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Hamzah BIN ZAID

Devin K. JOSHI

Singapore Management University, [devinjoshi@smu.edu.sg](mailto:devinjoshi@smu.edu.sg)

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# Where does Right-Wing Populism Succeed Sub-Nationally? Explaining Regional Variation within France

*Hamzah bin Zaid*

Singapore Management University [hamzahzaid1993@gmail.com](mailto:hamzahzaid1993@gmail.com)

*Devin K. Joshi*

Associate Professor, Singapore Management University [devinjoshi@smu.edu.sg](mailto:devinjoshi@smu.edu.sg)

## Abstract

While many scholars have studied how right-wing populist parties (RWPP) have recently increased their vote shares in national elections in many countries, fewer studies have assessed why some sub-national regions favor RWPP more than others. Addressing this gap in the literature, we analyze regional variation in voter support for one of Europe's most successful RWPP, the Front National (FN) Party of France which recently made it to the second round of France's 2017 presidential elections. Our research design examines electoral results across French regions between 1992 and 2017 through the lens of four case studies analyzing regions where the FN has been consistently popular, gained in popularity, declined in popularity, and been consistently unpopular. Comparing these diverse regional cases, our study concludes that regional unemployment, urban support, and to a lesser degree past voting behavior are significant demand-side factors behind regional voting for right wing populism.

## Keywords

populism – right-wing parties – regions – voting – France – Front National

The rise of right-wing populist parties (RWPP) in Europe since the end of the Cold War has attracted much attention among scholars and the media. In

recent national and local elections, Eurosceptic and far right parties including the Swiss People's Party, Freedom Party of Austria, Sweden Democrats, and France's Front National have all obtained far more votes in national and local elections than previously expected despite the attempts of mainstream parties to stem their rise in popularity. Moreover, the 2014 election of Narendra Modi in India and 2016 election of Donald Trump in the USA suggest that right-wing populism is now a global phenomenon.

The goal of this article is to better understand the geographic diffusion and dispersion of RWPP by addressing the puzzle of why certain regions within a country are more favorable to them than others. While many scholars have studied cross-national variation in RWPP support, sub-national variation in voting for right-wing populism has only recently begun to attract more systematic scholarly attention.<sup>1</sup> Contributing to this agenda, we examine regional variation in electoral support for one of Europe's most successful RWPP, the Front National (FN) of France,<sup>2</sup> which recently made it to the second round of France's 2017 presidential elections.

Over the past three decades, the FN has evolved from a fringe party to one of the most glaring examples of right-wing populism in Western Europe.<sup>3</sup> Initially founded by an agglomeration of Vichy conspirators, Algerian war veterans, and disgruntled *Pieds-Noirs*, the FN originated as a party marked by deep cultural conservatism and rabid anti-Semitism before suddenly blossoming in the twenty-first century under its former leader Jean-Marie Le Pen with progression to the second round of the 2002 French presidential election.<sup>4</sup> This improbable feat was again repeated by his daughter, Marine, in 2017. Meanwhile the FN have performed impressively in local elections attaining first place in the first round of the 2015 regional elections in six of France's twelve continental regions.<sup>5</sup>

While much of the FN's electoral success in the past few years might be attributed to Marine Le Pen's policy of normalization (i.e. moderation) removing blatantly anti-Semitic and socially divisive elements from the party including her notorious father, mainstream parties, including the Socialist Party (PS), have also hemorrhaged votes to the FN.<sup>6</sup> This suggests a certain degree of alienation or disaffection amongst traditional leftist

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<sup>1</sup> See Stockemer and LaMontagne, 2007; Todd, 2015; Agerberg, 2017; Schraff 2017; Stockemer, 2017a; Gross and Debus, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> The party was recently renamed Rassemblement National (RN) or "National Rally", but given the temporal focus of our paper we refer to it as the Front National.

<sup>3</sup> Reynié, 2016; Stockemer, 2017b; Bastow, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Favell, 1998; Feldman, 2013; Mondon, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> The FN lost the second round election in each of these cases primarily due to the *cordon sanitaire* (anti-FN electoral alliance) that most French parties employ in the second round to prevent the Front from gaining electoral power. See Samuel, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Samuel, 2017a.

voters now possibly drawn to the FN after its decision to support more populist economic policies including protectionism, welfare chauvinism, and Euroscepticism.<sup>7</sup> Support for the Front has also markedly increased after the 2008 financial crisis with the FN portraying itself as a defender of French republican values while taking a strong stance against immigration.<sup>8</sup>

While many scholars have tried to uncover the puzzle of why the FN and other RWPP in Western Europe have gained increasing votes in recent elections, they rarely take sub-national regions—such as the province, county, and commune—as their units of analysis. Addressing this deficit, our study examines regional FN vote shares in elections held in France between 1992 and 2017 through the lens of four case studies contrasting regions where the FN has been consistently popular, gained in popularity, declined in popularity, and been consistently unpopular. Our analysis starts in 1992 as this was the year of the landmark Maastricht Treaty (and its associated referendum) which formally established the European Union. As we discuss later, our comparative analysis finds urban support and regional unemployment as well as past voting behavior to have been important demand-side factors behind a region voting for the Front National.

## 1 Literature Review

RWPP are generally defined by two characteristics. Firstly, their right-wing nature stems from cultural conservatism in the form of “exclusionary nativism” calling for a separation of locals from “foreign” elements (often immigrants).<sup>9</sup> RWPP also generally combine this with ethno-nationalism and xenophobia—preferring that “their” country be filled only with people deemed worthy of being called natives.<sup>10</sup>

Secondly, the populist dimension of RWPP stems from claims of representing a “pure people” with RWPP positioning themselves as protectors of the nation vis-à-vis a corrupt power structure dominated by elites and the corruptive influences of globalization.<sup>11</sup> Employing nostalgic rhetoric, RWPP deploy romanticized constructions of the past that appeal to those feeling left behind by globalization.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> McKirdy and Hume, 2015; Todd, 2015: 140–150.

<sup>8</sup> Rydgren, 2005; van de Walle, 2008; Willsher and Panketh, 2014; Mondon, 2015; Stockemer, 2015; Goodliffe, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Wodak, 2015: 25; Liang, 2016; Mols and Jetten, 2016; Mudde, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Favell, 1998: 53; Ivarsflatten, 2008; Rydgren, 2005, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Swank and Betz, 2003; Betz and Johnson, 2004; Rydgren, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Mondon, 2014; Wodak, 2015: 27–28; Liang, 2016; Liogier, 2017. As Hawkins and Kaltwasser (2017: 526) rightly point out, “populism is not a new phenomenon, nor is the current wave necessarily stronger than previous ones.”

But what causes RWPP to win votes? Several studies point to their opposition to immigration and Islam, which RWPP portray as degrading the purity of the people and causing economic unemployment and inequality.<sup>13</sup> Several analyses of the European Social Survey suggest that cultural appeals are salient in explaining support for RWPP.<sup>14</sup> Yet, the number of immigrants within a region may not matter much as perceptions may be more important than actual levels of immigration.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, immigrant numbers within the EU as a whole may influence RWPP support in any of its member countries.<sup>16</sup>

An alternative driver behind RWPP may be economic hardship and deprivation. RWPP support may come from increasing wealth inequality and rising unemployment,<sup>17</sup> but actual economic conditions may matter less than perceptions citizens have about the economic situation in their country.<sup>18</sup> For instance, van de Walle argues that in France, “Le Pen’s audience is predominantly made up of social groups that face or at least believe that they face difficult socio-economic conditions.”<sup>19</sup> Yet, only some citizens subscribe to “welfare chauvinism”—a feeling that non-natives are abusing the country’s welfare system whereas only natives are worthy of generous state welfare benefits.<sup>20</sup>

Voters feeling unrepresented by political parties of their choice might also enhance RWPP support especially among “losers of globalization” who may feel particularly un(der)represented.<sup>21</sup> For instance, RWPP core supporters are often males and those with less formal education.<sup>22</sup> Even though working class individuals are often at odds with the left’s sociocultural dimensions they continue voting for them due to economic congruence.<sup>23</sup> However, a neo-liberalization of traditional leftist parties as represented by increasing support for free trade and European integration can incite working class voters to flock to RWPP.<sup>24</sup> Thus, some traditionally left-leaning working class electorates have switched to RWPP due to their economic values being

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<sup>13</sup> Rydgren, 2005, 2007, 2008; Ivarsflatten, 2008; Wodak, 2015; Akkerman et al. 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Oesch, 2008; Rydgren, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Stockemer, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Podobnik et al., 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Rydgren, 2008; Goodliffe, 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Rico and Anduiza, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> van de Walle 2008: 26.

<sup>20</sup> de Koster, Achtenberg and van der Waal, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Swank and Betz, 2003; Mondon, 2014; Wodak, 2015; Liang, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Swank and Betz, 2003; Arzheimer and Carter, 2006; Lucassen and Lubbers, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> Rydgren, 2005.

<sup>24</sup> Mondon, 2015; Todd, 2015: 150; Goodliffe, 2016.

misrepresented by the left's neoliberal shift; a frustration fueling their protest vote.

Among the more limited number of studies examining sub-national variation in RWPP support, some have pointed to regionally specific factors such as corruption and economic insecurity. For instance, one study finds that regions in Europe with a low Quality of Government (i.e. more corruption and bias in public administration) have more populist support.<sup>25</sup> Another finds the far-right gains more votes in regions that are rural and where increasing unemployment rates among college-educated citizens are combined with a high percentage of foreigners.<sup>26</sup> A recent study also links the highest probability of a Eurosceptic vote to "insufficient compensation" from the EU which occurs most often in middle income regions as well as some of the poorest areas since "the more developed areas among the poor are favored in funds allocation."<sup>27</sup> Relatedly, Gross and Debus find more support for European integration (and hence less voting for RWPP) in regions receiving more funding from the EU.<sup>28</sup> Yet, others have argued that in economically depressed regions the far right vote is likely to increase in times of economic growth.<sup>29</sup>

While a number of potentially influencing factors have been unearthed by previous studies, our reading of this literature has led us to develop the following three hypotheses. H1) The RWPP will be more popular in economically depressed regions but regional immigration figures will not be a significant factor in RWPP popularity. H2) Rural areas will vote more for the RWPP than urban areas, but rural support for the RWPP might be fairly consistent across regions. H3) The RWPP's popularity within a country may increase or decrease over time, but its popularity across sub-national regions will retain a relatively consistent rank order reflecting a degree of path dependency.

## 2 Research Design

Our study of sub-national variation in RWPP support examines France and the FN as a crucial case given the socio-cultural heterogeneity of France and the long history of the FN.<sup>30</sup> We focused on uncovering factors that might explain why right wing populism has proliferated more in certain French

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<sup>25</sup> Agerberg, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Stockemer, 2017a.

<sup>27</sup> Schraff, 2017: 1.

<sup>28</sup> Gross and Debus, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Mols and Jetten, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Stockemer and LaMontagne, 2007; Todd, 2015.

regions than others between 1992 and 2017. Our units of analysis are the twelve regional administrative government departments of Metropolitan France where there have been noticeable differences in FN vote shares (as a percent of all votes cast) during elections held between the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 and France's most recent presidential election in 2017.<sup>31</sup>

The dependent variable in this study is the share of first round votes obtained by the FN in cantonal, regional, parliamentary, and presidential elections. We focused on the first round of France's predominantly two-round system (TRS) of uninominal domestic elections for three reasons. First, all parties participate in the first round. Second, people are more likely to vote in this round based on their conscience and actual political interests. Third, first round voting may provide a more accurate reflection of FN popularity as it precludes the *cordon sanitaire* typically applied against the FN during second round elections.

As French regions exhibit considerable variation in FN vote shares, we selected four diverse regions to compare as a form of "within-case analysis."<sup>32</sup> Our primary case selection criterion was to maximize variation on the dependent variable. Thus, we chose two case regions where the FN have been least popular (*Bretagne* in the West and *Ile-de-France* in the Centre) and two where they were most popular (*Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie* a.k.a. *Hauts-de-France* in the North and *Provence-Alpes-Cote D'Azur* (PACA) in the South) as highlighted in bold in Tables 2 to 5 (see also Appendix). Their respective locations can be seen in Figure 1.

As displayed in Table 1, these regional cases also fulfill the "diverse-case" criteria whereby "the goal of case selection is to capture the full range of variation along the dimension(s) of interest."<sup>33</sup> In PACA, FN support has been consistently high whereas in Brittany, FN support has consistently been low compared to other French regions; suggesting a possibly historical character to these two regions that make them either resistant or receptive to the FN. Contrastingly, the other two case regions started with medium levels of FN support back in 1992 but FN popularity increased over time in *Hauts-de-France* while declining in *Ile-de-France*. In addition to variation in FN support, these diverse regional cases also capture highs and lows in patterns of immigration (See Table 6), which is often considered to be a primary source of voter support for RWPP.

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<sup>31</sup> Our study does not include the island region of Corsica.

<sup>32</sup> King, Keohane and Verba, 1994.

<sup>33</sup> Gerring, 2008: 99.



Figure 1 Map of French Metropolitan regions

Source: Taken from GeoCurrents <<http://www.geocurrents.info/>>

Table 1 Immigration and FN voting support among case regions

		FN Support	
		Low/Falling	High/Rising
<b>Immigration</b>	<u>Low</u>	Brittany	Hauts-de-France
	<u>High</u>	Ile-de-France	PACA



Table 2 Presidential elections: first round FN vote shares (%)

<b>Region</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Average</b>
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	21.58	23.35	13.84	23.87	28.16	22.16
Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	17.36	19.43	14.91	23.85	31.04	21.32
Ile-de-France	14.09	14.57	7.54	12.28	12.25	12.15
Bretagne	10.10	11.81	7.18	13.24	15.33	11.53

Data Source: Authors' calculations from French Ministry of the Interior data

Table 3 Parliamentary elections: first round FN vote shares (%)

<b>Region</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Average</b>
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	21.72	24.41	16.25	6.21	21.23	20.92	18.46
Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	14.04	16.75	13.69	6.37	17.92	21.82	15.10
Ile-de-France	13.39	14.20	9.13	3.70	10.06	7.93	9.74
Bretagne	7.50	7.98	5.66	2.26	7.97	7.89	6.54

Data Source: Authors' calculations from French Ministry of Interior the data

Table 4 Regional elections first round FN vote shares (%)

<b>Region</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Average</b>
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	22.65	25.57	22.03	19.72	39.31	25.86
Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	12.47	15.53	18.51	16.80	39.13	20.49
Ile-de-France	14.98	15.87	11.92	9.04	17.85	13.93
Bretagne	8.41	7.92	8.09	5.96	17.49	9.57

Data Source: Authors' calculations from French Ministry of the Interior data

Table 5 Cantonal elections first round FN vote shares (%)

Region	1992	1994	1998	2001	2004	2008	2011	2015	Average
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	21.11	14.91	23.68	9.23	19.27	7.62	24.77	33.65	19.28
Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	11.70	10.66	14.60	8.62	15.02	8.05	21.89	34.19	15.59
Ile-de-France	15.23	13.05	16.15	7.64	11.22	4.59	16.62	21.06	13.20
Bretagne	6.89	4.42	6.79	3.58	6.22	1.06	4.20	18.30	6.43

Data Source: Authors' calculations from French Ministry of the Interior data

Table 6 2011 share of immigrants (%) in selected French regions

Region	Immigrants (%)	Principle region of origin		
		1	2	3
Ile-de-France	17.9	Algeria	Portugal	Morocco
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	10.1	Algeria	Morocco	Italy
Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	4.8	Morocco	Algeria	Portugal
Bretagne	2.9	UK	Morocco	Portugal

Data Source: French Ministry of the Interior based on 2011 Census Results

The ensuing case studies are conducted in the form of a “structured, focused comparison”<sup>34</sup> drawing upon data analysis from French ministries, relevant regional literature, and a three-decade analysis of media news coverage of elections in each region. We then conducted a comparative analysis using Mill’s method of difference (also known as a ‘most similar systems’ design)<sup>35</sup> while remaining attentive to the possibility of equifinality (i.e. multiple pathways to the same outcome).<sup>36</sup> In the process of identifying and ruling out possible explanatory factors that are similar despite differing outcomes (and vice versa) our case study comparisons also help to provide a clearer picture of likely underlying reasons behind regional outcomes.

<sup>34</sup> George and Bennett, 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Gerring, 2008: 139–143.

<sup>36</sup> Ragin, 2000.

### 3 Case Studies

*A. Bretagne* (Brittany): Despite being the birthplace of the FN's founder Jean Marie Le Pen, Brittany has consistently turned out relatively few votes for the Front National over the past three decades. Even with the general increase in FN popularity across France during the 2017 French presidential election, Marine Le Pen pooled low (15.3%) in Brittany finishing fourth while frontrunner Emmanuel Macron (29.1%) received almost double her votes.

What explains Brittany's consistent aversion to the FN? Some commentators believe it stems from the region's pragmatic Catholic roots and a solidarity ethos rejecting political extremes of both right and left.<sup>37</sup> Another claim is that Bretons are more open-minded and open to foreigners due to a history of discrimination against their regional identity from the central basin.<sup>38</sup> However, Brittany's rejection of right-wing populism appears to be over-determined. Social inequality is low in Brittany, which may bolster the aforementioned solidarity. The FN's xenophobic discourse might not resonate strongly in Brittany due to its low proportion of immigrants (about 3% of the population) compared to other regions. Economically, Brittany has also been fortunate to escape the harsh de-industrialization programs of the Northeast of France and its unemployment rate is lower than most other parts of the country.

Based on voting patterns, Brittany is a Europhilic region where a majority supported the 2005 Lisbon treaty referendum and a strong majority voted for the 1992 Maastricht treaty referendum. Bretons have also consistently demonstrated opposition to Europhobia by protesting at FN events and rallies in the region—for instance, pelting eggs at Marine Le Pen during her 2017 presidential campaign visit.<sup>39</sup>

Nonetheless, the fact that some Bretons still vote for the FN is intriguing and may be evocative of a nationwide rural-urban split.<sup>40</sup> To examine whether this divide occurs in Brittany, we compared rural and urban voting patterns in randomly selected urban and rural communes during the first round of the 2017 presidential elections. To emphasize the contrast between city and countryside we defined “urban” as having over 20,000 voters and “rural” as below 2,000 voters. What we found as discussed in more detail

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<sup>37</sup> Plant, 2017.

<sup>38</sup> Henley, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> BBC, 1999; Evans and Milne, 2017.

<sup>40</sup> Henley, 2017.

below (comparing Brittany to other regions) is that urban Bretons generally shunned the FN whereas rural Bretons were more receptive.

Does this mean that Brittany will perhaps turn to the FN in the near future? It seems unlikely. On the one hand, the FN's Eurosceptic rhetoric has slowly gained resonance amongst some Breton farmers facing stress from European farming laws.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, Brittany consistently votes for moderate candidates. For example, the Socialist Jean-Yves Le Drian garnered 52% of the vote in the 2015 regional election as compared to only 19% gained by the FN's Gilles Pennelle, who finished third. Despite the increase in the FN's vote share in that election as compared to previous regional elections, they are still relatively unpopular in the region which supports our third hypothesis. Brittany's history of independence movements from France and its separate identity from the rest of France may also inhibit the FN's nationalistic rhetoric from gaining support in the region.<sup>42</sup> To conclude, although the Front has witnessed gradual gains in its vote share in this region, Brittany has largely been able to resist the rise of the FN.

*B. Ile-de-France:* As France's most populous and economically important region, *Ile-de-France* is a key electoral battleground, but also a region where support for the FN has regressed over time. Ironically, this region centered on the capital of Paris has historical ties with the Le Pen family. Jean Marie and his daughters lived there in the past and Marie-Caroline Le Pen was the first FN mayor of *Mantes-la-Jolie* municipality in the *Yvelines* department in the late 1990s. Marine Le Pen also contested the *Ile-de-France* regional presidency election of 2004 making it to the second round. Despite not winning that election, she managed to get elected as a member of the European Parliament for the region that year. However, historical roots of a political parties' founding family do not necessarily translate to electoral success as Marine Le Pen received less than 5% of Parisians' votes and only 7.6% of *Hauts-de-Seine*'s votes during the 2017 presidential election's first round.<sup>43</sup>

In great contrast to Brittany, *Ile-de-France* has very high proportions of immigrants (18% of the population), but this has not translated into FN electoral support as the region seems to be more socially open minded, with Paris opening up its parks to migrants unlike some of France's other regions where migrants are not tolerated and even protested against.<sup>44</sup> The FN headquarters in Paris was even bombed by a group called "Combat

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<sup>41</sup> Chazan, 2017a.

<sup>42</sup> Willsher, 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Meyze, 2017.

<sup>44</sup> McGuinness, 2016.

Xenophobia” suggesting an almost militant-like solidarity with immigrants, unseen elsewhere in France.<sup>45</sup>

A possible reason behind low FN support in this part of France may be that *Ile-de-France* is an extremely wealthy region, with the highest budget amongst all of France’s super regions, whereas the FN generally performs better in economically depressed areas. Perhaps the wealth of the region makes it more resistant to the Front National, as wealth would imply an economically healthy region less prone to divisive rhetoric due to higher employment opportunities as reflected in a lower unemployment rate. Thus, similar to Brittany, Eurosceptic ideologies have not resonated well in this region as seen in its “yes” vote shares in the European referenda of 1992 and 2005.

The region’s political tendencies have also veered towards the left, even for the disenfranchised. For example, in the 2015 regional election, 46% of voters in *Val-de-Marne* selected the French Communist Party.<sup>46</sup> As Table 7 reveals, the more left-leaning populist Jean Luc Melenchon bested Marine Le Pen in the first round of the 2017 presidential election in all but one of the region’s departments. Nonetheless, whereas the FN has become increasingly unsuccessful in the region’s urban areas, it has fared much better in rural areas. For example, they came in first in the 2014 *Mantes-la-Ville* cantonal election and in 2017, Marine Le Pen attained 22.9% of the vote in *Seine-et-Marne*.<sup>47</sup>

Table 7 Ile-de-France first round votes in the 2017 presidential election

Department	Jean Luc Melenchon	Marine Le Pen
Paris	19.56%	4.99%
Yvelines	16.65%	12.92%
Essonne	21.88%	16.43%
Hauts-de-Seine	18.28%	7.64%
Seine-St-Denis	34.02%	13.59%
Val-de-Marne	24.53%	11.50%
Val-d’Oise	23.96%	17.18%
Seine-et-Marne	20.84%	22.86%

Data Source: French Ministry of the Interior

<sup>45</sup> Stothard, 2017.

<sup>46</sup> Rossi, 2015.

<sup>47</sup> Breson, 2014; Meyze, 2017.

To conclude, *Ile-de-France* has been highly resistant to the FN despite much higher levels of immigration at more than double the proportion of almost any other French region. Factors that have facilitated the FN's rise elsewhere, such as unemployment and social fractures, have failed to fully materialize in this region. One reason, as summarized by Edouard Lecerf from Kantar Public, may be that voters against Le Pen "are from a France that has not suffered from inequalities."<sup>48</sup>

*C. Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie* (a.k.a. Hauts-de-France): In contrast to our first two cases, *Hauts-de-France* has turned out strongly for the Front National in recent times despite the region historically leaning towards parties of the left.<sup>49</sup> After the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, left wing parties started moderating their traditional working class-centric rhetoric with the Socialist and Communist parties becoming more receptive to the European Union and free trade.<sup>50</sup> Socialist lawmakers even voted for the Treaty of Lisbon despite opposition from 65% of the region's voters in the 2005 referendum. This was seen as a betrayal by some of the Socialist Party's working class support base resulting in an erosion of political trust in the left.<sup>51</sup>

Given these changing fortunes, the FN became a popular alternative starting in the early 2000s especially after the *Le Touquet* agreement essentially turned the area of Sangette near Calais into a makeshift campsite where migrants congregated due to being unable to easily transit into the United Kingdom.<sup>52</sup> Already economically downtrodden residents became distrustful of the camp exacerbating relations between them and immigrants.<sup>53</sup> Escalating tensions with immigrants then played into the hands of FN anti-immigrant rhetoric culminating in Jean Marie Le Pen (19.3%) polling higher in the region during the first round of the 2002 Presidential election than the center-left's Lionel Jospin (16.2%).<sup>54</sup>

Jean Marie Le Pen then launched his 2007 presidential campaign in the region from Lille, the fiefdom of Martine Aubry, a socialist heavyweight.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> As quoted in Gee, 2017.

<sup>49</sup> Duval-Smith, 2007; McKirdy and Hume, 2015; Samuel, 2015; Smith, 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Marnham, 2002; Chassany, 2016.

<sup>51</sup> Duval-Smith, 2007; Goodliffe, 2016.

<sup>52</sup> Marnham, 2002.

<sup>53</sup> Sage, 2002; Willsher, 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Sage, 2002; Pasha-Robinson, 2016.

<sup>55</sup> Duval-Smith, 2007.

Le Pen's anti-immigrant, protectionist rhetoric resonated well with those living in Lille and in the suburbs of Tourcoing and Roubaix, where unemployment was extremely high at 12%.<sup>56</sup> Appealing to the working classes, Marine Le Pen also led the first round of that year's parliamentary elections with 24.5% of the votes in *Pas-de-Calais* 14th constituency and was the only FN candidate to make it to the second round before eventually losing with 41.7% of the votes to Albert Falcon (58.4%) of the parliamentary left.<sup>57</sup>

With the party gaining traction in the region, the FN's Steve Brionis finally captured the mayoralty of *Henin-Beaumont* in 2014 with a first round majority (50.3%). While the Socialists' loss of this working-class mining town after six decades of continuous rule may have stemmed from the unpopular economic programs of Hollande and Valls, former supporters of the left also expressed fears of immigration in the region.<sup>58</sup> The FN was also boosted by the unpopularity of Sarkozy and the republican right wing party as an alternative.<sup>59</sup> Meanwhile, Socialists were seen as defending "wealthy bureaucrats" and "BoBos", hence "paying the price" for not defending "the interests of the workers."<sup>60</sup> In response, many disaffected voters flocked to the FN. Symptomatic of this transformation, Hayange's mayor, Fabien Engelmann, a former Trotskyist joined forces with the FN.<sup>61</sup> Even more indicative of the region's transformation was Marine Le Pen's vote share (40.6%) in the first round of the 2015 regional presidency elections compared to the republican right's Xavier Bertrand's (25.0%) and Socialist Pierre de Saintignon (18.1%). Marine's decisive capitalization of security fears in the aftermath of the 2015 Paris attacks and the FN's leftward economic shift were reasons given in the media for her success in the 2015 elections resulting in the Socialist candidate withdrawing himself from the second round.<sup>62</sup> Despite eventually losing to Bertrand, Marine's close defeat and the absence of a leftist candidate in the second round showed how much the Front had progressed in a region usually known for more left-leaning politics. The regional presidency was arguably only denied Marine Le Pen by the *cordon sanitaire*.

Marine's popularity in the region also gave her high poll numbers before the 2017 presidential election. Despite her eventual defeat by Emmanuel Macron in the second round, the only two regions out of 94 in continental

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<sup>56</sup> Duval-Smith, 2007.

<sup>57</sup> Samuel, 2007a, 2007b.

<sup>58</sup> Willsher and Panketh, 2014.

<sup>59</sup> Smith, 2015.

<sup>60</sup> Burke, 2009; Todd, 2015: 140.

<sup>61</sup> Chassany, 2016.

<sup>62</sup> McKirdy and Hume, 2015; Samuel, 2015.

France where a majority voted for her in the second round were *Aisne* (52.9%) and *Pas-de-Calais* (52.1%), both from *Hauts-de-France*.<sup>63</sup> Reflecting her immense popularity in the region, Marine Le Pen won an *Assemblée Nationale* seat in *Pas-de-Calais*' 11th constituency in the 2017 parliamentary election. These results are quite astounding when one considers that the region actually has a relatively low proportion of immigrants (<5%) in its population at only about a quarter the rate of *Ile-de-France*.

To sum up, the FN has successfully gained a foothold in this northern region of France. Their popularity appears to stem from a working-class support base reeling from “economic devastation in northern France’s old industrial belt” that now feels politically alienated by leftist parties.<sup>64</sup> Experience or perceptions of economic hardship have also made the region susceptible to the Front’s economic populism and xenophobic discourse with voters fearing “jihadists” being among them and stating it “just isn’t possible” to take in foreigners especially when the French people are “living in poverty.”<sup>65</sup> As with other regions, we also looked at urban-rural voting dynamics. Fascinatingly, and in contrast to Brittany and *Ile-de-France* we found high levels of FN support in both urban and rural areas as discussed further below.

*D. Provence-Alpes-Cote D’Azur (PACA):* Our final case region in the Southeast of France has historically registered high levels of voting for the political right, both the republican right and far-right parties.<sup>66</sup> It was here that the FN was founded and became popular amongst many *Pieds-Noirs* who resettled in PACA after the Algerian War.<sup>67</sup> The FN’s first leader, Jean Marie Le Pen, was long popular in this region with his fiery rhetoric resonating well in places like *Marseilles*, which has both high unemployment rates and high numbers of immigrants.<sup>68</sup> Even when FN support declined nationwide in the second half of the 2000s, the FN still did well in the region winning more than 20% of votes in the first round of 2010 regional elections. In the past, the FN has also won multiple mayoral elections in cities of the region such as *Toulon*, *Orange*, *Vitrolles*, and *Marignane* despite being perceived by critics as ineffective and corrupt while in office.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Le Figaro, 2017.

<sup>64</sup> The Local, 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Nossiter, 2015.

<sup>66</sup> Samuel, 2017b.

<sup>67</sup> Feldman, 2013.

<sup>68</sup> Landrey, 1992.

<sup>69</sup> Piet, 2015.



The Front's popularity has also strengthened in recent times. In 2012, Marion Marechal-Le Pen became a Member of Parliament by winning a *Vaucluse* constituency.<sup>70</sup> The FN then gained further momentum during the 2015 regional presidency election, when Marion Marechal-Le Pen came out on top in the first round before eventually losing a close second round battle with 45.2% of the votes to Christian Estrosi (54.8%) of the republican right. Similar to *Hauts-de-France*, only the *cordon sanitaire* prevented a FN regional presidency in PACA during the 2015 elections. Marion has since become a figurehead and darling for the FN especially after helping her aunt, Marine Le Pen, expel the more extremist elements in the Front, including her grandfather Jean-Marie.<sup>71</sup> Being culturally conservative and sensitive to the region's long simmering tension against immigrants from North Africa, she has managed to gain almost cult status in the region.<sup>72</sup>

Personalities aside, the Front has capitalized on its already heavy presence in the region by moving leftwards economically and it has increased its appeal among traditional supporters of leftist parties by plying its rhetoric amongst the "unemployed" and "the downtrodden" and other people left behind by the effects of globalization, often manifested as rhetoric against the European Union.<sup>73</sup> In a region with high unemployment where immigrants comprise almost 10% of the population, the FN seems to have effectively capitalized on anti-immigration rhetoric especially in the aftermath of the *Nice* attack in 2016.<sup>74</sup>

To conclude, compared to other parts of France, the PACA region has always turned out heavily in voting for the FN and this tendency has continued into the 21st century. Driven by demographic factors such as the heavy presence of descendants of the *Pieds-Noirs* and relatively high immigration<sup>75</sup> coupled with a newfound economic appeal, the Front might also continue to be strong in the region for decades to come. In addition to the region's right wing affinities and distrust for the European Union, we also found its urban areas almost as supportive of the FN as its rural communes.

#### 4 Comparative Analysis

When we compare our four diverse case regions to each other and various possible explanatory variables, it clearly points us to the two factors of

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<sup>70</sup> Samuel, 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Lichfeld, 2015.

<sup>72</sup> Crilly, 2015.

<sup>73</sup> Lichfield, 2015; Liogier, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> Chazan, 2017b; Samuel, 2017b.

<sup>75</sup> Pelling, 2007.

unemployment and urban support as salient factors explaining FN regional vote shares. As Table 8 illustrates, we found considerable support for our first hypothesis (H1). The FN was indeed fairly popular in the economically depressed regions of PACA and *Hauts-de-France*, but much less popular in the economically healthier regions of *Ile-de-France* and Brittany. Moreover, immigration levels only sometimes matched FN support. Brittany's low numbers of immigrants did correspond with its low support for the FN just as PACA's higher proportion of immigrants correlated with more FN voting. However, in *Ile-de-France* where immigration is very high, FN support has declined considerably while in *Hauts-de-France* where immigration is fairly low there has been considerable growth in FN voting. Thus, overall we found a much stronger link between RWPP voting and the state of a region's economy than its levels of immigration.

While our results concerning unemployment and immigration levels are largely consonant with previous studies, we observed some novel findings regarding the gap in voting preferences between rural and urban areas. Firstly, in support of our second hypothesis (H2) we found rural support for the FN to be fairly strong (20% or greater) everywhere and higher in all regions compared to urban support. However, a crucial difference was that urban votes for the FN were low in Brittany (9%) and *Ile-de-France* (12%) but high in *Hauts-de-France* (23%) and in PACA (25%). This divergence in urban-rural voting behavior is clearly illustrated in Table 9 which displays randomly selected urban and rural communes from each region.

Lastly, regarding our third hypothesis (H3), high FN votes in PACA and low FN votes in Brittany support our expectations of a certain degree of path dependency whereby FN popularity across regions would retain a relatively consistent rank order. For example, Brittany started off with low support for the FN among French regions in the 1990s and this pattern remained into the late 2010s whereas FN support was strong in the PACA region in both the 1990s and 2010s; with the FN consistently polling ~20% over this period as seen in Tables 2 through 5. This suggests that regions receptive to the FN in the past may be more likely to turn out for them in the future and vice versa relative to other regions notwithstanding dips and troughs in actual vote counts over individual elections. However, the shifts we observed over time in *Ile-de-France* and *Hauts-de-France* reveal that regions that were not previously strongly in favor (or in opposition) to an RWPP can indeed become more or less favorable to such parties over time. Thus we found only partial support for H3 regarding regional continuity of RWPP support levels over time.

Table 8 Unemployment, immigration and regional wealth

	Unemployment		Immigration		Regional wealth	
	1992	2016	1999	2012	PCI 1992 (Euros) (Euros)	PCI 2015
Brittany	8%	9%	2%	3%	16,094	27,838
Ile-de-France	7%	9%	15%	18%	30,220	55,227
Nord	11%	12%	4%	5%	15,729	26,095
PACA	11%	11%	10%	10%	18,467	30,864

Data Sources: INSEE; French Ministry of the Interior

Table 9 2017 presidential FN votes in rural and urban communes in 4 French regions

Commune	Bretagne	FN votes	Ile-de-France	FN votes	Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	FN votes	Provence-Alpes-Cote D'Azur	FN votes
Urban	Rennes	6.7%	Paris	5.0%	Lille	13.8%	Aix en Provence	15.0%
Urban	Quimper	10.3%	Boulogne-Billancourt	5.1%	Villeneuve D'Ascq	15.1%	Avignon	21.2%
Urban	Vannes	10.9%	Asnieres-sur-Seine	6.9%	Roubaix	16.9%	Marseilles	23.7%
Urban	Saint Brieuc	12.0%	Courbevoie	7.4%	Amiens	18.4%	Antibes	24.0%
Urban	Saint Malo	12.8%	Montreuil	8.3%	Valenciennes	23.5%	Cannes	25.1%
Urban	Brest	13.0%	Saint Denis	10.1%	Beauvais	24.9%	Nice	25.3%
Urban	Lorient	15.1%	Nanterre	10.4%	Tourcoing	25.1%	Hyeres	26.0%
Urban	Lanester	17.9%	Creteil	10.5%	Saint-Quentin	28.7%	Toulon	27.3%
Urban			Vitry-sur-Seine	12.6%	Dunkerque	29.8%	La Seyne sur Mer	29.6%
Urban			Argenteuil	14.7%	Calais	37.2%	Frejus	33.5%
<b>Average</b>		<b>12.3%</b>		<b>9.1%</b>		<b>23.4%</b>		<b>25.1%</b>
Rural	Goulven	9.8%	Thiverval-Grignon	12.8%	Killem	23.4%	Vaugines	16.2%
Rural	Noyal	10.6%	Marchault	23.0%	Journy	26.3%	Saint-Martin-de-la-Brusque	23.1%
Rural	Ouessant	15.1%	Hodent	23.5%	Noroy	27.1%	Venanson	25.4%
Rural	Bohal	19.5%	Verdelot	23.6%	Saint-Blimont	29.4%	Mons	27.0%
Rural	Saint Caredec	20.5%	Nainville-les-Roches	24.2%	Revelles	31.6%	Ampus	30.2%
Rural	Maxent	20.7%	La Falaise	24.3%	Naves	31.9%	Pierrefeu	30.9%
Rural	Calan	22.8%	La Foret-le-Roi	24.8%	Gouzeaucourt	40.1%	Saint-Auban	31.6%
Rural	Kergrist	23.7%	Boinville-le-Gaillard	27.1%	Saint-Paul-aux-Bois	42.8%	Valderoure	37.1%

Rural	Antrain	25.4%	Omerville	29.6%	Saint-Benin	49.1%	La Celle	38.5%
Rural	Hirel	26.9%	Flacourt	43.0%	Halloy	58.5%	Esparron	43.3%
<b>Average</b>		<b>19.5%</b>		<b>25.6%</b>		<b>36.0%</b>		<b>30.3%</b>

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Data Source: Authors' calculations from French Ministry of the Interior Data

*Notes:* Given that France has approximately 36,000 communes it was not possible to analyze voting in every single commune. Hence, ten urban and rural communes were selected randomly for each region. The 'urban' communes selected were ones with over 20,000 voters and the 'rural' communes each had less than 2,000 voters. Only eight urban communes were identified in total for Brittany.

What are the implications of these findings? While some have argued that immigration is a primary factor in explaining RWPP electoral success, numbers of immigrants (or migrant share of the resident population) does not seem to be a primary factor in explaining regional FN support as shown in Table 10. Noticeably *Ile-de-France* has resisted the rise of the FN despite its high numbers of immigrants. Our findings on this resemble Stockemer who asserts that actual immigration figures locally are negligible with perceptions being more important.<sup>76</sup> A lower level of economic development as measured by regional per capita income (PCI) also does not seem to be a primary determinant as Brittany demonstrates low support for the FN despite being less economically affluent than PACA and roughly equivalent to *Hauts-de-France*.

However, the FN is clearly popular in regions with persistently higher unemployment rates. The confluence of this and people's reactions to increased immigration could contribute to an increase in frustrations propelling the far right vote. Essentially, social stress brought about by immigration exacerbates economic stress brought about by unemployment. These results suggest that unemployment plays a stronger role than regional domestic product, a finding supported by previous studies highlighting how economic insecurity facilitates the rise of the far right.<sup>77</sup>

Over time, the FN's increasingly leftward economic orientation may also be a reason for their growing popularity, but we suspect this is largely a nationwide phenomenon as opposed to a regionally specific change. In *Hauts-de France* it seems to have made a greater impact with the FN picking up voters who previously voted for the leftist parties. This reinforces the view of Rydgren that working classes will vote for the far right when their traditional parties shift economically.<sup>78</sup> However, the fact that the FN is still not very popular in disenfranchised areas in *Ile-de-France*, who still turn out for the left, highlights a certain shortcoming to this claim.

Lastly, as mentioned above there seems to be quite a significant rural-urban divide in voting for the FN, possibly attributable to rural regions being far away from centers of wealth. However, this was much more pronounced in Brittany and *Ile-de-France* than in *Hauts-de-France* and PACA where urban areas were also quite receptive to the FN. The fact that the urban-rural divide was not significantly different in these latter two regions where the

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<sup>76</sup> Stockemer, 2016.

<sup>77</sup> Rydgren, 2008; Todd, 2015; Wodak, 2015; Goodliffe, 2016.

<sup>78</sup> Rydgren, 2005.

FN have become exceptionally popular rather suggests that it has already been able to entrench itself in certain urban centers of influence.

Table 10 Summary table—FN voting and regional characteristics

	<b>Brittany</b>	<b>Ile-de-France</b>	<b>PACA</b>	<b>Nord</b>
Rural Support (20% = high)	High	High	High	High
Urban Support (20% = high)	Low	Low	High	High
Immigration (10% = high)	Low	High	High	Low
Unemployment (10% = high)	Low	Low	High	High
Economic Prosperity (€35,000 = high)	Low	High	Low	Low
FN Vote Trend (from 1992 to 2017)	Consistent Decrease		Consistent Increase	
2017 FN Vote (among 12 French regions) #12	#11	#2	#1	
2017 FN Vote Shares (20% = high)	Low	Low	High	High

Note: 2017 vote shares are based on parliamentary elections as shown in Table A2.

## 5 Conclusion

Through a comparative analysis, we found regional variation in voting for the Front National Party in France over the period from 1992 to 2017 connected with a) urban support for the party, b) unemployment rates prior to elections, and to a lesser extent c) past voting behavior within the region. By contrast, gross regional product and levels of foreign immigration within each region played a less important role, though we acknowledge that scapegoating of immigrants and Muslims may nevertheless increase RWPP support in general.

While unemployment rates and previous vote shares have emerged as significant factors behind RWPP support in previous studies, our findings on rural-urban support were somewhat unexpected. Rural areas are often seen as particularly prone to RWPP appeals, but we found the rural effect to matter less than the urban in determining RWPP vote shares within a region. This implies that rural support for RWPP may be more uniform across a nation whereas urban support may take on regionally specific characteristics due to the nature of regional identity, economic structures, and local inter-party dynamics.

That our case studies revealed an urban-rural divide in voting for the FN, especially in regions where it is not well supported deserves greater attention in future research. This suggests to us that FN supporters are those whom have not benefitted economically. A major implication of this finding is that the economic health of a political region conditions receptivity to the populist right, especially in circumstances where social bonds may be stressed. Thus, our study complements previous literature identifying social reasons as prognostic factors behind the rise of right wing populist parties and economic reasons as diagnostic factors.

In conclusion, we believe the findings from this study warrant further testing at more micro levels and in other national contexts. One limitation of this current study is the still macro nature of its analysis despite its focus on subnational regions. Thus, one research strategy might be to compare several *departments* or *communes* within or across French macro-regions. Taking this study's approach to the departmental level or even lower might reveal additional insights into regional vote variation for the FN though it would necessarily require even more micro-level data that in some cases may be difficult to attain. Also valuable would be to replicate the analysis performed here in other nations to see if dynamics uncovered here are at play there as well.

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## Appendix

Table A1 Presidential elections first round FN vote shares (%) by region 1995–2017

Region	1995	2002	2007	2012	2017	Average
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	21.58	23.35	13.84	23.87	28.16	22.16
Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine	21.73	21.92	14.33	23.21	27.78	21.79
Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	17.36	19.43	14.91	23.85	31.04	21.32
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté	15.19	15.09	12.84	20.74	25.09	17.79
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes	16.76	18.67	10.26	18.13	24.50	17.66
Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées	14.53	18.56	11.24	19.63	22.98	17.39
Centre-Val de Loire	14.92	17.22	11.39	19.37	23.08	17.20
Normandie	14.67	16.11	10.96	18.75	23.93	16.88
Aquitaine-Limousin-Poitou-Charentes	10.14	12.40	8.45	15.76	18.89	13.13
Ile-De-France	14.09	14.57	7.54	12.28	12.25	12.15
Pays de la Loire	9.58	12.19	7.35	14.39	16.62	12.03
Bretagne	10.10	11.81	7.18	13.24	15.33	11.53

Data Source: Authors' Calculations from French Ministry of the Interior data

Table A2 Parliamentary elections first round FN vote shares (%) by region 1993–2017

Region	1993	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	Average
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	21.72	24.41	16.25	6.21	21.23	20.92	18.46
Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	14.04	16.75	13.69	6.37	17.92	21.82	15.10
Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine	14.09	18.89	13.53	5.68	15.67	16.72	14.10
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes	14.56	17.17	11.38	4.27	19.06	12.15	13.10
Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées	13.16	15.97	10.92	4.34	15.76	16.30	12.74
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté	11.21	15.06	13.21	4.77	14.61	15.54	12.40
Centre-Val de Loire	12.35	14.37	12.50	5.04	14.24	13.73	12.04
Normandie	11.55	13.98	10.83	4.03	13.15	15.49	11.51
Ile-De-France	13.39	14.20	9.13	3.70	10.06	7.93	9.74
Aquitaine-Limousin-Poitou-Charentes	9.01	10.01	7.42	2.86	10.57	11.37	8.54
Pays de la Loire	8.35	8.99	6.59	2.25	9.09	9.29	7.43
Bretagne	7.50	7.98	5.66	2.26	7.97	7.89	6.54

Data Source: Authors' Calculations from French Ministry of the Interior data

Table A3 Regional elections first round FN vote shares (%) by region 1992–2015

Region	1992	1998	2004	2010	2015	Average
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	22.65	25.57	22.03	19.72	39.31	25.86
Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	12.47	15.53	18.51	16.80	39.13	20.49
Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine	13.61	16.28	17.47	14.04	34.45	19.17
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté	11.57	14.98	15.99	12.01	30.03	16.92
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes	14.48	15.95	15.59	12.32	24.64	16.60
Centre-Val de Loire	11.34	15.09	16.52	10.63	29.12	16.54
Normandie	11.49	13.26	13.65	9.98	26.55	14.99
Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées	12.31	7.60	13.56	10.54	30.33	14.87
Ile-De-France	14.98	15.87	11.92	9.04	17.85	13.93
Aquitaine-Limousin-Poitou-Charentes	7.88	9.24	10.29	7.67	22.09	11.43
Pays de la Loire	8.42	8.34	9.13	6.76	20.34	10.60
Bretagne	8.41	7.92	8.09	5.96	17.49	9.57

Data Source: Authors' Calculations from French Ministry of the Interior data

Table A4 Cantonal elections first round FN vote shares (%) by region 1992–2015

Region	1992	1994	1998	2001	2004	2008	2011	2015	Average
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	21.11	14.91	23.68	9.23	19.27	7.62	24.77	33.65	19.28
Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	11.70	10.66	14.60	8.62	15.02	8.05	21.89	34.19	15.59
Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine	11.79	11.21	15.25	8.86	13.91	6.87	18.51	30.69	14.64
Ile-De-France	15.23	13.05	16.15	7.64	11.22	4.59	16.62	21.06	13.20
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes	12.50	10.47	13.87	7.15	12.30	5.32	14.89	24.55	12.63
Centre-Val de Loire	10.72	9.94	12.79	7.26	13.18	5.03	15.27	26.40	12.57
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté	9.80	9.38	12.0	6.80	13.23	4.76	14.67	27.31	12.25
Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées	11.00	7.65	12.12	6.36	11.17	5.22	16.09	26.10	11.96
Normandie	9.68	10.02	11.50	6.50	11.99	2.62	13.38	26.12	11.48
Aquitaine-Limousin-Poitou-Charentes	7.78	5.49	8.84	4.12	8.29	2.30	8.71	20.11	8.21
Pays de la Loire	7.69	5.99	8.17	4.11	7.35	1.88	7.34	21.23	7.97
Bretagne	6.89	4.42	6.79	3.58	6.22	1.06	4.20	18.30	6.43

Data Source: Authors' Calculations from French Ministry of the Interior data

Table A5 2011 share of immigrants (%) in French regions

Region	Immigrants (%)	Principle region of origin		
		1	2	3
Ile-De-France	17.9	Algeria	Portugal	Morocco
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	10.1	Algeria	Morocco	Italy
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes	8.8	Algeria	Portugal	Italy
Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées	8.3	Morocco	Spain	Algeria
Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine	8.2	Algeria	Turkey	Morocco
Centre-Val de Loire	6.9	Portugal	Morocco	Algeria
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté	6.3	Morocco	Portugal	Algeria
Aquitaine-Limousin-Poitou-Charentes	5.5	Portugal	UK	Morocco
Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	4.8	Morocco	Algeria	Portugal
Normandie	3.7	Algeria	Morocco	Portugal
Pays de la Loire	3.2	Morocco	Algeria	Portugal
Bretagne	2.9	UK	Morocco	Portugal

Data Source: French Ministry of the Interior based on 2011 Census results

Table A6 Unemployment (%) in French regions 1992–2016

Region	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	2016	Average
Nord-Pas-de-Calais-Picardie	10.7	13.2	9.7	10.1	12.2	12.2	11.4
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	11.3	13.7	9.7	9.2	11.0	11.3	11.0
Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées	10.2	12.0	9.4	9.1	11.2	11.8	10.6
Normandie	9.2	11.2	8.0	7.9	9.8	10.1	9.4
Aquitaine-Limousin-Poitou-Charentes	9.0	10.0	7.3	7.2	9.2	9.5	8.7
Alsace-Champagne-Ardenne-Lorraine	7.1	8.8	6.7	7.6	9.5	9.9	8.3
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes	8.4	9.5	6.5	6.7	8.4	8.7	8.0
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté	7.7	9.0	6.5	7.0	8.8	9.0	8.0
Centre-Val de Loire	7.6	9.1	6.3	6.6	8.9	9.5	8.0
Ile-De-France	7.4	9.3	7.1	7.2	8.3	8.7	8.0
Pays de la Loire	8.7	9.4	6.4	6.4	8.1	8.6	7.9
Bretagne	8.0	8.8	6.4	6.5	8.2	8.7	7.8

Data Source: Authors' Calculations from French Ministry of the Interior data