Spring 5-7-2022

Why No Rallying Force? Factors of Rassemblement National Underperformance in 2021 French Regional Elections

Amy Rhodes

Recommended Citation

Why No Rallying Force?

Factors of Rassemblement National Underperformance in 2021 French Regional

Elections

© 2022

Amy Rhodes

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completion

Of the Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies at the

Croft Institute for International Studies

Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College
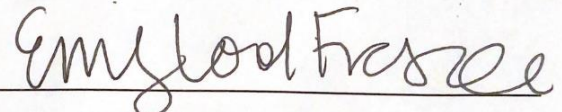
The University of Mississippi

University, Mississippi

May 2022

Approved:

_____

Advisor: Dr. Ana Velitchkova

_____

Reader: Dr. Emily Lord Fransee

_____

Reader: Dr. Miguel Centellas

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

Marine Le Pen remains popular within national French politics. However, following the June 2021 French regional elections, her far-right party, Rassemblement National (RN), failed to win a single region. This thesis seeks to explore the factors behind the RN's surprising lack of success through a comparative historical approach. This thesis also evaluates the applicability of the second-order model on these elections. Two regions, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (ARA) and Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur (PACA) serve as case studies for this research based upon their diverse electoral results. Regional newspaper articles, national newspaper articles, and candidates' social media posts from the election cycles serve as the data for this thesis. The results demonstrate that candidates in the PACA region featured similar campaign strategies but had differently sized media scopes. Candidates in the ARA regions had very different candidate strategies, one candidate focused on campaign issues while the other relied on party imagery. The newspapers reveal a variety of structural and national factors, including abstention, appeals to national candidates, etc. This thesis upholds that the second-order model somewhat applied to the 2021 French regional election, but also upholds the principle that elections are multifaced events with many causalities. This thesis provides important election analyses as the 2022 French presidential elections rest on the near horizon.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

"Tonight you won, France won. Everyone told us it was impossible, but they don't know France."

These were the words that centrist La Republic En Marche! (LREM) candidate Emmanuel Macron declared to a crowd outside the Louvre Museum following his defeat of far-right National Front candidate Marine Le Pen in the second round of the 2017 French Presidential elections ("Emmanuel Macron Defeats"). Macron had garnered 66.06% of the votes over Le Pen's 33.94% (ibid.). Four years later, the next presidential election will occur in April 2022, and the two candidates both remain popular. According to POLITICO polls, these two candidates have been the most consistently favored presidential candidates since 2017 ("France — 2022"). The LREM and now-renamed National Rally (RN) parties have also found success in the 2019 European elections, each party gathering around 23% of the votes (ibid.).

However, on June 27th, the day of the second round of the 2021 French regional elections, an article by the New York Times reflected,

> "... after nationwide regional elections on Sunday, a rerun of the second round of the 2017 election appeared far less certain as both Mr. Macron's centrist party, La République en Marche, and Ms. Le Pen's party failed to win a single one of France's 13 mainland regions" (Cohen).

The 2021 French regional elections were a shock for the nationally-popular LREM and RN parties. LREM won the region of Guadeloupe, but only polled at 7%

nationally (Warren et al.). The RN party was largely anticipated to win a regional

majority for the first time since its creation ("Explainer"). However, the party qualified

for the second round of voting with less than 20% of votes in 6 regions and did not

qualify for the second round in 5 regions, all of which were overseas territories

("Résultats"). After the second round of voting, the party did not win a majority in a

single region and even captured fewer regional seats than they had back in the 2015

regional elections (Warren et al.).

For this thesis, I sought to explore the reasoning behind the surprising lack of

electoral success for specifically the RN party, by researching the question **"What were

the factors that caused the underperformance of the nationally-successful

Rassemblement National (RN) party in the 2021 French regional elections?"** I begin

this research by discussing the theoretical framework of regional elections, focusing

especially on the second-order model. Chapter III presents the comparative historical

analysis methodologies used in the creation of this thesis. This chapter explains the case

selection of regions, newspapers, articles, and candidate social media posts along with

coding practices. Chapter IV presents the findings of the social media analysis, separated

by candidate and organized by most prevalent codes. Chapters V through VII present the

findings of the newspaper analyses, separated by regions, source types, and election

rounds. Within these chapters, findings are organized by the most prevalent codes.

Finally, Chapter VIII describes this study's limitations, re-evaluates the research

question, and suggests key applicability.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the field of study surrounding regional, municipal, and European Parliament elections, an important theory to consider is the second-order model. First proposed by Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt in the 1980s, the second-order model was developed to explain the dominance of national politics within European Parliament elections (Schakel and Jeffery 324-326). This model defines elections below the national level as largely influenced by the national level. Simplified examples of this model would be voting for a local candidate solely because they are aligned with the party of the President, or voting for a challenger opponent because of dissatisfaction with the majority national party.

Since the 1980s, scholars have sought to reexamine the second-order model and how it applies to more recent elections. Pippa Norris re-evaluated the application of the second-order model to European Parliament elections and found the model still applied after examining more recent election cycles (Norris and Reif 109-124). Michael Marsh agreed with Norris's results by explaining that European Parliament elections are "pointers to subsequent general elections", although the second-order model requires more nuance than what was originally crafted (Marsh 591-607). Christine Fauvelle-Aymar and Michael S. Lewis-Beck also examined this concept by specifically looking at French regional elections. They argued that French regional elections were dominated by national factors, thus supporting the second-order model (Fauvelle-Aymar and Lewis-Beck 2-21). Bruno Jerôme and Véronique Jerôme-Speziari also examined French

regional politics and the impact of national factors on local economics, concluding that these elections were once again heavily influenced by national factors and issues (Jerôme and Jerôme-Speziari 219-236).

However, even though there is no true model or theory to oppose the second-order model, not all studies uniformly apply the second-order model to regional politics. For example, in their research on Belgian municipal elections, Marien, Dassonneville, and Hooghe find that while ¾ of voters voted the same as they did for national elections, many voters knew of local issues and candidates (898–916). Boomgaarden, Johann and Kritzinger's research on the second-order model's applicability to Austria's European Parliament elections also found that the model could not be uniformly applied (130-144). Robert Liñeira studied the applicability of the second-order model to Spain's regional elections. He proposed that these elections were neither autonomous nor dependent on national politics, but that they existed on a continuum between the two, with specific regional factors determining where on that continuum the elections would rest (Liñeira 510-538). Finally, Arjan H Schakel and Charlie Jeffery studied 2933 regional elections across 313 regions and 17 countries. Their research found that only 18% of these elections could fully be described as second-order (337-339). They also critically emphasized the argument that studying an election solely from a second-order model viewpoint causes implicit bias and creates a "self-fulfilling prophecy" (326). All of these studies reinforce Shackel and Jeffery's point because they emphasize that regional elections contain unique factors separate from national politics that influence their results.

My research question falls critically between both realms of theory. By examining the factors involved in the RN's surprising lack of success, I am able to evaluate both

5

national and regional factors. This thesis examines the validity of the second-order model theory while still exploring regional uniqueness and autonomy. Examining national factors will, for the first time, evaluate whether the second-order model applied to the 2021 regional elections. The revealed national factors also provide an important national context in the face of the upcoming 2022 Presidential elections. However, this study ensures that regional factors and influences are not ignored while examining the larger national picture, the aforementioned "self-fulfilling prophecy". Regional influences give context to the unique culture, issues, and tactics of each region, aspects lost when only examining national factors and statistics. This is the pinnacle of my holistic exploratory approach: by examining national news articles, regional news articles, and candidate platforms, the 2021 regional elections are able to be viewed through three different levels of politics at the same time, a tactic not found in the existing literature. This approach provides for a much more well-rounded view of the French political system than if only one level were to have been examined. My research thus not only mediates between two existing theories regarding regional elections but also demonstrates a unique exploratory research approach and an analysis of largely unstudied elections.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Case Selection

The research approach to this topic is a **qualitative comparative historical analysis, specifically an exploratory study investigating the factors of influence on the 2021 French regional elections**. I examined the aforementioned hypothesized areas of influence—national factors, regional factors, candidate factors, and structural factors—through newspaper and social media analyses.

In order to holistically examine the election cycles, I had to define multiple levels of case selection.

Region Selection

Seawright and Gerring's article "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options" explains that diverse sampling allows for a more representative sample when there are few cases to select from in non-probability sampling (300-301). Considering there were only 17 voting regions during the French 2021 regional elections, choosing a diverse sample from among those regions is crucial. In addition, to establish a true causal election timeline, I eliminated regions where the RN party did not qualify for the second round. Of the remaining regions, **Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (ARA)** had the lowest RN electoral share following the first round, while **Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur (PACA)** boasted the highest RN electoral share. By examining these two diverse regions, I am able to draw a more

representative electoral sample, ensuring that unique electoral influences will be examined.

Crucially, both of these regions later were won by Right-aligned parties, meaning that they have a strong control element as well. The lack of RN success cannot be easily attributed to merely the dominance of Left-aligned politics in the regions because both regions elected conservative leaders. By choosing these regions, I am able to examine nuanced factors across the spectrum of RN electoral success.

Figure 3-1 also highlights the theoretical importance of these two regions. Not only are these two regions diverse in their 2021 French regional election RN results, but they also demonstrate national significance. These regions faced the greatest electoral changes for the RN when comparing their 2021 regional first-round results to their 2017 presidential results. This, in turn, means that these two regions are also able to display a diverse representation of national opinion and national influences as well.

Newspaper Selection

In order to measure both national and regional influences on the 2021 French regional elections, it is crucial to examine both levels of newspapers as well. The primary factor of selection for newspaper sources was circulation. Papers with low readership would be less likely to affect voters and create a tangible impact on voters and public opinion.

The journal *Le Monde* was selected to represent the national opinion and realm of influence. Data published by *Statista* and presented as **Figures 3-2, 3-3**, and **3-4** demonstrate that *Le Monde* has the highest-paid daily circulation volume, the most online

payments, and the second-highest print circulation in France. Its national influence across France makes it a strong data source for analyzing the 2021 election cycles.

Figure 3-5 shows data published by *Statista* explaining the circulation of regional news sources. Comparing those popular sources with their area of distribution reveals that the journal *Le Dauphiné Libéré* is the most highly circulated paper in the ARA region and *La Provence* has the most circulation in the PACA region. I thus selected these two newspapers as a representative regional voice in my causal historical analysis.

Article Selection

Articles across all three newspaper sources contained specific judgmental and convenience constraints. I selected 87 articles in total, 28 from *Le Monde*, 23 from *Le Dauphiné Libéré,* and 36 from *La Provence*. I chose to examine this number of articles due to research time and logistical constraints. All sources also followed specific judgmental timelines. To examine influences specific to the first round of the elections, I analyzed articles published from June 1st through June 19th. To examine the second round of the elections, I analyzed articles published the week between voting rounds, June 20th–June 26th. These time restraints allowed for a large enough sample size of articles while also ensuring the influences from each round of the timeline were isolated and specific.

I selected articles using key search terms within the ProQuest, Nexus Uni, and *La Provence* search portals. I selected the *Le Monde* articles using ProQuest advanced searches. The search "AND Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur AND élections AND regionales

OR Mariani" generated the *Le Monde* articles focused on the PACA region. *Le Monde* articles focused on the ARA region were sparser, requiring the two searches:

AND Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, AND élections, AND regionales, OR Kotarac; and

AND Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, AND élections, AND regionales, OR RN.

I used the same two advanced searches when selecting the *Le Dauphiné Libéré* articles within the Nexus Uni portal. For *La Provence*, I selected articles using the simpler search "élections regionales" since their online portal did not have an advanced search feature.

I selected the articles for this study from the generated searches due to topic relevance. This was a judgmental selection based upon personal readings of the articles. I selected articles in which the RN party or the candidates specifically were discussed to ensure their relevance to the overall research question. I prioritized articles specifically focused on the election cycles rather than candidates or party news. Many hours were spent ensuring the most relevant articles from each source during each election cycle were selected.

Candidate Platforms

For French regional elections, voters cast their support behind lists of individual candidates that are campaigned by a leader and are usually tied to a specific political party. In the PACA region, Thierry Mariani was the head of the RN list ("Résultats"). Mariani previously served as mayor of Valréas, deputy of Vaucluse, and member of the European Parliament (Gavazzi). He worked under former president Jacques Chirac in the Rally for the Republic Party and also served in President Sarkozy's government as Secretary of State for Transportation as part of the Republican Party ("Biographie"). He

joined the RN party in 2019 (Gavazzi). In the 2021 regional elections, running as the head of the RN list, he won 36.38% of the first-round votes—the highest of the round—before ultimately finishing second in the final round with 42.70% of cast votes ("Résultats"). The candidate that triumphed over Mariani was Renaud Muselier, a former friend and leader of the Republican list (Provansal et al.). Muselier also boasts a prominent political history; he was elected to the National Assembly for Bouches-du-Rhône, served as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and worked as regional advisor for the Republican party in PACA before being appointed as the region's leader following Christian Estrosi's retirement in 2017 ("Renaud Muselier"; "Renaud Muselier Désigné"). Muselier settled for second place following the first round of the 2021 regional elections, with 31.91% of votes. However, he beat Mariani 57.30% to 42.70% in the second round, maintaining his position as president of the regional council ("Résultats").

In the ARA region, Andréa Kotarac was the head of the RN list during the 2021 regional elections. The RN was not Kotarac's first political party; he previously was a member of the Left Party and then the France Insoumise Party under Jean-Luc Mélenchon ("Andréa Kotarac"). He served as an elected regional council member as a representative from Lyon under the Left Party (ibid.). However, following the Yalta Economic Forum in 2019 where he appeared alongside Marion Maréchal Le Pen and Thierry Mariani, Kotarac declared his support for the RN (ibid.). In the 2021 regional elections, Kotarac placed third in the first round of the elections with 12.32%. He finished in third overall, with 11.19% of cast votes ("Résultats"). Kotarac was far outpaced by Laurent Wauquiez. Wauquiez won an incredible 43.85% of first-round

votes, ultimately winning the region in the second round with 55.20% ("Résultats"). Wauquiez had previously served as Secretary of State for Employment and Minister of Education under President Sarkozy's government ("Laurent Wauquiez"). He even served as leader of the Republican party from December 2017 to June 2019 when he resigned from the party (ibid.). In the 2021 regional elections, Wauquiez stood as the leader of the Right union list ("Résultats").

In order to analyze the specific influences and platforms these four candidates invoked during the elections, I analyzed their social media posts. I selected their Instagram posts specifically due to the sample size and content during the time period constraints. To give context to candidate posts and influence, each RN candidate was compared to the winning candidates in the ARA and PACA regions, Wauquiez and Muselier. This allowed platform nuance and success to be more quantifiable and justified through the comparison between election leader and RN candidate.

All social media posts come from the candidates' public accounts. I analyzed posts from June 13–19 for first-round influence and posts from June 20–26 for second-round influence. I selected this time period to allow for a representative sample while also limiting logistical difficulties, such as time and womanpower. I selected 70 posts in total, 14 of which were posted by Wauquiez, 24 by Muselier, 19 by Mariani, and 13 by Kotarac.

The primary data for this comparative historical analysis is the 87 articles from *Le Monde, Le Dauphiné Libéré,* and *La Provence* journals. Candidate-level data was collected from 70 Instagram social media posts. All of these sources of data were analyzed using the Atlas.ti software.

Coding

I completed coding using the Atlas.ti system. I originally coded all articles together on one project file and all social media posts on another. Following a complete coding process, I then copied the two projects into specific files where each region's selected articles and each candidate's posts could be examined separately. I applied meta codes including source, date, and election round to all sources to help with organization.

Other codes I applied and later rejected from the sample. For social media posts, I coded hashtags and locations, but later removed them due to relevancy. These two codes overall did not reveal much information about the candidate's campaign tactics. The only cases where these codes were prevalent were the general hashtags that candidates applied to nearly all their posts, such as "Muselier2021". This hashtag does not reveal unique mechanisms of the campaign despite being prevalent and was thus removed. For newspaper articles, I originally coded occurrences of prediction and wording bias. However, these codes became the overwhelmingly most prevalent codes for both regions, as a result, obscuring all other aspects of the campaigns. For the same reason, I removed from consideration the codes connected to the prevalence of specific candidate and French figure names. While the type and prevalence of media coverage is an important factor in candidate success, it should not be the only factor considered, so these codes were not considered during the coding analysis and conclusions.

Social Media Posts

All social media posts received over 200 codes. Within these codes, I created specific categories that contained specific instances. For example, one category I coded was symbols, and this category contained codes such as flags, masks, press equipment, etc. Other categories I coded included endorsements, types of campaign paraphernalia, caption content, and discussed or photographed topics.

I applied codes based on photographs, not posts, as Instagram allows multiple photos per post. If a code appeared in multiple photographs, I coded for each instance, meaning this one post contained the same code more than once. From 70 social media posts, I coded 204 pictures in total. However, I only recorded captions once per post. When viewing Instagram, all photos contain the same caption underneath. Within Atlas.ti, the caption was visible next to each photo. I only coded for captions once per post to preserve the authenticity of the original social media platform.

Newspaper Articles

All newspaper articles received over 280 codes. Categories of codes included platform topics (security, environment, etc.), current events (pandemic, news scandals, etc.), national references, regional references, and structural factors (abstention, mobilization, party organization, polls, etc.).

I did not code photographs and photograph captions, nor did I examine video content embedded within articles. The newspaper analysis focused on a textual examination of the factors and topics prevalent during the 2021 regional election cycles.

Subcoding

After all codes were applied, I examined the most prevalent social media codes for each candidate and the most prevalent newspaper codes for each region, source type, and election round. For the regional newspaper analysis, I selected the top five for each to be examined more in-depth, with the exception of the ARA newspaper articles. This region's articles featured a three-way tie for the 5th most common code. Therefore, I only examined the top four most prevalent codes for these ARA newspaper articles. For the source type and election round analyses, only the three most common codes were examined.

I then broke down each of the most prevalent codes into subcodes. Some quotations referenced multiple types of subcodes. For example, one PACA quote under the Security code wrote:

> "Thierry Mariani parle énormément de sécurité, une compétence mineure des Régions. Ne trompe-t-il pas les électeurs ? La sécurité peut devenir une compétence majeure, car elle préoccupe les Français et est un enjeu central. Les Régions ont un rôle à jouer, en se mettant avec les autres collectivités, pour que cette cause nationale soit traitée prioritairement."
> (*La Provence*, 17 June 2021)

I placed this code into both the "Security is a national topic, not a regional one" and "Security is a topic of interest for RN party/candidate" subcodes. I applied the same tactic to social media posts, especially when symbols were present more than one time in an image. I performed this double (or at times triple or quadruple) subcoding to ensure that all content was thoroughly considered and not oversimplified. As a result, when discussing prevalence within the analyses, I refer to this data as "occurrences" and "instances" rather than "quotes" or

"images". For codes that were prevalent across multiple regions, source types, or

election rounds, I carefully cross-examined the data to ensure that all quotations

that appeared in multiple categories were subcoded the same way each time.

CHAPTER IV: SOCIAL MEDIA FINDINGS

Election-Winning Candidates

Muselier

Renaud Muselier was the leader of the Republican list in the PACA region. He placed in second following the first round of the elections, with 31.91% of votes. However, he beat first-place Theirry Mariani in the second round, winning 57.30% of the votes ("Résultats"). He has now maintained his position as president of the regional council in the PACA region.

<u>1: Masks (symbols)</u>

By breaking down the most common code further, it can be seen that masks were nearly almost always worn correctly, both by the candidate (4 instances) and by other people in the background (27 instances). The candidate only wore his mask incorrectly one time, and masks were found in people's hands 6 times. As a result, it can be concluded that Muselier took care to not only reference the Covid-19 pandemic within

his photos, but to responsibly face this pandemic through his careful following of mask-

wearing guidelines.

2: Posters (campaign methods)

Muselier mostly utilized posters through presentations and supporters. Posters

appeared on the podium of presentations in 8 instances, which was exactly equal to the

number of instances where supporters held up small campaign posters. Outliers for this

code included three uses of large posters in the background of presentations, one virtual

poster, and one poster propped on a stand. This code as a result shows that Muselier

utilized campaign posters as a way to present support, whether that was having himself or

others present from behind his campaign imagery, or by having supporters actively

carrying and interacting with his paraphernalia.

3: Endorsement Imagery (endorsements)

Muselier used a variety of endorsement imagery. Close interactions with supporters (6 instances), imagery of crowds flanking the candidate as a show of support (6 instances), and smiling group shots (6 instances) were all relatively equal in their employment. The outliers for this code were two photos of handshakes. As a result, this prevalent code highlights how Muselier employed a variety of endorsement imagery tactics within his photos as a way to symbolize popularity.

4: Press (symbol)

Symbols of the press also frequented Muselier's posts. Seven instances featured people taking photos of the candidate, while another 7 instances had videography equipment within the background of posts. Additionally, media coverage events (interviews and debates) were featured in four instances. Taken together, this code demonstrates the attractiveness of the candidate. The prevalence of this code symbolizes that Muselier is well-covered by the media, and therefore attracts attention within the political sphere.

5: Regional Endorsements (endorsements)

Finally, Muselier had 15 different appeals to regional figures, the most common of which was Christian Estrosi (6 instances). Christian Estrosi is currently serving as the Mayor of Nice, a key city within the PACA region. He also served as the head of the regional council prior to Muselier's appointment (SOURCE). By appealing to recognizable local figures within important positions and areas, Muselier is also appealing to voters within those areas or to voters who recognize those figures as a way of entrancing support.

Wauquiez

Laurent Wauquiez, leader of the Right union list and former president of the Republican party, triumphed early in the ARA regional election, winning 43.85% of first-round votes. He continued this success into the second round, winning the region with 55.20% of the votes ("Résultats").

1: Mask (symbol)

Wauquiez had the most Covid-conscious social media profile out of all four examined candidates. Out of all photos featuring masks, there was only one instance where a mask was not worn properly, and in this photo the mask was in hand. All other examples of masks featured the candidate wearing his mask properly (16 instances) and/or all people in the background wearing their masks properly (18 instances). It is evident that the candidate's campaign prevalently addressed and respected the Covid-19 pandemic and its safety regulations.

2: Conversations (campaign methods)

Wauquiez utilized conversations within his posts at a higher rate than other candidates. While most of these instances of conversations featured interactions with constituents as part of campaigning (11 instances), there was also a strong presence of conversations with officials as well (7 instances). These professionals included medical professionals and police officials who were in uniform within the posts, meaning that Wauquiez specifically emphasized how he works with and supports these areas of society. These photos of conversations not only emphasize how voters supported Wauquiez, but how he supports the medical and security sectors.

3: Caption- stating campaign topics (campaign methods)

laurentwauquiez ✔ Tous les jours, les contraintes administratives auxquelles les policiers font face leur mettent des bâtons dans les roues. La défiance des habitants, à cause d'un discours éronné tenu sur les policiers a créé une vraie crise de vocation. Et on ne leur donne plus les moyens de faire correctement leur métier en augmentant les effectifs, en finançant de vraies équipements pour leurs interventions et en ayant, enfin, un discours clair : il faut soutenir nos forces de l'ordre.

Depuis 2015, nous avons fait de la sécurité une priorité. Au cours du prochain mandat, nous continuerons de proposer notre aide aux communes pour financer des équipements aux polices municipales et leur redire, par ce moyen, que nous sommes à leurs côtés.

34w

Wauquiez was also the only candidate who regularly utilized his captions to discuss campaign topics. Most other candidates discussed a variety of topics in their captions, but Wauquiez focused on campaign topics frequently enough that it became the third most prevalent code. Even though he focused on using his captions to discuss topics, the topics themselves varied. Wauquiez referenced health four times. He mentioned security, police, money, employment, and industry three times each. Finally, the captions mentioned education twice, and regional unity once. This code demonstrates that Wauquiez specifically utilized his Instagram account to continue campaigning about specific topics and goals. While other codes highlight symbolism, endorsements, or campaign materials, this unique code highlights how this candidate was focused on the specific issues of the election.

4: Police (symbol)

Wauquiez was also the only candidate to employ prevalent police force

symbolism. All of these symbols were in the form of uniformed police officers within his

posts (6 instances). This demonstrates that security was an important topic and that police

officials were an important force to draw support from within the ARA regional

elections.

5: Personal Sentiment (campaign methods)

Finally, Wauquiez was also the only candidate to regularly employ personal

sentiment within his posts. This came in the form of words such as "visite très forte en

émotion de la maison à Caluire" and "Je suis très attaché à ces valeurs…", but also through imagery of deep thinking and through photographing his handwritten statements. This code highlights Wauquiez's appeal to individuals. It also shows his sense of motivation and dedication to his campaign.

Rassemblement National Candidates

Mariani

Thierry Mariani was the head of the RN list in the PACA region. He won 36.38% of the first-round votes, a feat that put him into first place. However, he ended up losing the second round to Muselier, with 42.70% of cast votes compared to Muselier's 57.30% ("Résultats"). However, Mariani was still the RN candidate to boast the most electoral success following the first round of the 2021 regional elections.

1: Masks (symbol)

Masks were the most prevalent code within Mariani's campaign. However, the usage of this symbol greatly varied across photos. Mariani's posts included 25 instances of background people properly wearing their masks, but also 15 instances of background

individuals improperly wearing a mask, 2 instances of masks sitting on the table, and one instance of a mask in hand. The balance was even more evident looking at the candidate specifically, as Mariani himself properly wore his mask 11 times, while also improperly wearing it 11 times. Out of all four candidates, Mariani had the greatest similarity between proper and improper mask-wearing. This code highlights that the Covid-19 pandemic was prevalent within his social media account and campaign, but that taking care to properly utilize a mask was not the greatest priority for the candidate and his team.

2: Market (other)

Mariani was the only candidate that prevalently featured markets. I coded markets 34 times, all of which specifically showed how his team campaigned within a marketplace setting. As a result, this code highlights Mariani's emphasis on campaigning locally, on appealing to voters directly. This code is one of the most evident sources of regional symbolism and regional appeals within social media posts.

3: Conversations (campaign methods)

Similar to Wauquiez, Mariani also utilized conversations as the most prevalent campaign method. However, Mariani's posts were less diverse, as there were 30 instances of interactions with constituents and only 4 other instances of conversations with endorsement figures. Where Wauquiez's posts were able to not only show support from voters, but also show the candidate's support to different sectors, Mariani's posts relied more heavily on emphasizing likeability and support. This code also shows how campaigning at the individual level was important for both candidates.

4: Pamphlets (campaign methods)

Mariani was also the only candidate who prevalently employed pamphlets within his social media posts. 7 instances showed the candidate handing out pamphlets, one instance showed an endorsement distributing a pamphlet, and one instance was simply focused on the pamphlet itself. However, the majority of occurrences (25) showed the candidate and constituents holding the pamphlets. This usage of pamphlets heavily mirrors Muselier's usage of posters by demonstrating imagery of voters supporting the candidate. This code shows how Mariani even drew support from the level of the individual voter.

5: Regional Endorsements (endorsements)

Mariani's photos featured a variety of regional endorsements (27 instances).

Sandrine D'Angio was the most prevalent regional endorsement, featured in 8

occurrences. D'Angio is an elected municipal representative in Marseille and a member

of the RN party. Marseille, like Nice, is a big city within the PACA region, so appealing

to recognizable figures from the area is a way to drive up support from that area. Allying

with other RN officials strengthens party unity and solidarity.

Kotarac

Andréa Kotarac was the head of the RN list in the ARA region. He placed third in

both the first and the second round, with 12.32% and 11.19% of votes ("Résultats").

Kotarac was the RN candidate in the 2021 regional elections that garnered the least

amount of electoral success while still qualifying for both electoral rounds.

1: RN logo (symbol)
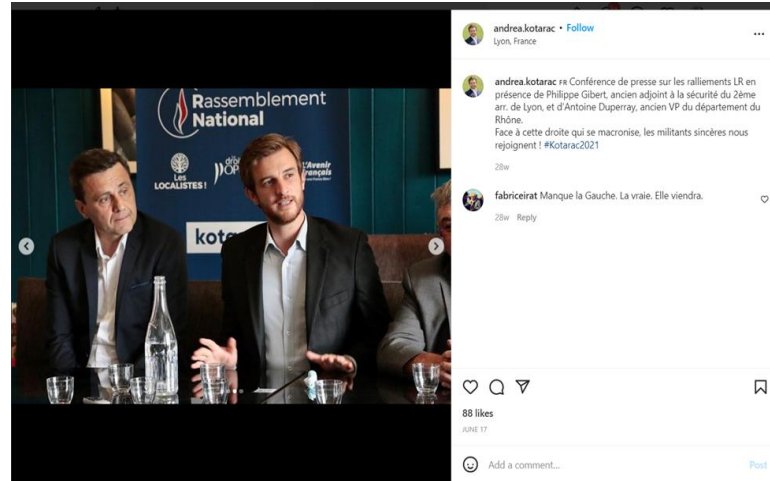
Kotarac was the only candidate whose posts heavily featured the RN logo. The key reason for this is that the logo was included in his campaign imagery. For example, the RN symbol was represented in 7 instances on pamphlets, 2 on pamphlets, 1 on a t-shirt, and 1 on a van. All uses of this code were connected to Kotarac's campaign materials. As a result, this code highlights how the candidate relied on his party and its supporters. Rather than be identified individually, he chose to remain closely connected to his party, highlighting campaigning at the party level, rather than the individual level.

2: Poster (campaign methods)
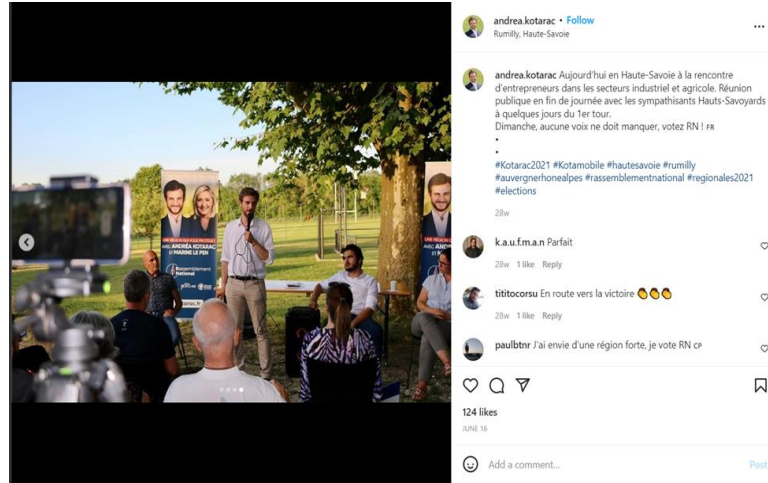
Kotarac used posters as the most prevalent source of campaign methods, just like

Muselier. However, where Muselier featured posters often in an interactive way with

presentations and supporters, Kotarac's posters appear most often in the background of

his posts. Five instances had posters in the background of a presentation, two were

generally in the background of photos, and one poster was in the background of an

interview. The only remaining usage of this code for Kotarac's campaign were posts of

virtual posters (2). This highlights how Kotarac used campaign materials as constant

background tools, rather than interactive tools to engage with constituents (as Muselier

did with posters and Mariani did with pamphlets).

3: Regional Endorsements (endorsements)

Kotarac had 8 instances of regional endorsements. However, unlike all other

candidates who also heavily featured specific regional endorsements, Kotarac had no

clear majority figure. All 8 instances highlighted a different regional figure. As a result,

Kotarac chose to instead demonstrate a broad array of support rather than rely on a few

key figures.

4: Endorsement imagery (endorsements)

andrea.kotarac • Follow
Saint-André-de-Corcy

andrea.kotarac Tractage sur le marché de Saint-André-de-Corcy dans l'Ain puis déjeuner avec les militants et sympathisants en présence de Jérôme Buisson et Maxime Chaussat ! FR

#ain #auvergnerhonealpes #regionales #regionales2021 #rassemblementnational #kotarac2021

28w

anthony_gaudilliere 🤩🤩
28w Reply

nhokhunpetuyekhashuong @andrea.kotarac Je vous souhaite la victoire aux élections
28w 1 like Reply

76 likes
JUNE 13

Add a comment...   Post

Kotarac's fourth-most prevalent code was a tie between endorsement imagery and masks, with seven instances each. When breaking down this code, I found that all instances of this code were smiling group shots (6) with the exception of one background image featuring a crowd of supporters. This demonstrates that Kotarac preferred the posed, more staged images with supporters rather than the more candid close interactions with supporters or handshakes. His campaign, therefore, was less natural in its type of supporter imagery, but also more professional.

4: Masks (symbol)
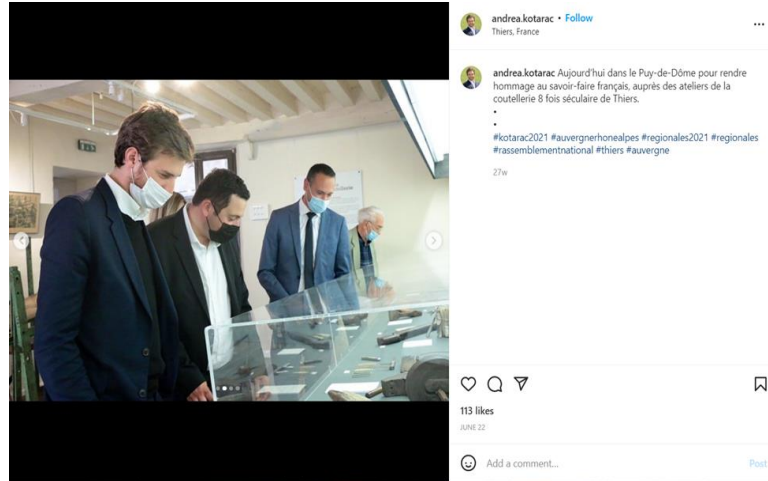
Kotarac's posts featured masks at a lower rate than the other three candidates.

Masks were the top code for the other 3 candidates, but only the fourth most common

code for Kotarac. Therefore, it can be concluded that masks were less important to his

campaign. Looking at the specific instances, masks were worn properly more often than

they were worn improperly. The candidate wore his mask properly in five instances and

never wore his mask improperly; people in the background wore their masks properly 4

times, compared to wearing it improperly three times and holding it in their hands once.

It can be concluded that while masks were not as much of a focus for Kotarac's

campaign, the Covid-19 pandemic was still referenced and Kotarac specifically still took

care to follow guidelines.

Social Media Conclusions

Through a comparative historical analysis, it is impossible to say that the

differences between candidates' posts and campaign strategies caused the election results.

However, there can be no denying that this analysis reveals different trends between the

candidates who won their region compared to their respective RN candidates. Firstly,

electorally-successful candidates placed a stronger emphasis on Covid-19 protocols. Both Muselier and Wauquiez had masks as their most prevalent code. When examined more closely, they both also had more instances of proper mask-wearing than improper. Therefore, their campaigns featured both coverage and diligence towards the pandemic. Mariani also had masks as his most common occurrence. However, his subcoding reveals greater diversity of whether masks were worn properly or not. Kotarac did not feature masks as prominently in his social media posts. When they were featured, protocols were typically followed. However, the electorally-successful candidates had both the pandemic coverage and diligence within their posts while these two RN candidates only had one or the other.

Looking specifically at the PACA region, Muselier and Mariani had very similar social media outcomes. They both heavily featured masks. Regional endorsements were the fifth most common code for both candidates. More specifically, Mariani and Muselier had one regional endorsement that they featured more heavily than the others; these local figures were both popular figures from key voting cities within the region. They both also featured interactive imagery. Muselier utilized imagery of supporters holding posters while Mariani used the same tactic for pamphlets. The key difference between them lies in the scope of their remaining prevalent codes. Mariani's second and third most prevalent codes were markets and conversations with constituents, two codes which demonstrate individual voter support. Markets are a local environment that demonstrates that the candidate is appealing to the grassroots of the region, while photos in conversations with voters highlight listening to individuals' concerns and questions. Muselier, on the other hand, had endorsement and press imagery as his third and fourth

most prevalent codes. These two codes also highlight support at the individual level, but they do so within a broader scope. Photographs demonstrating supporting the candidate or large group shots are at a larger level than the individual level, because now a group of people is supporting Muselier. Media equipment demonstrates that the candidate also has regional and national media attention and that he is a newsworthy candidate. Both Muselier and Mariani have very similar social media campaigns, but their key differences lie in what size network the candidate can draw support from.

Looking at the ARA region, the two analyzed candidates have a much greater difference in their social media campaigns. Wauquiez's key campaign topics were prevalent throughout his codes. Within coding for conversations, Wauquiez was the sole candidate to feature a prevalent number of conversations with officials. He was also the only candidate to heavily feature police symbolism. He also frequently used his captions to discuss campaign issues, and he reinforced this by also prevalently featuring personal sentiment, further emphasizing his conviction. All his social media posts became centered around the propagation of election topics. Kotarac, on the other hand, did not strongly present his campaign topics. Instead, he focused on symbolism. The RN logo was highly prevalent in his posts which connected his campaign more to the ideals of his party than to his own personal ideals. He used posters, but more in a background way than Muselier or Mariani did with their campaign materials. He featured endorsements, but he spread his regional endorsements across multiple people instead of specializing and his endorsement imagery was more posed than natural. Where Wauquiez was passionate and personal around key issues, Kotarac ended up seeming impersonal and hyper-professional around RN campaign materials.

CHAPTER V: ARTICLE FINDINGS PER REGION

Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur

All articles that I examined and coded in the context of the PACA region were published by either *La Provence* (36 articles) or *Le Monde* (17 articles). These 53 articles in total include both national and regional sources from both rounds of the election. The purpose of examining articles in the context of specific regions is to examine the priorities of the different regions.

1: Polls

Polling statistics were the most prevalent code to emerge from the PACA articles. Within this broad code category, these statistics most often stated the current odds or status within the election cycle. Two examples of this would be instances such as "...les sondages confirment la poussée du RN" (*La Provence*, 9 June 2021) and "...Le sortant LR Renaud Muselier et Thierry Mariani (RN) sont donnés au coude-à-coude, entre 30 et 35%, selon différents sondages" (*La Provence*, 21 June 2021) This subcategory highlights the reliance on polling data to predict the regional results.

Additionally, there were seven instances of candidates boasting about their polls, or about overcoming the predicted first-round odds. For example, one article wrote, "Muselier se réjouit d'avoir déjoué les sondages" (*La Provence*, 21 June 2021). However, six instances diminished the legitimacy of the polls: "Les sondages ne font pas une élection" (*La Provence*, 3 June 2021). These two points also highlight that even though

polling data is depended upon during the election cycle, it is not always accurate. Polls

are not the same thing as cast votes. This theme was also demonstrated by the final

prevalent subcategory for the PACA region polls; six instances demonstrated surprise at

the election results compared to the polling data. For example, one article wrote, "Le

président sortant Les Républicains est distancé par Thierry Mariani (Rassemblement

national), mais de moins loin que ne le prédisaient les sondages" (*Le Monde*, 21 June

2021). The polls in this region were heavily referenced and relied upon, although several

categories of instances reveal a second underlying theme questioning the ability of polls

to accurately predict results.

2: Appealing to national figures

Candidates were also often connected to national figures. The most common

national figure referred to was Marine Le Pen. Articles did this in two ways. The first

way (15 instances) was stating straightforward references connecting Le Pen to regional

candidates. For example, one article wrote, "Arrivé en tête (36,38 % des voix) au premier

tour devant son ancien ami Renaud Muselier (31,91 %), le chef de file RN soutenu par

Marine Le Pen" (*La Provence*, 23 June 2021). The second type of connection between

regional RN candidates and Le Pen came from Le Pen's active campaigning during the

regional elections (11 instances) as demonstrated by the following citations:

> "Venue soutenir son candidat issu de la droite pour les élections régionales,
> Thierry Mariani, la présidente du RN a répété qu'elle voulait aller au-delà des
> étiquettes" (*Le Monde*, 18 June 2021).
> "Régionales : Marine Le Pen appelle cadres et électeurs de LR à "soutenir" le
> RN" (*La Provence*, 18 June 2021).

These two types of connections work to not only draw Le Pen voters into the regional elections, but also to nationalize the image of the regional candidates, keeping them connected to the RN party and its figurehead.

With the exception of Marine Le Pen, former French Presidents Chirac and Sarkozy were the next most referenced figures, with 12 and 14 quotes, respectively. This high amount is rather unsurprising considering both Mariani and Muselier worked within their governments. In fact, all quotations involving Chirac were directly tied to the history of the candidates as demonstrated through phrases like "...les deux chiraquiens d'origine" (*La Provence*, 23 June 2021). Articles referenced Sarkozy in the same way: "Ancien ministre des Transports sous Sarkozy, Thierry Mariani connaît le sujet" (*La Provence*, 1 June 2021). However, importantly, there were also five additional quotations of Sarkozy giving his official endorsement to Muselier. One article wrote, "Pour faire battre le RN, le président sortant envoie des signaux à gauche et a reçu le soutien de Sarkozy" (*Le Monde*, 26 June 2021). These appeals to the two former presidents highlight the importance of a candidate's political career during an election campaign. It once again continues to nationalize them as well, by associating them not with their own ideas, but with the ideas of national figures. Finally, these quotations also show an advantage of Muselier, because both candidates had a history with the former president, but only one had received his official endorsement.

3: Abstention

Abstention was the third most common code for the PACA region, and the second most common structural quote. Within this code, the most common occurrences were

those discussing the current rate of abstention in the regional elections (23 quotes) as demonstrated by the following citations:

> "Reste que les abstentionnistes ne reculent pas. Ils sont estimés à 65 % dans la région, à peine moins que la semaine dernière (66,3 %)" (*La Provence*, 24 June 2021)
>
> and "Si l'on regarde attentivement l'étude de l'Ifop, on observe que 45 % des électeurs de Jean-Laurent Félizia au premier tour se disent prêts à rallier Muselier, les autres (52 %) s'abstenant" (*La Provence*, 24 June 2021).

In addition to the specific rates being mentioned, 9 instances also described the general existence of high abstention within these elections. For example, one article wrote, "Mais les électeurs en ont décidé autrement. Du moins ceux qui se sont mobilisés, tant l'abstention a été, dimanche, au firmament" (*Le Monde*, 20 June 2021). Not only were there references to the current rates of abstention, but articles also referenced historical rates (11 instances), most often to place into context the severity of the 2021 abstention: "...en 2015, alors que l'abstention a culminé à plus de 66 % dimanche" (*Le Monde*, 21 June 2021). These three prevalent subcodes establish that abstention was a major structural factor within the 2021 regional elections in the PACA region.

Three other abstention subcategories were also prevalent. Nine instances described the reasons for the high abstention. The instances quoted lack of care about the elections, lack of campaigns connecting to regional people, election cycle disorganization, the pandemic, and the rejection of the system as some of the reasons voters abstained. There was no clear reason that stood out as the majority cause. As a result, abstention can be seen as a personal choice that could come from a variety of reasons. The second subcategory that was prevalent was the demographics of abstainers. Demographics were cited 8 times. These instances explained that the most prevalent

demographics that did not vote were women, young people, and RN supporters, as demonstrated by the following citations:

> "Alors ils ne votent pas forcément. Chez les femmes surtout, c'est criant, elles ont moins envie de se battre" (*La Provence*, 24 June 2021).
> "Les jeunes votent peu aux Régionales, ils ne savent pas quelles sont les compétences de la Région" (*La Provence*, 16 June 2021).
> and "S'il est le seul RN à faire la course en tête en France, il sait … que ses réserves de voix se situent chez les abstentionnistes" (*La Provence*, 21 June 2021).

This final instance in particular highlights how people that the RN relies upon did not turn out to vote. The third (and final) subcategory with several instances was the discussion of the effects of abstention (7 quotes). All of these quotes expressed worry about the abstention and what its high levels represent: "Régionales : la classe politique "inquiète" face à l'abstention record, appelle à une mobilisation" (*La Provence*, 20 June 2021). As a whole, these subcodes reveal abstention was a prevalent structural factor of the 2021 Regional elections, thereby creating worry among political scientists and diminished voter turnout for the RN party.

4: Mobilization

The main conclusion drawn from this prevalent code is the importance of mobilization following the abstention results of the first round. The subcategories of quotes for this topic included quotes calling out to voters to participate in the elections (12 instances), emphasizing the importance of mobilization (9 instances), expressing the need to increase mobilization (6 instances), and describing efforts being made to increase

mobilization (4 instances). All of these categories emphasize that mobilization was an important topic within the PACA region.

Besides the general call for mobilization, there were also calls trying to mobilize specific demographics or supporters (8 instances). For example, one quote highlighted the consequences of not voting on the election results: "Si vous n'allez pas voter dimanche vous donnerez la victoire au candidat d'Emmanuel Macron" (Mariani)" (*La Provence*, 20 June 2021). Other instances appealed to specific groups: "J'appelle tous les cadres, militants et électeurs de LR à tirer les conséquences de cette rupture interne (au parti Les Républicains, ndlr) et à nous soutenir dans ces élections" (*La Provence,* 18 June 2021).

Other subcodes discussed current mobilization trends (7 instances), expressed the belief that mobilization will increase (4), reiterated historical mobilization trends (4), discussed mobilization against the far-right (1), and expressed mobilization success (1)

The importance of mobilization shows that strong support was needed to help validate results and help stave off the high abstention rates. All candidates strived to increase mobilization which displays common support for this topic. Additionally, mobilization was highlighted to a greater degree in PACA than in ARA (where it was not among the four most prevalent codes). It is thus interesting how mobilization was specifically important to the PACA region where the election results were much closer.

5: Security

Out of all campaign topics discussed in the PACA region articles, security was the most prevalent one, with 49 total instances. It was also thus the fifth most common code

overall for the region. The subcodes displayed three clear trends: discussing the topic's importance, regional level issues, and debating if this topic was actually a concern for the national level.

There were 15 instances demonstrating security was a topic of interest in the regional elections. One article declared, "Au menu du jour, la sécurité" (*La Provence*, 10 June 2021). There were also 11 instances where security was specifically connected to the RN party, as demonstrated by the following citations:

"Régionales en Paca : Thierry Mariani veut des agents de sécurité dans les lycées" (*La Provence*, 7 June 2021).
and "Thierry Mariani, le candidat soutenu par le Rassemblement National pour les élections régionales en Paca a dévoilé les mesures inscrites dans son programme en matière de sécurité" (*La Provence*, 7 June 2021).

Therefore, these two key subcodes emphasize that security was an important topic of discussion within the region, one that appeared to suit the RN party.

Articles discussed specific types of security relevant to the region. These types included transportation security (11 instances), security in schools (6), the security budget (3), and security agents (2). The most important and prevalent within the PACA region was therefore security surrounding transportation. Mariani's direct words were actually quoted in an article, becoming one of the aforementioned 11 instances. The candidate stated, "...Selon Le Figaro, les actes d'agressions ont augmenté de 72% dans les gares. Quand je rencontre des personnes qui prennent le train, par moment ils ont la boule au ventre. Nous prenons l'engagement d'embaucher en 2022 60 agents de sécurité dans les trains, pour arriver à 500. Nous proposons un wagon sécurisé à partir de 21 heures" (*La Provence*, 16 June 2021). Mariani's statement demonstrates how the topic of security had specific local initiatives within the PACA region.

However, not everyone was convinced that security was a local issue. Nine instances discussed how security was not a topic for the regional level, but the national level. One article wrote, "Thierry Mariani parle énormément de sécurité, une compétence mineure des Régions. Ne trompe-t-il pas les électeurs ?" (*La Provence*, 17 June 2021). This quotation highlights how an issue within the PACA region can reflect many levels of policy and campaigning.

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

All articles that I examined and coded in the context of the ARA region were published by either *Le Dauphiné Libéré* (23 articles) or *Le Monde* (11 articles). These 34 articles in total include both regional and national sources from both rounds of the election. The purpose of examining articles in the context of specific regions is to, once again, examine the priorities of the different regions.

1: Security

Security was the most common code to emerge from the ARA articles. Here, the difference between the two regions is revealed, as security was important within the PACA articles, but at a lower rate than within the ARA articles. Looking more specifically, the most common subcode for the ARA region described security as a topic of interest for Wauquiez (16 instances). As an example, one article wrote, "A chaque discours, Laurent Wauquiez égrène les faits divers récents, rappelle l'installation de 6 000 caméras de surveillance durant sa présidence, et promet de financer les équipements de polices municipales. « Notre priorité absolue, c'est le retour de la sécurité », insiste-t-il"

(*Le Monde*, 3 June 2021). Wauquiez connected with the topic of security more than other candidates. There were also 5 instances demonstrating how the topic was important for the election. One article phrased this very simply: "La sécurité, thème central" (*Le Dauphiné Libéré*, 6 June 2021). The RN and security were discussed together in 7 instances, less than half that of Wauquiez. Of these quotes, the majority were actually in reference to Kotarac's campaign slogan: "Pour une Région qui vous protège" (*Le Dauphiné Libéré*, 8 June 2021). The subcodes reveal that security was a topic of interest in the ARA regional election. However, the subcode difference between the two candidates shows that the RN had a much more surface-level investment in the topic of security when compared to Wauquiez.

Within the ARA, the broad theme of security could be broken down into the specific regional subcategories of security agents (3 instances), security budget (2), references to attacks on citizens (2), and the criminal justice system (2). The region also stated that security is a national-level topic not a regional one at an equal rate when compared to PACA. As an example of this subcode, one ARA article wrote, "...la sécurité redevient la priorité des électeurs et le RN peut imposer son thème de prédilection dans le débat même s'il ne s'agit pas d'une compétence régionale" (*Le Dauphiné Libéré,* 6 June 2021). ARA had 3 instances of the regional versus national debate, which might not seem significant, but it was the fourth most common subcode, the same as in PACA. As a result, it can be concluded that within each region, skepticism remained over the validity of security within the regional level, even as more prevalent subcodes demonstrate security's continued regional importance.

2: Unification of the political left

This code was uniquely prevalent within the ARA region. Within this unique code, the most prevalent subcode was the confirmation of the political left's unification. There were 16 instances demonstrating this subcode, the following two citations serving as examples:

> "Régionales 2021 : en Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, la gauche s'unit contre Laurent Wauquiez" (*Le Monde*, 22 June 2021)
> and "Les gauches unies pour le second tour" (*Le Dauphiné Libéré*, 22 June 2021)

Besides the most prevalent subcode detailing the completed unification, there were also subcodes describing how the left was preparing to unite (5 instances), and admissions that unification can be difficult at times (3).

Collectively, the prevalence of this structural code highlights how alliances and negotiations are important tools within regional elections, particularly within the ARA region. Having a unified left also creates another electoral obstacle for the RN party to overcome during the second round of the elections.

3: 2022 Presidential Election Discussions

Interestingly enough, within ARA articles that I selected due to their relevance with regards to the 2021 regional elections, the newspapers still frequently discussed the 2022 French Presidential elections. There were 21 instances relating to the presidential elections within the ARA regional articles. The most prevalent subcode described how regional candidates could potentially have presidential aspirations (11 instances). The candidates with national political ambitions included Xavier Bertrand (6 instances),

Wauquiez (5), and Valérie Pecresse (2). One citation, in particular, described all three candidates' aspirations:

> "...dans cette famille, ce sont, en effet, pas moins de trois présidents de région sortants et candidats à leur propre réélection qui ont l'intention de jouer un rôle lors de l'élection présidentielle de 2022 : Xavier Bertrand dans les Hauts-de-France, Valérie Pécresse en Ile-de-France et, enfin, Laurent Wauquiez" (*Le Monde*, 25 June 2021).

National aspirations highlight not only how regional elections can be stepping stones to larger national elections and campaigns, but also the strength of these particular candidates' bases. To be successful on the national scale, they must be popular candidates. Naturally, it would then be more difficult for the RN candidates to find success when candidates with larger aspirations are competing within the same region.

Regional candidates with national aspirations were the largest subcode within this category. However, articles also discussed how regional elections lead into national election results (3 instances), how there could be new options for 2022 other than Le Pen versus Macron (2), the current 2022 odds (2), and commentary regarding presidential candidates (2). These all were much less prevalently tagged than the national aspirations of the regional candidates.

4: Abstention

Abstention was also another structural code that was prevalent within the ARA articles. It was less prevalent than in the PACA region, being the fourth most common code in ARA compared to third most common in PACA. The subcoding, however, is very similar to PACA, with 8 instances detailing the rate of abstention and 7 instances stating its high existence. Examples of these instances include "Sa victoire incontestable

n'est ternie que par une participation famélique de 33,48 % des inscrits" and "Reste que dans un contexte d'abstention aussi élevée…" (*Le Dauphiné Libéré,* 22 June 2021).

Articles quoted demographics three times. One of these articles wrote, "C'est le cas pour Marine Le Pen, dont le parti a beaucoup souffert de l'abstention…" (*Le Dauphiné Libéré,* 22 June 2021). Even when demographics are only mentioned three times, it is still demonstrated how the RN party was at a disadvantage due to the abstention levels in the regional elections.

As with PACA, the discussion of abstention maintains that it was an important structural reality in the 2021 regional elections, and that it occurs across different demographics.

Region Conclusions

The 87 articles and the resulting 9 most prevalent regional codes reveal several different categories of factors that impacted the 2021 French regional elections. Firstly, the articles revealed several structural events occurring during the election cycles. Articles heavily relied on polling data for depicting candidates' current rankings and standings. Several subcodes also discussed how these codes may not always be perfect predictions. However, having positive polling data, therefore, became an important legitimacy factor for campaigning candidates. The articles also discussed the high rate of abstention, with subcodes revealing how lack of RN turnout particularly hurt these candidates' standings. Unsurprisingly, mobilization was also a common structural factor as candidates tried to reinvigorate voters following such low first-round turnout. Finally, the ARA region also prevalently featured the fact that the political left candidates united

for the second round, highlighting the importance of negotiations in the second round, while also posing as a united threat for Kotarac to overcome. All of these structural factors influenced the election, and it is likely that this negatively favored the RN candidates.

In addition, national factors appeared to be more prevalent than regional factors. Security was a key code demonstrating this division. It was the most prevalent campaign topic in both regions. Both regions also demonstrated how it was an important campaign topic to the RN candidates and also to Wauquiez, highlighting how it would be a regional issue. However, both regions' subcodes reveal a debate on whether security is truly a national issue rather than one for the regions. Additionally, the articles featured other prevalent national factors including connections to national figures and discussing the 2022 presidential election. These codes reveal the importance of a candidate's political history and connections, along with the overall political strength of the candidate. These codes also work to nationalize the candidates, by associating them with larger country histories, with the legacies of their political allies, and with the aspirations of a national campaign.

The most important truth revealed within the article instances is that the election was not easily defined. A topic that might appear to be of regional importance, like security, may have deeper debates underneath. Structural factors, such as abstention, make calculating a regional consensus difficult to measure. Measuring the impact of all of these unique aspects on voters is also important to further study. Therefore, it can be concluded that the 2021 regional elections contained a variety of key topics and influences, each one of which reveals smaller truths and meanings.

CHAPTER VI: ARTICLE FINDINGS PER SOURCE TYPE

Regional Papers

All articles that I examined and coded in the context of regional papers were published by either *La Provence* (36 articles) or *Le Dauphiné Libéré* (23 articles). These 59 articles in total include all regions and both rounds of the election. The purpose of examining articles in the context of source type is to explain specifically the difference in topic coverage.

1: Polls

Polls were the most common code for the regional paper articles with 71 unique instances. The overwhelming majority of these instances (47) described current polling data, as demonstrated by the following citations:

> "Dans les sondages, Laurent Wauquiez, président LR sortant, écrase la concurrence" (*Le Dauphiné Libéré,* 19 June 2021)
> and "L'enquête donne ainsi le président LR sortant vainqueur au second tour (51%) avec une très faible avance sur son concurrent du RN (49%)" (*La Provence*, 25 June 2021)
> The other subcodes for this category included six instances of candidates boasting

about their poll standings or overcoming the poll predictions. Six other instances described results as surprising when compared to polls. Four instances diminished the accuracy of the polls. Four more instances stated voter opinions on topics. Three instances outlined polling methodology and one instance mentioned abstention intentions.

This code collectively highlights how regional news sources prioritized using polling statistics. Regional papers prioritized these data sources at a much higher rate than national papers, as polls were the most common regional source code, but not even within the top five most common national source codes.

2: Abstention

Abstention was the second most prevalent code for regional newspapers with 60 unique instances. Within this category, the articles' most prevalent subcode discussed the rate of abstention (26 instances). However, the remaining subcodes had relatively equal prevalence: 11 instances discussed the high existence of abstention, 10 instances discussed the demographics of abstainers, 9 instances cited historical abstention rates, 7 instances highlighted the effects of abstention, and 7 instances discussed reasons for abstention. The remaining 3 instances discussed gathering votes from abstainers.

The subcodes reveal several interesting findings. Firstly, demographics were discussed more prevalently within regional sources than within the PACA region, ARA region, or round two categories, highlighting an effort to explain who specifically abstained from the regional election voting booths. Secondly, the diverse significant subcodes reveal that regional sources holistically explored the theme of abstention. Finally, abstention was clearly a focus of regional news sources, one in which they explored many facets.

3: Security

With 46 unique instances, security was the most prevalent campaign topic and the third most common overall code within the regional news sources. Security was clearly an important topic for regional papers to cover; this was reinforced by the fact that the most common subcode stated that this topic was important within the regional elections (15 instances). The RN also appeared to be in a strong position to address this issue, as 13 instances indicated security was a topic being addressed by the party. When compared to the fact that all other instances connecting to a specific candidate or party only amounted to four instances, all of which were connected to Wauquiez, it is evident that regional news sources gave more credibility to the RN. When viewed through a regional lens, the RN party has a favorable advantage in the realm of security.

The most common aspect of security was transportation security, with 10 instances. Citations including "Les violences continueront dans les trains, nos entreprises, nos exploitations agricoles fermeront les unes après les autres, notre région sera encore plus endettée" (*La Provence*, 20 June 2021) highlighted combating the lack of transportation safety within the regional level. Other aspects of security discussed included security in schools (3 instances), security budget (3), security agents (3), and criminal justice (1).

Regional articles also featured nine instances stating that security was better situated at the national rather than regional level, a point which will be further addressed within the national source section.

National Paper

All articles that I examined and coded in the context of regional papers were published by *Le Monde* as outlined in the methodology chapter. These 28 articles in total include all regions and both rounds of the election. The purpose of examining articles in the context of source type is to, once again, specifically explain the difference in topic coverage.

1: Security

Security was the most common code within the national source, with 32 unique instances. Considering its prevalence within this source, and the fact that regional sources mentioned security as better suited for national politics, it can be concluded that this topic was largely a national issue.

The most common subcode within this topic recognized security as a key issue for Wauquiez (12 instances). One example of this important subcode included the following instance:

> "A chaque discours, Laurent Wauquiez égrène les faits divers récents, rappelle l'installation de 6 000 caméras de surveillance durant sa présidence, et promet de financer les équipements de polices municipales. « Notre priorité absolue, c'est le retour de la sécurité », insiste-t-il… " (*Le Monde*, 3 June 2021)

The subcode recognizing security as a key issue for the RN party came into second place with five instances, much fewer than those attributed to Wauquiez. Therefore, when viewing security through a national scope, Wauquiez, rather than the RN party, had the advantage. Considering *Le Monde* features more readership than either of the regional sources, this RN disadvantage could have had specific electoral consequences.

2: 2022 Presidential Election Discussions

The second most common code for the national source discussed the 2022 French presidential elections (32 instances). More specifically, the most common subcode, with 15 instances, discussed the presidential aspirations of 2021 regional candidates. Seven instances also discussed past and present presidential candidates. Six instances also pointed to regional elections results leading to national results. The remaining subcodes observed new options for 2022 besides Le Pen and Macron (3 instances), the current 2022 status (1), and a breakdown of voters' past presidential voting preferences in the context of current cycles (1).

Considering *Le Monde* is a national newspaper, and therefore concerned with presidential election cycles, it logically follows that this paper would use the regional elections to discuss upcoming national elections.

3: Appealing to national figures

Instances connecting regional candidates to national figures were the third most common code within the national news source (32 unique instances). The national figure most often connected to regional candidates was Marine Le Pen, as she was connected to candidates 5 times while also having 5 instances of her directly campaigning on behalf of regional candidates. Closely behind Le Pen was former president Sarkozy, with six instances of connections and three instances of direct endorsements. Interestingly, in PACA and round one articles, former presidents Chirac and Sarkozy usually had a similar number of instances; however, in the national news source, Chirac was only referenced once. This demonstrates a lack of Chirac coverage at the national level.

News Source Conclusions

My analysis of the 59 regional and 32 national articles revealed unique aspects pertaining to different levels of French media during regional elections.

Regional sources featured a much higher reliance on polling data. They also holistically examined the topic of abstention. These two structural codes also show how broad overarching data can still be consumed at the regional level. They demonstrate that it is important for candidates to both be favored by the polls and to also overcome the obstacle of abstention.

The national news source rather unsurprisingly discussed national-level topics more so than the regional sources. These news articles discussed the presidential aspirations of regional candidates along with frequently connecting national figures to these candidates. Interestingly, national news featured former president Chirac at a lower rate than in other analyses. Overall, the national news source demonstrated that it is important for candidates to have endorsements, connections, and aspirations at the national level.

The most important finding to come from this analysis was the topic of security. Security was an important topic for both levels of media; it was the most popular code for the national source and the third most popular code for the regional sources. However, within the regional scope, the RN party was largely favored. At the national level, it was Laurent Wauquiez, not the RN, who was favored. Transportation security was specifically highlighted at the regional level, whereas no specific type of security was strongly prevalent within the national level. Importantly, even the regional level admitted in nine instances that security was more of a national-level topic than a regional one. This

highlights how the regional coverage favored the RN but was perhaps less significant than the national level. Since the national level more prevalently and significantly featured security but favored a different political view, the RN clearly faced a newspaper coverage disadvantage.

CHAPTER VII: ARTICLE FINDINGS PER ELECTION ROUND

Round One

The first round of voting in the 2021 French regional elections took place on June 20th. All articles that I examined and coded in the context of the first round were published between June 1st–June 19th. These 50 articles include all regions and all source types. The purpose of examining articles per election round is to establish an election timeline, with round one articles serving to explain the election factors leading up to initial voting.

1: Polls

Polls were the most common code within articles published before the first round of voting with 65 unique instances. As in the articles specifically focused around the PACA region, first-round articles most often detailed the current predictions and standings within the elections (48 instances). One example of these predictions included the following instance: "…Mariani (RN) crédité de 42% des voix au premier tour selon un sondage" (*La Provence*, 17 June 2021). This trend once again shows a reliance on polling data to predict and measure success within the electoral cycles.

However, the round one articles also diminished the legitimacy of polls at a higher rate than in the PACA region, with one instance detailing "…les sondages se sont «souvent trompés» dans la région." (*Le Monde*, 11 June 2021). Round one articles also featured candidates boasting of their poll standings (4 instances), polls outlining voter

opinions (4 instances), polling methodology (3 instances), and one instance mentioning polled abstention intentions. As a whole, this code demonstrates the importance of polling data prior to the first round of French regional election cycles.

2: Security

Security was the second most prevalent code within the first-round articles with 61 unique instances. It was also the most prevalent campaign topic across all election rounds. Clearly, security was a key topic of the election, a point which the subcodes further highlight. There were sixteen instances stating security was a topic of interest within these elections, fifteen instances stating its importance to the RN party, and eleven instances stating its importance to Wauquiez's campaign specifically. One instance culminated the importance of this topic: "la Région ne peut pas tout faire", il sait que "l'élection régionale est aussi nationale". Et que la sécurité, préoccupation majeure, sera l'enjeu numéro un" (*La Provence*, 1 June 2021).

Looking at specific themes, round one focused on transportation security (9 instances), security agents (5 instances), security budget (4 instances), and security within schools (4 instances). These subcodes highlight how security is a broad topic with many facets to discuss prior to the first-round vote. There were also eight instances stating security was actually situated at the national level, not the regional, along with three instances stating other candidates do not handle the topic well. Clearly, the management of security and who should be in charge of its decisions and implementation is also a critical point of consideration.

3: Appealing to national figures

I found 57 instances of articles connecting national figures to regional figures, making it the third most common code within first-round articles. Le Pen was the most appealed to national figure with 17 instances. One example of this connection included describing RN regional candidates as "…une génération née avec Marine Le Pen et ils sont vraiment au service de la candidate pour 2022" (*Le Dauphiné Libéré*, 6 June 2021). Former presidents Chirac and Sarkozy were both referenced in nine instances each, once again highlighting the importance of a candidate's political history. Other figures appealed to included President Macron (4 instances), former prime minister François Filion (2), presidential ecologist candidate Yannick Jadot (2), first-ever presidential ecologist candidate Réné Dumont (2), founder of the France Insoumise party Jean-Luc Melenchon (1), and former president François Mitterand (1).

Besides general appeals and connections to candidates, there were also specific endorsements from national figures. First-round articles had nine instances mentioning Le Pen campaigning on behalf of regional candidates, two instances of Prime Minister Castex giving his endorsement the LREM party, and one reference to Sarkozy giving an endorsement to Muselier. Not only were text connections important, so too were the outright endorsements given by these national figures.

As a whole, this prevalent code highlights the importance of receiving national support prior to the first round of the elections. In many ways, these connections act as a way for voters to recognize and learn about candidates. Elections feature many candidate choices all vying for attention, particularly prior to the first-round while everyone has an equal chance. Candidates need to win attention and votes in order to advance to the

second round and voters need information about the candidates. Logically, national appeals are one way to satisfy both demands.

Round Two

The second round of voting in the 2021 French regional elections was held on June 27th. All articles that I examined and coded in the context of this second round were published between June 20th–June 26th, the week between voting rounds. These 37 articles include all regions and all source types. The purpose of examining articles per election round is, once again, to establish an election timeline, with round two articles serving to explain the election factors prior to the run-off voting.

1: Abstention

With 58 unique instances, abstention was the most prevalent code within the second-round articles. Most of these instances (58) indicated the rate of abstention following the first round: "Il y a eu 66 % d'abstention au premier tour, tout est possible pour le second tour" (*La Provence*, 23 June 2021). The second most prevalent subcode, with 13 instances, emphasized that the abstention rate was indeed high, with quotes including "Reste que dans un contexte d'abstention aussi élevée, l'humilité devrait rester le maître mot" reminding readers that abstention was a structural enemy in the regional elections (*Le Dauphiné Libéré*, 21 June 2021). Articles also referenced historical rates 10 times, most often to place into context just how extreme the abstention in 2021 truly was, as demonstrated by the following citation:

> "L'abstention atteindrait entre 66,1% et 68,6% selon les estimations des instituts
> de sondage, soit un record tous scrutins confondus en France hors référendum.

Jusqu'à présent, l'abstention la plus élevée pour un premier tour des régionales datait de 2010 avec 53,67%" (*Le Monde*, 25 June 2021)

This code also outlined the demographics of abstainers (8 instances), reasons for abstention (8 instances), effects of abstention (5 instances), and efforts to gather votes from abstainers (3 instances). Within the context of this prevalent code appearing between rounds of voting, it can be concluded that this code acted as a reflection on the first round of voting. Following the first round of voting, papers addressed the high rate of abstention. This code could also be interpreted as articles presenting the information about abstention rates in order to draw in more voters for the second round, encouraging them to not contribute to such high statistics.

2: Polls

Polls were the second most prevalent code for the second round of the elections with 36 instances. As with the first round (and the PACA region), the most prevalent subcode was also stating current predictions and expectations. However, this round uniquely featured a higher rate of instances describing how the actual elections results were surprising compared to the polls. Since it is a reflection of the first round of voting, it naturally follows that this subcode must be situated within the second-round articles. However, it is still the second most prevalent subcode within this category, with 8 instances. This subcode also serves to call into question the accuracy of the first-round polls by providing surprising election results as demonstrated by the following example:

"Arrivée en troisième position, comme les sondages ne l'avaient pas du tout prédit puisqu'il était crédité 10 points au-dessus, le candidat du Rassemblement national, Andréa Kotarac se situe autour de 12,3% des voix" (*Le Dauphiné Libéré*, 21 June 2021).

In conclusion, this code serves to once again highlight how French election cycles heavily rely on polling statistics, while also introducing the idea that polls are also simultaneously criticized.

3: Mobilization

For the second-round articles, mobilization was the third most common code with 27 instances. This code is another reaction to the results of the first round and its high abstention, encouraging voters to engage with the voting booth. In fact, the most prevalent subcode was precisely this, with 8 instances appealing to no-show voters: "A la veille d'une échéance électorale décisive, des entrepreneurs et chefs d'entreprises de la Région Sud appellent à une mobilisation citoyenne" (*La Provence,* 25 June 2021). Articles from the second round clearly rallied around the need to increase voter turnout.

The remaining subcodes within this category are much more diverse. I found 5 instances of articles citing current mobilization trends, 4 instances expressing the need to increase mobilization, 4 instances emphasizing the importance of mobilization, 3 instances appealing to a specific demographic, 3 instances citing historical mobilization trends, and 3 instances expressing the belief that mobilization will increase for the second round. There was no clear hierarchy of subcodes, but nearly all of them reiterate the desire for mobilization to increase for the second round of voting.

Election Round Conclusions

Examining the newspaper articles through the lens of the different electoral rounds revealed unique findings pertaining to the organization of the French election cycles.

Round one articles demonstrated the initial campaigning methods. It is important for voters to understand the platforms of candidates prior to when they enter the voting booth, so the high prevalence of the security topic would satisfy this information desire. It is also worth noting that the fourth and fifth most common codes for the first round were environment and transportation, two other campaign topics. Therefore, candidates' platforms needed to be discussed to a higher extent before the first round rather than the second.

Additionally, understanding candidates' credibility was also shown to be important prior to the first round of voting, as demonstrated by the second most common code, appealing to national figures. Associating candidates with national figures also helps voters with the information desire, applying recognizability and legitimacy to those figures while also explaining their political loyalty and history.

While round one prioritized filling the information gap regarding candidates, the second-round articles prioritized explaining first-round results. The top three codes (abstention, polls, and mobilization) were all structural factors. These articles thus sought to explain the structural realities that the first round evoked. High abstention was discussed along with the resulting desire for mobilization. Poll subcodes also revealed discussing the accuracy of prior first-round polls by highlighting surprising results. Second-round instances centered around explaining the consequences of the first round. It

is also worth noting that while this was especially evident in the top three codes, the fourth and fifth most common codes (discussing the 2022 presidential election and the unification of the political left) demonstrate the same trend.

Round one and round two articles had different focuses and intentions, but they both relied on polling statistics. Round one prioritized it more so than round two, but this logically follows from round one's increased desire to anticipate the very first results of the election. Within both rounds, the most common poll subcode stated current predictions, a finding which highlights the French election cycles' dependence on polling data and information.

The findings from rounds one and two of the 2021 regional elections serve to explain the process of French elections. Round one emphasized filling the information gap between candidates and voters, while round two drew structural conclusions from the first round of voting. Both rounds also exhibited reliance on polling data.

CHAPTER VIII: DISCUSSION

Limitations

As a comparative historical analysis, this study is unable to measure causality. There can be no denying that themes and their results can be drawn from the social media and newspaper articles, but this study is unable to measure to what degree these factors influenced voter decisions and election results. Additionally, they contain sample size restrictions due to logistical restraints. A final limitation is that this study was not completed by a French citizen or native speaker, meaning that some endorsement imagery or article references might have been missed due to a lack of cultural familiarity. However, this study is still able to identify prevalent factors that occurred during the 2021 French regional elections, a discovery that still holds meaning even if it contains logistical limitations and non-causal arguments.

Re-evaluation of Research Question

What were the factors that caused the underperformance of the nationally-successful Rassemblement National (RN) party in the 2021 French regional elections?

With regard to the second-order model, it is evident that national effects acted on the 2021 regional elections. Newspaper articles discussed the 2022 presidential elections and candidates' aspirations, candidates accepted national endorsements, and even campaign topics had national roots. Within social media platforms, candidates used party

imagery, appealed to the press, and observed national current events. Therefore, some level of the second-order model applied to these elections.

However, these elections also displayed unique regional features as well. Muselier and Mariani in particular framed their social media campaigns around appealing to the individual local voter, as demonstrated by Mariani campaigning in marketplace settings. Regional endorsements were relied upon. To say that the regional elections only reflected and appealed to the national sector of politics would be an incorrect statement when this thesis has also highlighted regional appeals as well.

Finally, the second-order model does not take into account structural components of elections, such as the effects of mobilization, abstention, current events (such as the pandemic), party alliances, etc. The theory does discuss that abstention rates are usually higher in national elections than in regional, which was a true statement for this election. However, the subcodes for abstention revealed that abstention is caused by more than just disinterest in regional elections. Elections contain structural influences, but also personal choices, both of which the second-order model does not fully consider.

Application

French politics have now turned their attention to April 2022, where a new round of national politics will decide the next president of the Republic. Analyzing the 2021 regional elections revealed the variety of influences within electoral cycles. Therefore, a similar study could be applied following the upcoming elections to examine if a similar amount of variety or the same specific factors exist at the national level, once again examining the second-order model. This study serves as a reminder that elections are

multifaceted structures, something that should be remembered as the media begins

coverage on a new round of voter expression.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Andréa Kotarac, Candidat Rn Aux Régionales Pour Justifier Son Transfert ?" *Rue89Lyon: Infos, Enquêtes à Lyon Et Dans La Région*, Rue89Lyon, 29 Apr. 2021, www.rue89lyon.fr/2021/04/29/qui-est-andrea-kotarac-candidat-rn-elections-regionales/.

"Biographie Thierry Mariani." *Le Parisien - Hommes Politiques*, Le Parisien, pratique.leparisien.fr/biographies/biographies-personnalites-politiques/hommes-politiques/thierry-mariani-1400002176.

Boomgaarden, Hajo G., David Johann and Sylvia Kritzinger. "Voting at National versus European Elections: An Individual Level Test of the Second Order Paradigm for the 2014 European Parliament Elections." *Politics & Governance*, vol. 4, no. 1, Cogitatio Press, Feb. 2016, pp. 130–44. *EBSCOhost*, doi: 10.17645/pag.v4i1.472.

Cohen, Roger. "Macron and Le Pen Parties Both Battered in French Regional Elections." *The New York Times - Europe*, The New York Times, 27 June 2021. www.nytimes.com/2021/06/27/world/europe/france-elections-macron-le-pen.html.

"Emmanuel Macron Defeats Le Pen to Become French President." *BBC News*, 8 May 2017, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39839349.

"Explainer: Why Do France's Regional Elections Matter? Look Ahead." *Reuters*, 17 June 2021, www.reuters.com/world/europe/why-do-frances-regional-elections-matter-look-ahead-2021-06-17

Fauvelle-Aymar, Christine and Michael S. Lewis-Beck. "National Forces V. Local Forces: French Regional Elections." *Conference Papers -- American Political Science Association*, Jan. 2010, pp. 1–21. *EBSCOhost*, search-ebscohost-

com.umiss.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=94850530&site=eho
st-live&scope=site.

"France — 2022 Presidential Election Voting Intention." *POLITICO - Poll of Polls*,
www.politico.eu/europe-poll-of-polls/france/. Accessed 13 Sept. 2021.

Gavazzi, Adrien. "Régionales 2021 En Provence Alpes-Côte D'azur : Qui Est Thierry
Mariani (RN) Que Le Dernier Sondage Donne Vainqueur ?" *France 3 Provence-
Alpes-Côte D'Azur*, Franceinfo, 12 May 2021, france3-
regions.francetvinfo.fr/provence-alpes-cote-d-azur/vaucluse/qui-est-thierry-mariani-
candidat-du-rassemblement-national-aux-elections-regionales-de-provence-alpes-
cote-d-azur-2057134.html.

"Laurent Wauquiez - La Biographie De Laurent Wauquiez." *Gala*,
www.gala.fr/stars_et_gotha/laurent_wauquiez#nav-bio.

Liñeira, Robert. "Second-Order Elections: Everyone, Everywhere? Regional and National
Considerations in Regional Voting." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, vol. 46,
no. 4, Oxford University Press / USA, Fall 2016, pp. 510–38. *EBSCOhost*, doi:
10.1093/publius/pjw015.

Jerôme, Bruno, and Véronique Jerôme-Speziari. "The 1998 French Regional Elections:
Why so Much Political Instability?" *Electoral Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2, June 2000, pp.
219–36. *ScienceDirect*, doi: 10.1016/S0261-3794(99)00049-9.

Marien, Sofie, Ruth Dassonneville, and Marc Hooghe. "How Second Order Are Local
Elections? Voting Motives and Party Preferences in Belgian Municipal Elections."
Local Government Studies, vol. 41, no. 6, Routledge, Dec. 2015, pp. 898–916.
EBSCOhost, doi: 10.1080/03003930.2015.1048230.

Marsh, Michael. "Testing the Second-Order Election Model after Four European

    Elections." *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 28, no. 4, Cambridge University

    Press, Oct. 1998, pp. 591–607. *Cambridge University Press*, doi:

    10.1017/S000712349800026X

Norris, Pippa, and Karlheinz Reif. "Second–Order Elections." *European Journal of*

    Political Research, vol. 31, no. 1, 1997, pp. 109–24. *Wiley Online Library*, doi :

    10.1111/1475-6765.00308.

Provansal, Florent, François Tonneau, and Eric Puech. "Élections Régionales En Paca :

    Mariani-Muselier, Les Frères Ennemis." *La Provence*, 3 June 2021,

    www.laprovence.com/article/politique/6375235/les-freres-ennemis-du-sud.html.

"Renaud Muselier." *France Culture*, www.franceculture.fr/personne-renaud-muselier.html.

"Renaud Muselier Désigné Pour Succéder à Christian Estrosi à La Tête De La Région

    PACA." *Le Monde*, 9 May 2017,

    www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2017/05/09/renaud-muselier-designe-pour-

    succeder-a-christian-estrosi-a-la-tete-de-la-region-paca_5124935_823448.html.

"Résultats Des Élections Régionales 2021." *Ministère De L'Intérieur*, www.interieur.

    gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Regionales/elecresult__regionales-2021/(path)/

    regionales-2021/index.html.

Schakel, Arjan H., and Charlie Jeffery. "Are Regional Elections Really 'Second-Order'

    Elections?" *Regional Studies*, vol. 47, no. 3, Routledge, Mar. 2013, pp. 323–41.

    EBSCOhost, doi: 10.1080/00343404.2012.690069.

Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A

    Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options." *Political Research Quarterly*, vol.

61, no. 2, SAGE Publications Inc, June 2008, pp. 294–308. *SAGE Journals*, doi:

10.1177/1065912907313077.

Warren, Hayley, Caroline Alexander, and Ania Nussbaum "Republican Rivals Emerge for

Macron, Le Pen." *Bloomberg*. 28 June 2021, www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2021-

france-regional-elections/.

VOTE SHARE (using % of votes)					Qualified for second-round
Region	2017 National First Round	2021 Regional 1st round	% change 2017N vs 2021R		
Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes	20.72%	12.32%	8.40%		Region won by Right Party 2021
Burgogne - Franche-Comté	25.09%	23.19%	1.90%		Region won by Left Party 2021
Bretagne	15.33%	14.27%	1.06%		Max/Min
Centre - Val de Loire	23.08%	22.24%	0.84%		
Corse	27.88%	4.00%	23.88%		
Grand Est	27.78%	21.12%	6.66%		
Guadeloupe	13.51%	0.00%	13.51%		
Guyane	24.30%	0.00%	24.30%		
Hauts-de-France	31.04%	24.37%	6.67%		
Ile-de-France	12.57%	13.14%	-0.57%		
La Reunion	23.46%	1.74%	21.72%		
Martinique	10.94%	0.00%	10.94%		
Normandie	23.93%	19.86%	4.07%		
Nouvelle-Aquitaine	18.89%	18.20%	0.69%		
Occitanie	22.98%	22.61%	0.37%		
Pays de la Loire	16.62%	12.54%	4.08%		
Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur	28.16%	36.38%	-8.22%		
		Average Change	7.08%		

Figure 3-1

I organized this table myself using data from the Ministre de l'Intérieur:

"Résultats Des Élections Régionales 2021." *Ministère De L'Intérieur*, www.interieur.

gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Regionales/elecresult__regionales-2021/(path)/

regionales-2021/index.html.

Which of these online news websites have you spent money on in the past 12 months?

Website	Share
Lemonde.fr	38%
Lefigaro.fr	33%
Leparisien.fr	24%
Ledauphine.com	20%
Leprogres.fr	18%
Lequipe.fr	18%
Lepoint.fr	15%
Lavoixdunord.fr	14%
Ouest-france.fr	14%
Ladepeche.fr	13%
Lesechos.fr	13%
Lexpress.fr	11%
Liberation.fr	8%
Sudouest.fr	7%
Nouvelobs.com	6%
Other	14%

Share of respondents

Source
Statista Global Consumer Survey (GCS)
© Statista 2022

Additional Information:
France; 8 Oct to 14 Dec 2021 and 7 Jul 2021 to 15 Sep 2021 and 1 Apr 2021 to 14 Jun 2021 and 6 Jan 2021 to 15 Mar 20
years; respondents who spent money on ePaper / online newspapers
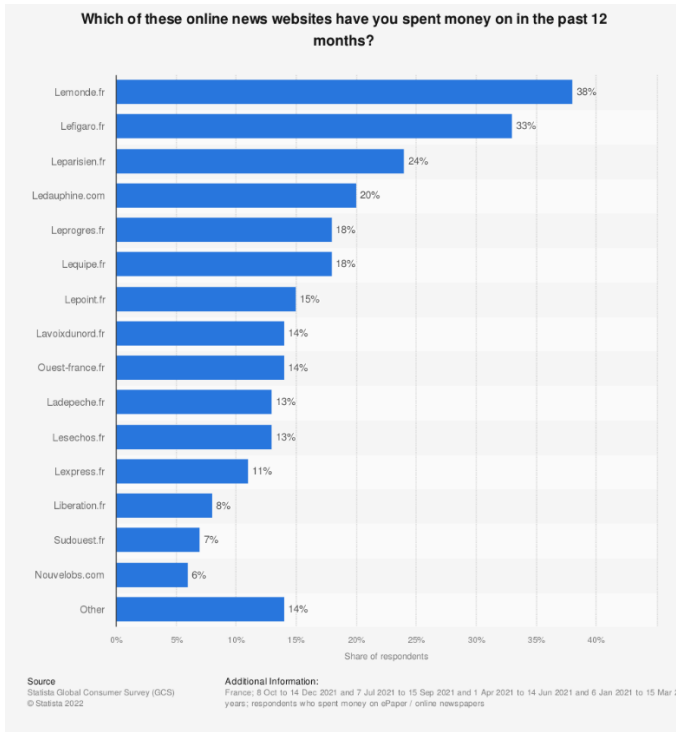
Figure 3-2

Knust, Alexander. "Which of these online news websites have you spent money on in the

past 12 months?" *Statista.* 26 Aug. 2021, www.statista.com/forecasts/998305/

epaper-online-news-website-purchases-by-brand-in-france.

Which of the following printed daily newspapers have you read in the past 2 weeks?

Newspaper	Share
20 Minutes	26%
Le Monde	20%
Le Parisien	18%
L'Equipe	16%
Ouest-France	16%
Le Figaro	15%
CNews	12%
La Voix du Nord	11%
Aujourd'hui en France	9%
Sud Ouest	8%
La Dépêche du Midi	7%
Libération	6%
Le Progrès	5%
Les Echos	5%
L'Humanité	4%
I did not read any in the past 2 weeks	8%
Other	31%

Share of respondents

Source
Statista Global Consumer Survey
© Statista 2021

Additional Information:
France; 1 Apr to 14 Jun 2021 and 6 Jan 2021 to 15 Mar 2021 and 21 Jul 2020 to 19 Aug 2020; 602 respondents; 18-64 yea
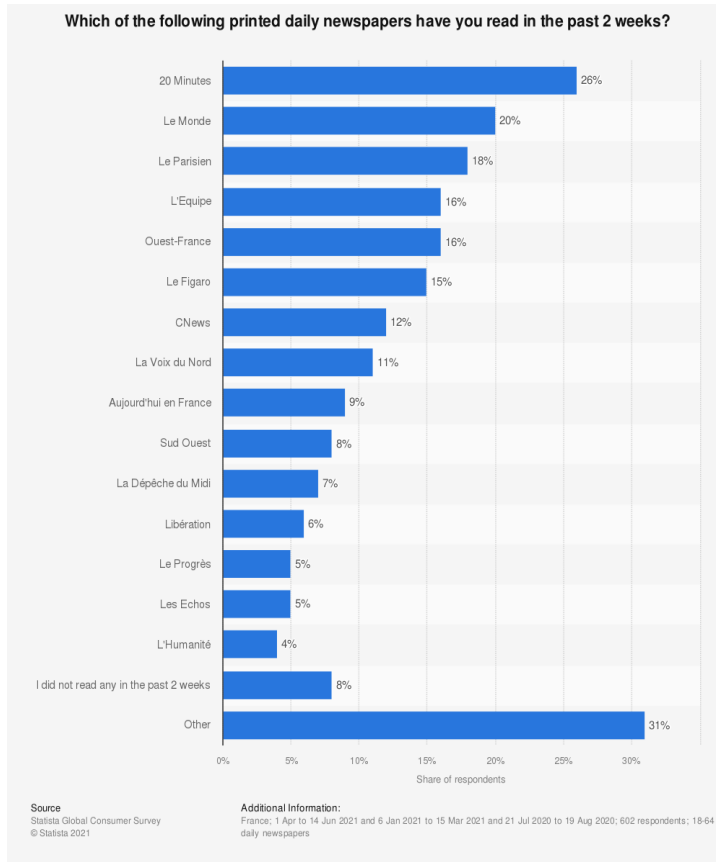daily newspapers

Figure 3-3

Knust, Alexander. "Which of the following printed daily newspapers have you read in the

past 2 weeks?" *Statista.* 26 Aug. 2021, www.statista.com/forecasts/998348/daily-

newspaper-consumption-by-brand-in-france.

Ranking of national daily newspapers in paid outreach in France in 2021, by daily circulation volume

Newspaper	Volume
Le Monde	445,894
Le Figaro	347,088
L'Equipe	214,062
Les Echos	136,587
Libération	90,354
La Croix	84,562
Aujourd'hui en France	72,595
L'Humanité	38,497
The New York Times	3,844

Volume of circulation by number of copies

Source
ACPM
© Statista 2022

Additional Information:
France; 2021; Due to the health crisis in 2020, the months of March, April, May and June have not been taken into accou
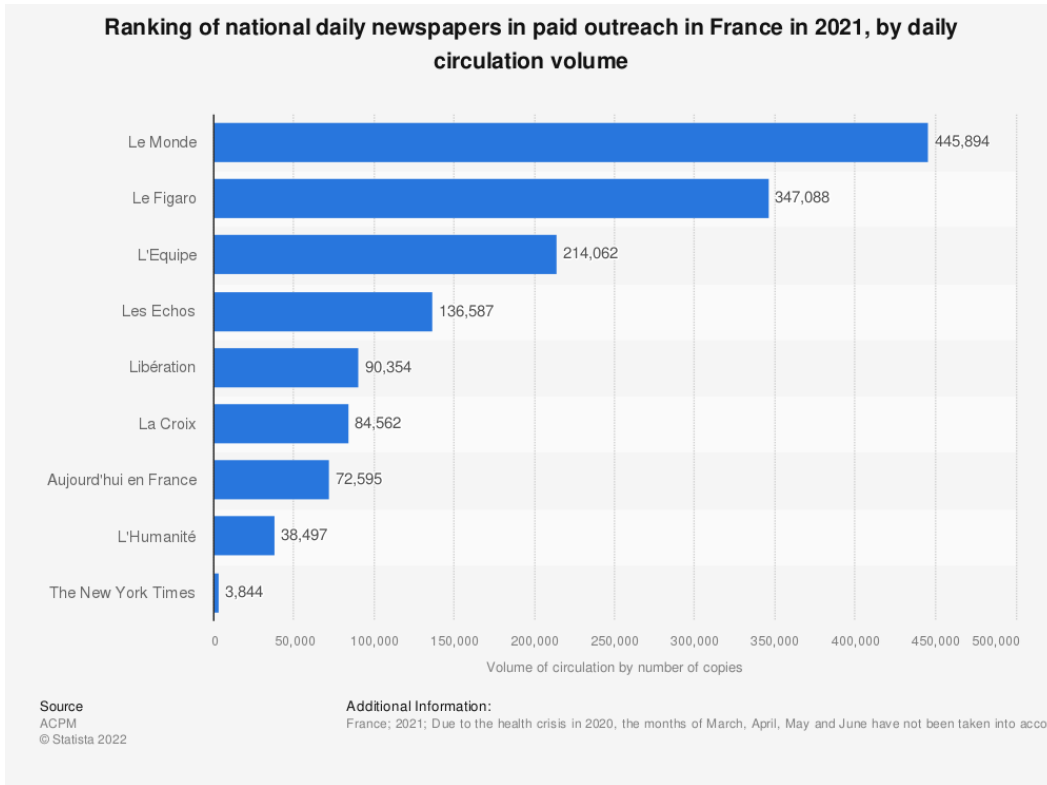
Figure 3-4

"Ranking of national daily newspapers in paid outreach in France in 2021, by daily

circulation volume." *Statista.* 24 Feb. 2022, www.statista.com/statistics/784974/

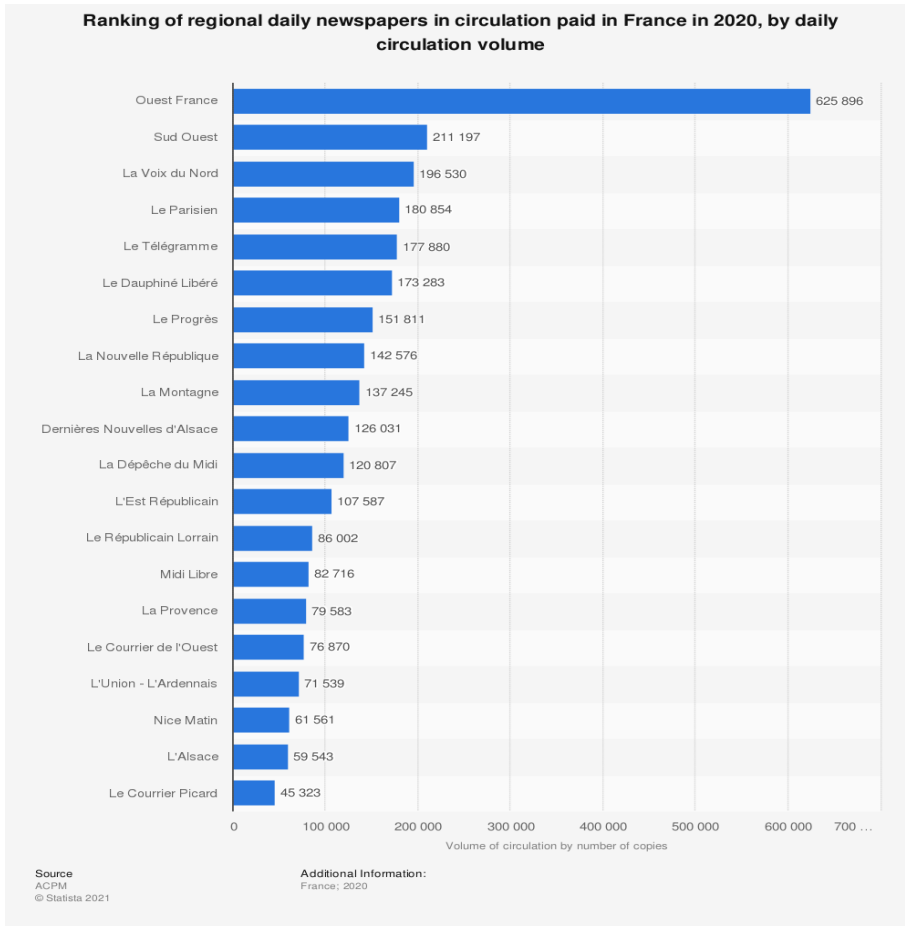paid-circulation-volume-national-dailies-by-publication-france/

Ranking of regional daily newspapers in circulation paid in France in 2020, by daily circulation volume

Newspaper	Volume of circulation by number of copies
Ouest France	625 896
Sud Ouest	211 197
La Voix du Nord	196 530
Le Parisien	180 854
Le Télégramme	177 880
Le Dauphiné Libéré	173 283
Le Progrès	151 811
La Nouvelle République	142 576
La Montagne	137 245
Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace	126 031
La Dépêche du Midi	120 807
L'Est Républicain	107 587
Le Républicain Lorrain	86 002
Midi Libre	82 716
La Provence	79 583
Le Courrier de l'Ouest	76 870
L'Union - L'Ardennais	71 539
Nice Matin	61 561
L'Alsace	59 543
Le Courrier Picard	45 323

Source
ACPM
© Statista 2021

Additional Information:
France; 2020

Figure 3-5

"Ranking of regional daily newspapers in circulation paid in France in 2020, by daily

circulation volume." *Statista.* 2 Jul. 2021, www.statista.com/statistics/784519/

newspapers-press-daily-regional-diffusion-payee-la-france/.