), *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 13 March 2012.
  - 53 Gabrielle Parussini (2012), 'French Rivals Woo Right's Votes,' *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 April 2012.
  - 54 Quoted in Lionel Bonaventure (2012), 'Sarkozy, poursuivant sa campagne tambour battant, juge Le Pen 'légitime,' *AFP*, 24 April 2012.
  - 55 See, for example, 'Sarkozy, un candidat qui joue avec le Front' (2012), *Libération*, 24 April 2012. The sharpest and, to some extent, most germane criticism, however, appeared in a *Le Monde* editorial which charged that Nicolas Sarkozy 'has adopted the language, the rhetoric and in consequence the ideas, or more precisely, the obsessions of Madame Le Pen', 'Sarkozy et

le FN: La fin ne justifie pas tous les moyens', *Le Monde*, 25 April 2012. See also Bruce Crumley (2012), 'A Dangerous Game: Why Sarkozy's Bid for Far-Right Votes May Backfire', *Time*, 26 April 2012 Available at: <<http://world.time.com/2012/04/26/a-dangerous-game-why-sarkozys-bid-for-far-right-votes-may-backfire/>>

- 56 Jean-Pierre Raffarin was prime minister during Jacques Chirac's second term from 2002 to 2005. He was replaced by Dominique de Villepin after the victory of the "no" campaign in the referendum on ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon.
- 57 Nicolas Sarkozy benefited in the second round from the support of more than 70% of Marine Le Pen's voters to achieve this result unequalled by any candidate in the Fifth Republic.
- 58 Quoted in Alexandre Lemarié (2012), 'La droitisation de l'UMP n'est pas la cause de la défaite', selon la Droite populaire,' *Le Monde*, 19 June 2012.
- 59 See 'La Droite populaire pose la question des alliances entre UMP et FN' (2012), *L'express.fr*, 19 June 2012.
- 60 Ibid. Yves Jégo officially left UMP after making a statement on its "Lepeni-sation." After the legislative election, Jégo called for 'alliances on the right to address the threat of Front National,' quoted in Colombe Dabas (2012), 'Jégo: "Une droite plurielle pour répondre à la menace FN,' *L'express.fr*, 20 June 2012.
- 61 Front National gained two extremely symbolic seats with the election of Gilbert Collard, a declared "Marinist" though not a Front National member, and the victory of 22-year-old Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, Marine's niece and Jean-Marie's grand-daughter. Maréchal-Le Pen became the youngest MP and her image helped boost the party's strategy of building ties with far-right parties in other EU countries, especially Vlaams Belang in Belgium. The success of Jacques Bompard, a former Front National member, can be added to this short but historically significant list. Before the election, Maréchal-Le Pen's profile especially drew media attention. See, for instance, Bruce Crumley (2012), 'Meet French Candidate Marion Maréchal-Le Pen: Third-Generation Extreme-Right Militant,' *Time*, 04 June 2012; Angelique Chrisafis (2012), 'Le Pen Again: New Face of French Far Right Has Familiar Surname,' *The Guardian*, 04 June 2012; Kim Willsher (2012), 'French Parliamentary Elections: Marion Le Pen Hoping to Continue the Front National Dynasty,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 03 June 2012; and Chloé Woitier (2012), 'Marion, le nouveau visage du clan Le Pen,' *Le Figaro*, 25 April 2012.
- 62 See Jocelyn A. J. Evans and Gilles Ivaldi (2005), 'An Extremist Autarky: The Systemic Separation of the French Extreme Right', *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 351-366.
- 63 For a good account of the diversity within UMP, see 'A l'UMP, la 'droitisation' en procès?' (2012), *L'express.fr*, 19 June 2012.
- 64 The poor performance of Droite populaire, which had fewer than 43 of its members re-elected in the 2012 legislative election, may add to the success of the Bleue Marine coalition. See Matthieu Deprieck (2012), 'La droite de l'UMP sort affaiblie des législatives,' *L'express*, 19 June 2012.
- 65 'Le FN est un parti 'comme les autres' pour la moitié des Français' (2012),

- Lexpress.fr*, 01 June 2012. Available at: <[http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/le-fn-est-un-parti-comme-les-autres-pour-la-moitie-des-francais\\_1121426.html#xtor=AL-447](http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/politique/le-fn-est-un-parti-comme-les-autres-pour-la-moitie-des-francais_1121426.html#xtor=AL-447)>
- 66 Le Pen's defeat to a Socialist candidate in the second round of the legislative election in Hénin-Beaumont (in northern France), while by an extremely narrow margin, underscored her difficulties in winning a two-round election even at a local level.
- 67 'France's Extreme-Right Makeover' (2011) *Newsweek*, 20 February 2011.
- 68 Peggy Hollinger (2011), 'Le Pen Daughter Applauds Cameron,' *The Financial Times*, 09 February 2011. Available at: <<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ce56c4dc-3478-11e0-9ebc-00144feabdco.html#axzz1ZhKEA84K>>
- 69 This term was used to describe Front National by political expert Thomas Guénolé, 'Le FN, tigre de papier' (2012), *Le Monde.fr*, 18 June 2012.
- 70 Christopher Caldwell (2011), 'Le Pen Is Mightier,' *The Weekly Standard*, Vol. 16, no. 25, 14 March 2011. Available at: <[http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/le-pen-mightier\\_552978.html](http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/le-pen-mightier_552978.html)> See also Jean-Pierre Le Goff (2011), 'Le syndrome du Front National. Genèse d'une ascension,' *Le Débat*, 2011/4, no. 166.
- 71 Sylvie Pierre-Brossolette (2011), 'Marine Le Pen: Dame attrape-tout,' *Le nouvel économiste.fr*, 17 May 2011. Available at: <<http://www.lenouveleconomiste.fr/marine-le-pen-dame-attrape-tout-10226/>>
- 72 In a video interview, Sylvain Crépon connects the renewed risk of Lepénisation with the rise of Marine Le Pen: 'La lepénisation des esprits risque de débiter maintenant,' *Libération.fr*, 13 January 2011. Available at: <<http://www.liberation.fr/politiques/06012916-la-lepenisation-des-esprits-risque-de-debuter-maintenant>>
- 73 After the legislative election, Marine Le Pen officially made 're-composing the right around Front National' a priority. See Abel Mestre (2012), 'Marine Le Pen mise sur une 'recomposition autour du FN'', *Le Monde.fr*, 18 June 2012.
- 74 Quoted in Alain Mergier (2013), 'Le FN n'est plus à la marge du politique, il en devient le centre', interview with François Fressoz, *Le Monde*, 17 September 2013. Mergier is an expert on current issues in working class life.